



CUT FOR KEEPS

A great haircut should thrill you the day you get it cut and for months beyond **BY SALLY WADYKA**

I CALL IT THE HOLY GRAIL of haircuts. Once, after leaving my stylist's chair, I felt like a girl in a shampoo commercial—the one with soft, smooth, swingy hair—and the cut still looked great when I washed and styled it myself the next day. Even more amazingly, it continued to get better with time. Alas, when I went back to the salon months later, my stylist had left town. So I asked around for some expert advice on trying to recover the grail (without breaking the bank). Some hairdressers say that getting your hair trimmed every six to eight weeks is essential. But I learned that with the right cut and good hair care habits, you can get a style that sticks around.

STEP ONE: THE CUT

Some styles have more staying power than others. The right cut will work with your hair type and grow out without looking messy. Consider these tips:

SPEND A LITTLE MORE When it comes to haircuts, it may be true that you get what you pay for. “Economy cuts may not last because the stylist doesn’t have the training to tailor the cut to your specific hair type,” explains Philip Pelusi, New York City stylist and creator of Tela Beauty Organics. Check out a “training night” (when trainees learn the ropes and offer discounted cuts) at a pricier salon, or try working with a junior stylist who’s starting out and charges less.

COMMUNICATE CLEARLY “Explain that your goal is to stretch out your visits and find a cut that works with minimal heat styling,” suggests Julie Ebner, owner of JuJu Salon & Organics in Philadelphia. With a good cut (and gentle care) you can expect to go at least three months between visits.

CONSIDER YOUR TYPE “Thick, wavy, or curly hair has a lot of body, so it can often go longer between cuts and the hair will still look good,” says Mario Russo, owner of Mario Russo Salon in Boston. Fine, straight hair can look stringy as it grows out, so you have to get creative with styling.

KNOW WHAT TO ASK FOR “Avoid high-maintenance styles with lots of short layers or asymmetrical cuts,” says Ana Daniel, a stylist at Ouidad in New York City. Longer layers just around the face are a better option because they can grow out and still look neat. You

also may want to consider bangs. “Although they grow out quickly, most stylists trim them for free between cuts—or ask for a quick lesson so you can do it yourself,” says Ebner. “Having well-kept bangs will help keep your cut looking fresh even as the rest of it grows out.” Those with very fine, straight hair might be best served by a blunt cut that falls to the shoulders or above, to keep it from looking too straggly. For shorter styles, Russo suggests a pixie, which should transition into a soft shag. Ask your stylist to avoid trimming with a razor. “The cut will lose its shape in a few weeks,” Pelusi says. Also steer clear of thinning shears. “Those scissors weaken the hair so you’ll end up with split ends sooner,” he adds.

GO SHORT(ER) Since hair grows on average about half an inch per month, go an inch shorter than your ideal. Bear in mind that the rate at which your hair grows may decrease in your forties—so it might be easier to stretch out your cuts. Another great thing about getting older!

STEP TWO: CAREFUL CARE

“If hair is in a healthy state, it’s flexible and bends when brushed without splitting or breaking,” explains Emily Overton, a principal scientist at Pantene. But abrasion from rough care like heat styling can cause hair to become weak and snap or develop split ends, making your hair look jagged. Since the only permanent fix is a haircut, anything you can do to protect your locks helps keep you out of the salon.

EAT RIGHT “Biotin, which is part of the B complex of vitamins, is important to grow healthy hair,” says Joshua Zeichner, M.D., director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City. Increase your intake by eating Swiss chard, tomatoes, romaine lettuce, and carrots.

START AT THE ROOT Massaging your scalp stimulates blood circulation, which helps hair follicles produce stronger strands.

SHAMPOO LESS OFTEN Washing every day can strip away natural oils from the scalp, leaving you with easily damaged hair.

DON'T SKIMP ON CONDITIONER It’s vital when it comes to preventing split ends.

PROTECT WET TRESSES Damp hair is more fragile than dry because the strands are full of water, thus more elastic and stretchable to the point of breaking, so use a comb when hair is wet. “Wait until hair is about 70 percent dry before you begin styling it,” recommends Ebner.

MINIMIZE HEAT AND CHEMICAL EXPOSURE When you can, skip heat styling, and limit perms and straightening treatments to just a few times a year.

GET CREATIVE “Ask your stylist for different ways to do your hair as the cut grows out,” suggests Pelusi. If you can pull some of it back or up, even when the original shape no longer works, your style can continue to evolve—and last. +

ONLINE
Find more healthy hair care tips at wholeliving.com/healthy-hair

Forever Hair With the right tools, you can keep scruffy locks at bay.



1 DETANGLER
MARIO RUSSO ONCE-A-DAY SPRAY can be spritzed onto wet hair to prevent damage while combing. \$18.50, mario-russo.com

2 LIGHT SPRAY
PANTENE AQUA LIGHT WEIGHT-LESS CONDITIONING SHAKE is made for hair that’s easily weighed down by heavy conditioners. \$6, drugstore.com

3 DRY SHAMPOO
OJON FULL DETOX RUB-OUT DRY CLEANSING SPRAY helps extend time between shampoos with a purifying soap made of tree bark extract. \$24, ojon.com

4 HAIR TOWEL
Get excess moisture out of hair before heat drying with SEPHORA MICROFIBER HAIR TURBAN. \$20, sephora.com

5 HAIR OIL
L’ORÉAL PROFESSIONNEL MYTHIC OIL contains nourishing avocado and grape-seed oils to help prevent split ends. \$29, loreal-professionnel-us.com for salons

6 CONDITIONER
INNERSENSE SWEET SPIRIT LEAVE-IN CONDITIONER is a light, natural oil spray to keep locks hydrated and split-free. \$20, amazon.com