

WEDDING TALK

January 25, 2016

As a beauty salon, we get lots of clients asking what sort of treatments are suitable for weddings and what would we advise to have.

So, having married recently myself, I thought I would talk about the treatments I had in the lead up to my wedding and the best way to time them correctly.

Because timing is key with a wedding - never leave treatments to the last few weeks before The Big Day. You really need to start thinking about them a good six to twelve months before (yes, really!) to make sure you are looking your best and more importantly, feeling your best!

So, what did I have? Well I won't beat around the bush...owning a beauty salon does give me amazing access to the best treatments around, some of which I can even do on myself, so perhaps I had more than some people could afford, and I do appreciate that. But hopefully it will give you some inspiration on what you might want to go for and when to start thinking about them.

Skin Treatments

Now for me, this was a big one. Having a genetically sensitive skin type, my skin has always been a little on the red side, and always very dehydrated, causing it to produce excess oil to compensate. Breakouts caused by immunogenic and neurogenic inflammation are something I have had to battle with throughout my 20s and I know that if one occurs, it's going to leave a little red mark that will last for a fair few months before disappearing altogether. Having an underactive thyroid, I also have very dry skin, meaning I can end up with an oily t-zone from the dehydration, with flaky patches from the dryness. Throw in a few breakouts and you've got a very annoying skin condition!

Now I do have a great skin care routine - I have used Dermalogica continuously for over 9 years and it has made an immense difference to my skin. But work is pretty hectic and rarely do I get the chance to have any treatments. So I made sure I made the time for them - for me, I opted for Active Resurface 35 Treatments (more recently changed to the PowerBright TRx Treatment) weekly leading up to the wedding, to speed up the cell turnover and resurface my skin gently. This really helped calm any breakouts and prevent any new ones occurring, while deeply nourishing the skin leaving it hydrated, supple and dewy. The perfect base for make-up application!

Now there are several skin treatments on offer at Utopia, and knowing which one is best for your skin is difficult - but don't fret...we can help you find the best treatment and products for your individual skin, and advise you on a personalised skin care and treatment regimen. This is one of those treatments that typically, you'll want to start thinking about 6 months before the wedding, so make sure you book a consultation well in advance to ensure picture-perfect skin.

Nails

Nails are one thing that the majority of brides-to-be will want to focus on (not forgetting the groom, bridesmaids and mother-of-the-bride, of course!). On average, a cell on the nail plate can take around 6 months to grow from the Matrix (where it is formed, underneath the cuticle), to the free edge, so again start thinking well in advance about monthly maintenance treatments to keep nails in tip top condition. You don't have to go all out - just a mini manicure will ensure nails stay healthy and grow strong.

Now I am very lucky with my nails - they rarely break, and grow very quickly when they do, so I knew I didn't need to worry too much in the lead up to the wedding. But lots of hand cream to keep skin healthy and nourished, plus even more cuticle oil will keep the nails from dehydrating (especially in the winter) and looking healthy.

I went for the Gelicure treatment - personally, I think this is an ideal treatment for a wedding for many reasons:

Strength: Gel is strong yet flexible, so protects the nail from breakages without weakening them.

It's dry: This is a big one for me - you don't need to wait for gel to dry as the LED light will do this for you, meaning smudging is not a worry. You don't need to have it on the day of the wedding, or even the day before (let's face it, there's enough to worry about) so you can have this on a day to suit you (preferably not too early though....we don't want any re-growth showing!) and be safe in the knowledge that you will not smudge or chip them before The Big Day.

It lasts: Now I know not everyone goes away on a honeymoon straight away, but if you do, you can be rest assured your Gelicure nails are going to last you the whole holiday (unless, of course, you're super lucky and going for weeks on end). No one wants chipped nails when they are away, nor do they want to be faffing about and re-doing them either.

We also get many Grooms in the salon having a manicure a few days before the wedding - we won't paint them (unless you want us to!) but nails will look healthy and tidy, ready for the photos.

Spray Tan

Anyone who knows me knows that I do not agree with sunbeds - now I won't go on a rant, because that's not why you are reading - but the fact is, spray tanning for me is THE safe way to tan.

So with that said, Sienna-X is the leading false tanning brand on the market, and have been for a number of years (why else would we sell it at Utopia?!) - they look very natural and pose NO health problems whatsoever. Completely safe to use, there are several shades available so your therapist can ensure your tan looks right for you.

I am naturally pretty pale, and like a number of women, I do feel better with a tan. So for me, a spray tan was a no brainer for my wedding day. Now it's always a good idea to have at least one trial for this - you'll want to ensure you are 100% happy with the shade, and it also provides a great opportunity to determine when to have the treatment before the wedding. For me, I always prefer my spray tan the day after it has been done. I have friends who prefer the look of it a couple of days after, so having a trial will enable you to decide what day you prefer the look of it, and so how well in advance you need to book it. It also provides an opportunity for you to get to grips with the preparation and aftercare of a spray tan (this really is vital, so best to know what you're getting involved in!).

It's also a good idea to tie in these trials with other occasions. You may as well make the most of it! Perhaps book your first when you're having a hen party. And when you know you're happy with the shade, book another trial to coincide with your make-up trial. This will ensure your make-up matches the shade of your skin correctly, and allow you to see exactly how you will look on The Big Day.

I used the Sienna-X products in the week before my wedding to ensure an even base for the tan to work with, but you could think about having an exfoliation treatment to kick start it off, and carry on the exfoliation process in the days that follow, before the spray tan itself.

But if you're keen on faking it without having it sprayed on, there is always the option of home-tanning. Sienna-X's home products are excellent, and they have a wide range - from instant tanning gels that will wash off at the end of the day, to gradual cream tanners, 360 degree spray mists and even a mousse. Simply take your pick! One word of advice when using creams or mousse - always use a tanning mitt. Sienna-X's Deluxe Self Tanning Mitt makes application quick and easy, ensuring an even coverage. The best way to use it is with long, circular movements over the body. Buy Sienna-X home products [here](#).

Lash and Brow

Now I have to say, when it comes to lashes, I'm pretty lucky. They're really quite long naturally, and generally look pretty good with a few coats of mascara. However, we can all do with a little help, no? And as for my brows - well, that's been a long process for me trying to get them back into a natural shape from a little mishap back when I was training (oh the joys of practising on each other!). I also wanted to fill them out a little.

Lash and brow treatments are big business at the moment - they really help to frame the face and make the most of your features. Now I didn't have HD Brows for my wedding, simply because I didn't train in this particular treatment until after The Big Day. For me, I opted for Christian Faye Eyebrows - a clay based powder that adheres to the skin as well as hairs, giving a natural shape that helps to fill in sparse brows, and even gaps. With 8 natural colours to choose from, and each kit containing 3 stencils, it really is a quick and easy way to apply your brow make-up each morning! I was lucky - the 'natural' stencil was a very similar shape to my brows, just a little fuller - so I applied my

make-up using the kit, shaped around them and over time my brows filled out to the same shape. Et voila! And don't fret about which colour to choose - simply book in with us for your free demonstration!

Of course we now have the luxury of offering the High Definition treatment (the new, re-branded name for HD Brows). This treatment is great - much better at looking at the bigger picture and the long term effect, and we start you on a re-growth programme if needed. If you're lucky enough to have full, even brows to start with, then you may only need one treatment - however if, like most people, a little help is needed, then you may want to think about having monthly treatments about 6-12 months before The Big Day. Of course we can advise you on this!

And now for my favourite part - the lashes. As I mentioned before, I'm pretty lucky generally. However, I do love long lashes - so LVL Enhance was the perfect choice for me for my wedding! A natural enhancement for the natural lashes, there is no need for glue, extensions, maintenance or mascara. The treatment simply lifts the lashes at the roots, giving the appearance of longer, fuller, darker lashes. Perfect! And lasting 6-8 weeks with absolutely NO maintenance treatments needed, it really is the perfect choice for a wedding, especially if you're going off on honeymoon afterwards! You can swim without ruining the effect and simply just enjoy the beautiful lashes for what they are. And best of all - NO damage to the natural lashes. This can be done as close to the day as you like - and the beauty of it lasting so long is that you don't have to wait right up until the day before, either. Mine were done roughly a week before the wedding. Check out this before and after picture of my lashes (and yes, there really is NO make-up on here!):



Personally, this wins hands down over lash extensions - but if you're after the really full, false effect, this may not be for you.

However, if you're short on time or happy with the lift your lashes have naturally - or indeed suffer from claustrophobia, then a simple eyelash tint should do the job. A 20 minute treatment to colour the lashes and will last 4-6 weeks, you'll still be able to swim and more importantly, cry on the day without running mascara!!

Waxing

This goes without saying - no one wants to be hairy on The Big Day! As I opted for a spray tan, I had all my waxing done 2 days before the wedding - giving a good 24 hours between the two treatments to enable all the pores to shrink back to normal and avoid any unsightly 'pitting' from the tan. My advice would always be to have any hair removal as close to the day as you can - to ensure longer lasting results for the day itself, as well as any honeymoon you may be going on.

Now many will say that waxing will last about 4-6 weeks....and yes, it can - provided you've been having waxing regularly for a while. I would never want to over-promise on something I know won't be the case, so just a little piece of knowledge to keep you going - this is why you'll need to be having it regularly for a while to achieve these results:

*Hair grows in three stages - Anagen, Catagen and Telogen. I won't go into detail on what each of these stages are, however I will let you know that all hair grows at different stages - so there will be roughly a third of all hair growing in each stage at any one time. Now think of a wax - this will remove any hair at follicle level that is showing **above** the surface of the skin, but what about those that have started to grow and yet haven't quite made it past the skin's surface yet? These are going to come through as they would normally - so it is normal to get a little regrowth within the first week of a wax if it is your first (or first in a while). Waxing every 4-6 weeks (so within that time frame of the hair's full cycle) will encourage the hairs to grow at the same stage, eventually leaving you with a nice 4-6 week gap hair free between treatments. The follicles generally also start to become deformed - meaning softer, finer hairs (and in some cases, will stop producing hair altogether!)*

So with this in mind, ideally you would want to start a regular waxing routine quite early on if you're wanting to make the most of the wedding and honeymoon period. As everyone is different, maybe think about this 6-12 months in advance. And don't worry if you're on a budget (you are planning a wedding, afterall) - if you just want a one off, leave it as close as you possibly can to the day. Afterall, the initial regrowth is minimal.

So that's it - a lot to think about but hey, it's a wedding! Don't forget your hair and make-up too, and trials for both as well. If you need any recommendations I know an EXCELLENT hairdresser and make-up artist (naturally I booked them both for my wedding!) - both able to come to location too so much easier for the day itself.

And most importantly, ENJOY!