

# CONNECTOR

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**A**nother paparazzi favourite, Victoria Beckham, recently went back to her roots and took up wearing extensions again. The result is stunning and can be seen on the covers of magazines all over the world. Her good friends Eva Longoria, Katie Holmes and Jennifer Lopez are also addicted to their Lengths. So what is it about hair extensions that these, and millions of women around the world love so much? We spoke to Julie Powell, owner of Great Lengths Middle East, the region's leading authority on hair extensions to find out more.

#### How long have you been involved in the hair extension industry?

Since 1988 when I had my first head of hair and was hooked. My first salon opened in the UK the following year.

#### How have hair extensions changed since then?

Enormously. We first worked with fibre as real hair wasn't available. Then David Gold of Great Lengths created and patented a keratin bond and suddenly extensions came to life. Working with 100 percent human hair changed the way the hair looked, felt and reacted. It was exactly like having your own long hair. That was the turning point in the industry.

#### Why are hair extensions so popular?


They are enormously popular for so many reasons. All women everywhere will have suffered from a 'bad hair day'. In contrast, hair extensions give you the ability to have exactly the hair that you have always wished for today. For 22 years I have sat behind thousands of clients who watch themselves transform in the mirror. The result is always the same, instant glamour. I can't think of any other beauty treatment that gives you the same result in 90 minutes or less.

#### What about the cost?

Of course great hair extensions are not cheap. However, by choosing a great quality hair and well known brand like Great Lengths you are guaranteed good value, and most often they will work out cheaper than a poor quality brand because the hair will last longer and look great until the day you remove it. Also, and most importantly, the natural hair is safe and well cared for because at Great Lengths we don't work with damaging elements such as glue, wax or clips.

As a price guide, Great Lengths flagship salon in Dubai, The Gold Salon offers a head of mid back length hair from just under Dhs 3,000. That is based on 100 strands of 17 inch, applied cut and blowdried. A free consultation will ascertain how many pieces your hair would require, and this differs enormously from client to client. Do ask your local salon if they stock Great Lengths,





as it is widely available in the finest salons throughout the Emirates and wider Gulf region.

### **Are the extensions comfortable and easy to take care of?**

Great Lengths extensions are extremely comfortable and are taken care of in exactly the same way as your own hair. Hair can be washed, blow dried, straightened, curled, permed, and even coloured if required. Clients can wear the hair up or tied back and nobody will know it is extended.

### **What about the horror stories we have heard about extensions?**

Sadly, there are issues with hair extensions, almost always from the cheaper end of the market where quality control is non-existent. The hair is not remi, and that means that the hair has been mixed in the collection and production stages, so is not all aligned in the same direction. This causes the hair to tangle and matt, and once that happens there is no choice but to remove it.

Additionally, when there has been little investment in the hair, the bond similarly will be inferior. Attachments can include using all kinds of methods ranging from glue sticks, hot wax, metal rings and clips, and stitched on in wefts. The integrity of the natural hair is not respected and problems will arise. At Great Lengths all our hair is pre-bonded in our European factories with a keratin bond that acts and reacts exactly like natural hair. With this patented, high-tech method, hair can be worn safely for up to six

months without causing damage to the hair or scalp of the wearer.

We have talked about the hair quality, and the bond, however the third vital ingredient is education. Great Lengths do not just sell hair. To receive this premium quality hair, a salon owner must first purchase the Great Lengths machine and undergo an intensive education on how to apply and style extensions. This education, based on a formula used successfully worldwide, is second to none. Once completed a Great Lengths technician is internationally certified to offer our extensions. We offer great hair, applied safely with a keratin bond, by a fully qualified technician. Our close relationship with salons and regular update education keeps us in touch with our certified salons.

### **Where does the hair come from?**

All of the hair at Great Lengths is ethically sourced from Indian temples. The hair is donated in religious ceremonies and the temples make a business of selling the hair to support themselves. This is the finest quality hair available in the world.

The hair is virgin, having never been chemically treated, and the state of the art processing facilities at Great Lengths offers a unique colouring process that treats the hair in a similar way to the colouring of cashmere in the garment industry. The result is the finest hair available in the hair extension business.

### **How long is the hair and is it available in all colours?**

Great Lengths strands are available in 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 24, 28, 30 and 32 inch lengths. There are 56 different shades from black through to blonde, and a wonderful selection of crazy and jewel shades. With this palette and length choice you can create any look imaginable.

### **Is the hair all the same?**

Because the hair is not machine produced, and is in fact natural, it can slightly differ in

texture on a head by head basis. Also we offer three different textures of hair. 90 percent of the hair we consume in the Middle East are our regular strands, these can be worn straight or waved, and can be left to dry naturally or scrunched for a slight bend or gentle wave, or brushed and dried straight for a sleek look. We also offer curly hair in a range of shades, and our unique kashmir strands that are currently the envy of the industry. Treated to remain silky straight all of the time, kashmir strands are super straight and of a lighter, finer texture and do not require blowdrying. They are perfectly suited to clients with fine, straight hair. One client recently told me she had given her hairdryer and irons away!

#### How should we take care of extensions?

If you are wearing Great Lengths extensions, you will take care of them exactly like your own hair. Feel free to style it either

at home or in a salon. It is exactly as if it is your own hair, just longer or thicker. You should use a Great Lengths brush that allows you to brush your hair directly from the roots. It is wise however to avoid applying oil directly on the roots. You can swim, dive, sauna and spa, work out and jet ski. The beauty of Great Lengths is that your hair looks just as good wet as it does dry - so nobody will know you are wearing extensions.

#### What do you see for the future of the hair extension industry?

Great Lengths is always at the cutting edge of extension technology, with three methods of application, we uniquely offer a heat frequency application, a cold application with our innovative ultra sonic machine, and automated multistrand application with air pressure - bonding ten extensions into the hair in less than ten seconds. We are also launching a brand new method of extension technology early in 2011 that will further transform hair extension application. Hair extensions are not just about long hair. We see a growing trend for clients to add say 50 or 75 pieces in the same length as their own hair to create subtle volume. Highlights using extensions is another growing trend, as you can create the colour you want without using chemicals - with a little extra volume thrown in too! I recommend a free consultation with a good technician and see what the wonderful world of hair extensions can do for you.

Great Lengths Middle East is based at The Gold Salon in Dubai. They educate the region's finest salons in the application of Great Lengths Extensions, working with hundreds of extensionists across the UAE, Gulf States, Iran, India and Pakistan.

*For more information about Great Lengths hair extensions in the UAE, or for information on how to become a Great Lengths approved Salon, contact Great Lengths on 04-3215162 or 050-6250288 or email [greatlengthsbssales@gmail.com](mailto:greatlengthsbssales@gmail.com).* 