

SPOTLESS

CLEAR THE HAIR

Whether they're deep inside the drains or sprinkled across the upholstery, all those strands have got to go. Here's the best advice for getting rid of fuzz once and for all.

BY LESLIE CORONA



Hairy Situations

YIKES: Mountains of hair accumulate on your bathroom floors.

FIX IT: You don't need to lug out the vacuum. Simply use your blow-dryer to blast hairs from corners and tight spots toward the center of the room. "We use this trick at the salon," says hairstylist Siobhán Quinlan, creative director of Art + Autonomy Salon in New York City. Swipe up the pile with a damp microfiber cloth. "Microfiber is great at attracting fine particles like hair because it's very staticky," says Melissa Maker, founder of the cleaning company Clean My Space. To get stubborn hairs off a microfiber cloth, rub it against itself.

KEEP IT UP: Next time you're blow-drying or teasing out your 'do, close the door so strands don't travel to other rooms, and tilt your head over the bathtub. Have a reliable hair strainer in place over the drain. Afterward, wipe the bottom of the tub with a microfiber cloth, or turn on the faucet and let the water drag the strands to the strainer.

TO BUY: The TubShroom (\$13; tubshroom.com) is a favorite hair strainer among experts. The unique design catches nearly every hair without disrupting water flow, and it's incredibly easy to install.

YIKES: A feline friend rubs against the bottom of your drapes, leaving a trail of fur.

FIX IT: Finally, an often overlooked vacuum attachment has its moment to shine! Use the upholstery attachment on heavy drapes. If the curtains are light, toss them into the dryer with wool dryer balls to collect the fuzz (just be sure to check the tags for washing instructions first).

KEEP IT UP: Antistatic spray (such as Static Guard) may prevent fur from clinging to the drapes. Alternatively, use outdoor curtains inside, says Jenn Kline, head of design at Pottery Barn. They're typically made with durable fabric that repels moisture, staining, and—coincidentally—pet fur.

TO BUY: Try the MultiClean Allergen Lift-Off Pet Vacuum Cleaner (\$220; bissell.com), which has a special Pet TurboEraser Tool. Plus, you can detach the small canister to tackle hard-to-reach spots.

YIKES: You and the plumber are basically besties, now that he's snaked your bathtub drain who knows how many times.

FIX IT: Extracting gobs of hair from your pipes is icky business—and those plumber bills add up—but using a liquid or gel clog remover should be your last resort, says Lou Manfredini, a home expert with Ace Hardware. Start with a drain snake to reel in the troublemaking clumps. You could also use a plunger: Remove the cap from the overflow drain (the metal disk on the side of the tub, beneath the faucet), and plug the drain with a wet rag. Then take out the stopper from the problem drain, and try suctioning up the clog with the plunger.

KEEP IT UP: A good strainer is an absolute must. Ideally, pull hair out after every shower, and scrub the strainer monthly with an old toothbrush to remove gunk. Important: Toss hairballs from the shower into the trash, not the loo, Manfredini says.

TO BUY: If you're still wading in ankle-deep water during your next shower, try a chemical cleaner, preferably one that is nonacidic, like Insta-Flo Drain Cleaner (\$20; acehardware.com). "Follow the instructions on the container to a tee, since these formulas can be really caustic," Manfredini says. After all, they're created to dissolve hair, scum, and other grossness.

YIKES: A certain family member's daily grooming session results in whisker fragments all over the bathroom sink.

FIX IT: Encourage your loved one to wipe the sink with a few squares of slightly damp toilet paper after each shave. Collect any straggling hairs with masking tape. If built-up product from wet shaving is causing a slow drain, use a drain snake or, if you must, a clog remover as recommended above.

GET TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

The average person sheds between 50 and 100 strands of hair per day. "It's a constant cycle of hair growing, resting, and falling out," says trichologist Kevin Mancuso, global creative director of Nexxus Salon Hair Care. To help minimize the mess, here are some preventive measures from Mancuso, Quinlan, and Heather Coughlin, vice president of product development at the hair-care brand Amika.

OPT FOR A LOOSE, LOW BUN OR PONYTAIL if you want to pull your hair back. A tight updo can create tension at the roots, causing more shedding.

EASE UP ON PLAYING WITH YOUR HAIR. Twirling, petting, and flipping it will inadvertently tug out strands.

MESSAGE YOUR SCALP when you're showering to stimulate blood flow, which helps keep roots healthy.

BIOTIN SUPPLEMENTS may help your hair grow healthier and stronger, reducing breakage.

KEEP IT UP: Dry shavers can lay a towel over the sink. When they're finished, they can fold it up and shake hairs into the trash. Wet shavers can periodically pour a small pot of boiling water down the drain to help prevent product and hair from accumulating.

TO BUY: The Beard Bib (\$21; duluthtrading.com) is an almost three-foot-long apron that drapes over the sink and suctions to the mirror. The slippery surface means all that hair should slide right off into the trash.

YIKES: Your bathroom baseboards are magnets for dirt, dust, and hair.

FIX IT: Styling products, like hair-spray, can settle along the baseboards and create a tacky surface that attracts particles. Wipe your baseboards with a microfiber cloth dampened with rubbing alcohol, which will help break down the sticky stuff. Test a small patch first to make sure the alcohol doesn't discolor or damage the finish, Maker suggests. If it does, stick with water (and a little more elbow grease).

KEEP IT UP: After the area is clean and dry, run a dryer sheet along the baseboard. This will leave behind a coating that helps repel sticky hair.

TO BUY: Try Mrs. Meyer's Dryer Sheets (\$9 for 80; mrsmeyers.com), which are made from plant-derived fibers.



YIKES: Before you leave the house, you look down and see your clothes are coated in hair.

FIX IT: Sure, a lint roller is the obvious answer, but use the fabric kind on clothes. It's more sustainable than the sticky-paper variety when it comes to daily tasks, Maker says. Pass it over your clothes, and the friction will let static cling do its magic.

KEEP IT UP: On laundry day, run hair-laden clothes and linens through the dryer for 10 minutes before throwing them into the wash to agitate off as much fur as possible. After washing, pull out each wet item and give it a snap to release stubborn hairs (and any wrinkles!), then toss it into the dryer with wool dryer balls or Bounce Pet Hair and Lint Guard Unscented Mega Dryer Sheets (\$13; amazon.com).

TO BUY: Donna Smallin Kuper, a certified housekeeping technician, uses the FurLifter Self-Cleaning Garment Brush (\$16; oxo.com).

YIKES: The brushes on your vanity are matted with hair.

FIX IT: Comb (yes, comb) the brush. Standing over the garbage, lift strands off the bristles with the pointy end of a tail comb.

KEEP IT UP: Do this after every use so hairs don't collect. Quinlan also recommends washing brushes regularly: Hold a brush under hot running water and add a tiny drop of shampoo. Gently rub the bristles, then rinse away the suds and lay the brush, bristle side down, on a towel to dry.

TO BUY: Self-cleaning hairbrushes do exist. The Mirai Hair Brush (\$29; bigelowchemists.com) comes with cotton liners you press onto the bristles and then peel off.

The average person sheds between 50 and 100 hairs per day. In a multiperson (and pet) household, all that fuzz builds up fast.

YIKES: Guests are coming over, and there's a thick layer of fur on your sofa.

FIX IT: Dampen a squeegee and drag it along your upholstery in short strokes. "The friction will help it pick up pet and human hair," Maker says. You could also use a damp rubber glove.

KEEP IT UP: Toss a machine-washable throw over your sofa for quicker clean-ups in the future. Just pull off the blanket to reveal pristine seating before guests arrive. If you're in the market for a new sofa, choose one in leather, Kline says, since hairs won't stick. Microfiber is another option—the tightly woven fabric makes it harder for hair to get caught in the weave.

TO BUY: The Full Circle Wipe Out Pivoting Head Squeegee (\$10; containerstore.com) has a sturdy and wide surface area.

LET'S NOT FORGET FURRY FAMILY MEMBERS

With consistent TLC, your pet's coat can be strong and healthy—and not spread all over your home. Elswick recommends these habits.

BRUSH YOUR PET AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK, more often if he has a thick or double coat.

BRUSHING OUTDOORS IS IDEAL, but what matters most is that your pet feels comfy enough to sit still for a quick grooming.

ASK YOUR VET if you can incorporate more omega-3 fatty acids into your pet's diet. There's evidence they may improve skin and hair, and a healthier, stronger coat could mean less shedding.

DRESSING YOUR PET in a specially made onesie (like Shed Defender, from \$40; sheddefender.com) will reduce the amount of hair that lands on the floor and may even help ease anxiety.

YIKES: Your socks are covered in pet fur from your carpet.

FIX IT: Use a high-quality vacuum with a HEPA filter that will suck up all that fur, along with dander and allergens trapped in the fibers.

KEEP IT UP: Vacuum your whole home weekly and high-traffic areas more frequently, Kuper says. If the thought of constant vacuuming fills you with dread, there's another solution. "Some animal hospitals set out a robot vacuum cleaner to do the bulk of the work overnight," says Maranda Elswick, DVM, creator of the Meowing Vet, a pet information site.

TO BUY: Check out our favorite robot vacuum on page 30. For a low-tech option, try a rubber broom or one with short, dense bristles. The Wisp Cleaning Set (\$40; thewisp.com) will dredge up embedded hairs, Kuper says.

YIKES: The power strip by your desk is a jumble of cords and, ew, hair.

FIX IT: Simply unplug it from the wall, then vacuum up the "nest."

KEEP IT UP: Plop your cords into a cable-organizing box—if you shed hairs, they won't end up tangled among the wires.

TO BUY: The Cable Management Box (\$38; theyamazakihome.com) not only hides ugly tech parts but is also easy to wipe clean.

YIKES: Fur and hair collect around the legs of your furniture.

FIX IT: Don't just mop around furniture. Lift each leg to ensure you're removing all the debris. Then, wearing damp rubber gloves or using a cloth, cup the bottom of each leg and twist to collect dust bunnies.

KEEP IT UP: Swap out the wool felt pads—which are hair magnets—for plastic gliders or silicone caps.

TO BUY: Try Everbilt's 7/8 Inch Clear Leg Tips (\$3 for 4; homedepot.com). ■