



TRIBEZA

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... AND IN HEALTH

story **amy townley**
photography **shannon mcintyre**

From toning up for that strapless gown
to defeating the odds against an
unwelcome case of allergies—Austin
experts give answers for a beautiful,
healthy wedding.

Nothing has the power to reignite a lost or dwindling motivation to get in shape and feel good like a future wedding in the works. But because of the intense pressure and chaotic reality that accompany the massive planning involved in a wedding, brides sometimes end up spending more time ensuring the health and beauty of the flowers used in the ceremony than ensuring that she, herself, looks and feels like the princess she should during one of the most important hours of her life.

All circumstances considered, strong-willed brides with sincere intentions to put their best foot and face forward should be aware that making tangible progress in how they look and feel by their wedding date is a process a bit more involved than eight hours of sleep and multi-vitamin smoothies the week before. "People really shouldn't go into the whole getting healthy and in shape for their wedding thing thinking they're superman or superwoman," says dietitian LeAnne Skinner. "Things only get more hectic as the wedding gets closer and there's no way someone can change his or her health at the last minute." Skinner, who has been CEO of Austin Nutrition Consultants and a practicing licensed dietitian there for nearly three decades, advises future brides and grooms to make nurturing their basic needs the foundation of any health or fitness plan if they want to see real progress. Basic needs meaning the things we've all heard so often like having a balanced diet (no crashing or fads!), an abundance of H2O, adequate sleep and physical activity. "It all sounds like common sense," says Skinner, "but people really don't do it." Though important for everyone, Skinner emphasizes the exceptional need for future brides and grooms to do so. "Engaged couples become especially prone to neglecting these essentials during the busy and often stressful months leading up to the wedding."

Stress alone is one of the most harmful things a person can do to his or

facing page vegetable bouquet by big red sun

"A LOT OF COUPLES I WORK WITH ENROLL IN FITNESS PROGRAMS TOGETHER BECAUSE THEY CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER AND THEY WANT TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER. I'VE BEEN REALLY SURPRISED AT HOW INVOLVED THE GROOMS ARE IN EVERY ASPECT OF THE WEDDING." — CHRISTINE GERLACH

her body, according to Skinner. But paired with other harmful wedding time habits, like rising levels of sleep debt, it can truly increase the risk of the unimaginable—the bride or groom falling ill as the big date grows near. Obviously not an option. Two of the possible actions you can take to aid your immune system in avoiding such a catastrophe are loading up on the antioxidants found in most brightly colored fruits and taking between two and four tablespoons of crushed flaxseed daily, according to Skinner. "Nothing fancy," she adds, "just the plain, brown flaxseed that you can buy at Whole Foods or Central Market." A flaxseed vitamin supplement does exist, but Skinner wholeheartedly insists that the real thing is much more beneficial because of the greater efficiency with which the body absorbs it. Though she believes firmly that optimum health is best achieved through a balanced diet alone, Skinner says taking some supplementary vitamins or one, simple multi-vitamin regularly is OK. "As long as you don't take mega-doses," Skinner warns. "Some people have a genetic tendency to react to really high doses of certain vitamins." One instance of this, she explains, is the

potential of large amounts of Vitamin A to turn a person's skin an orange tint. "People think that taking more will increase the benefits of the vitamin," Skinner says, "but there's absolutely no reason to ever take more than the FDA-recommended amount—it's a total waste."

As for the more aesthetic benefits of your diet, Skinner recommends plenty of protein for strong, healthy hair and nails—both of which, in fact, consist mainly of protein. Fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and whole grains are among notable sources of proteins. And to attain that dreamy, vibrant, glowing complexion that every bride daydreams about, Skinner suggests that water become your new best friend and that vitamins A (fresh fruits and veggies), C (green peppers, citrus fruits and juices, strawberries, tomatoes) and E (almonds, sunflower seeds, hazelnuts, peanut butter), never stray far from your plate for long.

A healthy diet is undoubtedly a huge step forward, but some form of exercise is inevitably part of the equation if slimming down and toning up to exchange vows with your sweetheart is part of your plan. And if you prefer to walk down the aisle

looking like a goddess to say those vows, then Lean Images personal training six-week Bridal Fit-camp may be worth looking into. "Participants lose an average of two pounds a week if they're really motivated and stick to their assigned sessions," says June Morrow, master trainer and founder of Lean Images. Morrow, who has worked as a personal trainer for 17 years, began the Bridal Fit-camp at Lean Images almost a year ago to help motivate brides to get the ball moving if they really want to look good as much as they say they do. The camp consists of four, one-hour sessions of intense strength and cardio training each of the six weeks. Morrow is firm and optimistic about the program. "Missing sessions is almost the only reason people don't reach the goals they had hoped for in the end," Morrow said. So if you sign up, go!

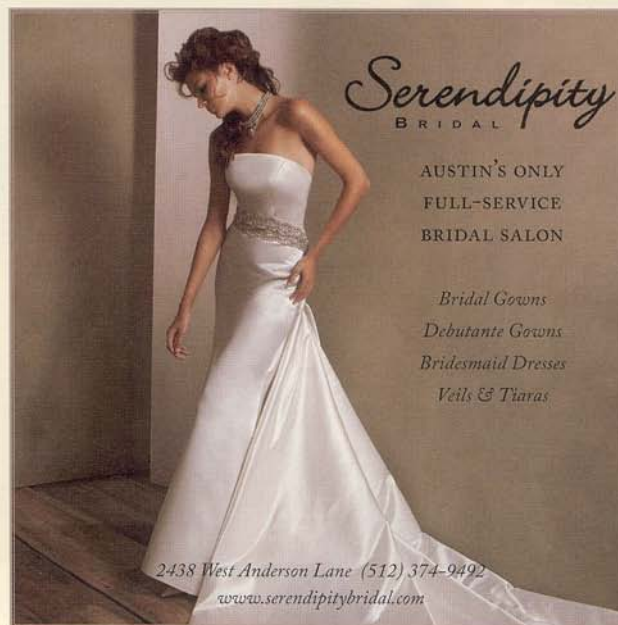
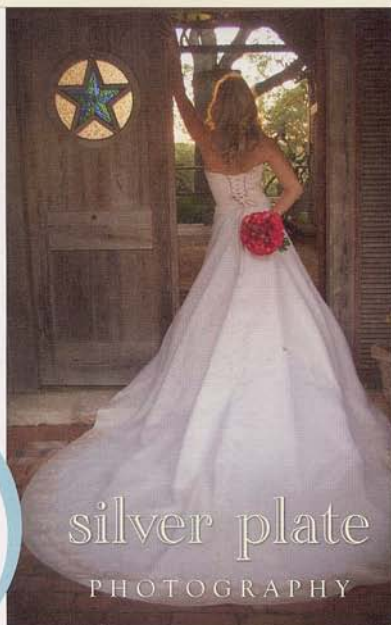
Though Morrow has primarily worked with brides hoping to shape up for their weddings, wedding planner Christine Gerlach's experience has been quite the contrary. "Guys care about what they look

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like, too!" insists Gerlach, a planner for Elite Weddings for more than a year now. "A lot of couples I work with enroll in fitness programs together because they care about each other and they want to support each other," Gerlach says. "I've been really surprised at how involved the grooms are in every aspect of the wedding." Gerlach is aware of the many great fitness programs available in Austin, but says she always first encourages the nine out of ten of her brides who voice concerns about slimming down to seek results by joining a gym first. "A big part of my job is to plan in the most cost-effective way," Gerlach explains. "And with all the expenses involved in a wedding, it's always better to explore your options and see if something simpler couldn't work just as well." But Gerlach says she realizes that all brides and grooms are different, illustrating with a story about how happy

her good friend Renee Kloesel was after completing a dynamic, six-week fitness program at King IV Fitness with her then-fiancé, Jason. Kloesel was so pleased, in fact, that her personal testimony can be found on the King IV Fitness website saying: "All of my family and friends told me how good my arms looked in my wedding dress. It was awesome!" Talking to Kloesel on a more personal level, she sums up her experience at King IV Fitness with the word "results" and speaks of the perks of the program. "What is great about this program is David [the trainer] will come to your house with all his equipment, so you don't always have to meet him at the gym or track. With the variety of places and workout programs, you don't get bored."

Aside from looking vibrant and being healthy, an additional and unpredictable

threat always seems to lurk in the form of allergies. Over-the-counter allergy meds can nix the symptoms in some, but those who experience moderate-to-severe allergies every year, take heart. If you plan ahead, allergist Dennis Dyer, MD, says there is a 70 to 90 percent chance that allergy shots will leave you without a worry about sneezing down the aisle. "It's a fairly in-depth process involving a series of shots that can last up to three or four years," Dyer said. "Six months is definitely the cut-off if you want to see significant improvement by a certain date." But the good news is that if you can manage to start up the series of shots three months before the wedding, you should be through the initial phase of treatment where you are only returning to get shots for maintenance.

Good luck and best wishes for an unimaginably fabulous wedding. **AT**

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