

DRESSED,
STYLED, *and*
DOWN *the* AISLE

Becoming a Stylish Bride

CHAPTER 10

SELECTING THE RIGHT SHOE

brought to you by

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SELECTING THE BEST WEDDING SHOE FOR YOU

Selecting a great wedding shoe is one of the most important decisions you are going to make for your wedding day. You might be thinking this is a bit of an overstatement, but trust me when I tell you; if your feet hurt, it's going to affect everything. My advice is to be realistic when deciding what to wear and go with a heel shorter than the one you think you can tolerate. While you may love to rock a sky-high stiletto in your day-to-day life, your wedding day differs from other events because you're not only on your feet longer, you're often carrying much more weight around thanks to your wedding dress being heavier (and often longer) than your everyday clothing. You are also on your feet longer, standing still as you pose for photos, and often traipsing on rough terrain. Over the years, I have had many clients swear up and down that they can last all night in 100 mm stilettos, but end up changing their minds before they walk down the aisle.

While you want to have a beautiful pair that looks gorgeous in the still-life vignette that your photographer will take with your dress and other accessories, **comfort is more important.** This is why it is not uncommon for a bride to purchase a pair for the photos and a different pair to wear. I once watched a client gasp in horror as the heel on her gorgeous (and expensive) shoes snapped off on the way to her engagement party; you just never know what might happen!

Lastly, break them in. You can do this by putting on thicker socks and wearing them around the house. Some great sole protectors will let you walk around without scuffing the bottom, so if you need to return them, they will be pristine.

WHEN YOU ARE SELECTING A WEDDING SHOE, ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. **Are you comfortable?** *If there is any part of it that hurts, it will be magnified on your wedding day.*
2. **Can you easily walk on the ground of your venue while wearing them?** *Consider if you will be on grass, cobblestones, boards, sand, etc.)*
3. **Are there any embellishments that could potentially snag on your dress?** *If there are any jewels on the shoe that have prongs, they may snag the lining or dress fabric, especially if you're wearing tulle or chiffon.*



HERE ARE THE MOST POPULAR STYLES BROKEN DOWN AND OUR FAVORITES IN EACH CATEGORY.

THE CLASSIC PUMP:

Timeless, elegant, and versatile, nothing beats a classic pair of pumps. If you're getting married in the colder months, this type of closed-toed shoe is optimal. They are defined by their slip-on nature and the low-cut vamp that reveal much of the foot above the toes. A pump comes in various shapes and styles, and they can have a slingback or closed back.

History:

First worn by men of very high social standing, pumps became popular with women in the early 1800s. Designs with a strap across the instep are called Mary Janes.

Designers who do it best:

Christian Louboutin, Dior, Manolo Blahnik, Stuart Weitzman, Jimmy Choo

PLATFORM HEELS:

We love platform heels because they tend to be more comfortable—and secure—than their stiletto counterparts. You get the benefit of the height because they elevate your heels and toes and keep your feet at a lower angle. Because the pitch (the angle of your foot from the heel to the toes) is smaller, your weight is more evenly dispersed instead of putting pressure on the balls of your feet. Sometimes, that can even be like an elevated flat with a very small pitch. We use them with our clients all the time, and they go with a variety of wedding dresses, afterparty numbers, pantsuits and jumpsuits.

History:

Created in the 15th century in Venice to help wearers avoid wet feet during floods, platform shoes have found their way into nearly every area of society, from the court (where they symbolized wealth) to the boudoirs of courtesans (where they were said to amplify sex appeal). Today, they are mostly worn by women and come in an array of designs and heel heights.

Designers who do it best:

Miu Miu, Prada, Jimmy Choo, Lofer Randall, M.Gemi, Aquazzura



FLATS:

Whoever said that you have to wear heels to feel like a bride? Reminiscent of a traditional ballet flat, **a pretty flat can be just as chic as a higher option**, and generally MUCH more comfortable. They are a great option if you'll be walking (or dancing) on uneven ground or have foot problems that prevent long-term heel-wearing. They come in many shapes and styles, but the ballet flat, known as "the French girl" shoe, is equated with effortlessly chic femininity.

History:

The first ballet shoes were heeled until the eighteenth century, but when innovative French ballerina Marie-Anne de Cupis de Camargo wore flat slippers during her performances, she changed their design forever. Years later, cobbler, Salvatore Capezio improved on Camargo's vision by making the shoe more comfortable for Russian ballerina, Anna Pavlova which inspired fashion designer, Claire McCardell to call on him to create a version of the slipper to be worn in everyday life. This resulted in the design we recognize today.

Designers who do it best:

Chanel, Jimmy Choo, Margaux NY Shoes, French Soles

THE STRAPPY SANDAL:

A pair of strappy wedding shoes can add **a chic touch to all types of wedding attire**. Whether walking down the aisle at a luxe hotel or throwing a boho-chic shindig on the beach, strappy shoes have a glamorous, subtly sexy vibe that can elevate any look.

History:

The oldest form of footwear, sandals date back over ten thousand years. However, women began wearing them more frequently in the 1920s, pairing them with pyjamas, a popular form of beachwear at the time. In the 1930s, heeled sandals were popularized by Hollywood Golden Age stars like Lana Turner and Ginger Rogers who loved to dance around in them on-screen.

Designers who do it best:

Aquazzura, Jimmy Choo, Steve Madden, Stewart Weitzman



THE BLOCK HEEL:

If comfort is a paramount concern — and it should be — you may want to consider a block-heeled shoe so **you're not in pain by the end of the night**. We love them for many types of weddings, and they are particularly helpful if you plan to be walking on grass or uneven terrain. As a bonus, you're bound to wear these versatile shoes far beyond your wedding day.

History:

Block-heeled shoes were first worn by the Persian cavalry in the tenth century to help keep their shoes in their stirrups but became popular in mainstream fashion in 1965 when Yves Saint Laurent, designer Roger Vivier showcased his "Pilgrim" shoe on the runway. Popular in the sixties, seventies, nineties and 2000s, the block-heeled shoe never really went out of fashion because of its comfort and practicality.

Designers who do it best:

Gucci, Loeffler Randall, Alexandre Birman

MULES;

Mules (a shoe without a back) can easily be worn with everything from a ball gown to a slip dress. They support the insole and offer quite a lot of coverage to the top of the foot, too. One particularly favored style is the block-heel mule, with its simple, clean look and ease of wear.

History:

Flat mules date back to ancient Rome, when senators wore red ones to court, and heeled versions of the shoe were long considered boudoir wear because of their association with Madame de Pompadour, the famous mistress of Louis XV of France. The shoes used to make a clicking sound and slip off the feet (hence, the boudoir association) until designer Beth Levine invented the Spring-O-Lator in 1956, an insert that kept mules securely on the foot.

Designers who do it best:

Aquazzura, Bottega Veneta, Manolo Blahnik



SNEAKERS:

A universally loved flat shoe that has reached peak chic as far as shoe trends go with scores of elevated designs that are both comfortable and stylish. Some brides opt to wear sneakers down the aisle, while others change into them for their second look. They're a great, comfortable option for reception dancing. It's safe to say that sneakers are having their moment, and today you can find all kinds that are fun to wear with a wedding dress or after-party dress.

History:

First created in the 1830s by The Liverpool Rubber Company, founded by John Boyd Dunlop, the sneakers were known as 'sandshoes' and worn by Victorians on beach excursions. With growing enthusiasm for sports (specifically lawn tennis), Dunlop launched their Green Flash model in 1929. When tennis legend Fred Perry wore the shoe at Wimbledon the sneaker was at once solidified as the sporting shoe of choice. Today, you can find designs to suit even the most elegant taste.

Designers who do it best:

Jimmy Choo, Chanel, Alexander McQueen, Golden Goose, Converse, and Nike (specifically the Air Force 1 designs).