

Wedding Body

Wedding Stress? Relax with These 5 Yoga Poses



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Whether you want to admit it or not, weddings mean stress. Lots of it.

From dealing with mom, to the budget, to an uninvolved groom, you're guaranteed to have at least one (or, OK, 30) minor to major freakouts. But that doesn't mean you should turn in your engagement ring or call the whole shindig off. It means you need a way to handle those inevitable moments where you're going to feel anything but cool, calm, and collected.

Enter yoga. This ancient practice is a great way to let everything go and clear your mind. Even better, it's a proven way to tone your body (buh-bye, pre-wedding starvation diet). I asked Dana Slamp, Senior Teacher at Pure Yoga in New York City, for five ultra-relaxing poses you can do at home. Try them out so the next time stress strikes, you can just say ommmm ...

Yoga Pose No. 1: Triangle

When mom emails you 50 extra guests she must invite, or your fiance "changes his mind about" (aka admits he was never even considering) taking dance lessons, you may feel the need to start screaming. But before you do, try the Triangle pose to help calm your nerves. A few minutes of this and you'll be ready to forgive and forget.

How to do it:

Stand with your legs approximately three feet apart and turn your right foot to the right. Raise your arms so they're parallel to the floor, palms down. Exhale and tip your upper body toward your right foot, bending from your hips and reaching toward the wall in front of your right foot. When you feel a good stretch, place your right hand on your shin and your left hand up in the air, twisting your torso toward the ceiling. Take five deep, relaxing breaths and on your last inhale, press your feet firmly into the floor to lift your upper body up. Repeat on the other side. This move opens your lungs, letting more of that relaxing oxygen into your body to help calm you down.

Yoga Pose No. 2: Locust

Like many yoga moves, the Locust will help you handle your stress, but the best part is it can also improve your posture. You'll have all eyes on you on your wedding day, so it's important that as you walk down the aisle, make your table visits, and do the Macarena (kidding!) your posture is perfect. So add the Locust pose to your post-workout stretch routine, and there will be no slouching bride in your wedding photos.

How to do it:

Lay on your stomach with your arms by your sides, palms up. Exhale and lift your head, chest, arms, and legs off your mat so you're resting on your lower ribs, stomach, and pelvis. Squeeze your butt muscles and lengthen your legs, keeping your big toes turned toward each other. Be sure to keep the back of your neck lengthened to keep the nervous system at ease and your legs only hips' width apart. Stay this way for 30 seconds to one minute, then exhale and release.

Yoga Pose No. 3: Reclining Side Twist

When eloping starts to sound like a really good idea, resist the urge to trade in all your shower gifts for two tickets to Tahiti and instead try the Reclining Side Twist. It's a great way to decompress and remember why you wanted to plan an event for 150 people in the first place. You can do it right before you go to bed every night so you wake up refreshed and ready to tackle your next wedding to-do.

How to do it:

Lie on your back and draw your right knee into your chest, then cross your knee over your body toward the floor on your left side. Allow your right arm and shoulder to relax and release. Your back, which is where we often hold a lot of tension, gets a gentle "wringing," says Slamp, helping you release any stress you're holding there. Repeat on the left side.

Yoga Pose No. 4: Seated Forward Fold

When thoughts of a never-ending assembly line of wedding favors are keeping you up at night, fight insomnia as well as anxiety with the Seated Forward Fold. Another thing that'll help: Putting down the latest issue of "Martha Stewart Weddings" and buying your wedding decor on etsy like everyone else.

How to do it:

Sit with your legs stretched out in front of you. Inhale and reach your arms above your head, exhale and reach your hands toward your feet, bending at your hips. Feel free to bend your knees if your hamstrings feel tight or you have lower back problems. Take long, deep breaths and sigh audibly at least three times, which helps release any pent-up tension.

Yoga Pose No. 5: Legs Up the Wall

While it's nice of your parents, your in-laws, your best friend, and your co-workers to throw you engagement parties and bridal showers, standing and chatting in heels for endless hours is taking its toll. Get help from the Legs Up the Wall pose, which can relieve strain on your lower back and feet. Skipping the 4-inch Louboutins for a night will help, too.

How to do it:

Begin by sitting close to the wall with one side of your body against it. Come down to your elbows and exhale while swinging your legs up the wall and relaxing your lower back onto the ground. Your head and shoulders should also be resting on the floor. Enjoy at least three minutes of deep belly breathing while the blood returns to your heart and brain. Bonus: An inversion like this will bring healthy color to your cheeks. When you're done, gently turn to your side and lower your legs. Stay on your side for a few breaths, then sit up.