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There Exists Several Methods for Attaching Hair Extensions

Hair extensions can be attached to your existing hair and be matched to your hair color, texture and style as well as your hair loss needs.

If you are balding in large areas of your head, Hair extensions are not a viable option for you. However as long as you have a good amount of healthy hair -- even if it's thinning -- you can get hair extensions attached to add more volume and length to your hair. Those suffering from hair loss and thinning hair can avoid further damage from adhesives, chemicals and heat by thoroughly investigating various hair extension attachment types to find an appropriate method.

Sewn-in hair extensions

Custom hair extensions can be sewn in strand by strand for a very natural look. Because of the time and expertise required to attach these, strand-by-strand extensions can be very expensive. With weaves, very small sections of your own hair will be braided close to your scalp. The hair extensions are then sewn into this braided base. Those experiencing hair loss or thinning hair should be aware that weaves, particularly if the attached hair is extremely long, can be very heavy on your scalp. This can cause an uncomfortable tightening and lead to traction alopecia.

Weft hair extensions

Weft extensions are quite popular. A weft is a track of hair that is already attached together in a row and which is applied using one row at a time -- as opposed to strand by strand.

"I love this method," says Norma Bouza, extension specialist at Cristophe Salon in Beverly Hills. "It is supereasy, takes very little time and results in gorgeous, luscious hair. It is a long weft that goes ear to ear, with little metal clamps on it. You simply loop the hair, clamp and seal shut. Wefts are amazing for photo shoots or a nonpermanent extension wearer."

Clip-in wefts are an inexpensive way to add instant volume or length. They can be attached at home, offering versatility for the user without spending hours at the salon.

Hot and cold fusion hair extensions

Hair extensions can also be attached with a variety of adhesives and bonds. Some of these use heat, while others do not.

"Individual pieces can be applied with or without heat," says Bouza. "With heat, these thermoplastic bonds are made mostly of nylon, which is great for the hair when it comes time for removal. You simply crunch the bonds, and they turn into a powdery substance and slide right off the hair, causing less damage. Cold fusion bonds are applied with no heat. They are attached through ultrasonic waves from the tongs. This attachment method is also very good for keeping the hair from being damaged," she adds.

"Protein bonded extensions use heat-free technology that bonds the extension to natural hair," explains Giovanni Mele, owner of Giovanni & Pileggi salon in Philadelphia. "This attachment method is the longest lasting and is ideal for thinner hair textures because the keratin protein bond is less

detectable than other methods. You can also apply individual pieces using this technique, which results in more control and a more natural look. There's also no risk of damaging the bonds with hot styling tools.

Mele continues, "With heat-bonded extensions, heat is used to secure the extension to your natural hair. It is long lasting and can be colored and styled like normal hair. Like protein-bonded extensions, you can also apply individual pieces using this technique."

"Infusion hair extensions are made with a keratin tip bond that is then heated and attached around your hair in very small sections," explains Teresa Cliff, a hair colorist and extension specialist at Le Posh Salon and Spa in Los Angeles. "These bonds are soft, so they can be precut to match your hair's density and thickness -- giving you a seamless transition between your hair and the extensions. This method is gentler on the hair, and when maintenance is done correctly, there is little to no damage. You may bathe, go swimming, work out and enjoy your normal routine with ease as long as you follow a few simple guidelines."

Cliff also discusses the benefits and drawbacks of microbead attachments. "Also known as interlock and micro-ring, microbead hair extensions are small bonded pieces that are also attached to the head in very small sections. Instead of having a keratin bond wrapped around the hair it's attached to, these extensions use small metal beads. The size of the beads cannot be customized, but the beads do come in a variety of colors to match the client's hair. This type of extension can get overheated by blow-drying, flatironing or curling iron use. Once the bead is heated, it damages the trapped hair inside and can cause breakage. Also, water can get caught inside the bead, leading to possible corrosion. But if you are more of a wash-n-go kind of person, this would be a good option for you. Another plus is the hair is reusable."

Sandwich hair extension attachments

"I chose to create my line with an adhesive bond, which uses a surgical tape to attach the hair," explains Ron King, L'Oreal Professionnel stylist and spokesman as well as the creator of Ron King Invisi-Tab Hair Extensions. "The benefits of this type of attachment are that the extensions lay flat against the head and remain very natural looking. Additionally, this type of bond provides support from end to end of the attachment, as opposed to strand by strand."

"The tape method is where the extension is attached to the hair by placing one piece under the section of the hair and then one on the top," says Bouza -- "Think of a sandwich." "Then it is heated, allowing it to adhere to the natural hair. This is a great method to get plenty of hair in one section or for a photo shoot."

This sandwich method is ideal for those with fine or thin hair, as well as those suffering from hair loss from chemotherapy or other causes that would make hot applications and harsh chemical attachments undesirable.

Hair extension attachments and hair loss

"When extensions are applied and removed properly, there should be no hair loss," Bouza says. "Educating your client on home care is very important to eliminate hair loss."

Any hair extension attachment can cause hair loss if applied improperly. Talk to your hairstylist about your hair loss issues before deciding which method to use. If your stylist does not have experience dealing with clients with hair loss or thinning hair, it may be best to look for another professional.

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