

POWERFUL PERCEPTIONS



By Elizabeth Fox, MD

Strength, vitality and youthfulness are depicted by a full, lush hairline. There is no more powerful analogy than that of Samson and Delilah. Hair is important. Portraits in museums rarely depict bald spots or receding hairlines. Entrepreneur and media-aware Donald Trump puffs and flips his hair to avoid the loss of power that a bald spot might reveal. Actor Bruce Willis's hair is often computer-enhanced in his blockbuster movies to avoid the appearance that he might be aging.



It's not just celebrities, either. In a competitive world, men and women strive to mask the perception of weakness or aging. One excellent way to do that is by controlling or improving hair loss.

Ryan, a 45-year-old, successful business owner in Naples, went through this process when his hairline and crown (the top of his head) began to recede. He looked in the mirror and didn't feel attractive or confident. Women didn't look at him the way they used to. He was worried about what would come in the next five years as his hair loss continued.

After watching numerous hair club commercials showing hair dye, sprays, weaves, hair pieces and other attempts at mimicking hair restoration

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guessing his mode of rejuvenation, he would consult a hair restoration physician. At Fox Plastic Surgery Center, he learned about non-surgical and surgical methods to improve his hairline and density.

Rogaine has proven scientific value when utilized consistently. Long term results have shown that Rogaine can delay or stop further hair loss. More importantly, it can alter the thinning, peach fuzz (pre-hair loss hairs) and contributes to dense hair growth. By working on the anagen - growth phase - of hair, Rogaine stimulates hair to grow thicker.

There are several other non-surgical methods for hair growth, and some are founded in scientific literature. Propecia, Retin-A and the LaserComb, for instance, have all been scientifically proven to increase the active hair growth. Propecia affects the androgen relationship with hair loss. Retin-A stimulates new blood flow and cellular growth, and the LaserComb, the newest venture for hair growth, increases both blood flow and active hair growth (a few of our patients have reported an improvement with eczema of the scalp also) and is similar to office hair laser treatments. When combined, Propecia, Rogaine and the Lasercomb offer an excellent means to increase hair density and halt hair loss mostly in the crown area.

Because Ryan wanted to quickly reverse what had already happened with his hair, transplants became the focus of our discussions. The old-fashioned plug system is increasingly discredited in the field because the round implants often resemble doll's hair and do not create the desirable look of youth.

Hair transplants are valuable when they impart the look of youth without signs of surgery. Because the transplanted hair is taken from the permanent hair zone, it doesn't succumb to loss during the aging process.

Female Hair Loss

Quite a few women today have hair loss or thinning. Miniaturization of hair is the

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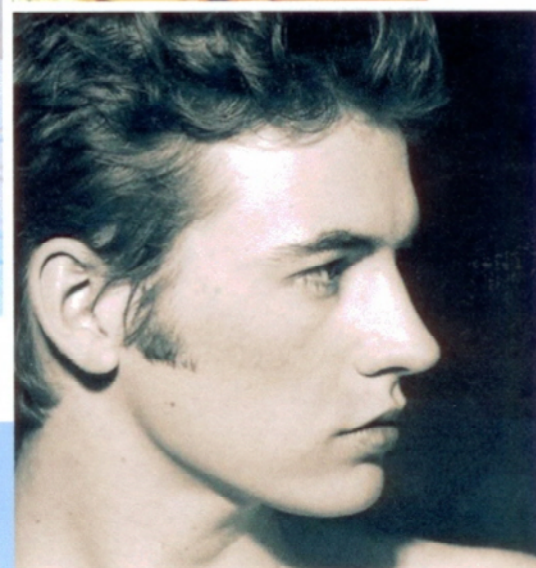
usual beginning of female hair loss. Our female patients have hair loss for several reasons, the most common being genetic. Metabolic and hormonal reasons, reactions to medications and infections, chemical exposure, stress and traction injury can all contribute to hair loss. The first step at a center that is versed in the causes of hair loss is to elicit a history of familial hair thinning and medications, assess the possibility of stress-induced alopecia, check the thyroid status and investigate potential infectious causes. In the case of Becky, a patient who had been on a long journey to find a solution to hair loss before visiting our practice, we were able to avoid wig placement. In just two hair transplantation sessions she was able to increase the density of hair at her hairline.

Some large centers today still do small plugs for the hair behind the hairline. We believe in one hair follicle for each graft for all areas, which is wonderfully natural with a 95% graft take. Excellent transplant centers have a team devoted to hair transplants. Our team of five transplant specialists will be able to perform over 1,500 grafts per setting.



Following are the specifics needed for excellent graft take:

Only microscopic dissection of graft. • Speed in replacing graft so viability of implant stays high. • Direction of hair graft so transplanted hair is natural. • Soft natural hairline to avoid transplant appearance. • High graft number to avoid repetitive sessions. • Excellent post-procedure care.



During Treatment

Most people are pleased to learn how easy the process of hair transplantation is. Relaxation soon follows any mild discomfort associated with a local anesthetic, and movie-watching is the order of the day.

After Surgery

Following treatment, most patients can return to work the next day with a baseball cap or hat. Because of stressful weather conditions and sunlight exposure, golf should be stopped for five days after surgery. Grafted hair will shed in two to four weeks and new growth will begin in three to four months, often much earlier.

Blessed Reality

In a world where living longer and healthier lives is possible, we want our looks to reflect how we feel about ourselves. More than ever before, life puts us in direct competition with youth on the job and on the tennis court. Hair restoration offers a competitive edge.

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