

Morgan Manella

How To Get the Perfect Shade of Blonde

Getting the perfect shade of blonde can be a bit of a struggle. No matter how many photos of Jennifer Aniston you flash before your stylist, there is always a chance your hair will come out looking ashy, bleached, bright yellow, or too fake.

A 2008 study conducted by Clairol found that 75 percent of American women dye their hair. But the process of achieving the ultimate shade of blonde requires a keen eye to mix the perfect solutions and strategically place the foils.

We asked professional colorist and blonde expert Michael Needle, who works at L'Estetica Salon International in Miami, what it takes to get the perfect blonde. Here are three things you need to know about going blonde and how you can help your hair stylist obtain and maintain your perfect shade.

1. **Get visual:** Bring pictures of blondes you like (and don't like) to your colorist. Make sure they are realistic. "Girls that come in see movie stars in magazines, they see a package, but the package is not necessarily the client sitting in the chair," Needle said. Blondes in magazines will look different depending on the amount of makeup they are wearing and the surrounding light. You might bring in a photo of Blake Lively and expect your colorist to match Lively's golden highlights, but your colorist can't make you 5'10" with a natural bronzed glow.

2. **Consider your skin tone:** Needle says there is a shade of blonde for everyone. “From their skin tone we match a color that makes a little contrast and doesn’t wash them out.” Be aware of cool and warm shades and which one complements your skin best. A cooler skin tone like Christina Aguilera or Reese Witherspoon can be matched with platinum or very light blonde.

3. **Focus on maintenance:** In the first stages of going from a darker shade to blonde, you need to see your colorist within three weeks. “The client should have a quarter of an inch of regrowth to lift the color to the right proportion,” Needle advised. The client can maintain her hair color at home by using shampoos that are salt-free. Needle recommends L’Oreal EverPure Sulfate-Free Color Care System Moisture Shampoo.

Every woman needs to experience being a blonde bombshell, but one shade definitely doesn’t fit all. Needle emphasizes the importance of following these steps so that you and your stylist can find the shade of blonde that’s right for you.

If you want to get started before your appointment at the salon, you can visit

www.lorealparisusa.com for a hair color consultation.