

The Groom's Complete Guide

Everything You Need to Know About Your Wedding Day (From Someone Who's Seen 2,500 of Them)

By Tony Winyard | Wedding Host & MC | 2,500+ Weddings

The 3 AM Scroll

It's 3 AM. Your partner is asleep beside you.

You're scrolling Reddit threads with titles like "What do grooms actually do at weddings?" and "Is it normal to feel nothing about wedding planning?"

The venue's booked. The date's set. Your partner has seventeen Pinterest boards and strong opinions about napkin colours. You've been asked to "just decide on the groomsmen and pick some music."

But nobody's told you what your day actually looks like. What happens hour by hour. What you're supposed to feel. What you're definitely not supposed to do.

What if I forget my vows?

What if the speech goes wrong?

What if I just stand there like a lemon while everyone watches?

Here's what I've learned from 2,500+ weddings: grooms who have a brilliant day aren't the most confident or the most organised. They're the ones who understood what was coming and prepared for it.

This guide gives you the roadmap.

The timeline. The speech (if you're giving one). The first dance survival tactics. The things nobody tells you until it's too late. And permission to actually enjoy your own wedding.

Part 1: What the Groom Actually Does

The Core Responsibilities

Your job breaks into five areas:

1. Show up on time, sober enough to function

2. Choose your groomsmen and best man
3. Get dressed properly (or have someone who'll check)
4. Say your vows without disaster
5. Be present and enjoy the day

That's genuinely most of it. The bar is not high.

The Additional Bits (Depending on Your Wedding)

You might also be involved in:

- Music choices (ceremony, first dance, party)
- Honeymoon planning (traditionally the groom's domain)
- Vendor decisions (photographer, DJ/band, transport)
- Speech (some grooms speak, some don't)
- Guest list management (your side)

What You're NOT Expected to Do

Unless you specifically want to:

- Care deeply about centrepieces
- Have an opinion on every detail
- Pretend to be excited about things that bore you
- Be the emotional equal partner in all planning aspects

The key is being genuinely helpful where you can and honest about where you can't. "I don't have a preference on this—your call" is a valid answer.

Part 2: The Lead-Up

6-12 Months Before

Choose your best man:

Pick someone reliable. Not necessarily your funniest mate or your oldest friend—the person who'll actually show up, stay sober enough to help, and not lose the rings.

Choose your groomsmen:

Usually 2-6. Depends on how many bridesmaids there are and how many people you actually want standing next to you.

Start thinking about:

- Suits (hire vs buy, matching vs coordinating)
- Stag do (give your best man some direction)
- Music (what you definitely want, what you definitely don't)

3-6 Months Before

Sort your outfit:

Book the suits. Allow time for alterations. Don't leave this until the last minute—tailoring takes longer than you think.

Stag do coordination:

Your best man handles the logistics. You just need to tell him:

- What you actually want (not what you think you should want)
- What you definitely don't want
- Budget comfort zone
- Who must be invited (and anyone who shouldn't be)

Vows (if writing your own):

Start thinking. You don't have to write them yet, but start noting things down. Observations about your partner. Moments that mattered. What you want to promise.

6-8 Weeks Before

Speech (if giving one):

Write a first draft. It doesn't have to be good yet.

Final suit fitting:

Bring the exact shoes you'll wear. Check everything.

Confirm the timeline:

Know what's happening when on the day.

2-4 Weeks Before

Stag do:

Enjoy it. Stay safe. Get home.

Polish speech:

Read it aloud. Time it. Cut anything that doesn't land.

Vows:

Final version. Practise reading them aloud. Not to memorise—just to get comfortable.

Week Before

Confirm with best man:

Does he have the rings? Does he know the timeline? Is everything sorted?

Final checklist:

Suit, shoes, socks, underwear, accessories, anything you need for the morning.

Night before:

Don't overdo the drinking. Get some sleep.

Part 3: The Wedding Day

Your Morning

Wake up:

Multiple alarms if needed. Arrange for someone to physically check you're awake.

Eat breakfast:

You won't get another chance for hours. Something substantial.

Getting ready:

- Shower
- Get dressed with time to spare
- Check everything: tie straight, buttonhole in place, flies zipped, no tags showing
- Have someone photograph you (your partner will want to see)

Before leaving:

- Phone charged
- Rings with the best man (double-check)

- Vows in pocket (if applicable)
- Deep breath

The Ceremony

Arrival:

Be at the venue before guests arrive. You'll greet people as they come in. Stand near the front, be visible, be welcoming.

When the processional starts:

Turn to watch your partner walk in. This is the moment. Everyone will be watching you watching them.

During the ceremony:

- Listen to the officiant
- When prompted, step forward, face your partner
- Exchange rings without fumbling (best man hands them over)
- Say your vows (reading from a card is completely acceptable)
- Kiss when told to

Common worries:

"What if I cry?" — Most people find it endearing. Have a handkerchief. *"What if I forget my lines?"* — The officiant will prompt you. You'll repeat after them. *"What if I faint?"* — Rare, but if you feel woozy, tell the best man. Sit down. Drink water. The ceremony can pause.

After the Ceremony

Immediately:

- Kiss again for photos
- Receive congratulations
- Bask in the moment

Photos:

- Listen to the photographer
- They'll pose you—just follow instructions
- Couple's photos can take 30-60 minutes
- Have drinks and snacks available

Drinks reception:

- Mingle with guests
- Accept congratulations graciously
- Pace yourself on alcohol (speeches are coming)

The Reception

Key moments:

1. Entrance (if the venue announces you)
2. Sit-down meal (usually top table)
3. Speeches (order varies)
4. First dance (after dessert, usually)
5. Party (when you can finally relax)

Your Speech (If Giving One)

Grooms don't traditionally give speeches in UK weddings—the best man and father of the bride handle that. But increasingly, grooms do speak, either:

- A joint speech with their partner
- A solo thank-you speech
- Vows extended into the reception

If you're speaking:

Keep it short: 3-5 minutes.

What to include:

1. Thank guests for coming
2. Thank both sets of parents
3. Thank the bridal party
4. Compliment your new spouse
5. A brief word about how you feel about the day
6. Toast to everyone / the bridesmaids / whoever's next

What to avoid:

- Inside jokes nobody gets
- Embarrassing stories about your partner
- Anything too personal for a public audience
- Going on too long

The First Dance

If you're not dancers:

Nobody expects you to be good. The only people watching for the full song are immediate family and photographers. Everyone else is waiting to join you.

Survival tactics:

- Choose a short song (or ask the DJ to fade after 90 seconds)
- Practise a basic slow dance at home (sway, step, turn)
- If you want something more polished, take one or two lessons
- Look at your partner, not the floor
- Smile

Song choice:

Something you both like. Doesn't have to be "your song." Common choices: Ed Sheeran, Frank Sinatra, Etta James, or something unexpected that represents you.

The Party

You've done the formal bits. Now enjoy yourself.

Actually dance:

Not constantly. But when the floor needs energy, you should be on it.

Mingle:

This might be the only time you see some of these people for years. Make an effort.

Pace your drinking:

You want to remember this.

Check in with your partner:

Weddings are chaotic. Touch base regularly.

Part 4: Common Groom Worries

"I Feel Disconnected from the Planning"

This is normal. Weddings often default to one partner driving decisions.

What helps:

- Ask to own specific areas (music, honeymoon, transport)
- Be honest: "I want to be involved, just tell me what's actually helpful"
- Accept that you might care about different things

"I Don't Feel Excited"

Also normal. Some people feel wedding excitement months out. Some feel it on the day. Some feel it looking at photos years later.

Not feeling "excited" doesn't mean you don't want to get married.

"What if I Mess Up the Vows?"

You won't. If you're writing your own, have them on a card. If you're repeating, the officiant will prompt you line by line.

Even if you stumble, it's endearing. People want to see humans, not performances.

"The First Dance Terrifies Me"

Understandable. But consider:

- It's 3 minutes of your life
- Everyone's rooting for you
- After 30 seconds, guests join you
- Nobody expects Fred Astaire

A few living room practice sessions will give you enough confidence to survive.

"I Don't Know What to Say in My Speech"

Three minutes of "thank you" and "I love you" is enough. Write down bullet points. Practice twice. You'll be fine.

Part 5: What Nobody Tells You

You'll Barely Eat

The meal happens when everyone wants to talk to you. Canapés vanish before you get any. Eat breakfast. Snack during getting ready. Ask your best man to bring you food.

You'll Miss Things

200 people are there. You can't talk to everyone. You'll look at photos later and see moments you didn't experience. That's normal.

Time Moves Strangely

The ceremony feels like 10 minutes. The afternoon disappears. The evening lasts forever and no time at all.

You'll Feel Things You Don't Expect

Calm when you expected nervous. Sad when you expected happy. Overwhelmed when you expected to be fine.

All of it is normal. Let yourself feel whatever comes.

The Day After Is Weird

Anticlimax. Exhaustion. Strange relief. Sometimes a bit of "what now?"

Plan something low-key for the next day. Breakfast together. A quiet walk. Transition time before the honeymoon.

Quick Reference Card

Week Before

- Suit ready
- Rings with best man
- Vows written and practised
- Timeline confirmed
- First dance song confirmed
- Speech written (if applicable)

Morning Of

- Eat breakfast
- Get dressed with time to spare
- Check: tie, buttonhole, shoes

- Phone charged
- Vows in pocket
- Deep breath

At the Venue

- Greet arriving guests
- Confirm rings are with best man
- Find best position for ceremony
- Wait for your partner

Ceremony Checklist

- Turn when they enter
- Step forward when prompted
- Exchange rings without fumbling
- Say vows (reading is fine)
- Kiss

Reception

- Photos (follow photographer's lead)
- Mingle during drinks
- Speech (if applicable)
- First dance
- Party
- Enjoy

About Tony Winyard

2,500+ weddings. Thousands of grooms supported through the day.

The grooms who have the best time aren't the most confident or outgoing. They're the ones who understood what was happening and gave themselves permission to enjoy it.

If you want guidance on any aspect of your day—from speech writing to first dance survival—I'm here to help.

Book a free 15-minute consultation: <https://www.winyard.com/contact>

You don't have to be perfect. You just have to show up.

© Tony Winyard Entertainment | www.winyard.com | tony@winyard.com