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Beauty

A Guide to Going Grey

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Lush, shiny, healthy grey hair is gorgeous. And like any other change in style, cut, or color, going grey (or not) is a totally personal decision. “Ultimately it’s all about how you wear it and how it makes you feel,” says Angela Haight, a colorist at Marie Robinson Salon in New York. Here are strategies for making the switch—whether or not you color your hair—as well as how to deal with grey you’re not ready to show off.

Why Does Our Hair Turn Grey?

As we age, our bodies naturally produce less melanin; the [average onset of grey hair](#) is between 34 and 43 years old. For those with premature grey, genetics can play a big role; for everyone, environmental factors like stress, diet, smoking, sun, and pollutant exposure can speed the greying process.

"In terms of timing, what I see in the salon is that people with thicker, more coarse hair types tend to go grey earlier than those with fine hair—regardless of how straight, wavy, curly, or coily it is," says Haight. Natural hair color also matters. "Very rarely do redheads turn actual grey," says Haight. "Their hair typically turns into a dusty, dirty-blonde shade before eventually turning white." She adds that natural blondes often turn darker (almost a mousy brown) before going grey, and brunettes have the clearest contrast: "The incoming grey or white hairs are easier to spot against naturally dark hair," she says.

In addition, as we age, our oil glands generate less sebum (which lubricates both skin and hair), which is one of the reasons grey hair typically looks coarser and more wiry, standing out even further. "The texture change varies from person to person," says Abby Haliti, a colorist and the founder of AH Color Studio.

How to Transition to Grey

Whether you're ready to go full-on grey or want to tiptoe into it, a consultation with a professional can help. Some salons, like both Marie Robinson and AH Color Studio, have experts who specialize in grey transitions. There are multiple options, so it's worth determining what might work best for you.

People who want to go fully grey often start by concealing it as it grows in. At her Manhattan salon, top hairstylist Sally Hershberger of Sally Hershberger 24K hair care sees some clients with gorgeous natural grey, as well as those looking to cover their grey.

Greys tend to show up at the hairline and temples first. "Changing up your part is a really simple way to conceal any chunks of grey," says Hershberger. "And go with a really cool haircut—a choppy bob or a romantic lob keeps things fresh and modern."

Brush-on powders for hair do work to help conceal and blend while your roots are growing out; the root touch-up ones from [Color Wow](#) are absolutely amazing (and much-loved by hairstylists).

Haight points out that you shouldn't pluck errant grey hairs (though the notion that twice as many greys will grow back is a myth). "You can cause permanent damage to the hair follicle, which can result in hair loss," says Haight. "Leave them alone."

Playing Up Grey Hair

Once your hair is 85 percent grey, you can play up the grey with hair color. Haight likes to dye it one monochromatic shade of grey, white, or charcoal (whatever best matches your natural shade of grey).

Another option: adding bold, ribbony, icy highlights or charcoal lowlights to accentuate the already-grey roots. This works especially well if you have greys throughout your hair or different shades of grey. "It gives hair a more intentional, pronounced look," says Haight. "The maintenance is about every three months, with a tone or gloss appointment in between." Hershberger likes a few fine highlights framing the face to help keep hair bright and blended.

How to Care for Grey Hair

Because grey hair feels coarser and drier, it's even more important to nourish and protect your hair. Hot tools, sun exposure, and chlorine can all turn grey hair brassy. High-quality hot tools can really make a difference here; so can clean heat-protectant formulas that help smooth and stave off damage.



RAHUA
Heat Protectant Shield
goop, \$38
[SHOP NOW](#)



ZUVI
Zuvi Halo Hair Dryer
goop, \$349
[SHOP NOW](#)

SHAMPOO LESS

The less you wash your hair, the more moisture it retains—and if you color your hair, the less it will fade. When you do

shampoo, use it as a chance to build in styling (with an antifrizz or volumizing formula, for example), preserve color, or clear away product or mineral buildup that might alter the way your hair looks. "A great clarifying shampoo can keep grey or white hair brighter and shinier and fight yellowishness," says Haight.

Clarifying



GOOP BEAUTY

Himalayan Salt Scalp Scrub

Shampoo

goop, \$55/\$38 with subscription

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Frizz-Fighting



GROWN ALCHEMIST

Anti-Frizz - Shampoo 0.5

goop, \$37.50

[SHOP NOW](#)

Brightening



RAHUA

Color Full Shampoo

goop, \$38

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Along similar lines, because minerals in the water you wash your hair with can also affect the color and texture of both grey and colored hair, use a filtered showerhead to help reduce those effects.



JOLIE

The Jolie Filtered Showerhead

goop, \$165

[SHOP NOW](#)

FIGHT FRIZZ WITH OILS AND LEAVE-INS

Whether or not you color, the underlying grey hair often has a coarser texture, so frizz can be more noticeable. Regularly smoothing on serums, creams, and oils made with moisturizing ingredients locks in moisture and fights frizz.



CROWN AFFAIR

The Leave-In Conditioner

goop, \$48

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RAHUA

Color Full Glossing Oil Mist

goop, \$34.80

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ROZ

Willow Glen Treatment Oil

goop, \$48

[SHOP NOW](#)

TREAT FOR THE BEST TEXTURE

To keep your grey hair (colored or not) soft and silky, the right treatment once or twice a week can make an incredible difference.

Preshampoo Serum



GOOP BEAUTY

Restore + Shine Hair Serum

Mask



GOOP BEAUTY

Nutrient Shinebath Hair Mask

Bond Repair



EPRES

Bond Repair Treatment

goop, \$55/\$44 with subscription

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goop, \$48

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Makeup for Grey Hair



"Grey hair looks modern and fresh and brightens up the skin," says Rose-Marie Swift, a top makeup artist and the founder of RMS Beauty. "In fact, I think it adds a sophisticated energy to your face." Swift says most people don't really need to change their makeup when they go grey. The main change she made was to tint her eyebrows to match her original darker hair color, adding contrast. "Brows frame your face beautifully, and when they're a different shade from your hair, it adds so much dimension," she says. "And a bright lip really flatters your face and makes everything pop."



KOSAS

Air Brow Tinted Volumizing Treatment Gel

goop, \$24

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AMI COLE

On-Point Brow Pencil

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RMS BEAUTY

Legendary Serum Lipstick

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