

Get your chic on

Swap tress stress for 'I love it' locks with our expert guide to getting the perfect hairstyle

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PHOTOGRAPHS: KURT GARDNER

Forget limp locks and tired tresses, a wedding calls for jaw-dropping, camera-loving, L'Oréal advert hair. But if your style search is putting the do into doubt, help is at hand. To rescue brides confused by the ups and downs of bridal styles, Antonia Krieger moved from handling the hair on films such as *Pride and Prejudice* and *Gladiator* to set up professional wedding stylists Elle Au Naturel. Get the right do for your day by learning the secrets she's picked up along the way.

Let your locks loose

"A tight, scraped-back style is too harsh on many brides. Instead, a soft updo with the hair twisted (not pulled) back at the sides and a few loose strands around the face is a really sweet, feminine look. Mischa Barton's lightly pinned red-carpet hairstyles are gorgeous, although if styles are messier, they can appear fuzzy in your wedding pictures."

Match the do to the dress

"Coordinating the shape of your hair with the lines of your dress just works. The Victorians used to balance their big-bustle dresses with big hair at the back, and the wider your dress, the wider your hair can be. Structured dresses (such as Phillipa Lepley's) suit structured dos, slim-fitting gowns work well with sleek locks and a fishtail looks great with a softer style. For asymmetrical gowns, where the dress is pulled to one side with flowers or a brooch, style your hair on the opposite side – buns look lovely for this. Lace or detailed Pronovias-style dresses suit both elegantly structured and loose, boho locks."

Suit your face shape

"Styles that are pulled tight, particularly at the sides, make small faces shrink even more, so try to add height and a bit of

width to your hair. If you have a square or round face, or a strong jaw, loose strands that cut across your cheekbone and jawline will slim the face. Long faces should avoid high hairstyles, which elongate the length further. If you have a big gap between your cheek and your jaw, get tendrils cut in that rest at this level – they'll break up the space."

Don't neglect your neckline

"The neckline is one of the prettiest parts of a strapless gown, so if you wear your hair down, choose a length that doesn't fall over the beginning of the dress. Take some hairgrips along to your dress fitting

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to see what works with your neckline. Boleros will work best with updos, otherwise long strands can interfere with the collar. Bobs look fabulous on brides and work brilliantly if you want to show off your jewellery."

Consider all angles

"Your photographer will snap you from every angle and top to toe, so if you keep the front of your do relaxed, add pretty detail at the back or side."

Don't accessorise all areas

"The days of decorating a do like a magpie's nest are gone; brides look beautiful with minimal but magical accessorising, such as adding a single flower or one stunning slide. Kelly Spence makes gorgeous vintage combs and offers a bespoke service where you can turn your own treasured items, like your grandma's old brooch, into hairclips.

For beautiful pearl or diamante pins, try Yarwood-White. Bear in mind that curly dos require bigger accessories as tiny pins won't stand out."

Flower hairdos and don'ts

"I recommend going faux. Fresh roses can be heavy and tricky to attach, orchids look amazing but their longevity isn't great and buds often turn brown very quickly."

No halfway measures

"A half-up, half-down do might seem the simplest solution, but this style can be tricky. Curls don't always hold – particularly on very fine or long, heavy hair – and wet, windy weather can transform your pretty do into a fluffy don't. If you're torn between both styles, I recommend having hair up for the ceremony and down for the reception. Keeping locks in an up-style for a while will give your hair soft waves and movement when you take it down."

Find a stylist who gets you

"Someone who rarely does wedding hair is unlikely to enjoy it or have enough ideas to produce your perfect style. Get bridal hairdresser recommendations from friends, your photographer or your venue. And always research prices – a top city stylist will expect to earn the same money doing your hair for a few hours as they would if they were in their salon on a Saturday morning."

Put an end to split ends

"Go for regular trims every six weeks. You don't have to lose an inch each time – just taking the tips off will reduce dead ends."

Wash hair when you want

"It's a myth that you shouldn't wash your hair on your wedding day – if you need to wash your hair every day, wash it. After all, how glamorous will

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an updo with greasy roots make you feel? Wash according to your hair type's demands – be it everyday or every three days.”

Avoid extension tension

“Don't fear a little fake. Clip-in extensions hold curls well (which is great if your natural locks don't), add volume and length and can be precisely colour-matched to your hair after the trial.”

Go for all-over colour

“If you only have a half-head of colour, an updo will reveal dark patches.”
Celebrity and bridal hairdresser Mathew Alexander recommends getting your roots or hair coloured a week to 10 days before the wedding. This gives time for your hair to settle and allows any colour adjustments to be made if necessary.

Time your trial right

“Have one at least two months before the wedding. Brides can feel nervous about it, especially if they've never had their hair styled before, but our aim is to find a do that suits you and makes you feel your happiest. Bring pictures of styles you love, your tiara (if you're having one) and a swatch of your dress.”

Stay true to you

“Unless you're a super-confident starlet who loves to mix her make-up and play with her looks, don't pick a do too different from your day-to-day style. You'll want to look natural and feel like you.”

Antonia Krieger and the Elle Au Naturel team offer worldwide bridal beauty and hairstyling services. For their hair help, visit elleaunaturel.com.



Antonia's best-tressed buys

“Silhouette, £3.79, holds all types of hair without feeling wet or sticky”



“A tail comb is a great tool – its prong lifts hair into sections” (£4, Kent Brushes)

“If you're after sleekness, ghd's amazing.” Styler, £116.49

“I love ceramic rollers, straighteners, everything.” Rollers, £XX, BaByliss

“Kérastase is the best.” Apply Nectar Thermique, £17.50, for a sexy sheen