

**Groom to-do's**

This is no joke. You have stuff to do. You may be able to negotiate out of some of these. Or beg for relief. But here's the list of what's expected of you...from the time you meet the girl of your dreams to the time you're married.

<b>36 months before wedding</b>		
	Find perfect match	On average, you'll date the girl of your dreams three years before proposing.  If you are single or just starting to date, you have time. So why are you reading this? If you have been dating for a while, watch the clock. You can bet she is.
	Survive third date	If you clear this hurdle, nothing stopping you. For some reason, she likes you. Don't blow it.
<b>24 months before wedding</b>		
	Please girlfriend	By now, she should have had at least a handful of orgasms. If not, maybe you should consider picking up a few power tools at your neighborhood adult store.  Having a healthy sex life is important, especially at this point in your relationship. It only goes downhill from here. A recent survey found that married couples have sex thirty percent less often than unmarried couples living together.
<b>18 months before wedding</b>		
	Please her parents	Sooner or later, you're going to meet her parents. Be polite. Be secure. Be respectful. After all, you can have rude, insecure and disrespectful sex with your girlfriend once your future in-laws finish dinner. Just make sure they actually leave the restaurant before you go at it in the bathroom.
	Start saving pennies	It's coming. You know it. She knows it. And most importantly, Sal, the discount jeweler who advertises on late night television, knows it.
<b>16 months before wedding</b>		
	Please your parents	Make sure you don't abandon your folks. Take her home for Thanksgiving. And if you're Jewish and she's not, try to nudge her in the right direction by slipping matzo ball soup into her recipe file, extolling benefits of eight days of presents in December and making sure she knows "it's not a beanie."
<b>13 months before wedding</b>		
	Pick engagement ring	This is a big step. And, if you're feeling generous, a bigger purchase than your car.  If you can afford to (or even if you cannot), bump up your budget. She's going to look at the ring everyday. Sooner or later, it'll pay off (think "Get out of Jail Free").
	Propose	Think that's all the guy has to do? Think again. Then read on...

<b>12 months before wedding</b>		
	Discuss expenses and budget (bride/groom task)	The average wedding costs \$26,000. And lasts about four hours. Do the math. Wait. Don't do the math.
	Pick out location (bride/groom task)	Compromise is the cornerstone of any relationship. So don't be too upset when she doesn't want a wedding in outer space. Or City Hall.
	Choose best man and ushers	In ancient times, groomsmen provided the muscle necessary to complete a marriage. In modern times, groomsmen are more likely used to entertain single bridesmaids or keep you out of too much trouble.
	Endure countless wedding vendor visits (bride/groom task)	In order to stay in her good graces, be prepared to go to plenty of bridal fairs, food tastings, music picking and wedding planner interviews.  Remember being prepared to go does not imply being prepared to offer an opinion. Speak only when spoken to. And if asked about your thoughts, "I like what you like" is always a safe response.
<b>9 months before wedding</b>		
	Start guest list (bride/groom task)	The average number of guests invited to a wedding is one hundred and sixty four. So start making new friends or digging up old relatives if necessary.
	Help choose bridal registry (bride/groom task)	Dizzy from china patters? Don't believe you should eat with a minimum of two forks per meal? Try adding a few items from Home Depot or the Sony store. Feel bad asking for cold hard cash? There are many online services to help your guests contribute to a honeymoon, home purchasing account or mutual fund.
	Discuss ceremony and counseling with clergy or officiant (bride/groom task)	If you plan on a religious ceremony, check for pre-wedding requirements, such as counseling. If its interfaith, clear things with your priest or rabbi first. You don't want the "I object" to come from the altar.  Other than the promise to marry, the content of the ceremony is yours to make up. Be creative!
	Start honeymoon plans	This one is all you baby! She expects you to plan this from Airlines to Zoo tours.  The average honeymoon lasts eight days and costs about \$3,700. Be sure to confirm your passports are still valid and check for any visa or immunization requirements.
	Book talent	Music can make or break a party. Spend time scouting for talent. Hit the clubs. Crash a few weddings. At a minimum, make sure the band can play the songs you most want. A DJ is usually less expensive and can offer a wider variety of music, but might make the reception seem too informal.  And make sure you get everything you want in writing. You know how flaky rock stars can be.
	Attend engagement party (bride/groom task)	The first of many parties to come! This is the time to announce your upcoming union to the world. Invite friends and family, but probably not any ex-girlfriends. Or at least not your most recent ex-girlfriend.  Gifts should be appreciated, but not required. Although you might want to note who brings the twenty-dollar bottle of champagne and who brings the six-pack of sparkling grape cider.

6 months before wedding		
	Complete honeymoon plans	Waiting for that amazing last minute deal? Don't unless she's both adventuresome and has a good sense of humor. While you might score a cheap trip to Fiji sixteen hours before you say "I do," there's a good chance you'll wind up on a two-week bus tour of Cleveland.
	Pay for bride's bouquet, corsages and boutonnieres	Technically, you are responsible for paying for the bride's bouquet, bridesmaids' corsages and groomsmen's boutonnieres.
	Plan rehearsal dinner	It is the groom (or his family) that picks up the check for the rehearsal dinner. Choose a fun place, such as a restaurant or a large house, to celebrate. But try not to invite the world.  Typically, you should invite the wedding party, both sets of parents, grandparents and godparents, the officiant and any out-of-town guests.
	Arrange wedding party transportation	The last thing you want to do is leave your best man stranded. Despite all the times he hooked up at a bar and left you without cab fare.
4 months before wedding		
	Find new place to live, if necessary.	If you aren't living together already, you need to plan for shelter after the wedding. Your choices are simple: your place, her place or some place else.  Compare cost, square footage, rodent population and ability to store things (lots of presents are coming). If still undecided, think about making a clean break and pick a new place. Just be sure there's room for your La-Z-Boy, neon Bud sign and high school diploma.
	Take bride away for weekend (bride/groom task)	By now, your blood pressure should be higher than your daily ATM limit. You need a break. And don't forget the future Mrs. You needs a break too.  Take a wedding-free trip for the weekend. Don't worry about spending a lot. Just taking a time out from the daily grind should mean more to her than a suite at the Four Seasons. But if you can splurge, by all means order the seaweed wrap for two.
	Attend Couple's Shower (bride/groom task)	Couple's showers are gaining in popularity, so odds are someone will be hosting this for you. The good news is that the gifts tend to be less about the bride. But don't think they'll be more about you. Think couple.

3 months before wedding		
Order wedding rings	While her wedding band should probably compliment the engagement ring, you have many more choices. There's gold, titanium or platinum. Comfort, fancy or plain bands. Diamonds or two-toned accents. Three, four, five or six millimeters.  At a minimum you can have matching engravings. Some couples have their initials engraved with their wedding date inside the ring. Avoid suggesting "RIP."	
Arrange lodging for out-of-town guests	Unless you want your second cousin, twice removed staying in your honeymoon suite (and if you do, she should be really hot), reserve a block of rooms at a convenient hotel for any out-of-town guests.	
Complete guest list (bride/groom task)	Time to dust off the guest list and keep folks from wondering if they made the cut. If you are tight for space (or cash), prioritize who can bring a date. At a minimum, require each guest to know the last name and zip code of his or her intended date.	
Attend dance lessons	Like it or not, you will be the center of attention throughout the wedding. And especially during your first song. If you've been grooving since the term grooving was popular, you might be in good shape. But odds are you need some practice. Find a local dance studio or ballroom that offers wedding packages. Typically they include both group and private sessions. And if you want to swing, salsa or tango, make sure the instructor is equipped to handle it. As well as your hips.	
Call your mother	There's going to be a new Mrs. Smith (or Jones or Bundy) soon. And that might cause some concern with the original one. Thank your mom. Tell her how much her support means to you. And to your future wife (even if they aren't on speaking terms yet).  A simple call to mom will help make your transition from her innocent little boy to her married big man easier. Put those free nighttime minutes to good use.	
Shop for honeymoon clothes	It's never too early. Unless you are trying to drop a Speedo size or two. Don't push this one out too far. Losing weight gets harder as the wedding approaches.  Plus after all of your wedding expenses, you might not want to go clothes shopping. But consider how much of a mood-blower your tattered Motley Crue T-shirt will be at your beach bungalow before you dismiss a J.Crew trip.	
Order wedding attire for self and groomsmen	Technically a tuxedo is considered semi-formal attire, but it's probably what you and your groomsmen will be wearing on the big day.	
Check marriage license requirements	You should call or visit the appropriate license bureau (usually the city or county clerk's office) and make sure you understand how to obtain a license. You may have to get a blood test in order to complete the application.  Some states have a mandatory waiting period and/or expiration date for the licenses. It's best not to joke about any of these topics with your mate.	

<b>3 months before wedding (continued)</b>		
	Select gifts for bride and groomsmen	<p>A gift is a great way to thank your buddies for putting up with you during your engagement and for helping out during the wedding. You could get the same gift for everyone or try to personalize each one. Plan to give the gifts during the rehearsal dinner.</p> <p>As for your bride, you don't have to go overboard. A simple (read: inexpensive) piece of jewelry or keepsake (e.g., scrapbook or photo album) should do the trick.</p>
	Write Couple's Shower thank you's (bride/groom task)	<p>The wedding hasn't happened and already you have to say thanks. For what? Maybe presents from your couple's shower. Or from your engagement party.</p> <p>Regardless, put your gift of gab to good work. Still stuck? Just be sure to personalize each one by referencing their present and telling the giver what you plan to do with it. Besides returning it for cash.</p>
	Attend bachelor party	You're probably not dreading this one.
	Pick up wedding rings	<p>Nothing shows your woman that you care about the wedding than helping out with the little things so she can focus on bigger issues (like how many roses there will be on each centerpiece).</p> <p>While you are at the jewelry store, make note of all the diamond bracelets, earrings and necklaces. Just because you bought a diamond ring, don't think you're done with that precious gem.</p>
	Begin financial consolidation	Time to start saying "what's mine is yours." If you haven't already, be prepared to discuss how to handle finances (savings, bills, credit cards, etc.) in the future. Research how to add your fiancée to your bank accounts (or open a joint account) and stock portfolios as well as making her your primary beneficiary for insurance and retirement accounts.
	Check under her hood	<p>By this point, she has been 150% focused on making sure the wedding goes smoothly and 0% on everything else, including her car. Surprise her by getting the oil changed. Odds are she forgot that pesky three month or three thousand mile rule long ago.</p> <p>And if you don't complain about the condition of her car, she may let you use your dipstick on her as well. Vroom vroom.</p>
<b>2 months before wedding</b>		
	Mail wedding invitations	<p>Start stuffing, licking and stamping! Any guest over eighteen should receive an invitation, even those very familiar with the details (like your parents). Never type or use labels on the outer envelope. Stuffing the invitations should be easy for those good at jigsaw puzzles or the SAT. Besides the invite, expect to neatly place a response card, envelope, directions, maps and tissue paper inside.</p>

1 month before wedding		
	Wine and dine her	Plan for a wedding-free moment by going to your favorite restaurant. Relive your first date. Or kiss. Or you-know-what. Ask how she's doing. And really listen. Don't race home to catch the end of the game. Or the latest episode of Survivor. That's what TiVo is for. And if you don't have a TiVo yet, add it to your registry. Having a pause button should reduce post-wedding fights by at least half.
	Pour your heart out	Time to write your vows, speeches and toasts. Or at least copy and paste some sappy words from the Web. If you are writing your own vows, try to include words like love, cherish, sacrifice, promise, infinite and respect. Avoid pain, suffering, one-way and maybe. And don't expect to just wing the speeches and toasts, even if you are a funny drunk.
	Verify honeymoon reservations	Now's not the time to assume all is well with the honeymoon. Expect the worst. Call the airlines, hotels, tour companies, bars and boogie board rental shacks. Make sure they know you are coming.  You might want to order flowers, fruit/cheese platter and champagne to be in your hotel room before you arrive. Or at least save your bag of airplane peanuts.
	Arrange with best man for ride from reception to airport	No this isn't about a getaway car. Your best man should help with ride arrangements from the reception to the airport (or hotel if you are leaving the next day).  It's okay to rely on your best man for help with other things as well. That's his job. Along with marrying your fiancée if you fail to show up at the wedding.
2 weeks before wedding		
	Pick up license	Time to head to the clerk's office and sign your life away. Go as a couple and bring proper identification (with picture and signature). If this isn't your first marriage, be prepared to say when your last one ended. If it's recent, you may need to show a certified copy of the divorce or death certificate.  It shouldn't take too long to complete this task. Do something fun afterwards.
	Remind groomsmen of rehearsal and wedding details	Besides telling your friends to take it easy on the still-single and desperate women guests, you should take the time to explain any special seating requirements or other wedding details. In addition, give the officiant's fee to best man. Preferably in check form. Especially if you are giving your groomsmen's pep talk at a strip joint.

<b>1 week before wedding</b>		
	Pack your bags	<p>It's not what you think. Or if you failed miserably at helping her plan the wedding, it is what you think.</p> <p>Take a few moments and pack a change of clothes for after the reception and all your new honeymoon attire. Doing this early will ensure you have time for some last minute purchases. You can't have enough flower-print shirts and boat shoes.</p>
	Arrange move to new home and change of address form (if necessary)	<p>If there's any moving to be done, do it now to make it easier when you get back from your honeymoon. Throw out the garbage (translation: anything your fiancée says is the "old you"), box your stuff and coordinate the movers (or the U-Haul truck, if you are a do-it-yourselfer).</p> <p>Don't forget to fill out change of address forms. You wouldn't want to miss a single issue of Playboy.</p>
	Pick up tuxedo	<p>Try on your tux to make sure all the measurements were correct. Or if your weight swung one way or the other, there's enough time to alter the clothes.</p> <p>Also, follow up with everyone in your wedding party, including fathers, to make sure they pick up their tuxedos as well. Nothing ruins a wedding faster than a group of guys who look like the picked their formal wear from Goodwill.</p>
	Upgrade personal hygiene	<p>Time's running out. While you probably won't drop a few inches around your waist or get those six-pack abs she really wants, there are things you can do to be more presentable during your wedding (and beyond).</p> <p>Get a haircut. Floss more often. Sleep a bit longer. And a few last minute workouts and stomach crunches wouldn't hurt either.</p>
<b>3 days before wedding</b>		
	Attend rehearsal and dinner (bride/groom task)	<p>Practice makes perfect. Hence the rehearsal. Make sure your fiancée is happy. Now's the time to make any changes.</p> <p>The best man and host (usually your father) should make toasts at the dinner. You and your fiancée should thank the wedding party and your parents as well. Also you should hand out your groomsmen gifts.</p>

Wedding day		
	Have a big breakfast	Don't be the groom that passes out before getting drunk and passing out.
	Get luggage ready	If you're not packed by now, prepare to increase your credit card limits.
	Give ring to best man	Check for pocket holes first. Don't dig too deep and give anyone doubts on why you are marrying a woman.
	Bring marriage license	Ignorance isn't a valid excuse at this point.
	Turn off cell phone	If the bachelor party stripper hasn't called by now, odds are she won't call during the wedding.
	Don't be late	Even in movies, this move can be fatal.
	Say "I do"	And after you affirm your intentions, take a deep breath and enjoy the moment. The best is about to come.
	Socialize	Your guests traveled far and wide to join you today. And even if they didn't, you should still thank everyone for sharing in your special day. Don't just hang with your bride. You'll have the next four or five decades for that. Mingle. Dance with guests. Smile for pictures. Also, eat some food. Most couples forget to enjoy what they spent all their money on.
	Speak up	The first few toasts will be about you (from the best man, maid of honor and your bride's father). Then it's your turn to speak. This is your chance to toast your new bride, thank your families (especially your in-laws) and thank friends for coming.
	Seal the deal	Don't go to sleep without officially sanctioning the wedding. And satisfying your new wife. But, if you only get one out of two done, at least your married. Where else can she go?

**Congratulations. You are now married.**