

THIN IS OUT!

Get to the root of hair loss—or, at the very least, make it seem less apparent.

by HILUXURY TEAM

GRAY HAIRS CALL FOR A SIMPLE DYE JOB, AND FOR MEN WHO ARE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO ROCK A SALT-AND-PEPPER, SILVER FOX crown à la George Clooney, slate-top woes seem trivial. But how do you cope when you aren't just going gray—or shedding a typical day's-worth of strands (50-100, according to the American Academy of Dermatology)?

Men, as women, are continuously bombarded with idealistic media imagery, courtesy TV, advertising and the Internet, causing gents to question their appearance, sexuality and confidence. And for balding men especially, modern cultural representations of the "ideal" male look—and locks—are proven, for many, to signify the "end of youth" and psychologically damage one's sense of security and self-esteem. According to *The Psychosocial Impact of Hair Loss Among Men: A Multinational European Study*, conducted by the National Center for Biotechnology Information in five European nations (Spain, Italy, France, Germany and the U.K.) in 2005, of the 729 men surveyed, 62 percent agreed that hair loss affected how they felt about themselves and the way they believed others perceived them.

And per the American Hair Loss Association, two-thirds of American men will experience degrees of appreciable hair loss by age 35, and by age

50, approximately 85 percent are suffering from severely thinning scalps. Regardless of the degree, the Association cites that androgenetic alopecia, or common male pattern baldness (MPB), accounts for 95 percent of male hair loss, which also affects both interpersonal and professional relationships. Forty percent of women, too, are suffering from lock loss. New York City plastic surgeon Dr. Yael Halaas shares that "most women begin to lose their hair in their 20s or 30s and don't even notice that they're thinning—until they've lost 50 percent or more of their hair."

As August marks National Hair Loss Awareness Month, it's only fitting to crop up conversation about healing both the physical and emotional consequences of cascading strands. Culprits range from genetic and hormonal to stress-induced. (Stress shedding is rare and usually temporary, caused by the release of telogen effluvium, a chemical hormone released in the body when one is undergoing extreme stress, such as crash dieting, surgery, a divorce, etc., experienced by those pre-disposed to hair loss.) While one cannot prevent falling follicles, restoration is conceivable.

Hair restoration remedies and tress transplants are sprouting up in the Pacific and beyond. Thanks to modern prescriptions, shampoos and surgeries taking root, men—and women—are able to revive once-thick manes, and consequently, regrow confidence.

"They're basically interchangeable," shares Honolulu's Dr. Shim Ching of restoration and transplants. "Although, restoration encompasses medication and supplements, while hair transplantation is technically a surgical technique, where we are moving the hair from one part of the head

to the other ... We borrow [hair] and put it somewhere else where they need it."

In December 2014, Ching introduced Hawai'i's sole robotic hair transplant remedy into his office via ARTAS: an innovative, American-made machine that made its medical industry foray back in 2011. Calling ARTAS, "Star Trek-like"—state-of-the-art, there are only "120 or so of these robots worldwide," according to Ching. "I thought this iteration of the machine was really innovative, and it was a really good time to get it and bring it to Hawai'i." (For more about ARTAS, see "The Future of Follicles," left.)

While hair loss is primarily a man's woe, many professionals working with patients suffering from hair loss consult women as well. "Women lose hair a little differently," Ching explains. "They don't have the same pattern of baldness that men do; it's more like a diffused loss of hair, but we can help them too."

Medication and hair-strengthening agents span cosmetic salons and over-the-counter to doctor-recommended. For a strong, scientifically formulated ingestible, Ching recommends prescription-based Viviscal Professional, an au-

natural supplement derived from exclusive AminoMar® Maine complex, sea kelp, proteins, vitamins and minerals. Ching himself takes Viviscal—and advises all his patients do so. (Less potent—i.e., non-Professional—versions of Viviscal are available to general consumers over the counter.)

As for fortifying shampoos, conditioners, et al., Revivogen (also available at Ching's office) promises physician-supported results. Other mainstay remedies include Rogaine and prescription-based Propecia, which Ching claims, "interferes with how testosterone works in the body. We believe that testosterone is responsible for hair loss; this capsule works to combat it."

For beauty aficionados, French hair authority Kérastase launched its 2015 Résistance Thérapiste Collection, a 15-years-in-the-making formula touted to boost strand brilliance. Hair-strengthening supplements, Omega-3 gels, biotin-laced and special hair-skin-nails capsules are also easy to spot on health market shelves.

"I definitely saw a need," says Ching of his hair-loss clientele. "[Hair restoration] is very rewarding to do for people; it really restores someone's youth and confidence."

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PHOTOS COURTESY BRANDS



THE FUTURE OF FOLLICLES

The ARTAS hair restoration system touts near-space-age technology.



The ARTAS Robotic Hair Transplant machine provides results without the pain of traditional transplants.

"It's just like digging up a plant in your garden, and then planting it somewhere else," says Ching of the ARTAS procedure. "And we're doing it [with hair follicles] thousands of times."

Rather than slice strips of scalp (the traditional method), the ARTAS machine plucks out graft units measuring less than one millimeter in diameter. ARTAS then harvests each follicular unit, making a miniscule, round cut around the hair shaft.

"We divide [the hair] into tiny pieces, which are the grafts. Each graft is smaller than a grain of rice and contains one, two or three hair roots," Ching cites. "Then, we put that graft into the hair root. Your body reincorporates it, and it grows like your real hair."

Courtesy an angle-measuring "eye," ARTAS sees the hair shafts' position, slicing grafts with flawless precision.

Repetitive surgeries are ideal for machines. Humans, not being robots, naturally fatigue and may experience perceptible shifts, which can hinder the quality of the procedure.

While ARTAS has numerous safety checks, standing on deck are Ching and a team to assist. Clear your calendar: Surgery can last from four to up to eight or nine hours, and patients are conscious during treatment.

"In terms of pain, there's really very little, and there's no incision," Ching says. "Recovery is very rapid."

Side effects? Minimal. The tiny grafts leave little to no marks post-treatment. Prerequisites? A consultation and good health.

While some witness immediate sprouting, full results are usually achieved in one-year's time. "Some people do need multiple procedures to restore all of their hair. Once the hair is transplanted, some of the roots will keep that hair and just keep growing ... others will go into a 'sleeping' phase."

Cost depends upon desired results and graft frequency. More grafts equate a higher price tag. Ballpark? Starting at \$10K, up to \$40K-50K for one's whole head.

While ARTAS is expensive, "I don't really see a down side," Ching says. "There's no scarring, and we're transplanting hair; hair roots we consider are permanent."

For now, other surgical robots are purely robotic systems. "We're not quite there yet, in terms of intelligent machines doing everything for you like you see in *Star Trek*," Ching chuckles.

With clientele ranging mid-20s on up, ARTAS is for "anybody who doesn't have as much hair as they used to—which is a lot of people, unfortunately."

But with ARTAS at hand, full heads of hair are the wave of the future.



Case 1: pre- and post-treatment snapshots of an actual ARTAS patient.



PHOTOS COURTESY RESTORATION ROBOTICS

—C.C.