

Hair toppers vs. wigs- which one is better? 3 questions to ask yourself to get the best alternative hair for you!

Welcome to the Alternative Hair Alchemist podcast. Now whether you're one of the hundreds of thousands of women experiencing hair loss for any number of reasons, or if you're curious and want to check out what alternative hair is all about, you are in the right place. Hi, I'm Deborah. I am a certified alternative hair specialist educator, and the co-creator of a one of a kind, shame-free, stigma-free alternative hair boutique called [Very Best Little Hair House](#), and that's where the magic happens.

That's where I help women and men like you find the alternative hair that brings their inner beauty out. We take over where genetics or Mother Nature drop the ball and help you find and wear the alternative hair that makes you feel vibrant. I've made it my business to discover all there is to know about good wigs and toppers, and I love to talk about them. It's not just hair. It's so much more than that. This is about feeling complete, and if alternative hair is the way for you to do that, I got you covered.

Yeah, it sucks when you see your scalp shining through your hair. But you know what? There is joy in finding the right alternative hair. Trust me, it can be overwhelming at first. I mean, where do you start? Wig, topper? Oh my God, will somebody know? What if my wig falls off? First of all, take a deep breath, I got you covered. This podcast addresses all things alternative hair.

It's not always as easy as just finding a wig and putting it on, so I'm going to give you a tell-it-like-it-is viewpoint from what I see firsthand. I've been through it all: stress hair loss, alopecia, chemo. I started my own journey about 20 years ago and at that time, I had nobody to talk to or get advice from, so I am here for you. I can tell you this, even on my best natural hair day, I never looked or felt as confident as I do in my alternative hair. Now after five years of helping people in my shop, get over that fear and get out there. I am bringing this to you to inspire, empower and educate you.

It's simple. When you look good, you feel even better. If alternative hair is part of that confidence, who cares if you grew it or if you bought it? Forget your grandma's wig and prepare to look red carpet gorgeous. Time to end this shame and stigma. Life is too short not to love who you are, and I want you to get excited about the possibilities. Grab your headphones, feel the love I am sending your way and let's do this.

Hello, hello and welcome to this week's episode of the Alternative Hair Alchemist. This is Debra Haim. I am your resident alchemist. I help people find the hair of their dreams in my shop in Sharon, Pennsylvania called Very Best Little Hair House.

One of the things I get the most questions about or possible consultations for is toppers. Also, if you're of the mature crowd, they're also referred to as wiglets. We're talking about the pieces that clip on the top of your head to add some fullness and some length. Boy, the sales of these things have gone through the roof. I'll tell you in 2003, I couldn't even find a topper. There really wasn't, but now there are so many out there so we're going to talk about those a little bit and figure out if one of those might be the right solution for you.

I find a lot of women come in or call in fact, I've learned to ask the person on the phone about their hair loss. Because sometimes, unfortunately, with hair loss, you have to at least have enough hair on your head for the clips to attach to.

Now there are all kinds of alternate methods to attach a topper, but I'm going to give you my thoughts on some of those as well as we go along. Hair loss is pretty prevalent in the world, the United States, whatever. But in the past couple of years, a lot more attention has been brought to it because COVID is reputed to cause hair loss. Sometimes people attribute it to the shots, whatever the medications today, stress has a lot to do with it.

Either way, I think a lot more women are starting to at least take inventory and see that they have hair loss, so they're looking to do something about it. The first thing they do is go to the internet, and you will see all kinds of videos that make it look like a topper is just easy to clip on and go. In some aspects, it is, but toppers are almost to me more of a challenge to get to look natural and seamless as it's a little bit more difficult than a very good-fitting wig in my opinion.

I'm gonna guess some of you that are listening to this have already figured toppers out and that's great, but for the average person that is looking at it where you clip it on and go, they make it look a little more easy than it is for the average person, especially somebody that has mobility problems, like say they've got shoulder or hand arthritis.

One of the things you have to think about is that every day when you wear your topper, you've got to get it in place. The clips can be kind of difficult for some people to deal with, so when someone comes into my shop, the first thing I do is assess their hair loss and measure the area. Because with a topper, you don't just want the amount of hair that you need.

I get a lot of women come in and say, "I'll just need a little bit of hair right here." Unfortunately, with a topper, it doesn't work that way. There are all different base sizes and you need to make sure that you go well beyond the area of thinning hair. Everybody will say, "Well, they can cause hair loss." Actually, they pretty much almost always do. That's why I recommend that if you get a topper, you are vigilant about where your clips are. I teach you how to move the clips as you need to.

There are topper grips available that I will try and address before this is over, but those again, when you get them in, on the topper grip itself, there are places for you to clip your clips into. Sometimes you've got to move the ribbons and stuff on those for those to work. Okay, the base size. As I said, you want it

to cover the main areas of hair loss. They do make special toppers for the crown. The thing that you have to look at though is the amount of coverage you're getting from that topper.

I have seen women come in and sometimes they've gone to a shop and purchased a topper where it just simply doesn't give enough coverage. Sometimes if you go with too small of a base size, then it's not covering in the back and not covering completely on the sides and you can see scalp through that. When I put a topper on someone, I make sure we look at all four views because your back view can be a big giveaway. Toppers come in longer rather than shorter, although they're making some more shorter ones now.

Almost everybody that gets a topper will need to have it customized in some way. Generally the length, they can take care of the ends, blend the ends in with your current haircut and make it look much like almost like a layered haircut, if you will. There are various lengths of toppers available. Again, a lot of questions from a lot of women coming in, especially you know your more mature women that want the shorter toppers, and there are quite a few of those. There's a couple that are my favorites. I'll give you a couple of suggestions before this is over.

Another thing I find is that women coming in, especially those who are new to hair loss, everyone seems to have the opinion that a topper will look more natural and be less hot. That really depends on the topper itself. Sometimes, the construction of some of them can be so thick and it can be heavy. Depending on what it's made out of, it doesn't feel any less hot than a wig, which if your wig fits you correctly and it's a good wig, it is not hot. I wear wigs almost every day. I do get hot flashes because I'm of that age, but I have never had a wig since I opened a shop that I would classify as hot.

That's the shame of it because when you're starting out and you choose a wig, and maybe it's not made of the construction or the right synthetic and it's hot, I get a lot of women coming in that assume all wigs are hot. Even though we're talking about toppers, I want to get that out there one more time. Wigs, if done right are not necessarily hot. You can get quite a lot of really good looks and more variety with a wig than a topper.

When someone comes in for a consultation, first of all, if they don't have enough hair for a topper, I will let them know that rather than sell them something that isn't going to work. Also, I will instruct them and have them put on a wig. I choose my wigs in true boutique style. I don't buy 12 of one wig in 12 different colors. I pick wigs and toppers in my shop in the shades that are just outstanding and very natural looking. I will tell you almost 75% of people that come in for a topper consultation that could get away with a topper leave with a wig and they are totally delighted.

I mean, I have people come in that think they want a topper because they are afraid of how wigs look because of bad wigs that they have seen around. After two or three wigs on them, they're like, "Wow, what a relief. I can't believe it," and then they are actually excited to wear the wig.

Wigs don't further your hair loss if done right, either. That's another thing that women come in concerned about is that, "Will a wig stop my hair from growing or will a topper stop that?" The answer is

no if you do it right. However, with the topper, you've got to be careful with the clips. As many times as I say that, as many times as I know it's said, I get people in my shop that are surprised that say, "Nobody told me that the clips would do that," or "Nobody told me to move the clips." That's why I'm throwing it in here now.

Then with the topper grip, that is also a really great thing if that works for you. However, with a topper, you do want to be concerned that it stays stable on your head during movement. Some people are more active than others. Another thing that you can do with a topper is slide a bobby pin or two along the side of the base. Catch the base without going through the base and cover it up with the hair of the topper. Just a bobby pin or two can give you a little extra security on that piece. I've done toppers before and I'll tell you it can get dicey if you're on a motorcycle or what have you, but you kind of find these things as you go along.

Now some of the differences between the brands of toppers. You will find that the different brands, number one, offer different colors. The construction will be different. The type of clips, I've seen some brands that have metal clips. Other brands have snazzier and smoother clips. You'll find a difference in the clips, and then also the distribution of the hair or fiber.

Now when I say hair, I'm referring to any type of alternate hair, whether it is human hair, whether it is synthetic, the distribution of the hair on the piece, some brands have permtease and a little bit of that built in there to give you more height of the hair. Now depending on whether you want to go all the way natural looking like if you have pretty severe hair loss and you want to look more natural, then that might be a concern to you. Some of the people that want to look more glam and the big-haired people, they want the topper with the most volume that they can get. That is something to think about too when you're choosing a topper.

As far as colors, there is less selection of colors in wigs, but you can get away with a whole lot more than you think you can. A lot of the brands come out with these blended colors and you can put them on almost any color hair. Now some women, the ones that do have enough existing bio hair to blend with the topper, sometimes they will pick the topper and then have the stylist color their own hair so that it matches better. That's an option. Like I said, I personally think you can get away with a whole lot with the topper arena, but whatever makes you feel the most comfortable, by all means do it.

I also want to address clip-in bangs. Like I said, if you're good at wigs or alternative hair and you're listening to this, you're probably already aware. First of all, I think women at home imagine that there will just be a little clip-on piece of a bang that you can put in the front. I've had clients come in that get some of those on Amazon and a couple of the vendors have a bang. But if you have severe hair loss, a bang piece isn't going to solve a lot of the problem.

Most of the bang pieces, they will have a little bit of hair that will help you blend it in the back, but a lot of the pieces will have a big seam of hair. I just mentioned this because a lot of women will call or come into the shop thinking that that will be a solution. If you get a bang piece, you want to choose one that has a lot of hair that you can blend in the back. However, I just want to make it clear that sometimes

women will imagine that there is just a bang, a piece that you can put on there. My advice is don't judge a piece as having too much hair because even with the bang piece, you want to get it blended into your existing hair so that it doesn't look like, I hate to say it, but like a clip-on mustache.

I'm getting pretty lengthy here, so I'm just gonna try and wrap it up. A lot of women will call the shop or come in and ask for a human hair topper because they assume that one, that you can dye it as you go along which I discussed that in the human hair episode, coloring a piece isn't best done at home. The fact is that when you get a human hair topper, as you wear it, they do dry out. Especially if you take care of them, it's not going to dry out so fast.

But looking for human hair just because you think it's going to look natural, of course it would be ideal to get human hair all the time, but you don't really necessarily need human hair to start into alternative hair or toppers. I see a lot of people coming in with really poor quality human hair toppers that just look fake, but they bought it because of the words human hair. I feel like it's my duty to remind you that human hair doesn't necessarily mean it's better. It depends on the hair and also where you got it from.

Most of the brands out there are offering toppers in various lengths. Some of the shorter ones that I mentioned, I'd say a few of my favorites, Henry Margu has a topper called Delight. That one has worked well for a lot of women and I love it. It's got a mono construction so you can part it all different ways. I was really impressed with that one. Bell Tress's six-inch topper is also very nice. It's also heat-friendly so you can get a lot of different looks out of that. I've had people wear that out of the store because it looks so good right on.

Another favorite of mine if you'd like a little more volume and a shorter topper, Essentially You from Jon Renau. Any of those are great, but there is so much really great alternative hair out there. I hope I've got you excited about at least trying some. With a topper, some guidance is always a good idea. I am starting to do video consults. By simply booking one of those, even if you're interested in a wig, what I do is we'll talk for a few minutes. You tell me what's working, what isn't, I look at your hair, and we go from there. Keep that in mind. Until next week, take care.

If you love this episode and want to connect with me, please go to my website and drop me an email, VeryBestLittleHairHouse.com so we can get in touch. Until next time, remember that you are beautiful, perfect and loved just the way you are.

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