



hair

the secret's out

The latest advancements in hair extension technology allows just about anybody to have long and lustrous locks. **Shallis Mason** reports.

It wasn't so long ago that hair extensions used to be Hollywood stars' best-kept secrets, available only to the rich and famous. At a moment's notice the likes of Elle Macpherson, Jennifer Aniston and Jennifer Lopez could call on their hair stylists to lengthen and thicken their locks.

But hair additions have, in fact, been around for thousands of years. In Ancient Egyptian times, both men and women wore them as cosmetic adornments. Men were known to shave their heads to avoid infection of head lice and wear hair additions to protect themselves from the elements. Since that time hair additions have been in and out of fashion nearly every century and are now readily available to just about anyone.

'Hair extensions can instantly modernise a person's entire look'

For many people, hair extensions not only create length and volume but they also offer immediate results, a boost to their self-confidence and instant gratification. They can modernise a person's entire look without having to take drastic measures or waiting for the hair to grow out naturally from a shorter cut.

For more than five years Sydney hairstylist Joseph Mourad of Joseph Mourad's Hair & Beauty in Sydney's Double Bay has been providing hair extension services to his clients. Mourad offers two techniques for attaching the extensions: ultrasonic cold-fusion and air pressure. His salon is one of only a few with the rights to use these methods which bond clinical keratin with keratin found in the natural hair.

These revolutionary techniques, together with the quality of hair he uses, can achieve dramatic results. The technology creates seamless results, so it is undetectable to the eye due to the elimination of heat, glue and clips. 'The bonding is so seamless that when my clients visit other top salons around the world, often the stylist cannot detect the client's extensions until they look closely,' he says.

Mourad only works with the finest A-grade quality hair available, ensuring the wearer is provided with superior quality hair. 'Colour, texture and thickness must also be taken into account to achieve the smoothest visible bond possible,' he adds.

The process works by attaching the extension to the natural hair, making sure they are very close together for a natural look. The ultrasonic vibration machine softens the keratin and grips onto the natural hair, blending into it. This gentle bonding produces a smooth, even join that allows the hair to lie flat.

According to Mourad, if the process of attaching the hair extensions has been performed properly, there should be no damage to the client's natural hair. 'In fact, extensions can even enhance the quality of the wearer's own hair,' he says.

Like the client's natural hair, the extensions will undergo some degree of wear and tear. 'If you're rough on your natural hair, you'll damage it,' explains Mourad. 'The same rule applies with extensions.'

Mourad emphasises the importance of conducting extensive research when it comes to the application techniques of hair extensions, the quality of the hair being used, and the experience and training of the stylist. 'If the extensions are not attached properly a lot can fall out after a few months,' he warns. 'In unskilled hands, the bonding can also be thick and bulky and put a strain on the natural hair. Additionally, they can tangle easily.'

With proper care, hair extensions typically last between six months and one year, and they can even be removed at home with the right instructions.

Mourad says that today's hair extensions can now be applied in next to no time. 'The air pressure technique allows me to apply around five to 10 extensions in 30 seconds, depending on the length and thickness of the client's hair,' he says. 'This makes it one of the fastest bonding methods available.'

With the latest advances in technology, long and voluminous hair can now be achieved in around the same time as a cut and blow dry. **acsm**



Ajay Rochester AFTER hair extensions by Joseph Mourad