

14 Tips for Great Wedding Photos *For Brides and Grooms*

Great photos are the photographer's job right? Definitely. However, AWESOME photos can happen when the people being photographed understand what goes into great photography and contribute as well. Here are a few things you can do that will help me capture your special day. Feel free to call or text me (Amy) any time for personal advice. (405-535-8447)

- 1) **Be super flexible.** Rarely does anything go as planned. When (not if) something goes wrong, go with the flow, learn to laugh, make the best of it.
- 2) **Do a lot of preliminary work.** The more you take care of the details before the wedding, the more you can relax on your special day. Once the day arrives, let events fall as they will. At this point it is beyond your control. Enjoy the fruits of your labor.
- 3) **Communicate with me like crazy.** The more I know what is happening at the wedding, when it is happening, any surprises you may have planned, and what is especially important to you, the more I can be ready to capture these moments and poses.
- 4) **Decide what your amateur photography policy will be.** Appoint an authority figure to kindly but firmly remind family and friends not to get in the way of your photographer (aka yours truly). You can decide the extent to which you want to limit other photography, but keep in mind that you are paying to have excellent photographs of you and your day. Extra flashes, intruding iPhones, and Aunt Gerty's Polaroid will most likely complicate my efforts.
- 5) **Make a conscious choice to enjoy your day.** If you are counting on everything going right in order to be happy, you will probably be stressed to the max. Assign as much responsibility away from yourself as possible and trust those you assigned. When you are stressed, it can show up in the photographs.

- 6) **Prepare for long photo sessions.** Good photographs take time, not to mention herding wedding parties and family members.
- 7) **Do it in slo-mo.** The walk down the isle, the rings, the kiss, the bouquet toss, the garter... Anything picture-worthy needs to be as slow as possible in order to give the photographer a chance to capture the best shot. For example, the kiss should be at least 5 seconds long.
- 8) **Be into each other.** Keep your focus on your new partner for life. Not only will it help you enjoy the moment, but it makes for great photographs (vs. looking at the officiate, studying the shape of a cellphone in your man's pocket, allowing guests to distract you, etc.).
- 9) Talking during photographs while finishing out the unity song or during your 1st dance can look about as bad as chewing food in a picture. I love what the article below mentions. "If you must talk, be flirty."
- 10) Hair worn down can potentially hide or be in your face.
- 11) Break your shoes in before the wedding day, or better yet, bring some comfy flats to wear on all the shots your shoes will not show, which is most of them if you are wearing a traditional floor-length or longer gown.
- 12) **LIGHTING**

Lighting is probably the most important technical aspect for brides to keep in mind when choosing time and location. Without good lighting, your pictures will look like snapshots from Aunt Gerty's Polaroid. And the more natural lighting the better. Important areas to keep lighting in mind are:

OUTDOOR WEDDINGS OR POSES

- The "golden hour" (roughly one hour before sunset) is perfect for amazing photographs.
- 12:00 – 3:00 pm is probably the worst time for outdoor pictures, for both the harshness of the light and for the potentially miserable temperatures
- Having your ceremony under trees looks gorgeous to the naked eye, but, unless it is a solid shade, it can be a nightmare for photography as the leaves create sharp, spotty shadows.

INDOOR PREPARATION AND CEREMONY PICTURES

- When prepping, try to get rooms with as much natural lighting (windows) as possible.
- The auditorium needs to be as well lit as possible. I totally understand the desire for a romantic, dimly lit room (so the candles will glow), but do you want great candles or great photos?

13) POSING

- Accent the jaw line – find the angles that show off the jaw line, as opposed to it blending into the neck. Usually chin up and a bit to the side is best.
- Pull your shoulders back.
- Tighten or tense your stomach muscles.
- Woman – go for the S-curve: Place your weight on one leg and allow the hip to naturally swing out.
- Fuller Figures
 - Avoid crossing your arms or hugging yourself; put some distance between your waist and your arms (hand on hip, arm casually lifted...)
 - Shoulders back!
 - Ladies: When standing, cross one leg in front of the other and put your weight on the back leg.
 - Ladies: When sitting, angle your body and cross your heels.
- Move slowly. Once you or your photographer have pulled yourself into your “uncomfortable” pose, relax, breathe, laugh, move naturally, and try subtle changes. The pose is the starting point. The key is to be as natural as possible.
- Confidence shows. So do nerves, stress or insecurities. If you struggle with the negatives, put on your best acting hat, and BE BEAUTIFUL for the day.

14) SMILING

- You don't always have to smile. Go for different expressions that capture your personality.
- The laugh is the best smile of all, because it lights up the whole face. No matter how much you have perfected your smile in the mirror, don't forget to loosen up and laugh. It

doesn't have to be a belly laugh, but look like you absolutely love life, and it will show.

- It's not just about the lips posing. The eyes are possibly even more important, not just because they are the "window to the soul" but also because they are the focal point for the camera. If the most "in focus" part of the picture are your eyes, give them a little extra attention – not just with the make up, but also with expression.
- Relax the brows
- Don't be afraid of those gorgeous laugh lines
- Open your eyes. Sometimes in our attempts to give a great smile, we squint.
- Be careful not to "freeze" your smile, especially when we are waiting for Aunt Gerty to stop talking, Grandpa to stop frowning and little Josie to stop screaming. Your lips can go into a grimace, and your eyes say "get me out of here!!").
- One way to avoid "the frozen smile" is to gently chuckle every few seconds, just enough to re-light your face.

This article covers even more (and might easily overwhelm you). However, it is full of great ideas for great photos.

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