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Wedding Workouts Customized By Your Wedding Gown Style

Flowers? Check. Invitations mailed out? Check. Photographer and band booked? Check. With only a few weeks left before the big day, now it's all about the dress. Every bride-to-be wants to look her very best on her wedding day. Once you've found that perfect dress, you're probably working extra hard at sticking to a healthy diet and exercise plan. "Your workout should be catered toward what style of dress you're wearing," says **Franci Cohen, personal trainer, certified nutritionist and exercise physiologist in New York City**. "There are the sleeveless ball gowns that hide lower body flaws but really show off your shoulders and arms. There is the mermaid style that hugs the body and demands a toned butt and hips. Whatever your style, there are workout routines that target the specific areas your dress reveals."

Here are a few of Franci's specific workouts, designed for a variety of wedding gown styles! To make this information extra-fabulous, I am offering examples of each dress style fresh from the Wedding Fashion Week runways! Yay! The first three gowns are from Vera Wang's collection, the last one is from Monique Lhuillier's collection.



(Photo Credit: Harpers Bazaar)

The Mermaid Workout

Form-fitted, sheath, column, hourglass, mermaid and trumpet style dresses cling to the body, drawing attention to the belly, butt and thighs.

What You Want: A sleek, smooth torso for even the slinkiest sheath.

The Workout: For a clingy dress that leaves no stone uncovered, and bares even the slightest bit of bulge, try this “Progressive-Plank Trio.” It works the entire core in a progressive series that will cinch your waistline, and give you the sleek and smooth torso you desire!

1. In plank position, lift your feet one at a time (just an inch off the floor) so it appears as though you are walking in place without bending your knees. Repeat 60 times (approx. 1 minute) **STAY IN PLANK!**
2. While still in plank position, progress to plank push-pulls! Push forward so that your weight is on your toes for 1 count, and then pull back so that weight is towards your heels for 2 counts. The cycle goes like this “push-pull pull, push-pull pull, etc.”. Repeat this cycle 20 times. **STAY IN PLANK**
3. In your final minute remaining in plank position, your final progression is to plank rolls! In plank position, gently and with control, roll your body weight to the right, all the way, so that you feet roll onto their sides as well. Then roll all the way to the left. Continuously, and with fluidity, roll side to side (as far right and left as possible) 20 times.



(Photo Credit: Harpers Bazaar)

The Baby Got Back Workout

Although Hilary Swank's navy blue backless Guy Laroche dress may not have been a wedding gown per se, it did however remind us that when it comes to sex appeal, a nicely toned back may be your most underrated asset. Open back wedding dresses are the new ultra-romantic wedding trend for the 2013 spring and summer seasons. Depending on how low cut you want your dress, they can be incredibly sexy and classy all at the same time.

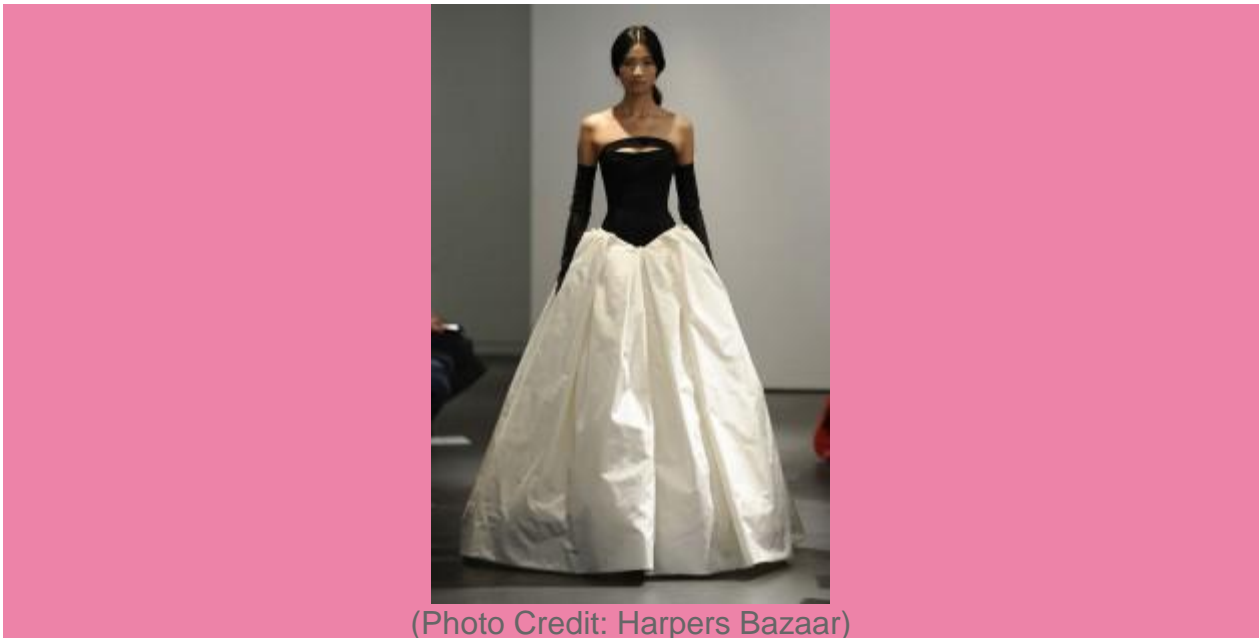
What You Want: An upper and lower back workout to help firm up that all important rear view.

The Workout: Want to wear an open back or even a super low back stunner? A strong upper back and toned physique will give you the killer backside you desire, to go bare back in style! Try this:

1. Bent over rows. To start, holding a body bar, stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Bend your knees slightly and keep your head up. Bend so that you are almost (but not quite) parallel to the floor. Bring hands straight down directly below your chest. Your palms should be facing toward you as you lift the weight. Use your back muscles to draw the weight up to touch your chest while keeping your elbows tucked in close to your body. Lower the weight under control and repeat 25 times.
2. Pull-Ups. This may seem like an exercise that's more appropriate for the arms but a great deal of work is placed on the upper back to lift the weight of the body and lower it with control. This exercise is a true measure of upper back strength, and is a great challenge, because you're lifting your full body weight. An

alternative for beginner would be to use an assisted pull-up machine that uses weight to counter act your own bodyweight. Use this machine until you can perform regular pull-up/chin-ups in proper form. Start with an overhand grip (palms down-away from you) for pull-ups, and underhand grip (palms up-facing you) for chin-ups. Keep your hands at shoulder width approximately for pull ups and just to the outside of the width of the jawline for chin ups. Perform 25 pull-ups of chin-ups, trying your best to hold for a second at the top of the movement.

3. The Dive-Lie. Face down on the floor with your hands on the floor right in front of your shoulders, and elbows bent out to the sides. Straighten out the arms and lift the upper body into a cobra position. Next, lean forward and lift both legs in the air, and lift hands off the floor, emphasizing lower-back engagement even more. Continuing rocking forward and back diving between the 2 movements.



(Photo Credit: Harpers Bazaar)

The 360-Degree Strapless Dress Workout

The strapless wedding dress is a classic, timeless style. It will also put your upper body on a 360-degree display during the walk down the aisle, the first dance and of course the bouquet toss.

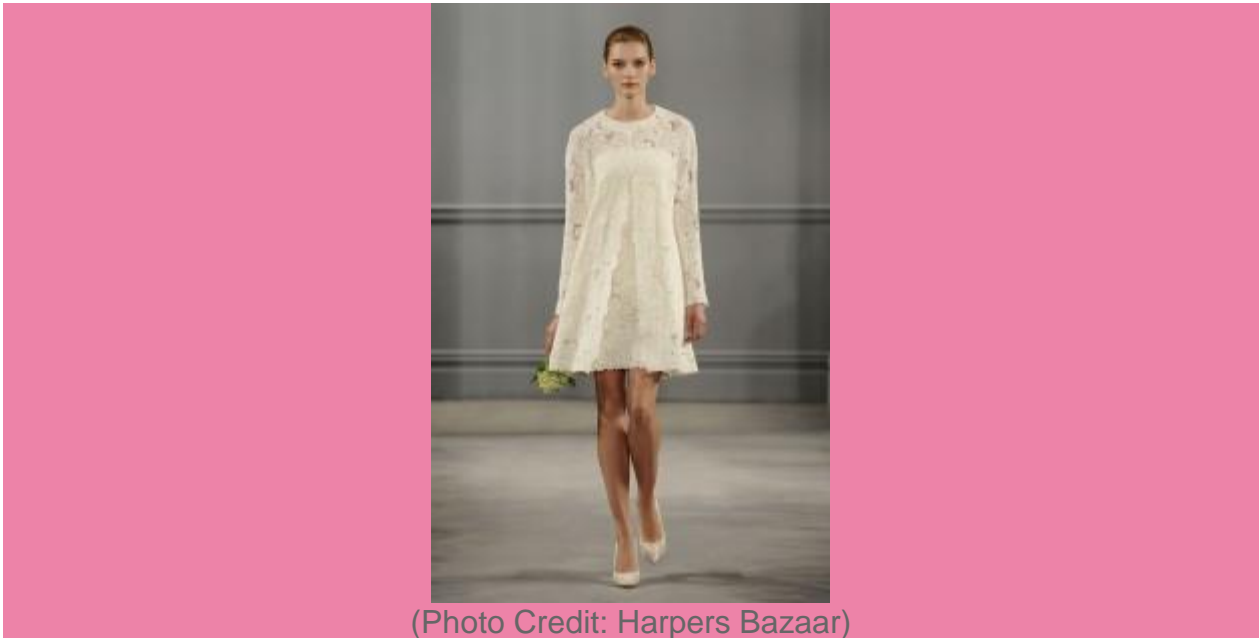
What You Want: Toned triceps, biceps, and pectorals to really strut your strapless stuff.

The Workout: Try these super-toning moves to get those arms sculpted to perfection in no time!

1. Triceps Dips. Begin by sitting on a step or chair with hands next to thighs. Balance on your arms, moving your rear end in front of the chair with legs straight (harder) or bent (easier). Bend the elbows and lower body a few inches,

keeping the shoulders away from your ears and the elbows parallel to one another, going no lower than 90 degrees. Push back up to starting position. Repeat for 1 long superset of 25 repetitions. If you have any wrist or shoulder problems, skip this exercise.

2. **Suspended Bicep Curls.** With a 3-5 pound weight in each hand, raise your hands up, so that elbows are parallel to your shoulders, and hands are directly above the elbows (basically form a right angle at your elbows). Keeping your arms suspended, with palms facing you, curl you hands in towards your shoulders, and then extend back out to starting right angle position (do not extend the arms fully to straight). Repeat for 35 curls.
3. **Push-Ups.** Start in plank position, with your hands under but slightly outside of your shoulders. Lower your body until your chest nearly touches the floor. As you lower yourself, tuck your elbows, pulling them close to your body so that your upper arms form a 45-degree angle when your torso is in the bottom position of the move. Hold for just a second, and then push back to the starting position. Keep your core braced the entire time. Don't let your booty lift up into the air, and don't let your hips sag either. You want your body to be on neutral position-one straight line from head to toe. If it hurts your wrists to put your hands directly on the floor, place a pair of dumbbells (use a pair with flat edges, like hex dumbbells) at the spots where you'd position your hands. Then grasp the dumbbells' handles and keep your wrists straight as you perform the exercise.



(Photo Credit: Harpers Bazaar)

The Get Shorty Workout

Mia Farrow made it iconic. Cindy Crawford made it cool and bohemian. Whether you're having a low-key beach wedding or looking for a second, more casual, dress to wear to your reception, short wedding gowns are all about the gams.

What You Want: Toned and sculpted legs, quads and butt.

The Workout: Want those sexy sculpted legs and glutes? Try this:

Stand facing a mirror with your hand holding on to the top of a chair. Place a squishy ball behind your right knee, and bend your lower leg to secure the ball in place. Lift your right leg so that your right upper leg becomes parallel to the floor and perpendicular to your left standing leg. Start pulsing the right thigh up and down (and inch in each direction). Repeat for 60 pulses. Next, rotate your right hip in and down, so that your right knee rotates down to face the floor. Then rotate up and out, so that your right foot faces the floor. Continue rotating in and out 30 times. Finally, return back to starting position, with your right thigh parallel to the floor and right knee should be level with your right hip. With your knee, start drawing circles. 20 circles rolling forward and then 20 in reverse. At this point you can now release the ball from your right leg, and repeat the entire cycle on your left leg.

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