

# The Daily Telegraph

# Features

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The latest extensions promise instant, natural-looking locks. Supermodels can't get enough of them, says **Julia Robson**

## Short cuts to longer hair

As Isaac Newton observed, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. If micro-minis are making the headlines, you can bet that maxi-kaftans are all the rage, too. When it comes to shoes, the only thing trendier than flatties are six-inch spiliacs.

It's the same with hair trends. Long is back but, if the catwalk trends in London, Milan and Paris are anything to go by, so is short. The runways were teeming with models sporting extra-long locks one minute and short crops the next.

At the D&G show in Milan last week, there was a classic "now you see it, now you don't" hair moment as Naomi Campbell prowled the catwalk in a dyed pink fox coat, swinging her distinctive, waist-length mane in time to the music. But three days later, when she took a bow alongside Linda Evangelista at the main-line Dolce & Gabbana show, Naomi was sporting a crop that barely reached her collar.

Sitting in the front row watching all this was Victoria Beckham, tossing her shiny brunette curls, which dangled down her back. A month earlier, she, too, had short hair.

The secret of the "new long" is, of course, hair extensions, which, thanks to recent innovations in realistic-looking acrylic hair and a new simplified method of attaching them, are set to become a summer craze.

Attaching extensions used to be a laborious, painful process which could take hours. Fake hair was knotted or glued to real hair using unpleasant chemicals. The finished effect would often look as natural as Elton John's fake barnet, and would inevitably turn into a tangled mess after a few weeks.

Real hair extensions, which can cost up to £3,000 for a full head, were, until recently, the



Long look: Naomi at D & G

only option if you wanted long, natural-looking, glossy hair but weren't prepared to wait for yours to grow. But the latest acrylic versions have revolutionised the market.

A new method of attaching extensions, with a heated tool which prevents natural hair from coming into contact with acrylic tresses, has made a huge difference.

Catwalk models have made widespread use of the new extensions recently (they featured at the Versace, Julien Macdonald, Zandra Rhodes and Marc Jacobs shows); another reason for their revival is their popularity with pop stars - from Gwen Stefani to Christina Aguilera - whose hairdos bring to mind My Little Pony.

Daniilo, of the leading New York salon Bumble and bumble, recently styled Stefani's hair for the Grammys, using extensions to create a futuristic chignon. "Temporary weave bonds" of 100 per cent natural hair were glued and then sewn to Stefani's own hair.

As well as the celebs who use

long hair to keep themselves looking young and glamorous (Victoria Beckham, Charlotte Church, Michelle & Kelli of Liberty X), the target market for extensions is the more mature customer, who will want them for extra volume, not length. A fuller head of hair can take years off a woman of a certain age.

Prostyles, founded four years ago, is Britain's largest hair extensions company. Based in Hampshire, it makes acrylic ProHair Fibre and provides training for 1,200 salons across the country. "The reason extensions never took off before now was that the product was poor and there was insufficient training for hair stylists," says Richard Knox, Prostyles' managing director.

"The new acrylic fibre is actually better than natural hair," he says. "It looks and feels beautifully conditioned. You can't always guarantee this even with real hair extensions, because they go through a lot of processes before they are sold. The new hair simulates European hair and comes in any colour. It can even be styled with heat, so the possibilities are endless."

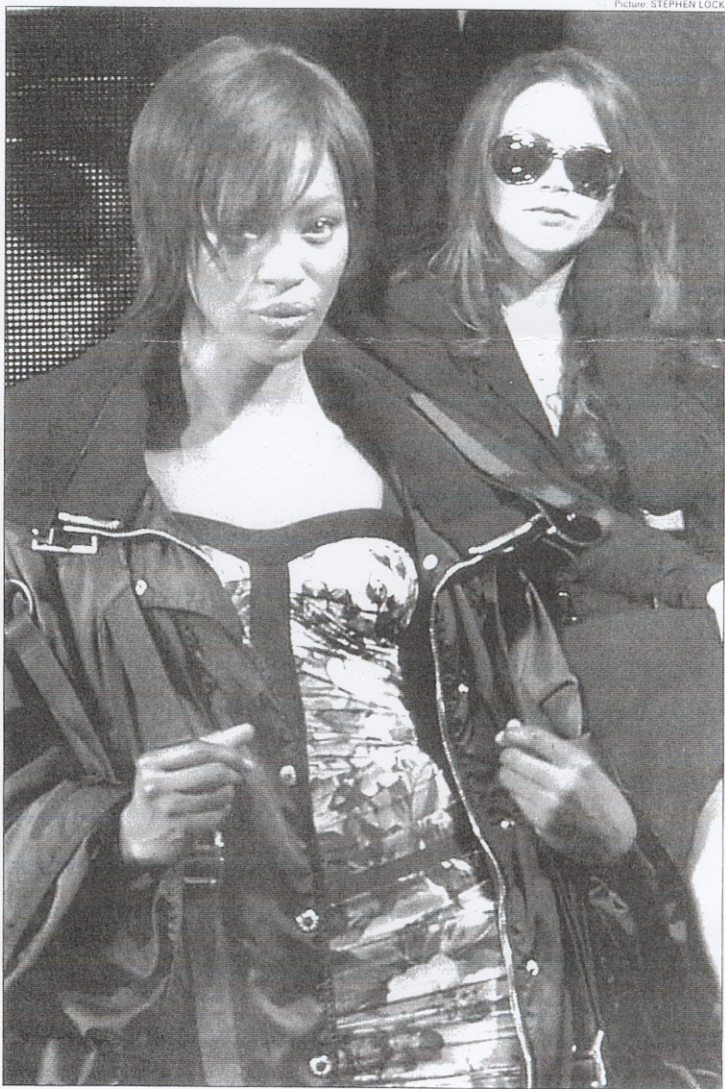
Prostyles guarantees that extensions will last for up to three months, providing they have been attached by one of its trained hair specialists. They can cost from as little as £10 for two bold, colour streaks. Extensions for volume cost from £50; full-lengthening can cost £180 or more.

### Where to get extensions:

Mark Glen, Lancashire Court, New Bond Street, London W1: 020 7495 6969 (£3.50/single extension; £200-£250 for volume, £350-£375 for length).

Antenna, Kensington Church Street, London W8: 020 7938 1866.

For your nearest Prostyles stockist call: 01420 511155 or visit [www.prostyles.com](http://www.prostyles.com).



Picture STEPHEN LOCK

Long and short: Campbell reverts to her natural crop at Dolce & Gabbana; Victoria Beckham goes for length