

# Give us a twirl

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It's the most important dress you'll ever wear, but where do you start? Here's our guide to bagging your dream gown...

The most exciting shopping trip you'll ever undertake is the hunt for your wedding gown – being prepared is everything. Before visiting any bridal store, do some research and check for accessibility and available parking. You may have to visit the shop on more than one occasion, and these little details can make a big difference to the experience. It's also worth checking out other services that the shop offers, like alterations, matching accessories, or outfits for the mother-of-the-bride or bridesmaids. You should never feel pressured into buying a gown that isn't the one. Look for knowledge and good advice from the staff and, if you have doubts, try elsewhere. "Look out for bridal shops that are members of the British Bridal Retailers Association too – this gives you peace of mind that the retailer follows a code of practice, and also makes you eligible for an insurance scheme to protect your deposit," says Sarah Redrup from Ivory & Lace Bridal, Toddlington.

## What do I wear to my fitting?

Sometimes brides have a clear idea of what they're looking for when they visit a store, but it's a woman's prerogative to change her mind so you'll most likely be trying on a mixture of backless, strapless and sheer dresses. For your appointment, wear a strapless pale or nude bra with pale modest underwear, and bring your shoes if you have already bought them. Wear comfy outer

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clothing that is easy to change in and out of, as you'll soon be disrobing right down to just your underclothes, and bring any pictures of styles you like as this can help rule out those that may not be right for you. "Bring an open mind too, as everything always looks different on the hanger so don't rule things out straightaway," says Anna Braxwell from Boxmoor Bridal Boutique, Hemel Hempstead.

#### Who do I bring to my fitting?

Too many opinions can be as bad as none at all so limit your group to a maximum of three people. "Bring a close friend, perhaps one of your bridesmaids, and your mum – she is likely to be the most truthful. But remember, it's your dress and you should only be guided by others," says Luton-based bridal designer Vanda Parkinson.



#### What options does mum have?

Most mums want to complement the bridal party, so when you're in the store ask about mother-of-the-bridal outfits and enquire about popular colours. "For those that don't want to wear a hat, smaller hats, hatinators or fascinators are good options. In terms of length, a hemline that sits just below the knee always looks good, and staff at the shop will be able to talk you through styling and accessory options," says Sue Ross from Cream, Royston.



### Can the shop advise me on jewellery?

Of course, but stick to the old saying: less is more. If your dress has lots of beading and detail, you should coordinate with a plain veil and delicate headpiece. Those fond of costume jewellery can opt for several strands of faux pearls which can really vamp up your look when paired with a classic lace dress. "Also consider the neckline of your dress. If it's a halterneck or high mandarin collar, big chunky necklaces may not work. You need a certain amount of skin between the dress and your accessories for a balanced look that isn't overpowering," says Vanda Parkinson.

### How do I match my dress and accessories?

When shopping for accessories, you may wonder how to marry up colours without carrying your dress around. Fear not, as any bridal shop should be able to provide a swatch of fabric that matches your wedding dress and fits neatly in your handbag, so buying and coordinating additional pieces will be a breeze.



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### !pretty pointers

- ♥ Think about the hair style you'd like for your big day – this is really helpful when choosing accessories.
- ♥ Some retailers allow you to order crystal details, lace motifs or extra fabric to use when shopping and coordinating accessories.
- ♥ On the big day, apply perfume and allow it to dry before you put on your dress and jewellery to avoid staining and discolouration. It's advisable not to wear any for your fitting.

### CONTACTS BOOK

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[www.boxmoorbridal.co.uk](http://www.boxmoorbridal.co.uk)

Cream  
[www.creamfashions.com](http://www.creamfashions.com)

Ivory and Lace Bridal  
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