

Grooming for the Groom

BY MARCY LOVITCH

Before her wedding, a bride traditionally (and rightfully) indulges in what is referred to as a "day of beauty." The checklist may go as follows: full facial, massage, haircut, color (if needed), hairstyling consultation, manicure, and pedicure. But the bride is not alone in wanting to look and feel great. Beauty experts from around the country say more grooms are getting into the act, incorporating luxurious, pampering treatments into their hectic prenuptial schedules.

HEADING FOR THE ALTAR

While the groom may not need an elaborate hairstyle, it is important that his hair appear healthy, neat, and in good condition. Frank Procopio, technical director at the J.F. Lazartigue Diagnostic and Hair Care Center in New York City, usually recommends an intensive conditioning treatment to keep hair shiny and noticeably vibrant.

Procopio says men generally don't spend much time worrying about their wedding-day hairstyle. When it comes to hair, their main concerns are dandruff, hair loss, and scalp irritation—all of which can be aggravated by stress.

Procopio suggests that men affected by these problems visit a salon three to six months before the wedding for a series of conditioning treatments. If the groom is uncomfortable going to a salon, he should try an at-home treatment like Lilt Hot Oil Remoisturizing Penetrating Therapy for Salon and Home Perms or Alberto Culver VO5 Moisturizing Hot Oil Treatment.

Grooms who want to experiment with a different hair shade should go with a temporary color (it gradually washes out over about six shampoos). It will add body and shine to his natural hair without making too noticeable of a change," says Procopio. Some men may want to cover up their gray hairs. Today, this can be done with an ammonia-free, peroxide-free rinse. A good one to try: L'Oréal Technique Equa-Ton Homme.

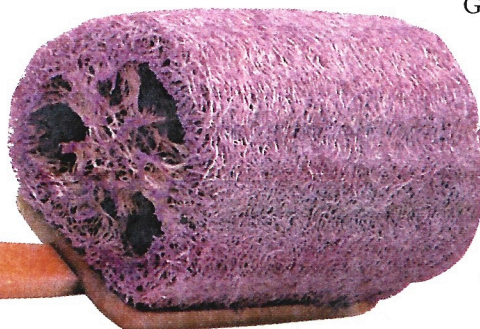
Of course, men can use various styling aids such as gels or tonics, if they want a slicked back look or more volume. José Eber, owner of José Eber Salons in California and Texas, believes a smooth look—both classic and romantic—is the right choice for a groom on his wedding day. He suggests that the groom slick back his hair with gel. If his hair is long enough, he can sport a ponytail for a "Valentino" style. Eber recommends that the groom go for cut and color (if desired) one to two weeks before the wedding, to test out the look. He strongly advises against trying anything drastic just before the ceremony.

Most of all, Eber says, remember what you will be wearing. "The collar of a tuxedo is high, so a simple hairstyle is best. Being clean shaven also adds to an overall neat appearance. After all, your photographs will last forever, and you want to look your best."

ABOUT FACE

When Benone Genesco, a partner in the Mario Badescu Skin Care Salon in New York City, first opened his business 25 years ago, only 2 percent of his clients were men. Now that number has risen to 20 percent. Genesco believes that this is because getting a facial is no longer seen as an activity that's strictly for women. "Working men schedule skin treatments because they know it is important for them to look good," says Genesco. Among his male customers,

WEDDING DAY HAVE-TO-HAVES. (Clockwise) Crabtree & Evelyn Shaving Brush and holder, Clearly Xenon Formation Design Impact Gelle, New West Arizona Calm After Shave Balm, Tuscany Mineral Body Moisturizer, Crabtree & Evelyn Loofah Bath Brush.



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Genesco finds that 90 percent of them are grooms who come in with their fiancées in preparation for the wedding day. Then, the grooms get hooked—and about 80 percent of them return as regular customers.

Nelson Lee Novick, M.D., associate clinical professor of dermatology at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, says, if you have perfect skin, it's fine to get a facial just to be pampered. However, Novick believes that a facial can upset problem skin. He says, "The vigorous manipulation of a facial can make skin break out." Something you definitely don't want on the day you walk down the aisle.

Dr. Novick recommends a visit to the dermatologist for a treatment of glycolic acid, also known as a "fruit treatment." (Glycolic acid is a derivative of certain fruit acids.) The regimen—one or two applications a day for six to eight weeks before the wedding—can be applied by the doctor or prescribed to the patient to use at home. "The fruit acid can help open up pimples, clear skin, remove skin discolorations, and leave a healthy glow."

HAIL TO THE NAIL

Manicured hands and pedicured feet are not only for brides. Arsi Kerpitchian, owner of Arsi Skin Care in New York City, finds that a growing number of women getting married now make appointments for both themselves and their partners, usually the day before they walk down the aisle. It's also common for bridesmaids and ushers to come in for treatments a few days before the ceremony.

"Men love getting pedicures, because it's very relaxing," says Kerpitchian. "Most grooms want to feel special when they go on their honeymoon, and it helps if their hands and

feet are well manicured."

A manicure for the groom doesn't differ much from the bride's—it costs the same for a basic job. However, for a few dollars extra, the groom can get a paraffin treatment. First he dips his hands in hot paraffin wax a few times and lets it harden; then he places them in electric mittens for five to ten minutes. The result: softer hands and cuticles.

Jonice Padilha, manicurist and co-owner of The J Sisters salon in New York City, concentrates mostly on men's cuticles and skin. She says, "Most men don't want to wear clear nail polish, but their hands generally do need some help. They pay less attention to moisturizing, so they tend to have incredibly dry skin and chewed up cuticles." Padilha spends a lot of time creaming the hands and cuticles. She finishes up by buffing the nails until they shine. Buffing helps keep nails healthy, she explains.

Padilha also sees many men for pedicures. "Men tend to have foot problems like callouses and corns and I can help get rid of those," she says. "When your feet feel great so do you."

A PREMATRIMONIAL MASSAGE

It's a good idea to soothe marital jitters with a relaxing rubdown. Ann Bond, massage therapist at the Houstonian Hotel in Houston, Texas, says about 50 percent of her clients are men, many of whom are about to take the marital plunge. Bond performs mostly Swedish massages, concentrating on the face, scalp, hands, and feet—areas where there are high concentrations of nerve endings. "Men love it when those areas are worked. Women tend to prefer work on the neck, back, and shoulders," she notes.

Some men prefer a more rigorous treatment, like a sports massage, which is deeper and more specific, working on trigger points to relieve muscle spasms and to deal with back problems and injuries.

Bond highly recommends that a tense groom get a massage a few hours before his wedding. It will help take his mind off the event for at least an hour and let the massage therapist work out the stored up stress. ♥



Smooth operators: (Above) Kiehl's "Wet Look" Groom, Kiehl's "Close-Shavers" Squadron Ultimate Brushless Shave Cream, (right) Bodyography Oakbark & Peppermint Refreshing Foot Lotion.

