

A recent survey of hair trends has found that 28 per cent of women are embracing or considering going silver.

50 SHADES OF GOING GREY

Whether you're just starting to notice a few silver threads, or salt and pepper is truly taking hold, **Cecily-Anna Bennett** will help you choose the right way forward – whether your grey is do or dye.

My mother, Tutti, 69, loves to tell the story of how she went grey at 31. “Until I had children, my hair was jet black,” she regales friends and strangers alike, looking at me with love and good humour. Perhaps it’s true that sleep deprivation and the stress of having two young children was enough to strip my mother’s hair of all pigment. Perhaps it’s genetics. Probably, we’ll never know. I come from a long line of women who embraced their hair’s natural transition from brunette to shades of grey. My great-grandmother’s hair was grey. My grandmother’s hair was as white as virgin snow. My mother’s hair is resplendent silver. And yet, just a couple of years away from 40, I’m desperately clinging to pigmented perfection to stay a brunette while the greys sprout like weeds. It’s a personal choice, underpinned by societal expectations of what “youth” is supposed to look like. But there comes a time when we should really make a more considered choice. “Don’t think just because you are ‘going grey’, it needs to be gone. There are so many grey heads out there that are beautiful,” says Renee Meredith, National Education Manager for Revlon Professional. “Work out if you would like to embrace your grey, blend it or cover it.” Read on for everything you need to know to make the right choice for you. ►

When the dye is finally cast

Dyeing your hair starts out easily enough, but as more greys appear in tell-tale spots like the hairline and part, it can be increasingly high-maintenance if you want to look polished. Instead of tinting it every week, try these quick and easy solutions to tide you over between salon visits.

L'OREAL MAGIC RETOUCH RRP \$15.95, Chemist Warehouse

This clever spray is available in eight shades, covers roots in seconds and will last until you wash it out.



1000 HOUR HAIR COLOUR STICK RRP \$10.99, Priceline

It's like a lipstick – for your roots. Simply swipe over silvers and they're instantly transformed.



JOHN FRIEDA ROOT BLUR RRP \$19.99, Priceline

The two complementary colours in this convenient compact ensure you can blend your greys away with ease.



THE SCIENCE OF SILVER

Why do some women go grey in their early 30s and others retain the colour of their youth for decades beyond? There are a variety of reasons. Ethnicity is one: Caucasians typically start to grey in their 30s, Asians in their late-30s and Africans in their mid-40s. Genetics also plays a significant role (just look to your parents to predict when your hair may take a similar turn), and ageing guarantees that, at some point, you'll make the transition. So why does it happen? Pigment cells in our hair follicles make melanin, the chemical that gives our hair its colour. As we age, the number of pigment cells decreases, causing new strands to become gradually lighter. Once a follicle stops making melanin, the strand takes on a silver colour. As each strand grows at a different rate, your hair goes through a long salt and pepper phase before going completely white.

GREY HAIR HEALTH

Whether you decide to keep your greys or hide them, you'll notice that, as hair loses pigment, its texture changes. Without melanin, the hair's cuticle is thinner, loses moisture and is more susceptible to environmental damage, leaving silver strands feeling drier, fragile and coarse. "Just as our skin changes as we mature, our hair is similar," Renee says. So it becomes more important to look after the condition of our hair. "Go for good-quality products to add shine,

softness, smoothing or volume to your hair," she says. "Using treatments [at home or in-salon] to condition is important too. We moisturise, exfoliate and apply masks to our face – our hair deserves the same TLC to look its radiant best."

LOOKING CHIC

If you decide to embrace the grey, there are a few things you can do to ensure the stylishness of your silver locks. "Use a mauve or silver-based shampoo once a week," advises award-winning hairstylist Anthony Nader from RAW Anthony Nader salon in Sydney. "This will keep your grey strands appearing shiny and also neutralise any unwanted warm, brassy undertones."

Using the right products is another important consideration for the health of grey hair. "Investing in a hydrating shampoo and conditioner will help soften your hair," Anthony says. "You'll notice a huge difference with the manageability. When using styling products, always use ones that are low in alcohol. Alcohol dries out your strands over time and fades your colour more quickly. Your hairstylist will be able to recommend the right products for your hair type."

For the most stylish head of grey hair, keeping your haircut sharp is essential, Anthony says. "Aim for a cut every six to seven weeks, tops, as part of your routine," he advises. "You'll want your hair shape to look on point and chic." **P**

Fast fact

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STYLIST SOS

Hairstylist Anthony Nader shares some smart advice, whether you're disguising the grey, or allowing your salt and pepper strands to shine.

BLEND YOUR COLOUR

If you're colouring your hair, opt for a combo of having low lights and highlights scattered throughout. This will give you a more natural blend, compared with having one solid colour

(and the regrowth in two to three weeks will be a nightmare to upkeep). Ask your hairstylist to add some low lights and highlights around the part line and your face. This will add dimension and fullness

to your hairstyle, and give your colour more interest.

PERFECT YOUR SILVER STYLE

When you're going through the transition phase to grey, the trick is to never style your hair flat or straight, as this will highlight what you don't want seen. Think about adding a slight wave or volume to the roots from now on, as this softens and adds more texture.

GET A CUT THAT MAKES YOU HAPPY It doesn't matter if you have a short-textured crop or a layered length below your shoulders. The most important thing is to maintain the health of your hair so it appears beautiful and thick. And always make sure the ends are cut, so they don't look wispy. Your hair says everything about your health, so be good to it!