



So your gown has arrived, Wonderful! You've spent a lot of time, money and stress on purchasing your gown so now is not the time to be cheap on your alterations. Yes, most expensive doesn't always mean better but remember, experience takes years to perfect. A highly experienced seamstress with years of bridal experience will and should be more expensive than the nice grandma of a friend of a friend who does some "sewing" in her living room.

Now is the time the gown you bought actually becomes "your" wedding gown. Hopefully when you purchased your gown, you were told upfront that alterations would be necessary, they typically are 99.9999% of the time. This notion of my gown was custom made for me, isn't true with most major designers. They are typically making their gowns based on a 2, 4, 6, 8, etc. size chart and your gown was been ordered based on your measurements to get the most "appropriate" fit.

Notice the word "appropriate"? That means the closest and most reasonable fit possible. That is based on your hips, waist and bust but won't fit all these areas perfectly; hence custom Alterations are the next step.

Fitting Stages: For most gown alterations, plan on having 1-3 fittings.

Pre-Fitting/First Fitting: This two can take place together depending on how far out your wedding day is. The First Fitting should begin at least 8-12 weeks prior to your wedding date, if this is possible. This is the most important fitting with the seamstress as decisions will be made regarding the overall fit of your gown.

Second/Third Fitting: These will usually only be necessary if you have very detailed alterations or if you make significant changes throughout the process or need additional items completed. Our seamstresses will go over this with you on a case by case basis.

Final Fitting/Pick-up: Our seamstress will provide you a pre-set date to pick up your completed gown. Typically, this is scheduled a few days prior to your wedding date. During this fitting you will try on your gown one final time to ensure all alterations have been completed successfully. In the event that your wedding is a considerable time later, we will have you pick up your completed gown and store it at home. Then a few weeks before the wedding you will return to double check everything and have your gown pressed so it is perfect for the Big Day.

Time Is Ticking: It's important to time your alterations right and you want to prevent anymore unnecessary stress. If you bring your gown in too early, you might not end up with a proper fit (with all the stress you may lose or gain weight). Bring your gown in too late, and you're just adding more stress to your wedding day. Also keep in mind that major changes will take longer than minor adjustments.

We recommend allowing 2-3 months for all the alterations. If you're not sure it's a good idea to go in for a consult with the seamstress and they can go over your timeline. Also keep in mind that the amount of times you need to go in for fittings depends on how much you're getting done to the gown, as previously mentioned plan on 1-3 fittings.

Budget for Alterations: Bridal alterations can add up. Some places will charge per service while others charge a flat fee. Design changes can cost anywhere from \$50 (for a bustle) to a few hundred (hemming, adjusting the fit, add lace or beading, reshape the silhouette, etc). Make sure you factor in these costs.

Research your Seamstress: As we mentioned earlier, that acquaintance of your friend's friend who does some sewing may work just fine for fixing that loose button but don't gamble with your wedding gown. You will always want to find a seamstress who specializes in bridal gown alterations. Get professional recommendations from family, friends, Google, Yelp, Wedding Wire, etc. and check them for feedback or reviews. Of course, not every place is going to be perfect. Every business may have a bad review or two (we openly admit that do) but read through them and you can get a pretty good idea of which ones are legit. And remember this isn't a job for your local dry cleaner, make sure whoever you choose knows the intricacies and complex details of Wedding gowns (boning, hems, bustles, beadwork and so on).

Bring your Accessories with You: Take your undergarments (Spanx or strapless bra), shoes and accessories to your alteration fittings as well, especially the first one. This will help you to envision your overall wedding day look. Your undergarments and shoes will ensure the proper fit and length of your gown, and your hair accessories or veil will help you maintain the right overall balance. If you don't have all your accessories or undergarments it's OK, we sell those as well. If you don't have the exact shoes you'll be wearing, bring something similar in height.

Monitor Your Weight: Yes we know - this is a touchy subject for brides, but it's a real one as well. Weddings are stressful and stress affects everyone differently. We have seen this in the past where everything was OK and then 2 weeks before the wedding the bride had a weight change and needed some emergency last minute alterations. It's usually nothing we can't handle but for the bride's world, it's another nightmare.

Bring Someone with You: While you might have legions of bridesmaids, it's not a good idea to bring everyone to your fittings, but you'll definitely want someone to come with you. We recommend you bring your mom or a close friend with you to your final fitting, just so you have an extra set of eyes. This is especially important if your gown will have a Bustle; that way the seamstress can show them how all the buttons or snaps will work.

Wrap Up: OK, so by now you should have a pretty good idea of what to expect throughout the alterations process. Whether you found your gown at a couture salon or a bridal sample sale, the options for alterations are nearly endless. And a highly experienced bridal seamstress will be accustomed to reworking fabrics, opening up hems, replacing boning or beadwork and can practically redesign a gown.

Why this process may sound overwhelming, choosing the right seamstress from the start can make the weeks and days leading up to your "big day" less stressful and even enjoyable. The stress of finding the perfect gown is over; let's allow the alteration process to celebrate that!