

HAIR FITNESS

Are *scalp serums* the hidden hero of hair growth?

Whether your wish is for stronger strands or thicker-looking locks, consider this daily treatment your new fairy godmother

You know that famous self-help saying “The grass is always greener where you water it”? Well, according to science, the same goes for hair. Evidence suggests treating your scalp with the right ingredients gives the follicles a nudge to produce stronger, thicker strands. And no, we’re not talking about a 10-minute treatment oil, but rather the new it-product: leave-on serums.

“Serums have a lighter texture than oils and tend to be better absorbed,” explains certified trichologist, Chelcey Salinger. “There are ingredients we know are beneficial to hair growth. For example, caffeine, which increases the anagen phase of the growth cycle, meaning it grows for a longer period before it enters the resting phase and is naturally shed.” Likewise, she says, antioxidant actives spur on growth by reducing oxidative stress.

If you’re worried about inheriting the thinning hair of your fore folk, serums with ingredients like green tea, saw palmetto and rosemary can help. All three, notes Salinger, help reduce dihydrotestosterone (or DHT, the strong testosterone in the skin), which those of us with genetic thinning are sensitive to.

Other things to remember: the price of a product isn’t always a measure of its efficacy, and even the best ones need to be used the right way to work. “If it’s a topical serum and contains some of the evidenced-based ingredients, it needs to be applied daily and remain on,” she advises. “People are often worried it will make their hair look greasy, [but] this is the benefit of a serum over an oil. It’s much less likely to leave you with an oily residue.”

But even the most powerful serum won’t speed up growth – it will only prompt new hair and improve its longevity. Salinger suggests adopting simple lifestyle changes to support hair health – think an antioxidant- and fibre-rich diet (to dial down inflammation and support the gut microbiome), avoiding tight hairstyles, getting enough vitamin D and reducing stress.

And what about scalp massage and its supposed lock-boosting benefits? There’s no harm in trying, she notes. You’ll probably feel far less stressed afterward, which is already a head-to-toe win.



+ The best super serums for healthier hair

Rescue stressed strands, and nourish your scalp, with these top elixirs



FOR DENSITY

The Ordinary Multi-Peptide Serum for Hair Density, \$36

A concentrated daily leave-in serum packed with antioxidants and a batch of hair-boosting actives, including peptides and caffeine.



FOR SOOTHING

Straand The Crown Fix Prebiotic Scalp Serum, \$28

Designed to soothe irritation and give the scalp microbiome a boost, this multitasker also helps relieve stress from heat styling and bleaching.



FOR SUPPORT

OiTO Grow Scalp Elixir, \$75

Developed by a leading Brazilian trichologist, this potent elixir uses natural ingredients like rosemary and juniper to support optimal hair growth.



FOR FORTIFYING

Kérastase Genesis Fortifying Anti-Hair-Fall Serum, \$42

A daily fortifying and nourishing treatment for weak and damaged hair prone to breakage, this serum also helps preserve the natural moisture barrier of the scalp.



FOR STRENGTH

Bondi Boost Procapil Hair Tonic, \$42

Formulated with plant-based ingredients that help inhibit DHT, it also contains saw palmetto, antioxidants and other root-boosting actives.



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