

ripple effect

Put down your flatiron and step away from the straightening cream. This spring, waves are *everything*. Here's how to create three undeniably sexy looks.

by Lesley Rotchford · photographs by Donna Trope

After last year's brief flirtation with straight hair, stylists say waves are where it's at right now: They're relaxed, versatile, and easily refreshed with just a scrunch or two—plus this: "Straight hair looks the same on everyone!" says Nathaniel Hawkins, a New York City hairstylist. "Wearing waves is a simple way to express your personality and style."

And thanks to a slew of innovative new tools and texturizing products, even those born without bend are finally able to pull off everything from windswept beachy coils to voluminous soft ripples. "Changing your entire look can be as easy as changing the size of your curling iron," says Hawkins.

With waves, it's important to consider the length and texture of your hair, as well as the shape of your face, when picking a look. Top experts reveal the three hottest versions, who they work best on, and how to whip them up yourself. For all hair types and textures, apply mousse (two or three handfuls, depending on length) from damp roots to ends, then blow-dry hair until it's fairly straight before following the next steps.



beachy

Originated by surfer chicks, this style can be laid-back or lusty. "These waves are sexy because they have an ease and rawness to them," says Hawkins.

MOST AMAZING ON:

Those with medium to thick hair that's shoulder length or longer. This style flatters every face shape and is "especially great for those with strong features because it has a softening effect," says Matt Fugate, a hairstylist at the Sally Hershberger Downtown salon in New York City.

TO DO:

Step 1: Hold a one-inch iron vertically and wrap a one-inch section of hair loosely around the barrel (not clipped into it), starting about two inches from the roots and twisting away from your face. Hold for two seconds, then let the curl fall. Repeat all over your head.

Step 2: Rake through the curls with your fingers to loosen them.

Step 3: Spritz on surf spray from mid-strands to ends to give hair extra texture. Try John Masters Organics Sea Mist Sea Salt Spray (\$16.50, johnmasters.com).

Quick Tip

No time for curling? Air-dry, apply a wave cream, then tousle and scrunch with a towel. Try Matrix Total Results Curl Contouring Lotion (\$15, matrix.com for salons).



COLOR WONDERS

The right hair color can make waves look shinier and even cooler—and also help hold your style.

1

Because straight hair lies flat, it's typically glossier than curls. A clear glaze will add not only luster but also definition to waves. Try Clairol Natural Instincts Shine Happy in Clear Shine Therapy (\$9, at drugstores). For the longest-lasting results (about five weeks), colorist Sharon Dorram, owner of Sharon Dorram Color at Sally Hershberger Salon in New York City, recommends combing the glaze through dry hair and leaving it on for 15 to 20 minutes before rinsing.

2

Waves make highlights appear more pronounced, so a little goes a long way, says Dorram. Focus highlights around the hairline and crown versus all over. If you prefer your waves messy and tousled, ask your colorist to paint highlights just onto the ends "for a beachy, sun-kissed look," suggests colorist Megan Sanchez-Hartigan of the Marie Robinson Salon in New York City.

3

Wavy ends often look frizzy and dull. For a quick pick-me-up, apply a demi-permanent dye (which contains light-reflecting pigments and washes out after 24 shampoos) to your ends for five to 10 minutes, says Sanchez-Hartigan.

Quick Tip
Accessorize a tousled style by clipping a studded or leather barrette right above your ear on the side with less hair.

messy

Not all events call for a flawless, every-strand-in-place 'do—and that's where these slightly roughed-up waves come in. "They're a non-fussy way to dress up your hair for a party without putting it up," says Hawkins.

MOST AMAZING ON:

Women with chin- to medium-length hair (longer hair doesn't hold this wave as well). It's a go for all face shapes and hair textures, says Hawkins.

TO DO:

Step 1: Make a deep side part. Take a section of hair

that's about two inches wide and one inch deep, and curl it with a one-inch iron held diagonally (for this style you don't have to wrap the hair; go ahead and clip it into the iron). Roll it toward your face, all the way to the roots, being careful not to touch your scalp.

Step 2: Unravel your hair from the iron, then roll the curl up to your scalp with

your fingers and pin it tight and flat against your head with a double-prong clip; try Hot Tools Double Prong Clips (\$3 for 12, ulta.com). Curl the next section of hair, rolling away from your face. Repeat all over your head, and leave hair pinned until curls are completely cool, up to 20 minutes.

Step 3: Gently brush out the curls, then skim hair with

finishing cream to control flyaways; try Pantene Pro-V Beautiful Lengths Strengthen and Smooth Finishing Crème (\$6, at drugstores). Shake curls with your fingers while pulling hair away from your scalp to mess it up and create volume. The style should be more wild than perfect, with curls falling haphazardly around your face.

flowy

This look fuses the sleekness of straight with the femininity of waves. "These are the most modern kind of waves," says Fugate. "They are really glamorous but still have a looseness to them."

MOST AMAZING ON:

Long, medium to thick hair that isn't crazy-layered (too much choppiness will break up the soft wave of this style), and those with an oval or heart-shaped face.

TO DO:

Step 1: Make a middle part. It helps to keep the top sleek, which is key to this look.

Step 2: Hold a one-and-a-half-inch curling iron vertically and wrap two-inch sections of hair around the outside of the iron, twisting away from your face, then turn the iron horizontally and roll it up to ear level. Let your hair sit on the iron for three to five seconds, then unravel. Repeat all over.

Step 3: Finish with shine spray if your hair tends to hold curl well (try Vidal Sassoon Pro Series Heat Protect & Shine Spray, \$4, at drugstores) or a medium-hold hair spray if it needs help (try Aloxxi Style Flexible Hairspray, \$17, aloxxi.com for salons). "Don't overdo it with hair spray. You want movement," says Fugate.

Quick Tip
If your face is wide, start the waves lower, below your chin, to help balance your cheeks.

PUMPED-UP IRONS

These new curling tools may just be the wave of the future.



1/ Hot Tools Deep Waver

Resembling a giant crimper, this ceramic tourmaline iron gets the job done fast by curling big chunks of hair all at once. Though it looks daunting, it is really easy to use and produces Taylor Swift-style ripples. \$60, ulta.com

2/ Sarah Potempa Beachwaver Rotating Curling Iron

Simply clamp your hair into the base of this iron, press the button, and watch the barrel spin and wrap your hair. It makes tight spirals, but you can rake your fingers through the curls to loosen 'em. \$199, sarahpotempa.com

3/ Sultra "The Bombshell Cone" Curling Iron

This clamp-free iron—covered in little bumps that help grip hair—yields pretty, voluminous waves. As a bonus, the iron treats damaged hair with infrared rays, which seal the cuticle during styling. \$130, nordstrom.com

4/ T3 BodyWaver

This white wonder is sleek (it turns on via a discreet chrome dial at the base) and creates bouncy, Gisele-esque waves, thanks to the fat, hollow barrel, which keeps heat even and consistent. In three words: Buy it now. \$149, sephora.com ■