

Learning How to Care for Your Hairpiece

First Things First

Find a professional hair stylist and cosmetologist that you trust and can communicate with. Consult with several different people until you are comfortable. Don't leave yourself without options. There are many wig companies and many professional hair stylists. Don't be talked into a purchase that you are not comfortable with. Sometimes it is helpful to take this first step with the help of a friend. They can be lifesavers.

If possible, gather old pictures of yourself and different hairstyles that you like. Take them with you to the consultant. If you want a new look, search magazines and hairstyle books. With the help of your professional hair stylist there may be a hairpiece that will look like the desired style you want, or one that can be cut and styled to suit you.

Be sure to find a person that will treat you with dignity and honor. You need this person to care about how you are going to feel and how you look when you leave. You want someone you will feel comfortable going back to.

Prior to purchasing a hairpiece, decide what you are able and willing to spend. Hairpiece can range from \$65 to \$5,000.

Buyer Beware! Do your research! When considering your purchase, you may want to think about purchasing two hairpieces. Like shoes, one hairpiece will get worn out faster. It is also helpful to have a backup in case one is dirty.

When you are considering human vs. synthetic hair, keep a few things in mind. Decide what you want. If you want easy, wash-n-go hair, consider purchasing a synthetic wig. Synthetic wigs are made of a plastic-type fiber. They typically will last about six months. They are easy to wash and will go back to their original style when washed, fluffed and dried.

If you decide that you want human hair, understand what that means. Human hair is real hair. You have more styling options, but like real hair, if your hairpiece does not have a curl or permanent wave and you get rained on, it will go flat and you will need to restyle it.

After you decide the type of hairpiece that you are going to purchase or order, you may be asked if you want to have your wig pre-cut or prestyled. DON'T DO IT! Remember that every person's head and face shape is unique, and a wig should be cut and styled to fit you exactly. Wait for the wig to come to you. Then carefully examine it before you do anything to it. Make sure the hair color is the color you ordered. Look at the construction of the hairpiece. Is it what you ordered? Make sure you are satisfied with your purchase before doing anything to it. And educate yourself about return policies. You want a company that will take care of you and guarantee their product.

Don't Panic

When the wig comes in, it may look a little different than what the picture or example looked like. A little cut and a little texture and shaping will make all the difference in the world. Wigs tend to have about two times more hair than you are going to want. Don't be afraid; this is where the professional hair stylist comes in. Remember be "in" the wig when it is cut and styled. You must communicate what you want. Even the best professionally trained stylists can't read your mind.

You're Home, Now What

First, don't be afraid of your hair. The hair will not fall out. Play with it. If, after the first cut and shaping, you think it is too long on the top or sides, go back and have it shaped again. Remember, wig hair does not grow, so take it easy.

When is it time to wash your wig? There are a few ways to tell if your hairpiece needs washing. One certain way to determine whether or not it needs washing is to smell it. Wigs, like hair, pick up odors and pollution, and dirty wigs can look dull and sometimes frizzy. That's the time to bathe them.

Don't be afraid to work with your wig, play with it, and restyle it. HAVE FUN !!!! Remember that it's your hair; you purchased it.

COSMETIC WORKSHOP

Synthetic Wig Care

1. Brush and detangle hair, prior to washing it.
2. Fill a sink or bucket with tepid water and synthetic wig shampoo or a water softener like Calgon. The water softener will help remove the residue. Let soak in a bucket for a few minutes. Gently swish hair back and forth in the water while holding it by the bangs. After a few minutes, empty the dirty water and rinse water and rinse with cool water. Rinse until water is clear.
3. Take the wig out of the clear rinse and gently squish hair so that the bulk of the water is out of it. Then, take a towel and gently wring the hair to dry it. Of course, it won't be completely dry.
4. With a wide tooth plastic comb, gently comb through the hairpiece to remove the tangles. It is advisable to let it air dry on a wig stand or a large can, covered with a towel. Don't lay it on the towel to dry, as it will be flat on the side that it is laying on.
5. Once your hairpiece is dry, remove it from the form. Using a chinstrap to secure it to your head, use a brush or pick to set your style. Your fingers are your best styling tools. A three-way mirror is helpful when doing the final style; you can see all sides and back. If you see holes or can see your scalp, you can tease or back comb at the area to cover any holes that may still be there.
6. *No patting.*
7. Please remember, while wearing your wig, if you constantly have your fingers or hands patting and smoothing, it will make your hand look like a wig. You want to look natural, so less is best.

Human Hair Wig Care

1. Brush and detangle hair prior to washing it.
2. Fill a sink or bucket with tepid water. Not too hot, not too cold.
3. Put about a quarter-sized dollop of shampoo in water. Use a professional shampoo product. Your hair stylist can make a recommendation for you. Rub your hands together with the shampoo. Hold the wig by the front of the bangs with one hand apply the shampoo in a downward motion. Do this several times.
4. Rinse the soap out of the wig, and empty the sink or bucket.
5. Fill the sink or bucket with clear water and put your conditioner in the bucket. Place the hairpiece in the water with the conditioner. Let soak for a few minutes.
6. Take hair out of the bucket and rinse with cool water (this will help to close the cuticle and make it shine, while also protecting it, so that the hair will not frizz). Rinse until water is clear. Do not put baking soda or use a clarifying shampoo on your wig. If a clarifier

needs to be applied, ask your professional to assist you with that. You may want to consider taking your hairpiece to a professional if you need extreme conditioning.

7. Remove hairpiece from water and gently wring. Then, using a towel, gently wring again.
8. Comb through wet hair with a wide-tooth, plastic comb.
9. Next, with a hair dryer, using medium heat, dry the inside for comfort. It also starts to dry the wefts, or the base of the wig.
10. If you only style from the outside and the wefts or base of the wig is still damp, your hairstyle will not hold. If you have permanent wave in your human hair, dry minimally, not combing. This will cause your permanent to frizz.
11. Next, flip the hair over at the nape (or back of the head area) and continue to dry it all the way. Drying it partially upside down will help to give it volume. If you want a straighter, sleeker look, don't blow dry upside down. A flat wig that doesn't have movement will tend to really look fake, therefore giving you that "wiggy" look.
12. Attach your wig to a head block, which is best because you can work with it three-dimensionally. Brush it into a semi-style and finish drying with a roll brush or blow dryer brush. You can back comb or tease to cover holes, create height, and finish styling.

Lisa Ciano
Denver, Colorado