

# suitably dressed

Morning dress has always been a popular choice for those hankering after a traditional wedding with all the trimmings. But did you know that not under any circumstance should a morning suit be worn to a wedding that starts after five in the afternoon? Here are the dressup details...



**H**ugh Grant was the ultra-attractive groomsman in full morning suit regalia in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. It's entirely possible that his heartstopping good looks in the formal outfit single-handedly prompted the renaissance of this classic.

Don't worry if it's not to be a morning event; despite the name, morning dress can be worn into the afternoon to weddings held before five o'clock.

The morning coat or cut-away is usually black or dark Oxford grey and has tails. The shape differs from a traditional tail coat and is closer to a frock coat in style, the skirt of the coat is knee length.

Formal trousers, traditionally worn with a morning coat, are grey striped with one pleat on each leg and should not have cuffs.

Custom prescribes a grey, buff or white waistcoat, double or single breasted; weddings are the only occasion that colour variations are permitted. Braces should be worn to prevent the waistband from appearing beneath the waistcoat.

Etiquette dictates that only the father of the bride and the groom wear grey morning coats; other bridal party members wear black coats. These days this rule is rarely enforced; but a rule is a rule.

At weddings an Ascot tie or cravat is worn with a wing collar, however in more recent times a plain black long tie is acceptable, worn with a turn down collar. If the shirt has a turn down collar it should have sleeves with a double cuff fastened with cufflinks. On a wing collar shirt there should be single cuffs fastened with cufflinks; a shirt with detachable collar and cuffs is the more traditional option.

The shirt can be either pleated or plain, the most formal shirt colour is white, however if a coloured or striped shirt is worn it should have a contrasting white collar and cuff.

In *THE MAN'S BOOK (2006)*, Thomas Fink states that if ever there was a time to wear a buttonhole, this is it. A simple white carnation or other white bloom attached to the lapel is most appropriate for morning suits.

Shoes should be a plain black Oxford style with laces and without brogue detail; never patent leather which is reserved for formal evening occasions. Black or dark grey silk or wool socks are appropriate.

For the ultra traditionalist a grey or black top hat and grey gloves completes the ensemble. According to *VOGUE'S BOOK OF ETIQUETTE*, in the 1940s a walking stick or umbrella was the height of correctness to complete the traditional morning suit look.