

Chapter 19: Wigs and Hair Additions

Cosmetologists should study and understand wigs and hair extensions because the market has expanded and is very lucrative, understanding the fundamentals means you can work with any manufacture, and these skills can open many doors for employment.

HUMAN VERSUS SYNTHETIC HAIR

- **Human Hair**

Advantages

- More realistic appearance
- Greater durability
- Same styling and maintenance as natural hair; can be custom colored and permed to suit the client; tolerates heat from blow dryer, curling iron, or hot rollers

Disadvantages

- Reacts to the climate the way that natural hair does
- After shampooing the hair needs to be reset
- The color will oxidize (fade with exposure to light)
- The hair will break split if mistreated by harsh brushing, backcombing, or excessive heat

- **Synthetic Hair**

Advantages

- Strong, durable; top-of-the-line synthetics have a natural, lustrous look and feel
- Great value
- Very easy to maintain at home; shampooing in cold water will not change the style nor will exposure to humidity
- Most are already cut in the latest styles so only some detailing is required
- Colors are limitless; some contain highlights and lowlights for natural effect
- Will not fade or oxidize even after long exposure to sun

Disadvantages

- Cannot be exposed to extreme heat (curling irons, hot rollers, or high heat or blow dryers)
- Coloring synthetic fibers is not recommended
- Sometimes synthetic hair is so shiny that it may not look natural
- The most natural-looking synthetic pieces are the most expensive

Quality products will be more expensive. Pricing varies as follows:

- European hair is top of the line; virgin (natural) hair is the most expensive
- Hair from India and Asia (most of the human hair commercially available) is next most expensive
 - Indian- usually wavy; lengths from 12 inches to 16 inches
 - Asian- usually straight; lengths from 12 inches to 28 inches
- Human hair mixed with animal hair; often used in theatrical settings
- Human hair mixed with synthetic fibers (usually a 50/50 blend)

Important Questions to Ask:

- What is the addition made of?
- Is the hair colored or virgin (natural)?
- Is the cuticle intact? (It is more expensive because the hair has been **turned**.)
 - **Turned hair (also known as Remi hair)**- hair in which the root end of every single strand is sewn into the base so that the cuticles of all hair strands move in the same direction (down)
- Is the hair fallen hair (the opposite of turned hair)?
 - Hair that has been shed from the head and gathered from a hairbrush;
 - Fallen hair is not turned so the cuticles move in different directions
- Is the hair tangle free?
- What is the condition of the hair?
- Will the hair match the client's hair?
- Can the hair be permed?
- Will the hair last a reasonable amount of time if the client is maintaining it at home?

WIGS

A wig can be defined as an artificial covering for the head consisting of a network of interwoven hair.

- Completed coverage- a wig
- Partial coverage- hairpiece
- **TYPES OF WIGS**
 - **Cap wig**
 - ❖ constructed with an elasticized, mesh-fiber base to which the hair is attached
 - ❖ made in several sizes and require special fittings
 - ❖ usually hand-knotted
 - ❖ front edge is made of material that resembles the client's scalp along with a lace extension and a wire support that is used at temples for a snug, secure fit
 - ❖ hand-tied under the net (under-knotted) to conceal the cap edge
 - ❖ side and back contain wire supports
 - ❖ latex mold caps are available for clients with special needs



- **Capless wig (also known as caps)**
 - ❖ Machine made from human or artificial hair
 - ❖ Hair is woven into wefts (long strips of hair with a threaded edge)
 - ❖ Rows of wefts are sewn to elastic strips in a circular pattern to fit the head shape
 - ❖ More popular; ready-to wear; less expensive than cap wigs
 - ❖ Very light; comfortable to wear; healthier than cap wigs because they breathe

Capless



- Capless is referred to as "open cap".
- Weftings attached to thin stretch elastic lace for better ventilation.
- Adjustable tabs at nape and contoured ear tabs.
- Cap is machine made.

METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION

- **Hand-tied (also known as hand-knotted)**- made by inserting individual strands of hair into mesh foundations and knotting them with a needle; natural and realistic looking; most closely resembles human hair growth; flexibility at the root; can be combed in almost any direction
- **Semi-Hand-tied**- combination of synthetic hair and hand-tied human hair; reasonably priced; offer natural appearance and good durability
- **Machine-made**- made by feeding wefts through a machine then stitching them together to form the base and shape of the wig; has a wefting direction which limits styling options; least expensive; have a bounce-back quality (even after shampooing, style returns)

TAKING WIG MEASUREMENTS

- **Custom wigs**- take client's measurement by keeping soft tape measure close to the client's head without pressure; send measurements to manufacturer; some require a hair sample from client; many have particular forms to complete that also include hair shade, length of hair, type of hair part and pattern
- **Ready-to-Wear**- no measuring needed
- **Blocking the wig**- head shaped form onto which the wig is placed for fitting, coloring, and styling; **today most wigs are cut and finished while on the client**; the block can be used for practicing

PUTTING ON THE WIG (p. 546-547)

- Securing hair under the wig cap and making sure it is flat and even will determine how well a wig sits on the head
- If a wig is too large and does not have tightening straps, you can create a small fold or tuck and sew the wig along the inside to create a seam; *sewing a wig to create a customized fit is a specialized art*

CUTTING WIGS (p. 546-547)

- The goal is to make the wig look realistic
- Follow the basic methods of haircutting-blunt, layered, graduated- using the same sectioning and elevation as on a real head
- You may also cut free-form on a dry hair; if using free-form, always cut towards the weight
 - Vertical sections create lightness
 - Diagonal sections create a rounder beveled edge
 - Horizontal sections build heavier weight
- Wet cutting is more controlled and technical; dry cutting is freer and more abstract (often looks more realistic)

STYLING THE WIG (p. 547-549)

- Remember the total picture; ask the client to stand and walk around after you style a wig to check for balance and proportions
- Most hair is chemically treated so it needs to be handled gently
 - When using heat, set styling tool on low
 - Do not pull hair or treat it carelessly
 - Use boar bristle brush or synthetic brush with smooth, rounded plastic teeth
- Use a block for coloring, perming, setting, and basic cut outlining
- Finish the cut and style on the client's head to achieve proper balance and personalization
- Choose styling products for color-treated hair or specialized products for wigs
- If wig does not have a natural-looking hairline or lace front, backcomb gently around the hairline for a softened look
- To test how realistic a wig looks, use the wind test: gently blow around a client's face with a blowdryer and make changes if it does not look realistic

CLEANING THE WIG (p. 549)

- Always follow manufacturer's instructions
- Use a gentle shampoo (for color-treated hair or specialty wig shampoo) and never one with a sulfur base
- Soak then gently squeeze the wig
- Use a drying rack for drying
- If wig is made of human hair, also use a conditioner

COLORING WIGS AND HAIR ADDITIONS (p. 549-550)

- All synthetic haircolors used for wigs and hairpieces are standardized according to the 70 colors on the haircolor ring used by wig and hairpiece manufacturers
- Colors range from black to pale blonde
- If you are going to custom color the hair, use hair that has been bleached through the lifting process and not with metallic dyes; check with the manufacturer
- Before coloring, see if the cuticle is intact. If the cuticle is absent, the hair is very porous and will react to color in an extreme manner
- Always to a strand test prior to a full-color application
- When coloring human-hair wigs or additions, conduct regular color checks every five to ten minutes; the hair you are working on came from many different heads, so it may be unpredictable
- It is often easier to color the client's hair to match the addition

PERMING WIGS AND HAIR ADDITIONS (p. 550)

- If you want to perm human hair to match a client's wave pattern, you need to know how the hair was colored. DO NOT perm hair that was colored with a metallic dye.
- Perms must be performed with the hair additions off the client's head
- For wigs and hairpieces, cover the head form with plastic to protect it from the chemicals, pin the hair securely to the head form, and perm as you would a natural head of hair
- Perm extensions as they lie flat

HAIRPIECES (p. 550-552)

- Hairpieces- a hair addition that sits on a client's head, covering a portion of it, or clip onto another area, such as the nape; usually attached by temporary methods; can also be attached with a braid and sew technique
- There are many different types:
 - Integration pieces- attached with semi-permanent method
 - Toupees
 - Fashion hairpieces which include falls, half wigs, wiglets, chignons, bandeaus, cascades, ponytails, bangs, and fillers

TYPES OF HAIRPIECES

- **Integration hairpieces-** hairpiece that has openings in the base through which a client's own hair is pulled to blend with the natural or synthetic hair of the hairpiece
 - Very light
 - Natural-looking
 - Add length and volume
 - Good for clients with thinning hair

- **Toupees-** small wig used to cover the top and crown of the head
 - Fine net base is usually most appropriate material for clients with severe hair loss
 - Attach: temporary (clips or tape) or semi-permanent (tracks, adhesive, or sewing)
 - The best toupees are custom-designed
- **Fashion Hairpieces-** great salon product for special occasions
 - Include ponytails, chignons, cascades, streaks, bangs, falls, half wigs and clip-in extensions
 - Vary in size; usually have a stiff net base
 - Attach temporarily with hairpins, clips, combs, bobby pins, or elastic

See the following examples in the book on pages 552-553

- Wraparound ponytail- a long length of wefted hair that covers 10 to 20 percent of the head; use as a simple ponytail or in chignons; good for client who can just get her own hair into a ponytail
- A cascade of curls is attached with a comb
- A hair wrap is mounted on an elastic loop and secured to the client's head with hairpins

HAIR EXTENSIONS (p.553-560)

Hair extensions are hair additions secured to the base of the client's natural hair in order to add length, volume, texture, or color.

- May be made from human hair, synthetic hair, or a blend of the two
- They are either wefts of hair or strands (small bundles)
- Guidelines:
 - Decide whether you are adding length, thickness, or both
 - Know the final style you are trying to achieve; make a sketch
 - Stay 1 inch away from the hairline at the front, sides, and nape as well as one inch from the part
 - Be sure the base does not show through very thin hair
 - When working with curly hair, you must decide if you are matching the curl pattern or adding another curl pattern to the hair
 - Curly hair appears thicker so you may not need to add as many extensions

Attachment Techniques (p. 554-555)

- **Braid-and-Sew Method**
 - Method of attaching extensions by securing them to the client's own hair by sewing braids or a weft onto an on-the-scalp braid (cornrow) which is sometimes called the track; the angle of the track determines how the hair will fall; may be placed horizontally, diagonally, vertically, or along curved lines

- Requires no special equipment
- Very safe technique
- Not recommended for clients who have extremely damaged hair, baby fine hair, or unclean scalps
- Lock stitch, double-lock stitch and overcast stitch are all ways to sew the extension to the track (see p. 554-555)
- **Bonding Method**
 - Method of attaching hair extensions, hair wefts, or single strands using an adhesive or bonding agent applied with an applicator gun
 - Hair should be at least 4 inches long
 - Lasts from 2-4 weeks depending upon frequency of shampooing, oiliness or dryness of the scalp, quality of products used
 - Maintenance is required as often as every two weeks
 - Process: section the hair at the nape; measure first weft against parting ½ to 1.2 inch from the hairline; lay weft on flat surface and apply adhesive (use a consistent amount); lightly press the weft against the clean parting; hold for 20 seconds; tug gently to be sure it has adhered; proceed to next section, working up the head
 - Do not work too close to the crown and parting or the weft will show through
 - Remove by dissolving the adhesive bond with oil or bond remover
 - Two advantages: very affordable; does not take much longer than a regular hair service
 - Disadvantage: some clients may have an allergic reaction to the adhesive (always perform a patch test)
 - DO NOT USE on clients with severely damaged hair; DO NOT USE wefts longer than 12 inches as the additional weight may cause damage
- **Fusion Bonding Method**
 - Method of attaching extensions by bonding it to the client's hair with a bonding material activated by the heat from a special tool
 - Advantages: harmonizes with the client's own hair with no unattractive attachment sites, lasts up to 4 months; removal is quick and painless
 - Disadvantages: expensive and time-consuming
- **Linking Method**
 - Method of attaching extension where a small amount of hair is picked up off a parting and a link is slid on close to the scalp with a special tool; the extension is inserted into the link and the link is pinched flat with pliers.
 - Advantages: styling versatility; integrity of natural hair is maintained
 - Disadvantages: expensive, time consuming, links can rust
- **Tube Method**
 - Method where the client's hair and the addition strand are inserted into a tube which is then heated to shrink it (requires special tools and training)

To become skilled at using extensions, you need to take specialized, formal training and practice continually.