

WEDDINGS 101: A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO GUEST PREPARATION

Get the couple something useful.

Most couples register for gifts. Don't feel the need to come up with an original idea at all—the most thoughtful gift is the one they truly need, and it's right there on Target.com.

Do *not* feel rude giving money. Most newlyweds need some cold, hard cash and it doesn't go unnoticed or unappreciated.

If you must come up with your own idea, check to see if either person has a Pinterest account, or ask someone close to them what they need.

Be ready for photographs even if you aren't in the wedding party.

Odds are, no matter your role, you are going to be photographed—and people will see them.

Consider the bride when choosing your outfit. Does she hate risqué? It's not your day.

Once you have the perfect outfit, choose some shoes that fit the landscape. Stilettos can be tough in a grassy vineyard. Just use common sense about whether your pair is worth the wear.



Need a go-to, cheap, full beat makeup look? Look no further. Don't need it? Scroll past it to number 4.

1. First, prep your skin. If your base isn't clean and moisturized, your makeup won't look as nice or last as long.
 - Wash your face and exfoliate.

There are numerous exfoliating cleansers at the drugstore, or DIY methods online. Be careful not to treat your skin too harshly with either method.

- Prime your skin.

You can use the NYX Angel Veil Eraser primer from the drugstore, or even just whatever facial moisturizer you have at home.

- Apply sunscreen.

If the ceremony is outdoors, you could end up looking beet-red in the massive canvas photo on your friend's wall. However, you also don't want to look like a ghost, so use a chemical rather than physical block. Test it for allergies along your jaw before applying all over, as chemical block can cause a reaction.

If your moisturizer or foundation has sunscreen, then eliminate this step. Wait a few minutes for your skin to absorb the products before carrying on.

2. Tap a little bit of concealer over your eyelid. Use your finger or, preferably, a fluffy brush (any drugstore blending brush will do) to apply a brown shadow onto the outer crease of your eyelid using windshield wiper motions.

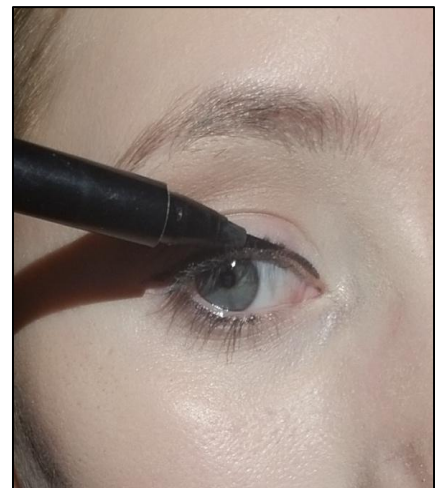
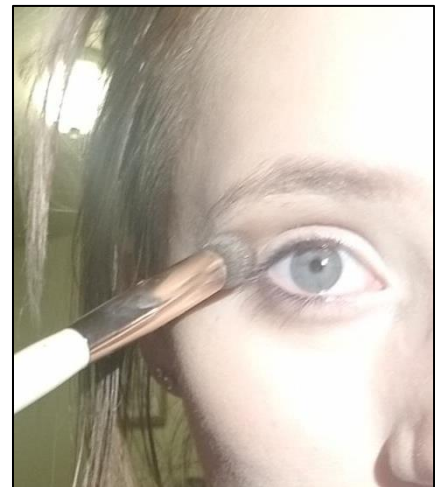
- If you have hooded lids, eyelids with extra skin that might cover the outer corner or center of the mobile lid, apply just above the crease. Blend until it's not dark or patchy.

Your eyeshadow shades will depend on your skin tone. Any brown shadow 2-3 shades darker than your skin tone can work. It should imitate the color of a natural shadow on your skin, or at least be similar.

I recommend the Carli Bybel BH deluxe palette because it has a wide range of shadow and highlighter shades for under 20 dollars.

3. Apply a thin line of eyeliner on the top of your lids starting at the inner corner and ending at the outer corner in a point. If you are experienced, apply wings. The easiest way for beginners is to press it against your eyelashes and slowly move it across.

- For liquid, I recommend the Physician's Formula Eye Booster. For gel, I recommend the Maybelline Eye Studio Lasting Drama Gel Liner.





4. Apply your favorite mascara. For beginners, it is easiest to hold the wand still and blink your lashes against the wand.
 - I recommend buying a miniature Too-Faced Better Than Sex mascara—they keep longer and are much more affordable.
 - Make sure all of your top lashes are covered completely.

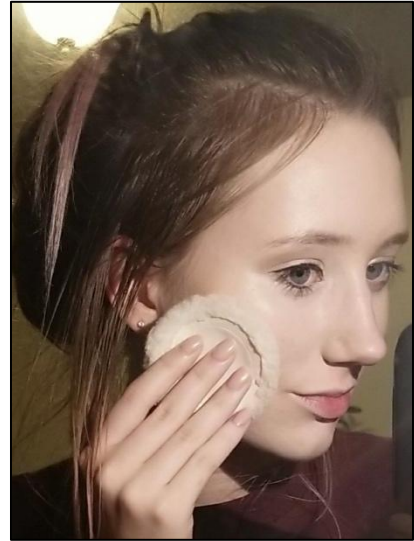
5. Apply a thin, even layer of foundation.
 - For around 5 dollars, you can get the Wet 'n' Wild Photofocus foundation at Walgreens, or, if you already have a foundation, use that. Applying with your fingers is the cheapest way, but for only a few dollars, you can purchase a silicone sponge on amazon. It's easier to sanitize than ordinary sponges or brushes and still does the job.



6. Apply a light layer of your favorite concealer wherever you feel you need it (under eye circles, blemishes, dark spots).
 - I recommend Maybelline Age Rewind concealer or the Makeup Revolution Conceal and Define concealer.

7. Apply a loose powder. Use any fluffy brush or powder puff to dust a small amount lightly over your entire face.

- I recommend Coty Airspun powder.
- Skip this step if you have extremely dry skin, or apply only to the areas you will apply blush, bronzer, and highlighter, as listed below.



8. Apply highlighter, with any makeup brush you have, to the highpoints of your cheeks (from your temples to just below your pupil, in a straight line.)

- You can use your highlighter tone from the BH Carli Bybel palette or any highlighter from ELF. Both are affordable and effective.

9. Apply blush lightly to your cheeks right below the highlighter. Blend them together by brushing lightly in circles where the highlighter and blush meet.

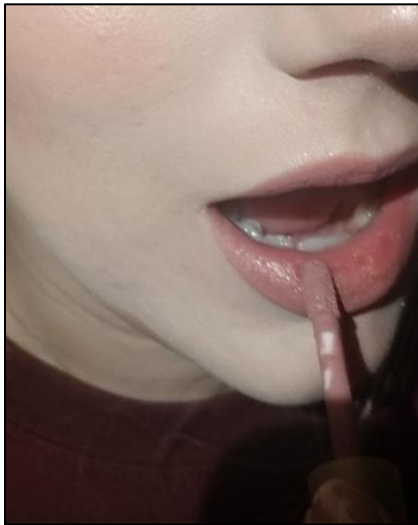
- If you don't have your own blush or bronzer brushes, you can use the puff from the Coty Airspun powder or even a cotton puff.

Most drugstore blushes are fine. I would recommend Loreal TrueMatch because of the shade range.



10. Apply bronzer just below your cheekbones and on your temples.

- Try out the Physicians Formula Butter Bronzer or one of the Makeup Revolution bronzer palettes for the shade range.

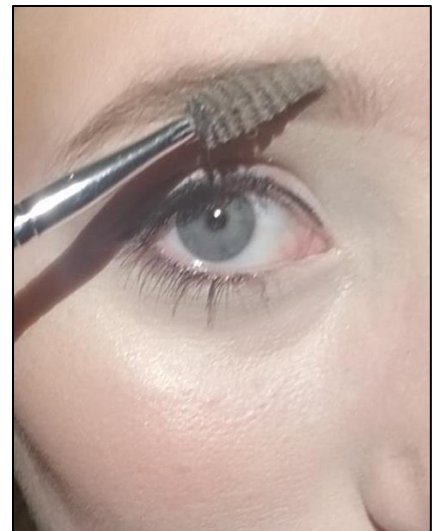


11. Apply your favorite lip balm and lipstick.

- I recommend the Wet 'N' Wild Liquid Catsuit for its staying power.

12. Fill in any sparse areas of your eyebrows with pencil or powder. No need to create a special shape, just follow the pattern of naturally growing hairs.

- If too many hairs are growing where you don't want them, pluck them first.
- I recommend an ELF eyebrow kit. They are extremely affordable and get the job done.





13. Finish up with 3 or 4 sprays of a makeup finishing spray to make it last through the night!
 - Try the Milani Make it Last spray.

Do your best not to take anything personally.

For example, if you arrive at the reception and you are at table 19 with pit-stank Jake or your name card is spelled wrong, relax.

Wedding planning is stressful and complicated. You were not forgotten or rejected. The couple is usually in over their heads and may have had help—meaning this wasn't their mistake. Your pleasant participation would be greatly appreciated.

You may not even be invited to the reception. With the cost of food service and venues, some couples can't invite everyone they want to.

Don't refuse to dance.

Imagine your wedding day. The music starts; you are excited to party. Aaaaannnnndddd... no one gets up. Everyone just stares at you aside from your brother, or something.

You might think this doesn't happen, but it does; and every person who sits and stares while the bride stands alone on the dance floor is to blame.

Learn to Swing Dance.

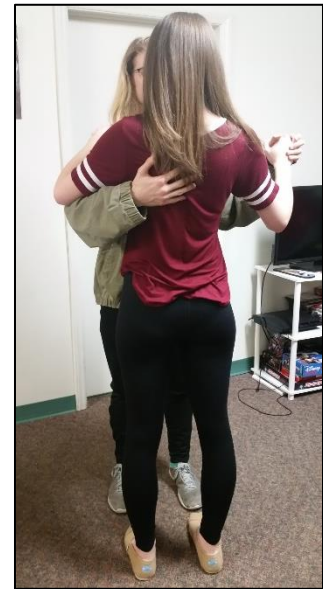
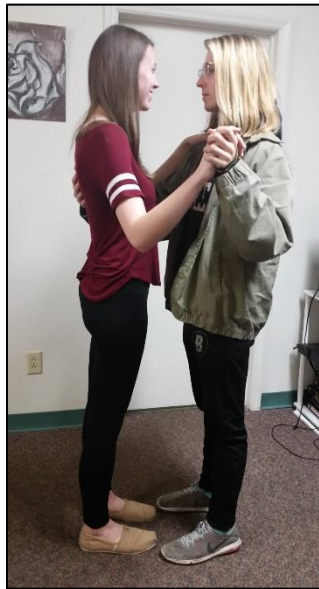
Weddings always have an interesting mix of dancers who choose to participate. There are those who think the running man can go with every song, the inconspicuous club dancers, and the "dad dancers." Learning to swing dance will not only make you the envy of all the guests, but you will also make the bride and groom very happy with your tasteful participation. First, we will learn the basic moves which you can then build on to create your own personal swing style!

Grab a partner and get in the swing mood.

1. Wear the right clothes
 - Advanced swing requires a lot of hip and leg movements, so female dancers often wear loose-fitting, knee-length skirts. For this type of swing, any pant style or skirt is acceptable as long as you can move your legs freely. Tighter shirts or short sleeves make it easier to see your arms which is helpful during faster dances (also you get sweaty easily, and no one likes that). Finally, wear shoes that will not come off your feet easily. Character heels, or anything with a top and closed toe will work nicely.
2. Establish the lead and follow
 - The lead is normally the male, and the follow is normally the female, but it doesn't matter which is which. This article only details the follow's perspective, but the lead will mirror almost all of the movements. It is helpful for the lead to be taller than the follow.
3. Pick the perfect practice song
 - Master the steps without music before you try them with music.
My preference for slower practice is Jamaica Jam by Teddy Powell, but if you want something faster, try Big Bad Voodoo Daddy by Jumpin' Jack.

Learn the starting position.

1. Begin facing each other with follow's left hand loosely on the right shoulder of the lead. It will be in a different spot depending on the heights of the follow and lead, but make sure it rests on top of the middle of the shoulder.
 - Do not grip.
2. The lead's right hand will support your the left arm, coming around the back and resting on the upper middle of the your back.
3. Stand approximately six inches from your partner.
4. Create a strong hold with the lead, but make it loose enough to flow through the steps.
5. The lead's left hand will be held open like they are holding a cup.
6. Rest your right hand on top of the lead's hand, letting the lead's fingers gently curl around your hand, and interlock your thumbs.
7. Center your weight, and begin with your feet shoulder width apart.

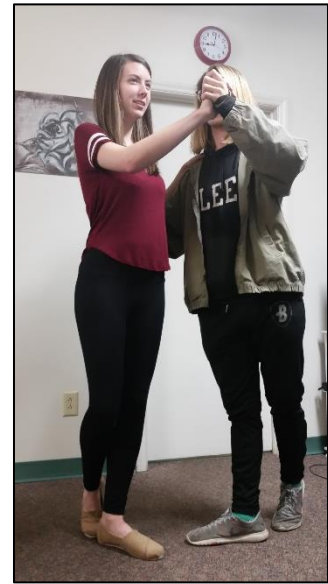


The follow is wearing red in all images.

The Rock Step.

This is the basic step that you will do in between every advanced move. It can also be done as a stand-alone move. If you're a music person, the rhythm is 1-and-2-3; if not, think quick-quick-slow-slow while doing the steps.

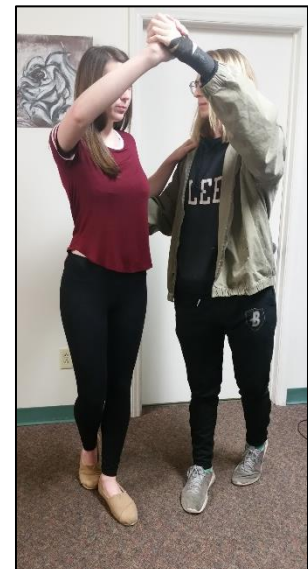
1. Begin in the aforementioned starting position.
2. Take the right foot, and while twisting, "opening," your hips away from the lead so you and your partner's hips are facing the same direction, take a small step diagonally back and to the left, but keep your weight centered between your legs.
3. Then, without moving either foot, step in place quickly with the left foot while shifting your weight gently to the left leg. Do not throw your weight. This move is very fast— a rock step.
4. While twisting the hips back inward towards the lead, move the right foot from its backmost position to its original position, shoulder width apart, in a slower step that shifts the weight to the right leg. Swing the hips gently to the right when stepping.
5. Then, take a slow step in place with the left foot while transferring your weight back to that leg.
 - The left foot should never move positions, only small steps in place.
 - Feel free to exaggerate the weight shift and keep your hips loose. This will make the dance look more natural and fluid.
6. Repeat as many times as desired.
 - The move should automatically reset itself into the original position so many can be done in succession.
 - This move only takes 3 beats and most swing music is in 4/4 time, so the dance and the music will rarely line up.



The Spin.

This move will continue with the beats of the rock step, only it will be more impressive to your friends.

1. Do at least one complete rock step cycle before you begin this move to get the rhythm in your feet.
2. On the backwards step of the rock step, the lead will raise his left (your right) arm and will gently push on your back with his right hand. This will signal you into a spin. See right.

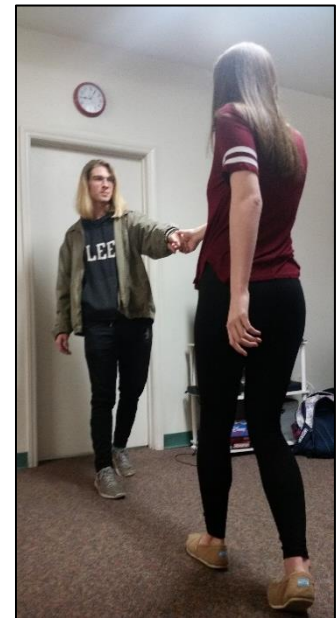




3. With your weight divided equally on both legs, take a step in place with your left foot in sequence with the rock step move.
4. Instead of simply stepping to the right as you would in the rock step, step through (with the right foot) the “doorway” made with your right arm and the lead’s left arm while spinning to the right. You will only spin about 270 degrees around and not a full circle.
5. Take a step forward with your left foot while pivoting to face your partner again. Your weight should be on the left leg

6. Do another rock step by bringing your right foot backwards and stepping quickly, first with the right foot and then with the left (in place) while centering your weight. Keep tension on the hand hold with the lead.

- Never lose the grip to your partner with your right hand; the momentum of this move could spin you into the bride’s mother, and that would defeat the purpose of learning this dance. You may have to shift hand positions during the spin.
- When this is done, you should be facing your lead while still holding hands. Your right foot should be one step behind your left and your right arm should be extended to hold onto your lead.
- Your lead will also be doing the rock step simultaneously, so your steps will be in sync.

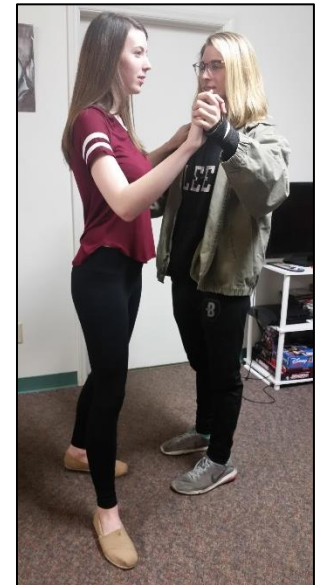
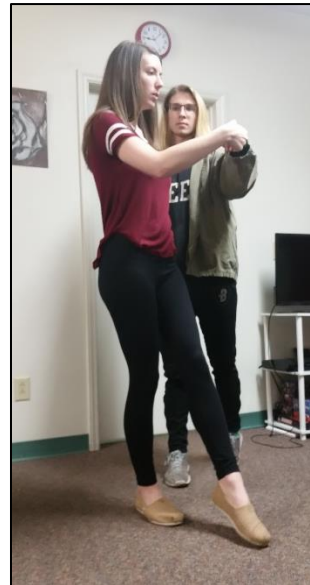




7. To spin back, step forward with your right foot towards your lead while raising your right arm. You will go back under the “doorway” you created. While you step, begin spinning to the left.

- When the arm “doorway” is over your head, pivot on your right foot to face the opposite direction.

8. Take a step with your left foot to the side which brings it back to the original position of the rock step.
 - Because your right foot has just pivoted, it will be perpendicular to your left foot.
 - The “doorway” should return to its original position before you take the step. See right.



9. From here, simply bring your right foot back to step one of the rock step and continue with the succession of steps in the rock step cycle.
 - You can do many spins or rock steps in a row, but be fluid with your motions. This is a fun dance!

If you complete these moves correctly, you will not only astound all of your friends, but you will also receive significantly more wedding invitations. Enjoy the wonderful world of weddings by becoming the perfect guest!