

How to...

be a confident bride

Love the idea of getting married but worried about being the centre of attention? Don't panic, you can learn to embrace your inner calm says **Eve Menezes Cunningham**

If the phrase "It's your big day!" sends you into a panic, you need to get a grip on your nerves to fully enjoy your wedding day. Some brides feel the pressure more than others, and it's very easy to be over-awed by the whole event. But a few simple tricks will help you gather your thoughts and relax. Imagine how you'll feel being married. What are you most looking forward to about the day itself, the honeymoon and your marriage? Pick a moment from the wedding day that you're particularly excited about: your first kiss as husband and wife? Cutting the cake together? Dancing at the reception? Make the

feeling as vivid as possible so you can recall the warm and fuzzy sensations any time you start feeling anxious. Let the people who love you spoil you

“Remember how good it feels to have everyone's support”

a little and start enjoying all the attention

Conquer your nerves

You have lived through many big days already. Do you remember the anticipation and excitement you felt before the school play?

Maybe you performed in dance or musical recitals or used to compete in sporting events. Perhaps you give presentations or lead

training at work? List every occasion you can think of where you had lots of positive attention. Remember how good you felt with everyone's support and delight in your achievements. While it's unlikely that these events took as much organisation or

that they were all about you, you can remind yourself that it's actually quite nice to be the centre of attention.

Choose the event you felt best about and when future wedding nerves surface, remind yourself that you felt great then and will feel even better on your wedding day.

Take time to relax...

Have you ever rushed around at work to meet a seemingly impossible deadline, frantically trying to organise everything in time? Did you then have to act all poised, in control and professional to present the result while your heart was still racing? When it comes to your wedding,

listening to music, doing yoga and even something as simple as just having a lie-in on a Sunday morning. You know the little things that make you feel good, so make time for them. This isn't about luxury – challenges seem smaller when you're rested and relaxed. Being relaxed is a vital element of wedding planning.

What's important

No matter what kind of wedding you're planning, the most important thing to pay attention to is your relationship. The closer you are to your fiancé, the easier it will be to look and feel amazing, happy and delighted throughout your big day. Support each other through any nerves and enjoy the celebrations.

PRESSURE BUSTERS

1 Walking down the aisle

Whether you'll be escorted by a father figure or are doing something different, many brides worry about tripping over the dress or stumbling down the aisle. Imagine yourself at the point where you'll first feel all those eyes on you. Who's there? Someone who loves you very much and will walk with you? Bridesmaids who've been your closest friends for years? Your fiancé feeling like the luckiest man on earth? Let everyone's support sink in.

If you're usually a jeans and trainers kind of woman, you might find that wearing your shoes around the house boosts your confidence. Give yourself a trial run wearing the full regalia.

2 The vows

It can feel daunting making such personal declarations in

front of practically everyone you know, but getting married isn't like public speaking. You'll be prompted at each step and everyone's rooting for you both. Talk to your partner about the vows in advance. If you're writing them yourselves and don't want to hear them before the big day, you can still empathise with each other.

Make the vows more meaningful by thinking about what you want from your marriage as well as the actual wedding, and talk to each other about what marriage means to you. It's important not to get so wrapped up in your own worries that you don't talk, and sharing feelings makes you feel more confident.

3 The first dance

Feeling anxious about your first dance as a married couple? Julia Boggio and James Derbyshire have certainly raised the bar – the couple had secret dance lessons for six months before their wedding to entertain guests with their *Dirty Dancing* routine.

You probably won't want to go to such lengths, but if you're nervous about being out of sync, a few dance lessons will boost your confidence. Dancing is naturally intimate and the fact that you and your partner will be learning together will help to bring you closer. Choose a dance style that reflects your personalities and have fun!

REAL BRIDES SHARE THEIR TIPS


Fiona Keyte got married in February 2006. She says, "It is daunting thinking about it, but it's something to be enjoyed. It's a cliché, but it is your day and probably the only day where you are put first by everyone. Unless you have a very small wedding, you just have to accept that quite a few eyes will be on you all day. I hadn't really thought about it until I went shopping with the bridesmaids and suddenly thought of the 'here comes the bride' music. I got really nervous at the thought of walking down the aisle. But because I loved my dress and kept the make-up and hair 'me', I felt more comfortable. I was very nervous that morning and felt terribly emotional but once I was walking down the aisle, I was so excited I forgot my nerves. I also drank very little alcohol over the day as I knew the nerves and excitement would add to the booze and make me feel very tipsy, very quickly if I wasn't careful."

Laura Hall, who will be getting married this June says, "I hate being the centre of attention so I'm quite nervous about the day. It's the thought of 'friendly faces' that are helping to calm those nerves."

Beth van Staten got married in April 2003. She says, "Everyone there was there for us and they were all people that I'd felt very comfortable with. On the day, in the whole outfit, you do feel like a princess and all nerves are washed away. I didn't believe it when people told me that would happen but it did. Let the dress carry you. The day goes by so quickly, it's really important to take things in. This is the result of your hard work and planning, so enjoy the day to the max."

Jennifer Carter, who got married in August 2005 agrees, "Everyone at your wedding has been invited by you. They are your closest friends and family and are on your side. I am a shy person and wasn't looking forward to being the centre of attention at all. I was most nervous about saying my vows so just told myself that I was only saying it to my husband. No one else had to hear."

Philippa Tisdall is getting married in June and admits, "I'm a bit nervous but I'll love it when it comes around." She is taking strength from the thought of holding on to her dad's arm as he walks her down the aisle.



these sensations can feel more extreme. Even if you have a wedding planner, going from rushing around trying to organise such an enormous event to appearing elegant, serene and radiant can be a challenge. Avoid burning the candle at both ends in the months leading up to your wedding, and build pampering time into your schedule. Not the functional pampering you've probably allowed for to help you look your best, but things that will make you feel great from the inside out, like massages and other relaxing treatments. Take time to enjoy reading magazines in the bath. Spend time just