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MATCH *fit*

Katie Bletcher discovers different ways to cope with pre-wedding stress and get your body and mind ready for the big day

As you approach your wedding day, well-intentioned clichés are inevitable. “It’s the happiest day of your life,” trips off perfect strangers’ lips, while everyone seems suddenly interested in all the minute details. As lovely as all that is, it’s ok if you’re not basking in this attention. And it’s ok to not constantly feel on cloud nine.

While weddings are cause for huge celebrations, they can also be a source of stress. Financial worries of treating 120 of your nearest and dearest to dinner, the fear of being centre stage, and the pressure of project managing this amazing day while holding down your job and existing commitments, can take their toll. Add to that fears over family members potentially misbehaving, insecurities about how you’ll look, and constant to-do lists and it’s the perfect storm.

We know it’s difficult when every supplier and family member seems to want your attention, but practising a little self-care can make all the difference. By prioritising some “you time” you’ll be able to cope much better. Here are just some ways to help you rebalance...



Get ACTIVE

In the run-up to my wedding I remember endless mental lists keeping me awake at night and I know I’m not alone. Sleepless nights can be a symptom of overly busy lives but slotting exercise into your daily routine is a great way to reset the balance, something advocated by Keira Thorley, the founder of online fitness class service StreamFit. She previously had premises in Edinburgh city centre but decided to pivot to streaming classes. “Doing it online you don’t have to make the effort of driving and parking,” she explains. “It works when it’s slotted into your routine.”

Keira’s live sessions and online library of workouts incorporate callanetics, HIIT (high intensity interval training) and yoga to sculpt your body while you mentally decompress. “The evening classes are particularly good for that,” she says. “It’s a full stop, an end to the day. If you’re high octane you need to switch your body off before you switch your brain off. It slows you down and you decompress. The bonus is you get your body sculpted.”

Callanetics is based on ballet training, working the deepest layer of muscle while relaxing the rest of your body. Keira works one muscle group at a time, working hard with series of pulses before stretching, and different classes target different areas, so it could be full body one day, waist and glutes the next and then pure yoga.

And the scientific evidence behind the classes is really interesting. Keira explains that much of what she does switches the body from the sympathetic nervous system - where you get the fight or flight mode - to the parasympathetic nervous system when your body relaxes, inflammation reduces, and its healing system kicks in. “When I do our stretches and deep breaths that’s where your body switches over,” she says. “I’m bringing in the yoga deep breathing. If you’re in a stressful situation you need to move and then switch off, so you pulse and stretch and then sit down and breathe.” Now, doesn’t that sound like the perfect way to help you feel calm and chilled ahead of your wedding?



Relax!

If you're feeling a bit strung-out Oils in Bloom's aromatherapy wellness mists are a great help. "Brides often use the power duo of anxiety mist [with lavender and vetiver] for day and sleep spray [with lavender, vetiver, jasmine and geranium] for night to help keep calm and grounded," explain founders Claire Brice and Jessica Roestenburg McCluskey.



On TRIAL

To see just how much good it can do, I got to trial StreamFit for a month, with Keira advising I try three 30 or 45-minute classes a week, working them into my daily routine. Some days I kicked off with a half-hour super sculpt class which really got the endorphins flowing for starting work. That's not to say it wasn't hard work during that 30 minutes though! Who knew that making tiny pulsing movements with your arms in a ballet position could feel so hard? Or prolonged sets of little ab crunches would have me shouting out in the living room!

In all of the classes there's a strong emphasis on making sure your pelvic floor is engaged, starting in the correct position and learning how to breathe properly throughout the movements. Series of minute pulses to tone the abs were initially very tricky and squats at my mantelpiece - like work at a ballet barre - would have one leg shaking uncontrollably! But in my fourth week I noticed real progress. I could make it through a full rep of pulses to work my core without having to stop and I was starting to feel stronger. A particular favourite class was a Friday morning workout that incorporated weights and cardio with the stretching. I also loved evening classes where you could work hard and then really enjoy the relaxation stretches at the end, knowing that you'd done some good for your body and mind before moving to the sofa for the rest of the night.

StreamFit is offering *Your Scottish Wedding* readers 20% off the bridal blitz, a 2-week programme that gives you full access to all StreamFit classes on the timetable and library and aims to give you a new, sculpted body with all the mental health benefits rolled in. Simply use the discount code YSW20 when booking at streamfit.co.uk until March 1st 2023. You can also catch up with StreamFit at the Luxury Scottish Wedding Show at The Balmoral on 22nd January.



Another LEVEL

I'll be honest. Looking after my eyebrows has never been one of my favourite beauty routines. Being naturally blonde I often fall into a bad cycle of letting them go too far for too long and then having to take to drastic action with the tweezers. But when I was invited to try out Shavata Singh's new collaboration with luxury skincare brand IISKIN at Edinburgh's Harvey Nichols I was excited to put my brows in the care of the experts.

My Shavata therapist treated me to the Lash Luxe Platinum package, combining brow threading and tinting with a lash tint as well as the application of IISKIN's rejuvenating undereye masks. She set to work, expertly threading and tweezing while instructing me where I should be letting my hairs grow back in for fuller, more natural brows - overplucked 90s brows your days are numbered! She then tinted them and helped me choose the IISKIN gel pads that would work best for me from the selection of the rose gold illuminating eye mask, sub-zero de-puffing eye mask and celestial black diamond eye mask. With its promise to reduce dark circles, wrinkles and lines, the black diamond ones won out and my therapist applied them right under the waterline. The surgically-inspired pads feel amazing going on. They're cool when applied and weighty, almost forcing you to relax under their pressure. While they were firmly in place my therapist tinted my lashes with a black/blue dye for maximum impact before undertaking a heavenly neck, shoulder and arm massage. Instead of a brow and lash appointment being a necessary in and out again task, the 20-minute massage upped the ante while the cooling gel pads left me so relaxed I could have fallen asleep. I imagine even a pre-wedding to-do list could have been momentarily dispelled.

I know the last days of wedding prep can feel like a whirl of appointments and things to tick off but if you can, book yourself in for a session. That little bit of self-care and relaxation could be all you need to reset.

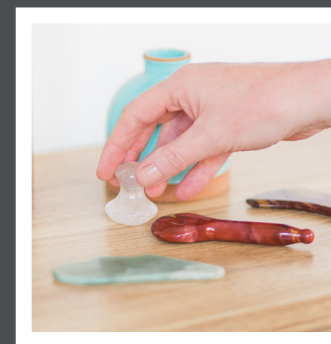
A FRESH approach

Every to-be-wed wants flawless glowing skin on their big day but just how do you achieve it? With over 30 years' experience as a make-up artist and beauty therapist, Lesley McCormick of Pamper and Polish knows about healthy skin. She's trained with various skincare companies and is introducing a new holistic approach, teaching clients guided self-face massage with her new programme; The vibrant bride... confidence with your skin and within. "My aim is to encourage an awareness of general wellness and how this affects your skin, rather than the topical creams you apply on top," she says. "My goal is also to help brides feel their most beautiful, calm and vibrant on their wedding day by following my approach."

Lesley regularly meets clients who have complicated routines and have paid for invasive beauty treatments that just aren't working for them. Feeling that a more holistic approach was needed, she's trained with experts in holistic rejuvenation and adopted new techniques to transform her own and clients' skin. "Healthy and radiant skin comes from the inside out and is a true reflection of your inner health and wellbeing," she explains. "The self-care guidance shared in this programme aims to help you fall in love with taking care of your skin and wellbeing."

Through the programme Lesley will teach clients facial gua sha, a facial rejuvenating therapy based on traditional Chinese medicine which, when done correctly, can reduce inflammation and redness, regenerate facial tissue with healthier skin cells, tone facial muscles and contours and

stimulate collagen and elastin production. "Imagine how amazing your skin will feel and how healthy it will be when you make this a regular practice!" says Lesley. "My online programme will guide you through your own face massage routine and start you on your journey to happy and healthy skin and wellbeing in the lead up to your wedding day."



Suzanne Li Photography



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