

Eyelash extensions: The latest cosmetic enhancement

By Sarah Hunaker

A new beauty trend is sweeping the U.S. — semi-permanent eyelash extensions. Initially a luxury available only to celebrities like Madonna, Oprah and Jennifer Lopez, now they are becoming a must-have for the average woman on the go. These semi-permanent eyelash extensions, originally developed in Asia, have quickly migrated west from New York to Los Angeles; now they are a sought-after beauty treatment in cities throughout the country.

False eyelashes have been around for years, but only now do they look so natural. The traditional application used to be a strip of false lashes that were glued to the lid and would have to be reapplied daily. The more modern eyelash extensions are different. As the name implies, eyelash extensions are an actual ex-

ension of a lash that is already present. The technician grasps an individual synthetic hair and applies it directly to the natural eyelash. The extensions are applied with a specialized bonding agent that is long lasting and black in color. This gives the pleasant illusion that mascara has been applied to the eyelashes.

Eyelash application must be very precise and therefore may take up to two hours to complete. Fortunately, one is comfortable throughout the entire procedure. Some use this time to just get away from life's daily stresses and others even take a little nap. It is crucial to arrive at your appointment without any makeup on the eyes and to avoid oil-based makeup remover that day. This can leave a residue on the lashes and can possibly interfere with the bonding process.

Taking care of your eyelash extensions is a simple matter. Immediately following the procedure, it's best not to let any water come in contact with your lashes for at least two hours. Two days following your treatment one must avoid steam rooms, hot tubs and steaming hot showers, as these activities can weaken the bonding agent and cause the lashes to fall out prematurely. After two days, it's back to life as usual. Of course, it is important not to vigorously rub your eyes as this could cause the lashes to break off or overlap each other.

As previously mentioned, eyelash extensions are only semi-permanent. To maintain that red carpet look it is important to come in for fills from time to time. Every hair on our bodies has a growth cycle, so they are constantly falling out at different times and then replenishing themselves. Likewise, when your original eyelash falls out, the extension that was glued to it will come with it. It's estimated that about every month or two, one will notice a couple of gaps in the lashes, which indicates it's time for a refill. Fortunately, refills are quick and cost only a fraction of that of the original procedure.

Lash extensions can be very beautiful when applied correctly. Having an experienced technician perform the application can help ensure the look you desire. If the lashes are improperly placed, the lashes can be completely glued to one another. This is hard to fix and can potentially break your original lashes. So take caution when heading to your neighborhood salon for a quick application. Be sure to ask questions and do a little research before deciding on a place that's right for you.

Eyelash extensions are fun and feminine. It's great to just eat, put the door in the morning and already look flawless. Your eyes are the first thing people notice, so when they are sparkling, your whole appearance will naturally follow. So go ahead, ladies, throw away your tubes of mascara and welcome yourself to the world of convenience.

Sarah Hunaker is a licensed esthetician at Advanced Vein Center and Aesthetics.

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