

Q: Why can't I blow-dry my hair like that at home?

A:

Ok, so I'm not going to lie here, honestly it's unlikely you'll get EXACTLY the same results at home unless you're a contortionist! Apart from the little detail that I'm a hairdresser just remember I also have you all seated and I'm standing, I can see exactly what I'm doing and can move around you! That said there are ways for you to get great results at home with the right tools and techniques.

First off bear in mind that our blow dryers are pretty gutsy, no travel dryers or woosey power outputs! No, you don't have to spend a fortune on a professional grade dryer but when shopping around for one here's a little check list:

1. Power output should be 1800 watts or more
2. Speed and heat controls are needed and a cool shot as well
3. Nozzle attachments are a must
4. Keep the weight and size in mind.

Make sure you pick it up (and yes look silly in the shop and raise it above your head you won't be blow drying your feet) be sure you are comfortable with the weight distribution and can manage the length of the nozzle. Heavy dryers equal tired arms and that won't help achieve a better blow-dry result!

You will also need a good brush, (finger blow drying won't cut it) again no need to spend a bomb. We use round brushes with wooden barrels and a mix of natural and polyamide bristles for both shine and grip, I chose these as I like that they don't create 'hot spots' and unnecessary heat damage and of course the finish the bristles create on the hair but you may prefer different at home, maybe a ceramic barrel is better for you or all natural bristles? My suggestion is experiment with cheaper options and then spend a little more when you know what you like. Size is also a factor and again experiment can be the key but obviously keep your hair length in mind and have a smaller option also if you wear a fringe.

Sectioning clips are a must as the hair should be separated in 3 to 4 sections.

Ok so hopefully you're not already overwhelmed because here comes the actual drying part. I'm going to stick to the technique basics and not touch on product and other finishing tools like irons, wands, rollers etc. as I find most people just need to get a handle on how to smooth the hair, create volume or straighten.

First of all you'll need to blast most of the excess moisture out of your hair (hair won't start to hold a shape until it's at least 90% dry so don't tire out your arms too early!), this can be done with or without the nozzle attachment on, and if you want to tip your head upside down first (if you are after plenty of root lift a good little trick is to concentrate on the roots and get them 100% dry while you still have your head upside down – hopefully by this stage you're not feeling faint from blood rushing to your head and once your roots are dry you can hold the position and make use of the cool shot. Keep going over the roots with the cool air until the hair no longer feels warm –this sets the hair- then flip your head back up ala 80's rock star and then you can work on the mids and ends.)

For efficiency it is better to section the hair out, (first section straight across the scalp from the occipital bone (the dip in the back of your head, second section from your temples and so on).

Start in at the bottom and clipping the rest of the hair up and out of the way, split each large section into to 3 or 4 smaller vertical sections so that you have an amount of hair that both fits on your brush and you are comfortable working with. Take one section and using your brush grab hair and ensure that the air flow of your dryer (with the nozzle attached) is pointing down the hair shaft so that you do not rough up the hair cuticle as this will produce frizz. Begin at the roots of the section and flow to the ends with the brush and dryer ensuring to maintain the direction of airflow down the hair shaft. This may take a little practice! As a general rule lift the hair up as close to a 90 degree angle from the scalp as you can for volume, and pull the hair taught and flat to reduce volume and straighten. If you don't want a blunt finish on the ends spin the brush the way you would like a curve to form at the ends (towards you for curved under, away for outward flick) and come off with the brush in that direction (i.e. don't slip the brush straight off in a downwards motion). It is important to make sure the each section is completely dry before moving to the next, especially at the roots. Once you have completed all vertical sections, take the next large section, split into smaller sections and repeat!

If you think you may suffer from arm cramp while doing all this or are running short on time, a good trick is to reverse the sections and start at the top! That way if the bottom sections of your hair are a bit neglected at least they are hidden! This is also handy for volume at the crown, as you will have fresh arms (and patience) to lift the hair higher to achieve better volume, and it will set as the crown cools while you work your way to the bottom!

If you are having trouble feel free to ask for more pointers and 'trouble shooting' at your next appointment.