



# The Keep Your Sanity Wedding Checklist

(including little-known tips for  
negotiating with vendors)





# Tips for your wedding planning at each stage!

## 9 to 12 months

We discuss where to start with your wedding planning.

## 6 to 8 months

We provide tips on booking your vendors.

## 4 to 5 months

Get into the details with your wedding invitations, favors and rehearsal dinner.

## One Month

Confirm reception details and get your financé in for a fitting.

## 2 to 4 weeks

Stay calm, double check all the plans and carry on!

## The Big Day

Enjoy your once-in-a-lifetime event!



**THE PICKWICK PLACE**  
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# 9 to 12 Months

**Create your wedding binder:** There are A LOT of details that go into planning a wedding. A binder, whether physical or digital, will help you keep everything organized from ideas to budgets to receipts and more. This is the same thing that we do for all of our weddings at The Loft. Trust us, it works.

**Consider making a wedding website:** A wedding website allows you to introduce your wedding party, share your love story, provide details about the ceremony and reception, and enable an RSVP function. TheKnot.com and Zola both have user-friendly and affordable options.

**Choose your bridal party:** Selecting your bridal party is fun, but you do want to think about the size of your bridal party. Are you going to include your fiancé's close friends on either side? What about siblings? Another thing to consider when thinking about the size of a bridal party is whether you'll have a gift of appreciation. We have The Stalls at Pickwick that can help you with gifts! Our vendors offer a wide range of unique gift items that make cherished bridal party gifts. You could even plant a gift in your bestie's apartment with a note "Will you be my Maid of Honor?"

**Start your guest list:** This certainly doesn't need to be a final list at this stage in planning, but it will help you figure out your estimated headcount, which you will need as you begin communicating with vendors. Are you going for a small, intimate wedding with only close family and friends, or do you want to invite second cousin Jimmy and his wife and four kids? It's smart to begin these discussions with your fiancé and family early!



# 9 to 12 Months cont.

**Book your venue:** Wedding venues can book up fast, especially if you're looking for a Saturday date. You don't want to wait to begin touring possible wedding venues. At The Loft we offer several open house events throughout the year as well as individual tours as requested. Whenever a couple books The Loft for their wedding venue, we schedule a consultation meeting with our Day of Event Coordinator to begin laying out the details for your day and creating your custom timeline to ensure every detail stays on track.

**Save the Date:** Order your save the date cards or magnets (whatever you choose!) to encourage your invited guests to have the date open and anticipate a formal invitation with more details.

**Find the one:** The dress that is! Many brides take the important women in their lives to shop at a few different boutiques. Take your time, but don't overthink it. Ask your boutique to set up a schedule for fittings. Typically, you'll have two-to-three fittings about eight weeks prior to your big day.





# 6 to 8 Months

**Plan your setup:** We recommend making an appointment at your venue to visualize the way the space can be set up, take measurements and view available rental items such as centerpieces, additional lighting and draping. This will help you get a vision for how you can decorate to achieve your dream setup. Many brides don't want to spend countless hours making their own centerpieces. The Loft has complete centerpiece looks, focal points, garland, furniture pieces and more available for rent. The Loft also provides recommendations on highly rated vendors that are familiar with the space.

**Select your caterer:** Not into chicken or fish? Your wedding meal doesn't have to be a formal multi-course dinner anymore. Many casual restaurants have catering options available. Have you always dreamed of a taco bar wedding? Have fun sampling dishes and skip tradition if you wish.

**Find a florist:** A good wedding florist will tie your wedding aesthetic together. Give the florist a few details about your color scheme and set up and he or she will be able to run with it and create a plan that meets the needs of your bridal party and budget. Be sure to cover whether you will be outside in cold or hot weather for photos or the event itself so that your florist can plan your arrangements accordingly. Many florists can coordinate with your baker to provide decor for the cake as well as your venue to perk up your centerpieces.

# 6 to 8 Months cont.

**Plan your music:** From your entrance jams to your closing song, your music choice will shape your reception in a significant way. Are you going to hire a DJ to manage the selections or create your own Spotify playlist that a friend handles? If you prefer the Cupid Shuffle over The Electric Slide - now's the time to discuss it. You'll want to go over your "Must Play" and "Do Not Play" lists so your DJ knows what to say to Aunt Edna who keeps requesting the Macarena. If you will be doing a first dance, parent dance and/or anniversary dance, you'll want to pick your songs. Ask your DJ about package levels, pricing and whether uplighting is available. At The Loft, we offer an Emcee service that includes coordinating your music playlist (you must supply a pre-made Spotify playlist).

**Find a photographer and/or videographer:** There are many options for photography and videography including your cousin Jenny who's an art major to an experienced professional with 20 years of experience. Decide on how important it is for you and your fiancé to have polished photos and a video. What will you do with your photos? Will you make a photo book, make them into canvas decor, etc.? Videos range from a full play-by-play of your ceremony to a highlight reel of important moments. Decide on how much you want to spend and then approach photographers with good reviews in your price range. Ask about wedding packages, how many hours are included, and whether a second photographer is included. You want to have pictures of you coming down the aisle AND your groom's expression. You could negotiate a cheaper price by allowing your photographer to leave before the reception ends.



# 6 to 8 Months cont.

**Book your baker:** Some guests would say this is the most important part of the reception! You could go with a trusted grocery chain, specialty baker or trusted friend. Some couples choose to have a small layered cake they display and supplement with sheets cakes. Most bakers charge by the slice. Ask about flavors, fillings and frosting that appeals to the masses. Some bakers will prepare your cake days in advance, so be sure they can guarantee freshness on your special day. Also clarify that they can deliver the cake to your venue, so that your friends and family don't get stuck picking up the cake in their formal wear.

**Consider wedding day entertainment:** Many couples prefer to bring their wedding to the next level with a photo booth, caricature, painters or dancers. Get quotes and think about what your guests will enjoy.

**Create your registry:** This is the fun part! You could go wild with a scanner at your favorite retailer, or build an online registry such as Zola that allows you to pull from hundreds of brands and launch a honeymoon fund. Take inventory of the items you want to keep using, the items you want to upgrade, and items you've always dreamed of having like a lime green Kitchen-Aid Mixer? We recommended adding items in various price ranges and choosing patterns and colors that will stand the test of time.



# 4 to 5 months

**Select your officiant:** The person that will officiate your ceremony should be someone you trust to direct your ceremony. If you're not in with a pastor, try searching an online directory of wedding clergy. Some couples end up asking a friend to get ordained (yes, this is a thing) so that the ceremony can be more personal.

**Order table favors for your guests:** Favors are optional these days, but always appreciated by guests. You could think outside the box and plan a candy table with an assortment your guests can take home. Customize a glass with your wedding date, provide plant seeds, make jars of jam - the options are limitless. Some couples even donate to a charity in the name of their guests and leave a card at each seat to let them know.





# 4 to 5 months cont.

■ **Order your wedding invitations:** The good news is, options are available in every budget. You can customize a templated design using programs like Canva or go with a premium option like Minted. Big box stores have templates available, too. With a little searching, you can find a design that matches your aesthetic. Then, think through the logistics. Do you want your printer to address your envelopes, or will you be hand addressing? Will you include an RSVP card, or simply have guests RSVP on your wedding website? Keep in mind, most caterers need a headcount about two weeks before your special day. You should give yourself a one-week buffer so you can track down guests that forget to RSVP. These should hit your guests' mailbox 6-8 weeks before the wedding.

■ **Schedule your rehearsal dinner:** Think about the schedules of your bridal party and officiant. Will they be able to take the day off, or will they be coming from work? Ask if your church or ceremony location will allow you to set up for a dinner or whether you will need a separate location. The Loft provides a Day of Event Coordinator who will help coordinate your rehearsal to make sure everything goes smoothly and you can focus on making memories.

## 2-3 months

- **Order or create your ceremony programs (optional):** This is a nice way to give a shout-out to your bridal party, relatives and let your guests know your order of service. Most online companies will offer a template that matches your invitation.
- **Shop for rings:** Whether you've had a ring style in mind for months or years, it's best to have an idea of the cut you would like before going shopping. Be sure to discuss a budget with your fiancé, so you don't get pressured by a sales person. Many couples choose to have their bands match in color and style, but it's totally up to you.
- **Make a salon appointment:** Ask your bridesmaids to come a day or two early to get your nails done and have a spa day. If you plan to get your hair and makeup professionally done, schedule your appointment several months in advance. Make your timeline clear and let the salon know if your bridesmaids need services, too.





# One month

■ **Confirm your reception details:** The plans are clear in your head, but have you communicated your room setup, rental items, and linen requests with your venue? Your coordinator will be able to identify any potential snags in the plan. The Loft offers a linen and napkin folding service so that brides don't have to coordinate with outside vendors. Couples who book through The Loft will also have another consultation with their Day of Event Coordinator to review all of these details in person or over the phone.

■ **Tux or suit fitting:** You've had your dress picked out for many months, but your fiancé and his guys are just getting around to their fittings. Some couples who are aiming for a casual feel buy a suit that the groom may wear again. Those with a formal dress code, usually rent a tux. The advantage of using a corporate location such as Men's Wearhouse is that groomsmen can go to any location for their fittings. They can match most dress colors and have many options for tuxedos and suit jackets.

■ **Get your marriage license:** You're so close to being Mr. and Mrs. and this step will add to that reality. For Ohioans, bring your fiancé to your county's Probate Court Office along with your paperwork: valid photo identification, Social Security numbers, place of birth, and occupation. You'll need to provide your parents' birth names and the name of your officiant. Bring cash or a check as many counties will charge you a fee to process your credit card.

## 2 to 4 weeks

- **Get your final count:** Your college roommate forgot to declare her attendance at your big event? Cousin Jenny is ghosting you? Just follow up with a friendly call, text or direct message.
- **Pick up your dress:** Try on your beautiful dress and imagine yourself walking down the aisle in just a few weeks. Be sure you've accounted for jewelry and accessories.
- **Work on a seating arrangement for the reception (if desired):** Depending on whether your event is formal or more on the casual side, you may or may not have a seating chart. Some couples like to have more control over how their guests are seated and feel that they can group them well. While others want to give their guests freedom to sit where they please and mingle. Make sure your seating chart is prominent, or make a "Seat Yourself Sign."
- **Finalize the details with your vendors:** Did you set a tentative time for your DJ to set up? Be sure to circle back with all vendors, finalize times and loop in your venue coordinator.
- **Pay final invoices:** Avoid any wedding day delays by paying your vendors on time. Check your contracts to make sure your florist, DJ, baker, venue, officiant, and caterer get paid!

## 2 to 4 weeks cont.

■ **Review clean-up procedures for your venue:** Some venues will clean up for you or allow you to come back the next day to pick up extra decor. Make sure you have a plan and enlist help from your bridal party as needed. At The Loft we will do basic room set-up and also tear down for our couples. If available, couples can also book the day before at a discounted rate to begin setting up early.

■ **Make a getting ready plan:** You're going beyond a five-minute face on your special day, so you'll need ample time for hair, makeup and dressing. Make a plan for where you will get ready whether it is your house, the ceremony site or a friend's house. The Loft has two rooms for getting ready that are included with your booking.







## Rehearsal and Wedding Day

**Rehearsal:** This is a time for you to take a breath and figure out exactly how you want your ceremony to go. Be sure to let your officiant, parents, grandparents and bridal party know the entrance cues and the plan for a receiving line (or not).

**Remember to eat something:** Don't be the bride that passes out on the altar! Consider coordinating a breakfast event with your mom and bridesmaids before you get ready.

**Enjoy this once-in-lifetime event!** Be sure to take mental snapshots throughout the day. You'll want to remember how it felt to start your life as Mr. and Mrs. and all of the special interactions with family and friends.

# SCHEDULE A TOUR

Schedule a tour of The Loft and see the beautiful space for yourself!



Contact us at [loft@thepickwickplace.com](mailto:loft@thepickwickplace.com).