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Make the cut

By **Vanessa Mulquiney**

THERE'S NO DOUBT a new hairstyle can boost your spirits. Compliments from friends flow like champagne and your confidence soars. But what do you do when a trip to the hair salon has the opposite effect?

Most people can recount at least one horror story that has the victim in hiding and avoiding mirrors for at least six weeks. But according to hairstylists, there are simple guidelines that should have you leaving the salon feeling sexy rather than embarrassed. They also have tips on how to keep the style looking good between salon visits.



Eve Lindsay, the Hong Kong-based personal and corporate image consultant and owner of Savvy Style, says knowing your face shape is the most important step in selecting a flattering hairstyle. Even with fabulous clothes and a great figure, you won't look good if your hairstyle doesn't work.

"To find your face shape, pull your hair off your face," Lindsay says. "Imagine you have a point at the top of your face, on your temples, cheekbones, jaw and chin." What shape do these points create?

"Oval faces are the most versatile shape and give you many hairstyle options," she says. Any style will suit this shape, including wearing your hair completely swept off your face.

If you have a square face you have a wide forehead with your cheekbones in line with your jaw. "It's a good idea to create balance by adding width to the upper part of your face, and softening the angles with curls or layers." Lindsay recommends avoiding straight bobs that end at your chin, and heavy, straight fringes.

A rectangular face is long and narrow with a square chin. Those with a rectangular face should avoid long, straight styles with a centre parting, as these make the face look longer.

"You need to give the illusion of widening and shortening the face, while softening the jaw line," Lindsay says. "A layered style will give the impression that your face is rounder and fuller. A softly layered crown is good, as is some fullness around the ear area, and a fringe will make your face appear shorter."

If your face is triangular or heart shaped, you have a broad forehead and cheekbones that taper down to a small chin. Lindsay says aim to give the illusion of a narrower brow and cheekbones by adding volume at the jaw line.

"A one-length bob that finishes just below your earlobe turned in or out is ideal. Pulled-back styles or anything that adds volume to your temples are not for you."

If you want a fringe, make it soft, light and feathered.

Softer round faces benefit from angles. Use asymmetric partings and feathered fringes. "A style that's layered and feathered will break up the fullness of the face. Centre or side partings are another way to create a length, as is long hair," Lindsay says. Round faces can't take big bubbly perms or a rounded,

turned-in bob.

The next step is to take proper care of your tresses, and that means knowing your hair type. You wouldn't use the wrong type of cream on your face, so extend the same respect to your hair.

"Use professional products as they're acid-balanced, and offer you a foundation and support for colours, straighteners, and perms," says Douglas Lillico, artistic director at Philip George Salon in Central.

If your hair has been neglected and over-treated, concentrate on conditioning and reconstructing the hair. "Hair can be rebuilt with the right products," Lillico says. "Never sacrifice condition for a chemical service of any type. It's the condition of your hair that people notice, not the colour or curl."

Curly, unruly hair can be washed less often than straight hair as this keeps the curl bonded and prevents frizz, Lillico says. "The conditioning regimen should involve more moisture than protein, and styling aids should be based around flexible, non-drying products, such as creams or a non-aerosol mousse."

Dry curly hair using a diffuser attachment to avoid frizz and try not to touch the hair after drying as this prevents the curl from falling, Lillico says.

Curly hair can be cut less often; it's best to leave enough length to reduce volume and decrease the tightness of the curls.

When it comes to colour, Lillico recommends dimensional highlights. "Highlights or low lights must be a bit chunkier, otherwise they will get lost," he says.

Straight, limp hair needs to be washed and styled daily to maintain bounce, says Darrin Usher, director of The Hairdressers in Central. "The purpose of long hair is for it to flow and be sexy," he says. "There is nothing sexy about having long rats' tails."

Usher says the big no-no's with this hair include wearing it too long and having too many layers.

To add some oomph to fine limp hair, go for a rich colour, which will add body and texture, Usher says.

"Cutting this type of hair is a bit more like sculpting than cutting," Lillico says. "It needs more attention to detail as straight hair shows every little line."

This hair type benefits most from using very little or no hair products, but if you must, go for a light, non-aerosol mousse or volume spray.

On and off the catwalk, wavy hair is hot this season but it can take a lot of effort to get this look right. "Wavy hair can be tricky. It's not curly enough to go wild, and not straight enough to leave alone," Usher says.

The answer? Styling. And the first step is to become a whizz with your hairdryer. "Use a dryer that is between 1,500 and 1,800 watts," Usher says. "This gives you enough power to straighten the hair, or add product and leave the hair to dry naturally."

To straighten hair, use a non-chemical "relaxer" or bounce waves into more of a structure with mousse and blow-dry using a diffuser.

When it comes to general maintenance, no matter what the hair type, a trim every six to eight weeks is a must, even if you're trying to grow your hair. Spilt ends need to be cut away to avoid splitting higher up the hair strand.

Lastly, to keep your tresses looking healthy and up-to-date, find a stylist you can relate to.

A professional stylist will take up to 15 minutes or more to consult with a client, to make sure that you're both in agreement, Lillico says.

Describe clearly what type of look you want. "Be firm and never be afraid to leave at this point if you're not comfortable," Lillico says.

Hopefully, it won't get to that. Eddie Chan, artistic director of Essence Beijing, says trust in the stylist is the key.

"Once you're in the salon, simply tell the hairdresser which length you prefer," he says. "You should try to let your hairdresser decide and take care of the rest because he or she is the professional and really knows what's best for you."

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