

Seven Things You Must Know Before Choosing a Hair Salon

Introduction

Your appearance is important to you, right?

Well if it isn't... it certainly should be.

We may not like it, but the truth of the matter is that we are ALWAYS being judged by our appearances. You may not be able to judge a book by its cover, but people certainly judge you based on how you look.

That's why it's important to find a good hair salon. If you end up going to a salon that's... not good, you're wasting time, money and even your self-confidence. Don't do that! Instead, find a salon that suits your needs, charges a fair price and is very friendly.

How do you do that? That's what this report is here for. We'll not only answer some of the most common questions regarding hair salons, we'll also provide you a few tips, tricks and questions to help you get started **today**.

The first place to start is determining how to choose the right hair salon for your specific needs.

How to Choose the Right Hair Salon for Your Needs

The first step in finding a good salon is to determine what you're looking for.

Do you want someone who's very friendly and talkative? Or do you prefer a stylist who is all business?

What about the price? Can you pay \$100 or more for a haircut? Or are you on a very tight budget right now?

Does someone you know have an amazing haircut that you'd like for yourself? Or do you want to "try something new", aka something rare and unique?

Figure out what you want. If you don't even know what you want, how do you expect to get it?

Once you've figured that out, you have a few options regarding how to find a salon. Each has its advantages and disadvantages, but all of them work just fine.

Word of Mouth (aka Recommendations from Friends and Family)

This is the oldest form of advertising in the world! That said, word of mouth is often seen as the best advertisement method.

That's because you tend to trust your family and friends, right? They wouldn't tell you to go to a dumpy, horrible hair salon. They want the best for you, so they're going to tell you the best place in town.

Well, at least what *they* think is the best place in town.

But you probably trust their judgment, right? Unless it's a friend who has the worst hairstyle you've ever seen, chances are high that you'll believe what your friend or family member has to say.

This works especially well if you want the same style as someone. Simply ask them where they get their hair done so you can go to the same place. Unless your hair is a completely different type (ex. Curly while your friend's is straight), their stylist should be able to give you what you're looking for.

Another reason this works well is that you get warned against the bad salons. If someone had a horrible experience, they'll be VERY quick to tell you about it! This is great because it helps you avoid making the same mistake.

The Internet

Another great place to start is online. There are a TON of ways to use the internet to help you find a good hair stylist.

For example, social media allows you to quickly ask a bunch of your friends, coworkers, family, etc. who they would recommend for a hair stylist. Granted, most of them probably won't respond, but it does allow you to very quickly get a few inputs. And since this is basically the same as word of mouth, but faster. It's a great way to start.

Another way to use the World Wide Web is simply looking at reviews of the salon. Sites like Yelp, Angie's List and Cityvoter have a lot of information on salons including customer reviews. These reviews aren't biased and come from actual customers. The best way to use these sites is to look at the most recent reviews for the salons. You can still look at older ones, but a lot can change over the span of a few years.

One thing that most people don't think of is using scheduling websites like Schedulicity or Vagaro. These are okay, but the downside is that you don't really see what people think of the stylist. You may be able to see how many "Faves" they have (such as on Schedulicity), but that doesn't mean a whole lot.

Finally, you can always resort to just using a search engine like Google or Yahoo! This works just fine, especially since some reviews will instantly come up. Granted, there probably won't be very many, but every little bit helps.

The Phone Book

Yes, phone books do still exist! And even though most people just toss phone books as soon as they arrive, they aren't completely useless.

There are a few obvious downsides though. For one thing, it will probably take you longer to find hair salons in the phone book than it would online. Second, you can't see any kinds of reviews from customers. Third, you're essentially just picking a salon based on their little ¼ page advertisement! Considering that you'll probably be paying these people a decent chunk of change, you probably want something more to go on, right?

To Sum it Up...

You have a lot of options here. Just make sure that you follow the first step of figuring out what you *really* want. That makes the rest of the process much easier.

Are There Different Types of Hair Salons?

Some people will tell you that all hair salons are the same. We beg to differ, as there are quite a few different types of salons out there!

And if you've been to just a few, you've probably noticed that each has its own personality and culture. Even those within the same company tend to be different from one another.

Here are the most common types:

Student Salons

Most beauty schools offer some kind of hair salon services. These are students learning the craft and trying to improve their skills. Unfortunately, that means they don't have a ton of experience. The students will usually take a little longer with your hair to make sure they get it right.

The good news for you is the cost. These services tend to be much lower than working with a professional stylist. Also, most students have enough experience to do a pretty good job, so don't think that you're sacrificing too much quality to save a few bucks.

Chain Salons

These are your average, run-of-the-mill salons that belong to some kind of brand name. A few examples are Great Clips and Sports Clips. These tend to be very affordable and even offer coupons.

The good thing with these salons besides the cost, is you know what you're getting every time you go. Whether you go to a Great Clips in town or while you're on vacation, it doesn't matter. Your stylists will have (roughly) the same level of expertise, the store will be set up similarly, and costs are also similar.

Some of these salons, such as Sports Clips, have their own "niche". Sports Clips allows men to watch sports while getting their hair cut. Not a bad idea!

As you may already know, these salons aren't for people who are extremely picky and willing to spend big money for a fancy haircut. Their stylists are qualified for most jobs, but don't expect to look like a celebrity when you leave these salons!

Upscale Salons

If you're willing to spend more money for an amazing haircut experience, upscale salons are for you. Costing anywhere from 2-10 times as much as a chain salon, you can expect some great service from a highly experienced stylist.

What generally makes up the higher cost isn't just the stylist's salary though, it's overhead. All of the little amenities such as the nice atmosphere, free drinks and snacks, shampoo and conditioner included in your haircut package, etc. The cost of these things add up.

If your goal is to look your *very* best for something like a wedding or job interview, these salons are your best bet.

Specialized Salons

Most hair stylists are jacks-of-all-trades, masters-of-none. They can cut anyone's hair, so they may cut a 5 year old boy's hair first, then a 25 year old bride for her wedding, then a 70 year old woman who needs her hair dyed.

But not all stylists are like this. Some specialize in certain hairstyles or demographics.

For example, some work exclusively with brides getting ready for their big day. Brides want to look as beautiful as possible, right? That usually means getting a very experienced hair stylist.

Another example is a stylist that specializes in afros or dreadlocks. They probably don't do these styles exclusively, but they can certainly do better things with those styles than most of their competitors.

Store Salons

One option that some people forget about is salons found inside large retail stores. The idea is that by offering a salon service, they're giving you the entire beauty package. Why go anywhere else if you can buy your clothes, groceries, toys and beauty supplies at the same place you get your hair done?

A few examples are Wal-Mart and Macys. Some of these salons are leased by the store, not owned. Either way, the idea is still the same. They want to be your one-stop-shop for everything beauty related.

Independent Stylists

Finally, there are individual stylists who rent out space and manage everything themselves. These are usually the more experienced stylists who want to create their own schedule, do things their own way, etc.

These are some of the best stylists out there. They have to be if they want to stay in business! Without the benefit of having a set store location or a brand name, the main way they'll attract customers is word-of-mouth.

To Sum it Up...

You have a lot of options. Some salons are expensive, some are affordable. Some specialize in certain things, others will cut any hair that comes through the door.

Which one you choose all depends on your current needs.

How to Make Sure Your Stylist is Qualified

Let's face it... not everyone out there who calls themselves "stylists" are fully qualified.

This is especially true if you don't go to an actual salon. For example, someone cutting hair out of their home may not be a certified stylist.

So how do you know what to look for? Well it depends on your state, but here's a good place to find out: http://www.beautyschoolsdirectory.com/faq/state_req.php

For example, Georgia barbers are required to have at least 1,500 hours of training or 3,000 hours of apprenticeship.

In Idaho, you only need 900 hours of training to become a qualified barber, but to become a barber *hair stylist*, you need at least 1,800 hours.

Take a look at that website and see what the qualifications are. This will give you an idea of how much experience your hair stylist (should) have.

Certificates/Diplomas

Another way to identify if your stylist is qualified is by certifications they've earned. There are currently five types of certifications:

1. Level 1 Certificate in Introduction to the Hair and Beauty Sector
2. Level 1 NVQ Certificate in Hairdressing and Barbering
3. Level 2 NVQ Certificate in Barbering
4. Level 3 Certificate in Hairdressing
5. Level 3 Certificate in African Caribbean Hairdressing

Professionals will make an effort to get all five certifications. Even if they don't have a specialty, it's a good idea for them to learn as much as possible about their craft.

Authority Organizations

There are a few organizations that are considered authorities in the hairdressing world:

- Hairdressing and Beauty Industry Authority (HABIA)
- Freelance Hair and Beauty Foundation (FHBF)
- National Hairdressers' Federation
- Professional Beauty Association
- Hair and Beauty Industry Association (HBIA)

Your stylist may be a part of some of these associations. It doesn't hurt to ask them! Typically, only people who are serious about their work join professional associations such as these, so it's another way to help you make your decision.

How Much Should I Tip, and to Whom?

Some women freak out about how much to tip their hair stylist. The good news is that it doesn't have to be too complicated!

Here are a few basic rules to follow:

- Try to tip a total of 20 percent. If you brought a small child with you, tip higher! Meanwhile if you have short hair and get it done every 4-6 weeks, its okay to tip a little less.
- Tip each person (stylist, shampooer, owner, etc.) separately. If you just tip the stylist, it may not get shared with the others.
- Don't tip well if you received horrible service. Instead, it's better to offer a small tip and provide honest feedback than to tip the full 20 percent.
- Tip with cash if you have it. All professions that accept tips (stylists, waiters, bartenders, etc.) prefer cash over credit.

These are just guidelines. Don't see this as the end-all, be-all! Each salon is different - some prefer you to only tip the stylist, while others prefer a separate tip for each person. Don't be afraid to ask if you're unsure.

What if I have Special Needs or Health Issues?

You shouldn't have to worry about your health when you go to a hair salon. This should be a relaxing, enjoyable time - not a stressful one!

If you have certain health concerns or special needs, there are a few things you can do:

- Ask the stylist if you can get a quick tour of the facility before getting your hair done. You want to make sure the facilities are clean and sanitary.
- Ask the stylist (or assistant at the front) what measures they take to keep the equipment clean and sanitary. Soap? Rubbing alcohol? Nothing?
- If your "special needs" includes bringing a little one, ask whether or not it'd be a problem. Some salons, especially high-end ones, don't allow children inside.
- Be upfront with the stylist. If you have an allergic reaction to certain things that are common in hair products, let them know! Or maybe your hair has an issue, such as constantly feeling too dry or oily. The more you share with the stylist, the more they can do to help you out.
- Don't be afraid to walk away from a stylist that won't accommodate your needs. You don't owe them anything, this is a business transaction. Don't take things personally, and they shouldn't either.

I know that some of these things are difficult to do. Nobody likes feeling like a burden, and sometimes those of us with special needs or requests can feel like that.

But you can't feel that way.

Just do what you need to do, stop worrying and be happy with your decision!

How to Make Sure You Get Exactly the Hair Style You Want

If you already know exactly what kind of hairstyle you want, you just made it much easier for the hair stylist!

You'd be surprised how many people come into a salon without really knowing what they want.

This isn't a huge deal, as you can look at photos or examples from them to make your decision.

Once you've made your choice, here are few things to do/keep in mind:

- Wash and brush your hair before you get there. This makes it easier to cut and style.
- Once you've selected your style, ask the stylist if they've done something like it before.
- Don't get too attached to a magazine or celebrity photo. Your hair is different, your face is different, even your head's shape is different! It may not look exactly the same on you.
- Don't micromanage your stylist. If you keep asking specific questions about they're doing, you're only going to slow them down. You can ask a few generic questions, but don't get too much into the details.
- Show AND tell. Some people will come in and say they want to take off "about 4 inches". But if they don't show the stylist what length they're talking about, the stylist may make it too short or too long.
- Be honest with yourself. If you don't like styling your hair, do you really want a high-maintenance haircut? Or if you don't like going to the stylist, do you really think that getting a short cut is best? Probably not.
- Allow your haircut about a week before you decide if you like it or not. You may dislike it at first, but find a way to style it at home that works for you.
- If you don't end up with a haircut you liked, tell the stylist! Tell them that you didn't get what you were expecting, and see what your options are. They may offer to fix it for free or a discounted price. Maybe they can give you some kind of coupon or discount for next time.

If you don't end up with something you like, please be mature about it with your stylist. Don't play the blame game - nobody wins! Instead, think about what went wrong and try to avoid letting it happen again in the future.

Important Questions to Ask Before Going to a Hair Salon

The topics we've already discussed will give you a good foundation for selecting a hair salon. That said, there are a few questions you can ask to help you make your final decision:

- **How much experience do your stylists have?**
- **What kinds of licenses and certifications do your stylists have?**
- **Do you specialize in any particular kind of style or hair?**
- **What makes you different from other hair salons?**
- **How much do you think this will cost?**
- **Do you prefer that I tip each person separately?**
- **If I have (special need), could you accommodate me?**
- **How long have you been in business?**
- **How long have you been at this location?**
- **Do you have any referrals I could talk to?**
- **If I'm dissatisfied for some reason, would you fix it for free or a discount?**

This is by no means an exhaustive list of questions you can ask. Instead, it's just to help get you started.

Conclusion

Don't let something as fun as getting your hair done be a stressful event! We all know that appearance is important, but we shouldn't have to stress over something as fun as this.

The best way to do that is to do a little research before choosing a hair salon. Each and every salon is different, so you just need to weigh the pros and cons.

Once you've found a salon and stylist that you absolutely love, the good news is that you're probably set for years to come. Unless you move or the salon goes out of business, you won't need to research salons again for a long time.

Good luck, thanks for reading and please contact us – we'll be glad to answer any questions you may have.