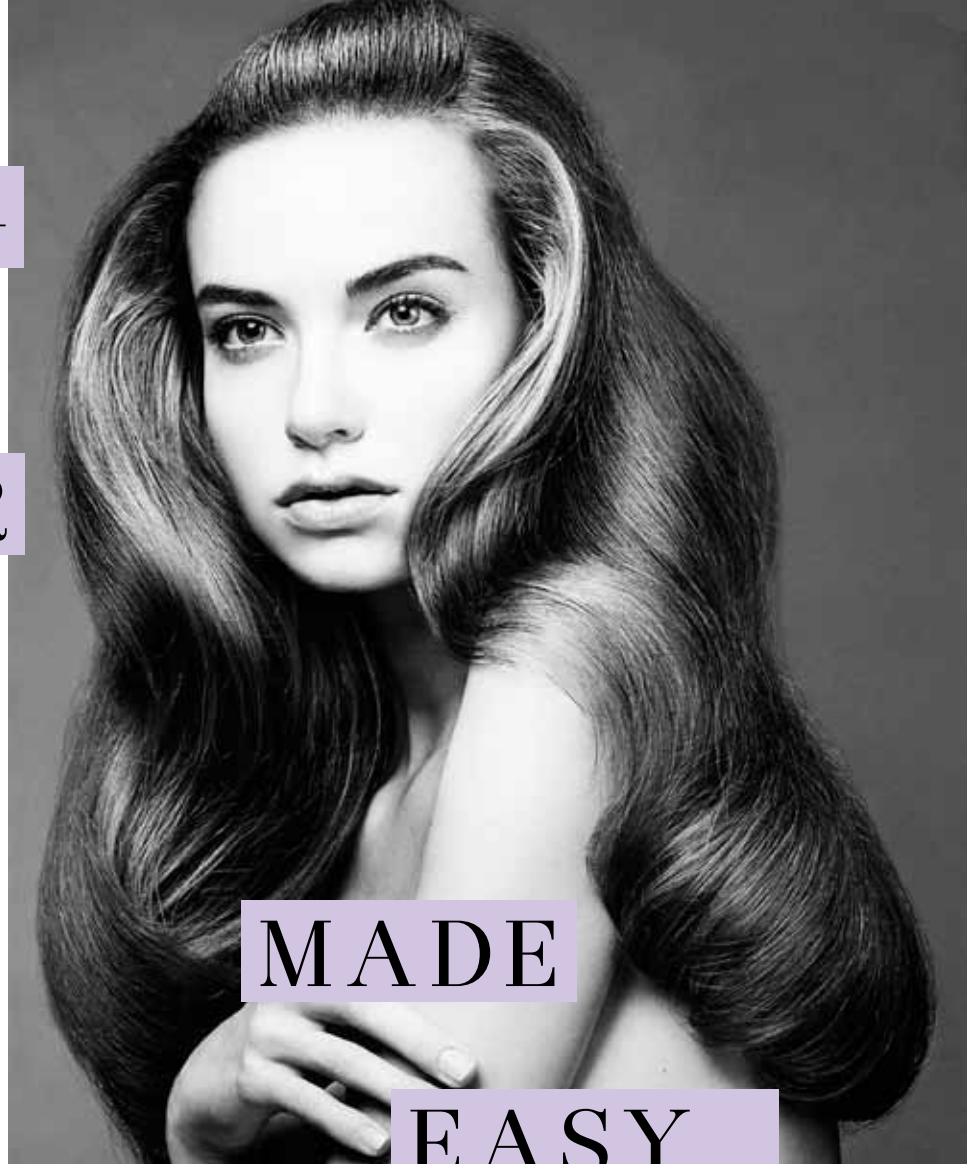


BIG

HAIR

If you want long hair without looking like a Wag, hair extensions are making a BIG comeback – and they're looking better than ever. Just call us Rapunzel...



MADE

EASY...

Forget scraggy, Waggy hair that looks faker than Barbie's – hair extensions have had a re-birth – or should that be re-growth? Now, with incredible new technologies, the chances are that you'd never know if the girl standing next to you with gorgeously glossy long hair has faked it or not. Which means YOU can have the long hair you've always dreamed of too. But beware: there are still dodgy techniques littering the extension world. Here's what you need to know...

The most important thing is whether to go for real or synthetic hair. You can safely heat-style real hair but you can't do the same with synthetic. If you do go for real, opt for an ethically sourced brand such as Great Lengths, which are guaranteed 100% natural human hair. Secondly, check with your stylist that the hair is 'remi' hair. That means that it's not dyed or chemically processed and the cuticle will lie flat against your own.

Thirdly, don't worry if your stylist needs to cut your natural hair before applying extensions – the lengths will need to be layered in so that the extensions blend with your hair. People often panic that when they have them taken out, they'll need to have another chop but think of it this way: your hair grows about 1/2 an inch a month, so in three months (how long extensions last), it'll grow 1 1/2 inches so you'll only be trimming it to its normal length.

Finally, it's all about the bonding. Before, extensions could only be bonded in with glue, leaving you with a sticky mess when they were removed. Now, gentler bonding processes are used, including new technologies that don't even adhere to your own hair.

With all of this in mind, Team Company have put these new-gen extensions to the test (and have filled Company HQ with super-swishy hair!).



euro grade hair at lucinda ellery

Best for: Adding length
Price: From £800
Tested by: Gaetane d'Halluin, Junior Designer

"I've avoided the hairdresser for eight months after a dodgy cut, so couldn't wait to get extensions. The technique didn't hurt and the staff were lovely (lucky, as I was in there for nearly eight hours!). The finish is so natural and as easy to style with heated tools as my real hair. The only catch is remembering to be careful when washing and drying – the root of the hair is really delicate because of the bond. I'm hoping by the time I have to take the extensions out, my dodgy haircut will have grown out."
● www.lucindaellery.com



copper bonding at daniel hersheson

Best for: No-bond bonding
Price: Starts from £450
Tested by: Victoria White, Editor
"My hair doesn't grow long – ever. I've never been able to swish hair over my shoulders... until now! After just three hours in the chair, I have long hair that no one, not even my mum, could work out wasn't my own. Each strand is fitted using a tiny copper bead and is totally painless. Best of all, you can go back in three months' time, provided you keep any that fall out and have them 'rebonded' for only £250. Which, for something that everyone claims takes 10 years off me, is a bargain (cheaper than Botox anyway!)."
● www.danielhersheson.com



multi sonic bonding at inanch london

Best for: Time saving
Price: £1,200
Tested by: Samantha Flowers, Beauty Assistant
"My hair's long but fine and doesn't hold a style, so I wanted extensions for extra body. I thought they'd never be able to match my colour (it's about three different shades) and that I'd be in the chair a whole day (I'm a fidgeter!), but was happily proved wrong. Inanch blended three shades of hair and applied them with the new Great Lengths Multi Sonic Fusion using ultrasound energy to bond the hair. The multi-strand application meant she could apply five strands at once using a 'laser gun'. Result? A super-natural, super-speedy set of extensions."
● www.inanch.com



cold fusion bonding at atherton cox

Best for: Damaged hair
Price: From £240
Tested by: Emma Bigger, Fashion Editor
"My hair is over-bleached, limp and generally rubbish so these are my third extensions in my pursuit of luscious long hair. Because of how bleached my hair is, I was a bit concerned. Happily, Andrew Bidwell at Atherton Cox knows his stuff. He used 100% human Wonderful Hair, alongside a cold fusion system (no heat, no glue), which reduces the risk of damaging hair. The flat keratin extensions were applied in the places I needed extra oomph. Because they're flat, they lie discreetly in my natural hair. They're definitely the best I've tried."
● www.athertoncox.co.uk



the foundation blow-dry at michael john

Best for: Volume
Price: £200
Tested by: Laura Martin, Stylist
"I have fine hair and it looks quite thin at the back, so I jumped at the chance to fake it thicker. My stylist, Alex, explained that this was a very natural and low-maintenance solution to my lack of volume. He used about 20 strands to fill out my style and I was done in half an hour! Using extensions for thickening rather than lengthening costs around a third less than normal because less hair is used. My hair feels thicker and I don't even notice that I have extensions because they're so light and easy to style. I haven't told anyone that I have them and no one has noticed – I'm a total convert."
● www.michaeljohn.co.uk

Compiled by: Samantha Flowers. Photographs: Rebecka Peters, Scope Beauty

For fast-track hair on a budget, try Xtra's 100% Natural Human Hair Clip-in's (around £45 for a deluxe pack) which are double-wafted and ethically sourced from China and India. Between the 12 October and 12 November COMPANY readers can get an exclusive 20% off all extensions (natural and synthetic) by entering COMPANY20 at the checkout. Log on to www.xtra-online.co.uk to order yours!

THE GOLDEN RULES

- Do...**
- ... go to a reputable salon that specialises in extensions.
 - ... opt for real hair if you plan on heat styling with tongs or straighteners.
 - ... get your colour done before your initial consultation. This is where they colour match you.
 - ... ask about maintenance charges. They should be happy to give you a quick trim a few days after application if you decide they're too long.
 - ... keep hold of any that fall out in the first few weeks – the salon should reapply them for you free of charge.
 - ... take care on holiday. Sun, salt and chlorine dry the bonds so make sure you rinse your hair after swimming.
 - ... brush through with a bristle brush morning and evening to ensure shedding hairs don't matte into the bond.
- Don't...**
- ... condition your hair at the roots, use a 2in1 shampoo and conditioner or use oil-based products near the bond.
 - ... use heat stylers near the bonds – the heat could melt them.
 - ... towel-dry hair with a scrubbing motion. Instead, use a blotting motion then wrap hair in a towel
 - ... sleep with your hair loose. Tie it into a low pony to avoid hair tangles.
 - ... brush the hair when wet. Use a wide-tooth comb to separate the bonds.
 - ... wash your hair for 48 hours to allow bonds to set. Then wash every few days.
 - ... use products containing alcohol or silicones as they damage the bonds.

FAUX-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

- **Gielly Green Volume Shampoo and Conditioner, £16, is silicone free and Philip Kingsley No Scent, No Colour Shampoo and Conditioner, £5.60, is pH balanced.**
- **Balmain's (www.balmainhair.com) haute couture hair range is specifically formulated for extensions. Prices start from £29.**
- **For more manageable extensions, try Great Lengths Vital Care Lotion, £11. This leave-in detangling treatment won't destroy the bonds. ☑**