

What to expect during your alterations appointments.

While many Seamstresses do things differently, here is a description of what to expect if you were to be one of my Bridal Customers.

At Your First Fitting

What to Bring: The gown, all undergarments you will be wearing at the wedding (not something “like” what you will be wearing – this is important).

What Will Happen: I like to fit the bodice first. Since so much else depends on the way the dress is draping on the body. This may not be much or can be extensive. Most gowns need a little something. If the bodice is fitting comfortably, then we can proceed to what would normally be done in the second fitting.

At the first fitting, I will also take stock of what other alterations the gown might need. I will do my best to answer any questions and give a complete written estimate of the cost for all alterations needed. I very rarely deviate from this estimate, but it is still only an estimate, not an ending cost. Many brides change their minds on what they want done to their gown during the following fittings for many reasons.

I start giving a Bustle Lesson at first fittings. I will teach the bride the bustle options and how I think each would look on her gown. I may even do a quick pinning to show her what I am describing. Then I tell her that she has another fitting before she must decide which style she wants. This gives her time to think about the look she wants.

At Your Second Fitting

What to Bring: All undergarments if they were not left with the gown, shoes that will be worn at the wedding (NOT shoes “like” the ones you will be wearing).

What Will Happen: First, the work done from the first fitting is checked for comfort and accuracy. If it passes, I will pin the hem. The bride will walk around a little and pin adjustments may need to be made until she is pleased with the predicted length.

I usually start with 1” off the floor and adjust for the bride's walking comfort and the needs of lacy decoration at the bottom. Most brides find 1” is a good point that keeps the dress from their feet for an easy walk and still gives a full-length look. A hem that touches the floor is not a good idea because it will make it harder to walk gracefully. Of course, this length is up to the bride and may be adjusted at this time based on the bride’s desires and wants.

At Your Third Fitting

What to Bring: All undergarments if they were not left with the gown, shoes that will be worn at the wedding (NOT shoes “like” the ones you will be wearing), and maybe the veil if it is a concern.

What Will Happen: The bride needs to walk around with the hem based in because it is quite common for gowns to act differently when stitched than they did pinned. It's important to remember to walk as you will on your day, head up, not looking down at your feet. When you look down to see what the hem looks like, you are bending your body enough to make a false impression of the true length. It will be longer because of your slight body bend. So, look in a mirror, or just walk normal feeling the swing of the fabric to determine if it is comfortable. I sometimes give brides a fake bouquet to hold to help them feel what it will really be like.

Once the hem is approved, the bustle style can be chosen. I used to do the pinning of the bustle points at this time but have decided that it is kinder to the bride to do that once she leaves. I put the gown on a mannequin and depending on the train length, fullness, and decoration, bustles points are determined. This process is a bit of a tedious, but I haven't met a dress I haven't been able to make a pretty bustle on. It can take an hour or two just to figure out bustle point placement.

At Your Fourth Fitting

What to Bring: All undergarments if they were not left with the gown, shoes that will be worn at the wedding, veil if you would like and at least one attendant or someone that will be in charge of managing the bustle.

What Will Happen: This is usually the last fitting. Everything is double checked. Then, since it is nearly impossible for a bride to rig her own bustle, the designated bustle management attendant (bride's maid, sister, Mom, friend) gets a lesson on how to both rig the bustle.

At this time, the gown may be taken if the bride wishes.