

The 30-day Pre-Wedding Bootcamp

Simple changes in your diet and workouts can help you look and feel your best on D-day

Anindita Paul
mirrorfeedback@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @MumbaiMirror

Thirty days may not seem much to transform your body, especially for an occasion that is as momentous as your forthcoming wedding. And while experts agree that it is neither realistic nor healthy to aim for a major weight loss, there's a lot you can do in terms of toning and fixing your nutrition, so you look (and feel) your very best on D-day. In fact, as Dr Deepti Bagee, a nutritionist at Reset gym points out, paying attention to your overall wellness becomes very important during the countdown to the wedding, as the introductory festivities and the stress of planning and organising the wedding can derail your existing regimen. *Mirror* readers, who are gearing up for their nuptials, share their pre-wedding nutrition and fitness routines.

Tone up and lose belly fat

"I only decided to do something about my fitness a month before my wedding. I wasn't sure about how much I could accomplish as I didn't start early. But I decided to go through with a four-week regimen to look toned and lose some belly fat," says marketing professional Sanya Sheth, 28. Sheth was also concerned about the weight loss affecting her skin and hair. "It was also not feasible to lay out a very strict diet, since I wouldn't have a lot of time to focus on food and could not expect to deny myself during the pre-wedding functions," she adds.

Food: Sheth was prescribed a low-carb diet. She also went on a ketogenic diet for two weeks. "Sanya's carbohydrate intake was restricted to about 70 gm to 80 gm per day and the main sources of carbs were brown, red and black rice, sweet potatoes and vegetables. For protein and fat, she ate paneer, tofu, soya, cheese, eggs (occasionally) and lots of nuts including walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, pecans and avocados. All the food was cooked in olive and avocado oil," shares Dr Siddhant Bhargava, a fitness and nutritional scientist whom Sheth consulted. Keeping the fat content high improved the satiety value of her food, while ensuring that her skin was healthy and glowing, he explains. Keeping in mind Sheth's height and weight (5 feet 3 inches and 55 kg, respectively), her caloric intake was capped at 1,500 calories with 60gm to 75gm of protein a day.

Fitness: Sheth exercised four to six days a week. One day was dedicated to the lower body, and two days to Pilates workouts that focused on the core and posture, while two days were assigned to cardio, one of which was high-intensity interval training with the heart rate fluctuating between 100 bpm-170 bpm and the second included steady-state cardio such as walking on an inclined treadmill or taking a stroll on the beach.

Eating for the skin: Sheth consumed at least four litres of water a day, which kept her electrolyte levels balanced. She also supplemented her diet with antioxidants and anti-inflammatory nutrients such as Omega 3 fatty acids. "I was prescribed at least 600 mg of EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) every day, along with vitamin C and E supplements for my skin. Further, consuming an antioxidant called astaxanthin made a lot of difference," she says.

The results: Sheth lost roughly 4.5 kg while toning her arms and hips. She lost fat on her stomach and pelvic region as well.

Lose bulk and look more defined

"I have been working out since I was 17. I go to the gym regularly and practise yoga. However, I was keen to lose bulk, shed some weight and gain more definition before my wedding," says pastry chef Alyssa Chesson, 31.

Fitness: With her wedding drawing closer, Chesson cut down on her gym workouts and replaced them with Pilates and Barre sessions. "At first, I was a little apprehensive about the effectiveness of these workouts as the movements are quite different from what I was accustomed to, at the gym — they are much smaller and isolate and target very specific muscle groups. Once I had mastered the form, I saw a major change in my body shape. My workouts begin with a warm-up with weights, followed by arm exercises that tone the arm without adding bulk. We, then, move to the lower body, targeting the glutes and thighs, and then finish with abs. Although I was already quite fit, these workouts have really taken my fitness to the next level. With only weeks to go before my wedding, I sometimes attend two sessions a day," she says.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

AKANKSHA MANKAR



Marketing professional Sanya Sheth, 28, opted for a four-week regimen to get toned and lose belly fat



AKANKSHA MANKAR

Pastry chef Alyssa Chesson managed to lose bulk and gain more definition before her wedding with Pilates and Barre sessions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

Nutrition: Over the last three weeks, Chesson has eliminated all meat and dairy from her diet. "Cutting out dairy, especially, made a huge difference to my body and skin. As a pastry chef and the founder of an ice-cream brand, it was difficult for me to not succumb and taste the ice-cream that we were preparing in the kitchen. I have been eating a lot more fibre in the form of vegetables and greens. I have also switched to plant-based protein sources such as lentils. I try to eat at home as far as possible. Considering that this is the wedding season, I do eat out occasionally, but am very mindful about what I put on my plate," she says.

Eating for the skin: "I make sure to take supplements so that my body can cope more easily with the change in my eating habits. I take a multivitamin supplement and biotin for my hair, skin and nails. I also make sure to get some exposure to the sun between 8 am and 10 am for vitamin D," she says.

The results: "I feel much leaner and stronger. My body shape is also much closer to what I was aiming for," Chesson says.

Feast. Don't fast

Dr Bagree cautions against quick-fixes and short-term weight loss plans. "Most crash or fad diets can lead to the weight coming back even faster. They can also result in the body hoarding more fat or lead to skin breakouts and hair fall," she says. To shed those excess pounds without compromising on your well-being, experts lay out the following mantras:

- Eliminate all forms of refined sugar foods, even if you aren't targeting weight loss. You could opt for more nutrition-dense substitutes such as unpasteurised honey, organic jaggery, coconut sugar and date sugar.
- Eat dark-coloured fruits and vegetables, which typically contain more vitamin C, essential for collagen synthesis that tightens your skin and boosts immunity.
- If you do eat out, undertake a day-long detox the next day where you eat only fruits and vegetables.
- Nutritionist Juily Wagle recommends a water intake of three to four litres a day. This keeps your skin hydrated.

Wagle also recommends taking a

good-quality fish oil supplement, which boosts metabolism and can rejuvenate your skin and hair. Tarvi Ghadavale, a nutritionist at PD Hinduja, suggests drinking coconut or barley water daily. These act as diuretics, reducing water retention and hence, bloating. Ghadavale also suggests eating more nuts, which are a good source of fibre, antioxidants, healthy fat, calcium and vitamins A, C and E, and minerals such as zinc and copper. Green tea, when coupled with ginger, mint leaves or lemon, green tea also works as a great blood purifier, says Ghadavale.

Work it out

When designing your pre-wedding fitness regimen, experts recommend a good mix of strengthening, conditioning, toning and cardio workouts.

- For cardio, choose between HIIT, swimming, walking, jogging, kick-boxing, any other outdoor activity that will boost your metabolism and burn calories, says Sheetal Shah, founder of Core Pilates.

Eliminate all refined sugar foods. Opt for substitutes such as unpasteurised honey, organic jaggery, coconut sugar and date sugar

- For conditioning, try weight training or machine or mat Pilates, Shah suggests. Machine Pilates could prove especially effective as it combines strength and resistance training with yoga, to improve your overall strength and flexibility. Alternately, mat Pilates, when combined with cardio, can also strengthen your core and improve posture, she explains.
- For the final two weeks before the wedding, Shah recommends paying more attention to getting enough rest to avoid stress. While eating well and exercise are still important, the couple must focus on getting enough sleep.
- Shalini Bhargava, a fitness consultant at JG's Fitness suggests combination workouts such as Yoyalates or Animal Flow. The latter is a chain of animal-styled movements that are more primitive and athletic as compared to yoga asanas, and build strength, agility, and improve motor control.

