



Get Your
Best
Hair at
30, 40, 50, 60

BY GENEVIEVE MONSMA



To Love

YOUR HAIR, YOU FIRST HAVE TO KNOW IT—THE WAY IT IS TODAY, NOT WHEN YOU WERE IN COLLEGE. FOR INSTANCE, WOMEN IN THEIR 40S MAY COMPLAIN ABOUT THINNING, WHILE THOSE 50 AND OVER LAMENT SAHARA-LEVEL DRYNESS. SO WE ASKED PROS TO OUTLINE STRATEGIES FOR EVERY DECADE TO HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF THE LOCKS YOU'VE GOT RIGHT NOW







Your Mane Objective at 30

Enjoy what you've got

YOUR HAIR may never look better than it does right now—so wear it well. “At this point, your hair is still pretty full, and most women are taking better care of themselves than they were in their twenties,” says Nunzio Saviano, owner of an eponymous salon in New York City. “As a result, their hair is often healthier now than it was then.” One potential pitfall? The thirties often see a rise in stress levels as women become more “life invested than they were in their twenties,” says Liz Cunnane Phillips, a trichologist at the Philip Kingsley Clinic in New York City. Just as they’re becoming more serious about their careers, they’re often having babies, which forces them to juggle the demands of work and family, she continues. The resulting stress produces spikes in cortisol, which can cause temporary hair shedding. To combat this condition, Cunnane Phillips recommends exercise, the great tension reliever, and proper nutrition. “Life isn’t going to get any easier, and good eating habits become crucial to hair health later on,” she says.

Defeat dryness

MOST PROS say it’s time to start using a hydrating shampoo and conditioner, even if your hair doesn’t feel that dry. “In our thirties, we start to lose lipids in our scalps, similar to what is happening on our faces, so we need to up the ante on moisture,” says Chelsea Scott, founder of the TruHair product line (hsn.com). Other pros agree it’s time to start hydrating, if for no reason other than to establish good habits before your dryness issues start. Try L’Oréal Paris Advanced Haircare Power Moisture Shampoo and Conditioner (\$5 each; drugstores).

This is also the time to buy a grownup brush; no more raking through strands with a plastic comb. “Brushing your hair is key. The whole 100-strokes-a-day idea went out of vogue for a while, but it’s back because there is a benefit to regular, therapeutic brushing,” says Saviano. “As we age, hair follicles shrink and eventually die. So now is the time to stimulate them with vigorous brushing, which keeps them healthy longer.” His advice: Use a small boar-bristle brush like Mason Pearson’s (\$88 and up; [bigelowchemists.com](#)), since natural hairs don’t tug on and break strands, and stroke your hair in every direction—“forward, backward, side to side”—for a minute. If your hair is straight, brush daily; if it’s wavy or curly, do it before shampooing.

Let your lifestyle dictate your hairstyle

BECAUSE YOUR HAIR is probably in good condition, you have the luxury of a wide range of styles. “The thirties is a sweet spot for your hair,” says Saviano. “You can wear a pixie because your skin is still radiant and your neck is still smooth. Or you can show off your enviable hair by letting it grow down your back.” Several pros point out, however, that if your life is more hectic than it’s ever been, you may want to consider a style you can realistically maintain

on your own. “I try to steer my busier clients toward cuts that look good even when they don’t have much time to fuss, such as a midlength style with light layers,” says Juan Carlos Maciques, a stylist at the Rita Hazan Salon in New York City. Adir Abergel, a Los Angeles–based stylist, concurs. “I have two different kinds of 30-year-old clients: those still unencumbered by family, who have the time for a more high-maintenance style, such as Jessica Biel’s blunt bangs and long layers; and the young moms who can’t be a slave to having a cut every six weeks,” he says. “For them, I suggest a long bob with angled bangs, because the grow-out process is pretty painless.”

Consider color (yep, this means you)

MANY THIRTY-SOMETHINGS notice that their natural color is becoming darker and duller, or they spot their first grays; sometimes they experience both, says Kyle White, lead colorist at the Oscar Blandi Salon in Manhattan. For natural blondes, the solution is simple: Start highlighting (if you haven’t already). This camouflages the grays and at the same time brightens the mousiness. For red or dark hair that is sprinkled with silver, White suggests a semi-permanent dye to mask the gray. It’s the “kindergarten of hair color,” he says, and a good first step for someone who has never colored before, as the shade fades naturally. And, finally, if the tone of your red or dark strands is becoming dull and drab, Rona O’Connor, a Los Angeles–based colorist, suggests adding a few discreet, thin highlights around the face or on the ends of the hair. This subtly brightens, she says, without altering your overall shade or setting you up for frequent maintenance. »



Your Mane Objective at 40

Brace your hair for hormone havoc

“IN YOUR FORTIES, hair falls into the same category as reading glasses,” says Cunnane Phillips. “Some days your eyes seem fine, and other days you can’t make out the menu. Your hair plays similar tricks on you. One morning it looks the same as always; the next, you swear your part is getting wider.” The culprit? Hormone imbalance (hello, perimenopause) is usually the reason our strands become skinnier and less plentiful. But several experts say they’ve seen a number of forty-something clients with iron deficiency (aka anemia) or thyroid malfunction who complain of significant hair loss, so it’s important to consult a doctor or trichologist if you’re concerned. “In my experience, early intervention is key,” says Saviano. “You can’t turn back the clock, but you can keep [hair loss] from getting worse.” Better news: Cunnane Phillips says your hair fiber is still quite strong, and while hair is a bit drier now than it was in your thirties (following the same pattern as your skin), the dehydration is usually nothing that consistent conditioning can’t handle.

Fight back on four fronts

TREAT YOUR HAIR as you would your face. In addition to a hydrating shampoo and conditioner, experts suggest expanding your regimen to include

the hair version of a night cream—a deep, once-a-week mask. Scott recommends alternating two deep conditioners: one week, an extra-rich formula that is all about hydration; the next, a mask laced with keratin (aka hair protein) to keep the fiber strong and prevent breakage. Her picks: Kérastase Nutritive Masquintense (\$63; kerastase-usa.com) and Fekkai PrX Reparatives Intense Fortifying Mask (\$49; fek kai.com).

Cunnane Phillips suggests using a product that works directly on the scalp, since its health will affect new hair growth. Two to try: Philip Kingsley Stimulating Scalp Mask (\$9; philipkingsley.com) or John Masters Organics Deep Scalp Follicle Treatment and Volumizer (\$23; johnmasters.com). And if the thinning is pronounced in spots—or if your hairline is steadily marching away from your forehead—Cunnane Phillips says to consider spot-treating those areas with minoxidil, the active ingredient in Rogaine. DS Laboratories also makes a product, Spectral DNC-N (\$40; dermstore.com), that contains an ingredient similar to minoxidil, called nanoxidil, which gets favorable reviews from users because it is absorbed quickly and is not sticky.

Finally, most pros emphasize good nutrition, with special attention to your intake of protein and iron (the latter is particularly important if perimenopause is making your periods heavier than they used to be). Also, take a multivitamin and/or something that contains biotin to be certain enough nutrients reach your nonessential tissues—namely, your hair and nails. “You want to do all you can to ensure you’re growing your best head of hair, so nutrition matters,” says Cunnane Phillips.

Choose length based on hair health

IN YOUR THIRTIES, your primary considerations in choosing a cut were your lifestyle and your willingness to spend the time and money needed to

maintain the look you chose. While those factors still count in your forties, so does the general condition of your hair. If you notice some thinning, Saviano says, try cutting your hair to your shoulders or collarbone to make it look fuller instantly. But don’t cut too many layers; Saviano says that can make the ends look straggly. If you see some thinning around the hairline or temples (“very common,” says Cunnane Phillips), you may want to add bangs—either the kind that falls straight across your forehead or a longer, sideswept fringe. And if you belong to the genetically tress-blessed club, along with Jennifer Aniston and Connie Britton, by all means wear your hair as long as you like, for as long as you can, says Scott.

Devise a game plan for grays

“ALMOST ALL WOMEN will see some gray by the end of this decade,” says White. While semipermanent color may suffice for those who see only a sprinkling of silver, most will have to graduate to permanent dyes, White says. That being so, you’ll be happy to know that in the past five years, “there have been *huge* advancements in hair color—now there are good options that don’t contain drying and damaging ammonia,” says White. His favorite: L’Oréal Professionnel INOA. As for tonality, O’Connor says that almost everyone this age will benefit from going a little brighter around the face: “For those who really resist lightening their hair, I just subtly lift the color at the hairline to make them look sunnier and refreshed and leave the rest of the color dark.” Finally, women who have decided to embrace their silver strands may want to lighten their overall color a little while the grays grow in. That way, the contrast between new and old growth is less obvious, and the grow-out less tedious. »





Hydrate, hydrate, and did we mention...hydrate?

DRYNESS is the most common complaint now, so it follows that most pros recommend hydrating at every turn: a moisturizing shampoo and conditioner, a once-a-week deep mask and a leave-in conditioner if your hair is really parched. Some to try: Living Proof Restore Shampoo, Conditioner and Mask Treatment (\$28, \$28 and \$42, respectively; livingproof.com) and Nexxus Youth Renewal Rejuvenating Elixir (\$18; drug-stores). Rich products can build up on the scalp, however, so White recommends using a clarifying shampoo weekly—or dabbing your scalp with an astringent such as Sea Breeze—to keep hair follicles from clogging and impeding growth. If you are shedding hair at a rate you deem alarming, Francesca Fusco, MD, a cosmetic dermatologist in Manhattan, says to first make certain you are eating well (and in particular are consuming enough protein) to ensure your hair and scalp are well fed. You should also be exercising to lower cortisol levels, since stress can exacerbate fallout. Finally, she suggests seeing a dermatologist to discuss more-aggressive hair-reviving measures, such as minoxidil (in products like Rogaine); Latisse (the serum that is FDA approved for eyelash growth but that some doctors are using off-label on the scalp); injections of PRP (platelet-rich plasma), which contains growth factors believed to stimulate hair follicles; and laser phototherapy, which is said to boost scalp-cell energy levels and maximize follicle activity.

Soften your style

“THE FIFTIES should be all about softness,” says Maciques. Saviano concurs: “Go for a cut that has body and movement. Anything harsh will be aging. And if you’ve never used rollers before, now is the time. The goal is to lift the hair off the scalp.” None of the pros we spoke to wanted to say no to long hair

Give your tresses a pep talk

DURING THIS DECADE, most women go through menopause, which leaves hair drier. Grays dominate, making hair coarser and duller than it was 10 years ago, and Cunnane Phillips says most women will have some thinning by now (though if you’ve battled unruly, thick hair, this may be a welcome change). Finally, she points out that some may be coping with health challenges such as high blood pressure or cholesterol, and medications prescribed to control them can harm the hair’s density or luster. It’s not all downhill, though. Dryness and density usually stabilize by the end of your fifties, so the ensuing decades shouldn’t present any more unwelcome surprises.

Your Mane Objective at 50

(consider the lustrous locks of Demi—or Julianne—Moore). But most say the majority of their fifty-something clients look chicest in cuts that fall just below the collarbone or shorter. A few outstanding haircuts on over-50 celebs: shaggy pixies on Angela Bassett and Ellen DeGeneres, bobs on Jodie Foster and Katie Couric and shoulder-length waves on Sheryl Crow and Michelle Pfeiffer. Several pros add that many of their 50-ish customers invest in clip-on hairpieces to add fullness. Although synthetic varieties are available at most beauty-supply stores, the stylists we spoke to said they prefer to see women enlist the help of their stylist or colorist, or both, when it comes to extensions. “A professional will direct you to what looks best, will be easiest for you to use—and will inflict little or no damage on the hair. Good hairpieces should be like good plastic surgery: They elevate your look but are not obvious,” says Abergel.

Add light around your face

“NO MATTER how good your skin is, having dark hair now looks harsh,” says White. “Imagine putting a photograph in a black frame . . . then envision the same photo in a cream frame. The lighter frame makes the photo look softer.” And while White concedes that not everyone needs to be blonde, he is adamant that women with dark or red hair look better with a few highlights. “They make the hair look as if it has more depth; they also create the illusion of fullness,” he says. At the other end of the spectrum, colorists warn against going *too* blonde. “You’ll look washed out,” says White. What helps: making sure deeper tones are mixed in with the bright. And if you elect to go silver? Every two weeks, shampoo with a purple-toned formula to keep dingy yellow tones at bay. An oldie but still goodie: Clairol Professional Shimmer Lights (\$9; [sallybeauty.com](#)). Finally, while this applies to any fifty-something suffering from a lack of luster, it’s imperative for those with silver strands: Visit the salon every two months to get a gloss—or try an at-home version, such as John Frieda Luminous Glaze Clear Shine Gloss (\$10; [drugstores](#)).

Your Mane Objective at 60

Relish your hair renaissance

AFTER MAJOR hair changes in your fifties (dryness, an explosion of gray, a feeling of “Where did my hair go?”), things have calmed down. In fact, “your hair may actually improve” as your hormones stabilize, says Saviano. Several pros we interviewed also remarked that what makes women in their sixties most attractive is that they accept themselves enough to go with the hair they have rather than try to reclaim the look they *once* had. Finally, Cunnane Phillips points out that many women retire in this decade, travel more and make more time for themselves—and their hair!

Fight flatness

A GOOD moisturizing shampoo, conditioner and weekly deep-conditioning mask should be in your lineup. But now aim for products that provide *weightless* moisture so your thinner, more fragile locks won’t fall flat. A few we like: Pantene Aqua Light Shampoo, Conditioner (\$4 each; [drugstores](#)) and Goldwell Dualsenses Rich Repair 60 Sec Treatment (\$19; [ulta.com](#)). “I encourage women to scale back on shampooing if possible—to every other day or even every third day,” says Scott. This helps prevent over-stripping of the hair’s natural oils

and the scalp’s lipids, and your hair will suffer less breakage because you aren’t doing the whole blow-drying-and-styling routine daily. To extend the life of your wash, find a good dry shampoo, such as Aloxxi Dry Shampoo (\$20; [aloxxi.com](#)).

Consider a chic short cut

MOST STYLISTS are unwilling to totally reject the idea of long hair after 60, but they aren’t talking it up either. “To the shoulders, lightly layered” is a more popular suggestion—or very short. “Many women at this age have the confidence to pull off a short cut,” says Saviano. Two over-60 celebs to emulate: Isabella Rossellini and Helen Mirren. Then there’s the whole stiff-hair issue: Because over-60 hair is coarser and drier, some women deal with strands that stay put *too* well, creating a hair helmet instead of a ‘do that swings. A short cut solves that problem, says Saviano, since it isn’t meant to move around. And if you do elect to wear your hair long, most pros say to use a product that provides a soft, shiny finish. Try Living Proof Satin Hair Serum (\$29; [sephora.com](#)).

Brighten—or whiten

“LIGHTER HAIR COLORS or highlighting will take years off your appearance,” says Scott. “Look at Meryl Streep or Diane Sawyer. They’ve both gone lighter as they’ve aged, and it keeps them looking fresh.” Embracing your natural silver can also be beautiful; just be sure to wash twice a month with a purple shampoo, such as Matrix Total Results So Silver Shampoo (\$9; [drugstores](#)). White emphasizes getting frequent salon glosses (monthly if possible) or doing one at home, because whatever your color, it is apt to lack shine. An at-home option: Oscar Blandi At-Home Salon Glaze (\$27; [oscarblandi.com](#)). *