

Wedding Dress

Workout

Tailor your
workout to
your dress
style

By Lisa Evans



You've got the dress, now all you need is the bod. Every bride wants to look her best in her dress, but logging hours at the gym weeks before the big day may not be the best way to get results. Jody O'Brien, fitness instructor at Ottawa's Booty Camp Fitness, has worked with many brides in her boot camp program and says tailoring your bridal workout to your wedding dress style will ensure your time spent working out before the wedding is optimized. After all, if your butt is buried in pounds of tulle by your princess A-line gown, you may be able to avoid the dozens of squats and lunges that yield a tight behind, but if you've chosen a form-fitting mermaid gown, your lower half will most certainly be on display. Jody recommends these tailor-made wedding dress exercises.

Backless dress

If back bulge is in the way, an exposed back can be less than flattering. Try these exercises to tone your back, shoulder blades and triceps.

Plank row: Start in a hand plank position, keeping a long, neutral spine with your chin away from your chest. With a dumbbell in each hand, bring one arm up to your chest, alternating arms in plank position without moving your shoulders or hips. This exercise works the stabilization muscles of the core while toning the upper back and triceps.



One-legged flyers: Standing on one leg with dumbbells in each hand, lean forward into a T-shape, placing your body parallel to the ground. Extend your arms out like you're flying and close them back. Do 10 to 15 repetitions on one side and then switch legs. This exercise targets the upper back and shoulders. Supporting all of your body weight on one leg also helps tone your core and butt.

Strapless dress

If your dress ends at the top of your bust line, your guests will have a 360 degree view of your shoulders, biceps and triceps. Don't let a flabby back, jiggly arms and armpit fat spill out over the top of this dress. Even if you're planning on sporting a shawl or capelet to hide any spillage, toned biceps will look stellar peeking beneath your cap sleeves.

Woodchop: Standing with feet shoulder-width apart and dumbbells in each hand, squat and lower the weights between your legs and then raise your arms above your head as you stand up. Bring the dumbbells back down in between your legs as you return to a squat position. This exercise not only tones shoulders, but works your butt and thighs too.

Push-ups: There's a reason this exercise is the standard for arm workouts. If you find a push-up too difficult, try doing them on a wall or on an incline off your kitchen table. Be sure to keep elbows bent at a 90 degree angle and keep a long back in a neutral position without arching your neck. For an extra challenge, try decline push-ups—placing your feet on the bed or couch and your hands on the floor.

Empire waist dress

Belly flab is a serious offense in this dress that hugs your middle, creating the perfect hourglass silhouette.

Russian twist: Sit on the floor in a V-shape, with your legs shooting straight into the air or bent at the knees. Hold your hands into your chest and twist your body from side to side using your core muscles without moving your hips or legs.

Superman: Balance out your core workout by strengthening your lower back. Lying face down on the ground, reach your hands in front of you and reach your feet behind. Lift your arms, chest and feet off the ground. Bend your elbows into the ribs then push back to extend in front with your chest and legs still off the ground. This exercise works the upper and lower back while simultaneously engaging the core muscles.

Cocktail dress

This adorable, retro style is cut around mid-calf, making it a great choice for an informal or beach wedding. Exposed legs make toning your calf muscles essential to pulling off this style.

Raised squats: With feet hip distance apart, lower into a squat and then raise your heels, coming up onto your toes. Push your legs

up straight while still on your toes and then lower your heels to the ground.

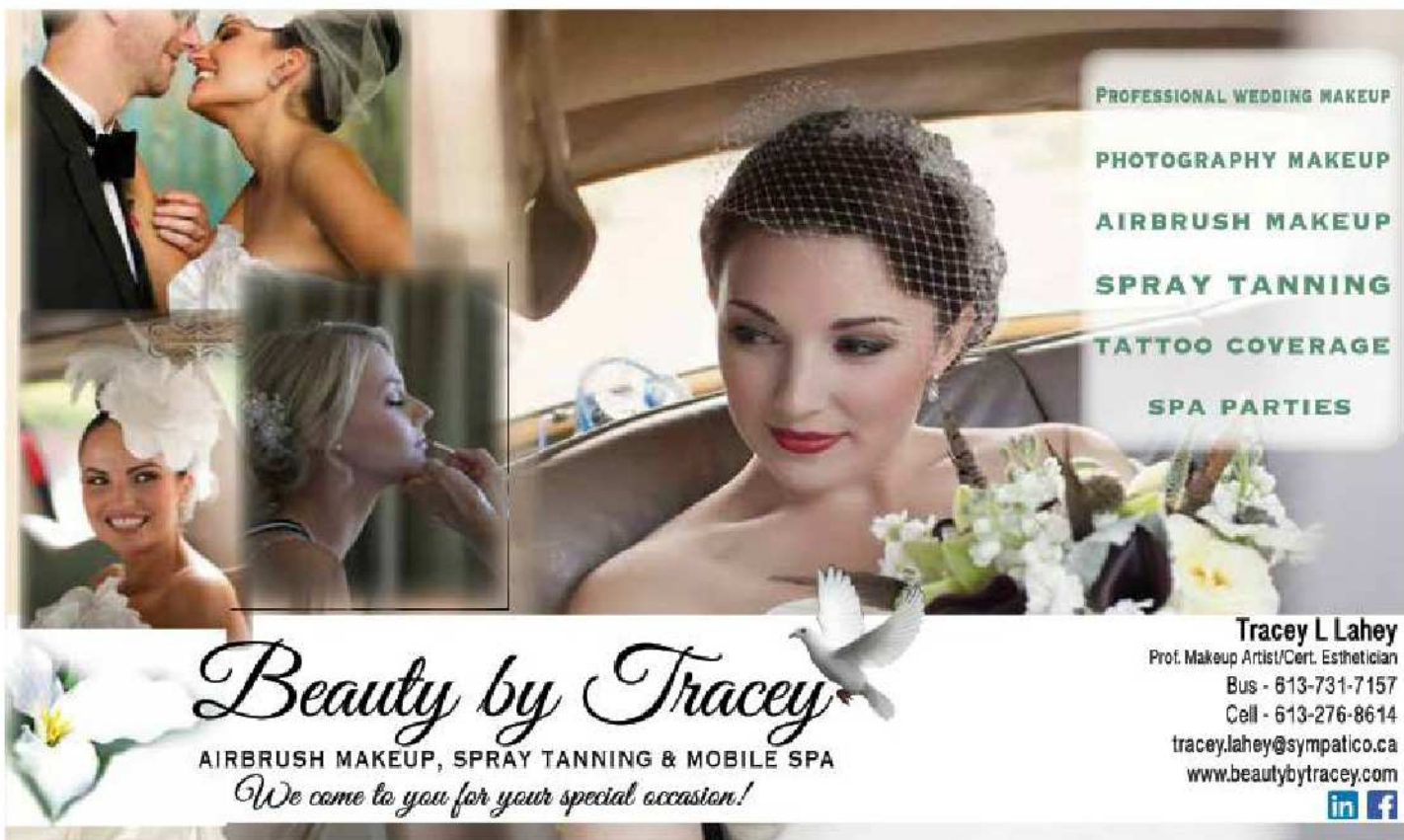
Plié squat lifts: Starting in a plié squat position with legs further than shoulder width apart and feet turned out towards the corners of the room, lower into a squat position and then raise one heel up and down, alternating between the left and right. This exercise works the inner thighs as well as the calves.

Sheath and mermaid dresses

These sleek dresses hug your curves and accentuate your core, bottom and thighs.

Clam shell: Lying on one side with your knees bent, allow both legs to hover a couple inches off the ground. Keep your feet together while the leg closest to the ground stays still as the top leg opens, pointing the knee to the ceiling, then close. Do 10 to 15 reps and then flip onto the other side.


Donkey kick into dog peeing on a hydrant: Start on all fours with hands beneath your shoulders and knees below your hips. Lift one knee off the ground squeezing your glutes, kicking your heel back and up towards the ceiling, then lift the knee out to the side like a dog peeing on a fire hydrant. Hold for a second then lower slowly. Do 10 to 15 reps and repeat on the other leg. *TR*



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Benefits of Sticking with It

The benefits of a pre-wedding workout regime go beyond looking great in your dress.

Lauren Washington wanted to be in the best shape of her life when she slipped into her Kenneth Pool Ava - a strapless, dropped waist gown. She registered for a six-month boot camp, working out twice a week to prepare for her wedding, and says all the sweat and pain had benefits beyond looking stellar in her dress. She offers her top five reasons why getting fit before your wedding is a must.

Have a fresh start. Lauren was in the best physical shape of her life on her wedding day and says looking and feeling her finest was the best way to begin her new life with her new husband.

Look good in wedding photos. Knowing her wedding photos would adorn the walls of her family home for years to come, Lauren was determined not to have flabby arms or belly rolls taint them. "I wanted to be smaller than ever and in the best shape I had ever been because I didn't want to look back at wedding photos and think 'I could have been in better shape' or 'I could have worked harder,'" says Lauren, who shed 16 lbs in the six months leading up to her wedding day.

Reduce stress. Regular exercise causes the body to release feel-good endorphins that will put you in a better mindset to deal with any glitches that come up in the course of planning your big day.

Ease the guilt. Working out before her wedding gave Lauren permission to enjoy pre-wedding festivities, such as bridal showers and bachelorette parties. "It really helped me not feel guilty. Because I was working so hard, I could afford to let loose a few times," she says.

Be honeymoon ready. Working out before your wedding can help you get bikini ready for your honeymoon. Don't forget to pack your sexiest lingerie, too.



Pre-Wedding Workout Tips

Start early

Don't wait until you're about to walk down the aisle to tone up. Jody says it can take four to eight weeks of regular exercise (three to four times per week) to see results.

Eat a healthy diet

Stock up on fresh fruits and vegetables and write a good meal plan to ensure you're feeding your body all the nutrients it needs to keep you in top physical shape. For glowing hair and skin, eat plenty of healthy oils such as salmon, flaxseed and olive oils.

Attend a bridal boot camp

Boot camps are a great way to get fast results. "They're shorter workouts, but you pack in as much energy as you can and tone up as many muscles in a short period of time," says Jody. Exercises incorporate multiple muscle groups, plus the high-intensity workout style means your heart rate stays up throughout the class. Getting your heart rate up means your metabolism stays high, for as long as 72 hours after your workout, meaning you'll be burning more calories throughout the day.

Find a workout buddy

Working out with a friend can help motivate you towards your fitness goals. Lauren says having her sister join her fitness program not only meant the two could push each other to achieve more in the class, but it gave them the opportunity to have fun together and bond before her big day.