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Hair Extensions: Everything You Need To Know

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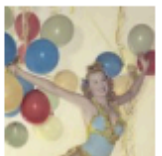
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While blunt bobs are very much 'the look' right now, there's still something to be said about the long, effortlessly full-bodied, loose waves favoured by the likes of our favourite models and style influencers. Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, we're looking at you.

And you don't have to be genetically blessed to get them. Many of the most sought-after heads of hair get help from extensions. To learn more about the often daunting array of fantasy-hair options, Marie Claire's Editorial Director Kate Stephens stopped by the **Four London** salon to give them a trial run - and to get some expert tips from hairstylist to the stars and **Extension Professional** founder Louise Bailey.

This is your Extensions 101...



Kate Stephens, Marie Claire's Digital Editorial Director

WHAT TO LOOK FOR...

In order to determine the quality of the extensions, this is what Louise recommends looking out for:

'When buying clip-in hair extensions, try not go for the ones which require to you clip-in lots of pieces as this will result in lots of noticeable thin pieces in your hair. Opt for ones which come in one or two pieces and have sturdy clips attached to them so they can support the hair without breaking.

Finally, a good brand of hair extensions will offer an array of colours so that you are able to find your perfect colour match.

I only work with 100% human Remy hair as it has the cuticles intact which means you encounter less matting and tangling. It also means your hair extensions blend in with your hair for a much more natural look.'

If you're looking for length, you need to make sure that the extensions you buy are longer than your natural hair. For volume, pick ones that are around the same length as your natural hair.'

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

When it comes to purchasing hair, you get what you pay for, as Louise warns 'Steer clear of extremely cheap hair extensions as you really do get what you pay for when it comes to hair extensions.' Price will vary greatly based on quality of the hair, as well as the desired quantity (for thickness) and length. Virgin (never-before-processed) Remy human hair is the highest quality - with a price tag to match.

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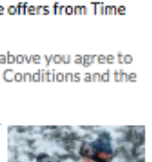
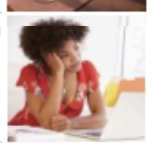
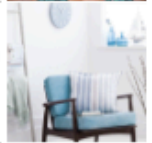
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The Cambridge Family



QUALITY CONTROL

Louise's own extensions hair range, Extensions Pro uses only premium quality, ethically sourced human hair. 'My clip-in hair extensions feature a unique two piece design with 150 grams of hair layered over two easy-to-use wefts – thus creating a seamless blend. With comfortable clip-in attachments, my Extension Professional range won't damage the hair and the easy removal lets you decide whether you wear them every day or just on special occasions.'

Photo Album



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COLOUR-MATCHING

It's important to match the colour and texture of the hair extensions with that of your natural hair – if the colour match is off, your extensions will be very obvious. So try to opt for a salon or stylist with a colourist background.

REAL VS FAKE

Extensions can be either human or synthetic but there's a clear favourite for experts and the A-list alike. For the most discerning of salon-goers, "virgin" hair (never coloured or processed) is considered the crème de la crème for extensions. It can be coloured, curled, ironed and cut in a way that lower quality hair cannot.

Synthetic hair extensions are also available in a range of shades and provide a cheaper alternative to human hair, but you essentially get what you pay for. Also, you can't use hot tools on synthetic hair, or else it will melt, so it's tough to get it to match your texture.

Human Hair - The Pros: 'Real, 100% human hair extensions tend to look more natural and behave like your real hair. They can be styled like your own hair and if you care for them properly, human hair extensions can be more durable and last longer than their synthetic counterparts.'

Human Hair - The Cons: 'Human hair extensions tend to be more expensive than synthetic.'

Synthetic Hair - The Pros: 'Synthetic hair is generally a cheaper alternative to real hair. It's a great solution if you are on a tight budget.'

Synthetic Hair - The Cons: 'Synthetic hair extensions don't look as natural as real hair extensions. They can't be styled as well or as easily and don't often last as long as human hair.'



WOVEN VS CLIP-IN

Finding the right extension method will depend on budget, preference, and hair type. While fusion and tape-in extensions can be used on just about any hair texture, weaves are best suited for curly, kinky hair.

Louise's top tip is to something we can all relate to. 'I always compare clip-in hair extensions to killer high heels- you should only wear them occasionally. They are the best solution for versatility and changing your hair or making an impact for a special occasion. As much as I love my Louboutin heels, I can't wear them everyday and that is the same with some of the clip-ins on the market as long term everyday wear can damage the hair where the clips sit.'

Louise and many other experts recommend bonded hair extensions, due to their versatility and the fact that they can look completely natural without damaging your real hair.

Here's Louise's top tips:

- * You can easily style your hair extensions however you like as long as they are 100% human hair.
- * Try not to use heated appliances such as straighteners on your hair extensions as this will drastically reduce the life span of the hair. I would always recommend blow-drying where possible.
- * When buying clip-in hair extensions, try not to go for the ones which require to you clip-in lots of pieces as this will result in lots of noticeable thin pieces in your hair. Opt for ones which come in one or two pieces and have sturdy clips attached to them so they can support the hair without breaking.
- * Finally, a good brand of hair extensions will offer an array of colours so that you are able to find your perfect colour match.

So there you have it! Happy hair days, peeps.

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