

EXAMPLE 8-HOUR WEDDING TIMELINE



With First Look

2:00pm - Details & getting ready photos

4:00pm - First look

4:15pm - Couples and wedding party portraits

5:00pm - Ceremony

5:30pm - Family photos, final couples portraits, attend cocktail hour

6:30pm - Toasts and formal dances

7:00pm - Dinner

7:45pm - Evening portraits

8:15pm - Miscellaneous reception activities (i.e., cake cutting, etc.)

8:45pm - Open dance floor, misc. group photos

10:00pm - Photographer leaves

Without First Look

2:00pm - Details & getting ready photos

4:15pm - Ceremony

4:45pm - Cocktail hour begins; family photos, wedding party portraits, couples portraits

6:15pm - Reception introductions

6:30pm - Toasts and formal dances

7:00pm - Dinner

7:45pm - Evening portraits

8:15pm - Miscellaneous reception activities (i.e., cake cutting, etc.)

8:45pm - Open dance floor, misc. group photos

10:00pm - Photographer leaves

POINTS TO CONSIDER

Timelines are tricky for two major reasons: (1) no wedding is analogous to another and (2) the customization possibilities are nearly endless. This doesn't have to be a bad thing; rather, you can use these differences to guide the decision making for your own day. Let's highlight a few important rationales from the timelines above.

A solo photographer should be able to thoroughly capture the preparations of both spouses in 1.5-2 hours if you're getting ready in the venue or same general space. If you and your partner are getting ready in spaces that require commuting between and you want photos of both preparations, you may want to consider a second photographer or extending your photographer's time earlier in the day to account for the needed commute.

My personal favorite choice of timeline is to include a first look before the ceremony. With a first look, you and your partner get not only a private emotional moment to share, but also more time with each other and your guests throughout the day. After the ceremony, you should have time to spend tasting hors d'oeuvres and sipping cocktails before the reception formalities begin. This logistical advantage significantly reduces stress and lets you truly soak up your day without worrying so heavily about the next task on the timeline.

Most couples avoid a first look because they want to preserve the emotionality of the ceremony aisle version, but experience has shown me that neither moment lessens the sacredness and beauty of the other. You're going to get emotional seeing each other down the aisle whether you have a first look or not - the presence of your favorite people ensures that. :)

Now, I promise this isn't a first-look sales pitch, but I chose to separate the timelines in that way because that singular change evidently impacts more than just the day's chronology. From the time the reception begins, most things stay the same in both cases. Your task is, then, to determine what events you want photographed, how thoroughly you want them photographed, and then adjust your day's timing accordingly.

Some questions to ask yourself as you begin determining when you want your photographer on site are as follows:

- Do we both want getting ready photos? If yes, what parts would we be sad to not have?
- Is a first look fitting for us or do we prefer the traditional aisle version?
- Do we have an extra large family or wedding party that needs more time for family photos?
- What time does the sun set on our day and do we want sunset portraits?
- Are we planning a formal exit at the end of the night? If so, do we want it photographed? If yes, when is the earliest our photographer start given the package we are considering/have booked?

I hope you found some value in these words and examples! Cheers to planning an unforgettable day!



- Garrett

