

HAIR TIPS AND TRICKS FOR LGBTQIA+ FOLKS 🏳️‍🌈

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Section 1:

CUTTING & DYING YOUR OWN HAIR

Why do it?

1. Budget: salons/barbershops can be expensive!
 - FYI some hair salons have low earner appointments or a pay it forward scheme for customers. If you don't see it on their website or profile, don't hesitate to ask!
2. Light anxiety, past trauma
 - I can say that 99% of my clients have experienced trauma at the hairdresser. Not being listened to, being scared to clearly state what we want, being misgendered, put in boxes, or just getting a really messed up haircut! It's happened to everyone and I know how discouraging this can be. You are not alone; we deal with it on a daily basis, and most queer friendly hairstylists I know are proper mental health advocates.
 - Don't be afraid to open up to them about your fears.

How do I get started?

- Before you get started, watch a few YouTube videos. Look for tutorials for self haircuts, do's and don'ts. You'll save yourself a few hours figuring out how to even hold the tools and hopefully won't end up looking like a lawnmower did the job.

Easy styles to maintain at home

- Buzz cut, undercut, asymmetrical cut with a shaved side, sharp bowl cut, short shaggy hair, long shaggy hair, anything shaggy. Wouldn't recommend bobs. Curly hair = lucky hair, mistakes can easily blend in, however fine hair over there be careful and very gentle!

Tools to buy

- Look at professional hair suppliers rather than on Amazon. Basic kits may contain a pair of scissors, comb, water spray, some hair clips, if short hair then use clippers and 2 mirrors. The secret is: don't try and make it perfect. If it looks good enough, leave it! Thinning scissors are amazing to blend those lines in, HOWEVER be very careful with it just a couple of snips on a strand is enough. They are not suitable for curly hair, it makes it frizzy.

Recommended Products

Support brands that are cruelty free (no testing on animals), ethical (source ingredients from fair trade farms and suppliers), sustainable (biodegradable and/or recyclable). One doesn't necessarily mean the other, so look them up! Some brands I personally recommend: Kevin Murphy, Oway, EVO, Davines, Lush, or the budget friendly Faith in Nature.

Section 2:

AT THE SALON

How do I choose an LGBTQIA+ friendly place?

- Google, twitter, instagram, blogs/forums. I use Instagram the most to:
 1. What the space looks and feel like
 2. What the clients look (look at pics) and sound (read comments) like
 3. The stylists
 4. Their range of skills (from the pictures they post)
 5. Reviews

*I wouldn't pay attention to the number of followers and likes.

READ 🙌 THOSE 🙌 COMMENTS. A handful of positive reviews from clients who have actually been to the place are worth much more than 500 comments from strangers who follow them because they have a good online presence and invest in social media marketing, and this is a golden rule you can apply to pretty much anything on Instagram.

- Look for gender neutral prices and services. The industry is full of hetero normative dinosaurs and it needs to change. Support the businesses that care about hair not gender!

How do I search for hair specialists with hashtags on social media?

1. Are you looking for an "exclusively" LGBTQIA+ salon? Queer owned, majority queer employees and clients, rainbow flags all over the shop => use specific geo-location+queer hastags*
2. Are you looking for a change of style and you want a specialist in this field that would also be LGBTQ+ friendly ? Use hairstyle specific hashtags (e.g.: #mulletspecialist, #longtoshorttransformation...) + look for that flag on their bio or for diversity on their page and client base.
3. QPOC folks: whether you wish to go to an ethnic specific salon or not (#asianhairspecialist, ...), again look for queer inclusivity and/or diversity on their page. Textured hair is not taught at hairdressing school, so unless your hairstylist is POC or took a course, they won't be qualified to cut your hair. The salon might not have the right hair products either.

*With using hashtags on IG you will have to dig a bit but I find it is the best way.

Recommended Queer Focused Hashtags:

**#alternativesalon #alternativehairstyle #androgynoushair #eastlondonsalon
#eastlondonbarber #eastlondonqueer #femalebarber #gayhair #gayhairstylist
#genderequality #genderfluidfashion #genderfluidhair #genderfluidhaircut
#genderfluidbarbershop #genderfreehaircutclub #genderidentity #genderneutralhair
#genderneutralfashion #hairhasnogender #inclusivesalon #lengthnotgender
#lesbianbarber #lesbianhair #lesbianhairstylist #lgbthair #lgbtlondon #nonbinarybarber
#nonbinaryartist #nonbinaryfashion #nonbinaryhair #nonbinaryhairstylist
#nonbinarystyle #queerbarber #queercut #queerhair #queerhaircut #queerhairstylist
#queerlondon #queerculture #queerfashion #transhair #translondon**

Section 3:

FINDING THE RIGHT HAIR STYLIST & HAIR CUT

Finding the right hair stylist for you:

- Remember that most hairstylists tend to specialize. A good hairdresser isn't necessarily a good barber. Good with long hair doesn't mean good with bobs/good with short hair doesn't mean good with fades. Again this is why I like using Instagram as you can really see the range of skills of hairstylists. However it is as important to feel comfortable with your stylist than getting the best cut, so if you like their vibe go for it!

How to pick out a hair cut:

1. Instagram and Pinterest. If you cannot find exactly what you want, pick elements of haircuts you like and make a moodboard. Visuals are better than words!
2. Look for pictures of people who have similar hair TYPE (1.Straight, 2.Wavy, 3.Curly, 4.Very curly/kinky) and TEXTURE (A. Fine, B. Medium, C. Thick) cannot 🙌 stress 🙌 this 🙌 enough. You might be disappointed if the result looks completely different otherwise.
3. Gender and age should make no difference in picking a style that suits a face. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. No one is ever too old, too young, too this or that for a hairstyle. Gender plays no role either: "man bun" is a "top knot" !

Section 4:

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR HAIRSTYLIST

Technical words you can use to describe your cut :

- Tapering/skin fade, fade for very short styles, blend/connection VS disconnection/asymmetrical
- Layer/thin out to reduce texture VS volume to create texture, shaggy/messy in opposite to sharp/blunt/full.

If you want to use a gender neutral vocab to describe haircuts, here are some alternatives to the words “feminine” and “masculine”:

- Replace “feminine” by soft/round/layered, and use sharp/strong/angles instead of “masculine”.

Be careful though, by wanting to use a gender neutral vocabulary you take the risk of not being clearly understood; unfortunately in early education and still up to this day we literally learn men’s cuts and women’s cuts, and that translates in the techniques that stylists use. It is engraved in their vocabulary, so unless your hairstylist is a forward thinking self taught inclusive genius it is very likely they will understand you better if you use a gendered vocabulary.

Gender neutral hairstyle terms/info:

- Mullets, bowl cuts, chelsea, undercuts, fade with longer top, bed hair bob, asymmetrical cuts, sharp fringes.
- To me being gender neutral is about **working with what you already have:** your body type and your facial features- and **balancing it out with what you can change:** hair, makeup and clothing.
- Anything can be gender neutral! Only you can choose what it means for you.

Don't be afraid to speak from the heart:

- Believe in yourself and your choices, as there is only one you on this planet. If you believe, we believe. I like to think that you are the real artists, whereas we hairstylists are simply the tools. The tools with the skills, but the vision comes from you. It's teamwork.
- My favorite haircuts aren't the show stopping ones on the cover of a magazine, it's the ones that a client was dying to try but thought they could never pull off and we made it work. And then they realize it was them all along.

If you are feeling anxious about visiting your hairstylist, think about writing them first:

- Ask if you can come in for a consultation to start with. I know hairdressers have the reputation to be a little gossipy and nosy, but in reality most are very good listeners. We are used to people opening up, sharing their experiences and their fears.
- Say yes to that cup of tea, ask if you can put your favorite playlist on, anything that will help you feel at home.
- If they don't ask you what pronouns you use, introduce yourself and ask for theirs.
- If you feel like the vibe is off for any reason: LEAVE. No, seriously. Politely explain that you do not feel comfortable going through with the cut and walk out. There is no contract that is tying you to your hairstylist. Save yourself from another trauma.

Section 5:

MENTAL HEALTH AND BAD HAIR DAYS

We all have bad days, so these tips are for everyone, but I know from suffering from depression that washing your hair can be a real challenge. Sometimes I do nothing and just own my greasy look. I've made a compilation of hairstyles I rock on my bad hair days :

- Wet look
- Hats, Beanies, Caps
- Bandana
- Slicked back hair
- Slicked ponytail, works well with middle parting
- Back-combed mohawk
- Braids (you can do these on the transports or on your break)

In times of crisis, please refrain from making any drastic decisions. Think about keeping a journal of your hair goals.

THANK YOU ALL FOR READING!

If you have any questions please pop a message on my Instagram:

Mako (They/them) [@mxmk.hair](https://www.instagram.com/mxmk.hair) 🏳️‍🌈

GOOD ARTICLES TO READ

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/qj4vyw/queer-haircuts-of-quarantine>

<https://www.allure.com/story/trans-clippers-project-covid-19>

<https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2020/05/gay-hairdresser-show-cut-hair-youre-locked/>

<https://www.womenshealthmag.com/beauty/g35281576/gender-neutral-haircuts/>

<https://www.latest-hairstyles.com/trends/androgynous-haircuts.html>

<http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/projects/kip/genderex/haircuts>