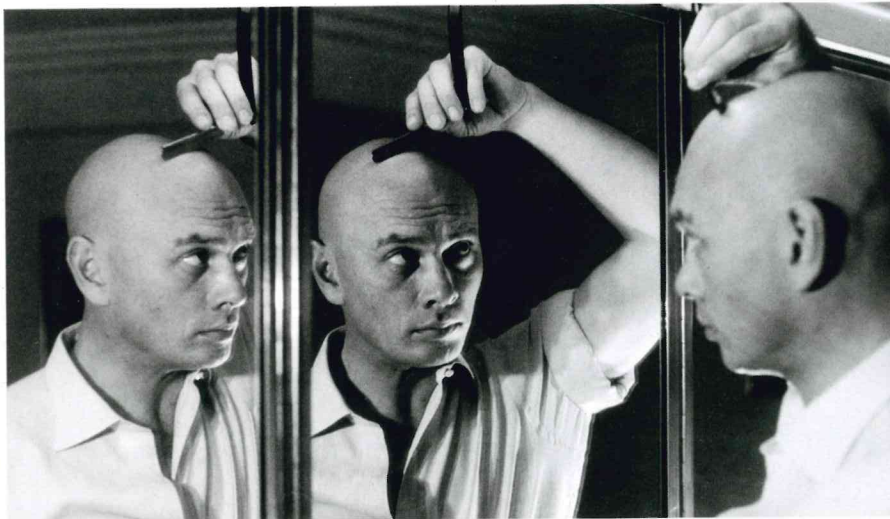


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Into Thin Hair: A GQ Primer on Balding with Style



The bad news: Something like 80 percent of men will shed some follicles in their lifetime. The good news: There have never been less embarrassing, more advanced ways to keep what you've got, grow back what you've lost, or say to hell with hair altogether. Wherever you are on the Bruce Willis Spectrum right now, here's how to save your scalp

▲ Yul Brynner, patron saint of badass bald men.

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→



PHASE 1 You've Still Got It!

luxurious locks, good for you. We're here with an arsenal of balding-prevention measures to keep you looking that way.

And if you're already looking more *Pulp Fiction* than *Die Hard 2*, we've got you covered too—quite literally—over the next few pages. New technologies are rolling out all the time to reunite you with your precious pelt.

In the absolute worst-case scenario, you get to visit beautiful Scandinavia as a bald man and come home with promises of a flowing mane. Life could be worse. —ANDREW RICHDALÉ

More than the jokes, more than the emasculation, more than the primal connection to Lloyd Blankfein, the hardest part about going bald is wondering whether you could've done something to prevent it. The answer, friends, is a resounding maybe.

The first thing you should know: It's much easier to keep the hair you have than to replace the hair you've lost. So if you're currently blessed with

Stop Blaming Grandpa

The genetic roots of balding are more complicated than you think

→ When the topic of balding comes up, you're likely to have a barber or aunt or some other jabber-mouth cite the most widely spread lie about a man's hairline: If your maternal grandfather's hairline receded, so will yours. While that's true for some guys, you'd be a fool to invest in a toupee just because Gramps looked like Kojak.

Researchers have indeed identified a variation of a gene that is linked to male-pattern baldness ("androgenetic alopecia," if you must know) and found on your X chromosome, which is only inherited from your mother. But some guys draw that straw and never lose their locks. And other genetic culprits can be the fault of *either* parent.

The real enemy here is a bastard called DHT (dihydro-testosterone), which is a by-product of testosterone. All genes that instigate male-pattern baldness amp up your DHT levels, which ultimately cause your follicles to shrink. DHT, in fact, is the same stuff that caused your voice to change and funny hairs to sprout during puberty.

Speaking of growing pains, your hairline may also shift up an inch or two at your temples in your twenties. Don't panic, millennials. That's just part of routine aging. Fortunately, you can fortify yourself with the weapons to the right. —JEN ORTIZ

Three Hirsute-able Measures to Hang On to Your Hair



1. Daily Vitamins

• Viviscal packs these little guys with flaxseed and zinc, which may help strands grow faster and stronger.

Viviscal.com, \$50



2. New Shampoo

• Harsh chemicals imperil your follicular future. Try Revita, as soft as gentle as shampoo gets.

DSLaboratories.com, \$31



3. Be an Iron Man

• Iron is to your hair as water is to plants. Spinach, seaweed, oysters, and nuts are just as iron-laden as that rib eye.

A Crystal Ball for Baldness



• The first time you notice a clump of hair circling the shower drain, make a dermatologist appointment and ask for a scalp biopsy, which the doctor can perform (with minimal pain) in about five minutes. A tiny sample of scalp skin is then sent to a lab for analysis, to determine why you've started thinning. Skin disease or serious stress—think bankruptcy or divorce, not "My DVR missed *Breaking Bad*"—may be to blame. In a way, that's the answer you want. If the test identifies a non-genetic culprit, treatment can revive your follicles. But you've gotta act fast. Wait too long and they're dead, gone, washed away forever. —A.R.

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PHASE 2
All Is
Not Lost

Hair Treatment from Rogaine to Robots

Your options used to be weird-ass plugs or a fistful of foam. Here, New York dermatologist Marc Avram breaks down the brave new world (as in, crazily sci-fi) of 21st-century balding remedies.

The Entry-Level Option



Price: \$50 for a three-month supply
How it works: In **Rogaine** we have a basic option for guys who are just starting to lose hair and know how to shop at a drugstore. After taking three months to kick in, the active ingredient (Minoxidil) helps regrow hair in about 80 percent of guys. Rub it on your head twice a day.

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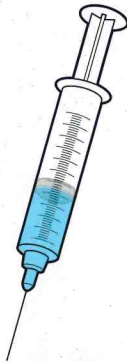
Our Version of The Pill



Price: About \$90 per month
How it works: **Propecia** blocks the development of DHT, the hormone that ultimately kills your follicles. Nice! Though it requires a prescription, it helps nine out of ten guys. But are you okay taking a pill every day? For at least six months? It takes that long to start working.

Give Blood (Then Take It Back)

Price: At least \$1,000, maybe more
How it works: With **platelet-rich plasma therapy**, a doctor separates the contents of your blood using a centrifuge. Platelets are then re-injected around areas where hair is thin or gone to jump-start regrowth. It's trendy, but its effectiveness as a hair-loss treatment is still inconclusive.



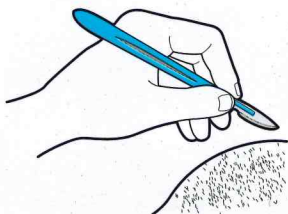
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Blast Baldness with Lasers



Price: \$700
How it works: Using phototherapy, the **iGrow** helmet bathes your skull with low-level lasers, which reinvigorate weak follicles. (Incredibly, this procedure is FDA-approved.) Treatment means getting your Darth Vader on four times a week.

Like Sod for Your Scalp



Price: \$8,000 to \$15,000
How it works: In a **strip hair transplant**, a dermatologist slices skin from the back of your head (where hair is thickest) into smaller units that are implanted and regrown where you've receded.

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The Droid You're Looking For



Price: \$8,000 to \$15,000
How it works: In a **robotic FUE transplant**, a doctor directs a tiny penlike instrument to grab your strongest follicles and then pop them into the front of your hairline, where they grow as in a traditional transplant.

You're Balding! Now Deal with It

• The realization—*Oh shit, I'm losing my hair*—arrives with a kicked-in-the-nuts queasiness that soon metastasizes into a thrumming neurosis. You worry that everyone notices. You develop acute mirror phobia. You stare with jealous disgust at the oblivious guys who nonchalantly run their hands through thick locks. Lucky bastards.

I spent a year letting "Why me?" echo in my mind until I reached a Dr. Phil-style breakthrough: Self-

pity is corrosive stuff. It's hydrochloric acid for a man's dignity, and it's a hell of a lot less flattering than a fading hairline.

The solution? Get over it. No one chopped off your junk, like that poor dude in *Game of Thrones*. You're still a man, just one with slightly less turf on the field. Spend a week—tops—mourning for hairdos past, then go do something about the situation. There are no bad paths forward, only bad comb-overs. —JON WILDE

How to Style a Receding Head of Hair



▲ Longer hair makes you look even balder. Do like **Manu and Jude**: Keep things high and tight.

→ When the shedding begins, contemplate Hulk "Hair Curtain" Hogan and run in the other direction. N.Y.C. über-stylist Jordan Blackmore has the answer for any man with a thinning mop.

- **Step one:** Tell the guy with the scissors that you want your hair two inches long on top and an inch on the sides, tapered at the bottom. "I call it the Steve McQueen," Blackmore says.
- **Step two:** Learn to love blow-dryers. "They lift hair and showcase it better than air-drying."
- **Step three:** Use a matte styling product— "Stay away from oil-based stuff," Blackmore says—and just push everything around until you hit tousled-but-covered perfection.

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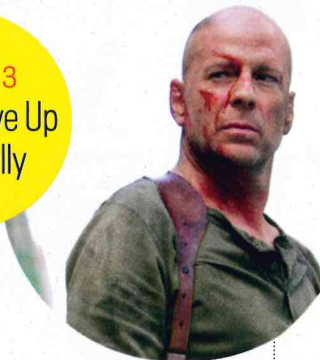
Transplant Yourself to the Hair-Repair Capital

• While it's hard to imagine a Viking worrying about his coif, Norway has given us the world's most meticulous hair-replacement clinic. For up to \$10,000, doctors at **Poseidon Klinikken** in Oslo spend hours removing and replanting thousands of individual hairs *by hand*. The job is so taxing that the docs work twenty days on, twenty days off. Best of all, the procedure is noninvasive; patients leave with slight red spots that soon fade. "Even your hairdresser won't see it," says Poseidon Klinikken co-owner Alv Aronsen. Included in the price is an experimental stem-cell treatment, which might grow new hair—the science is still unproven. Interested? Have an initial consultation via Skype and then come for a long weekend. The clinic is open 365 days a year, and Oslo's worth a visit in its own right. You can start and end every day at **Fuglen** (pictured below), a coffee shop that transforms into a cozy cocktail bar at night. And when it's time to rest your newly rehabilitated head, crash at **The Thief**, a designer hotel perched over the Oslofjord (above) and lined with contemporary art. —KAYLEEN SCHAEFER



If you're down for a Poseidon Klinikken adventure, why not make a holiday of Oslo?

PHASE 3
How to Give Up Gracefully

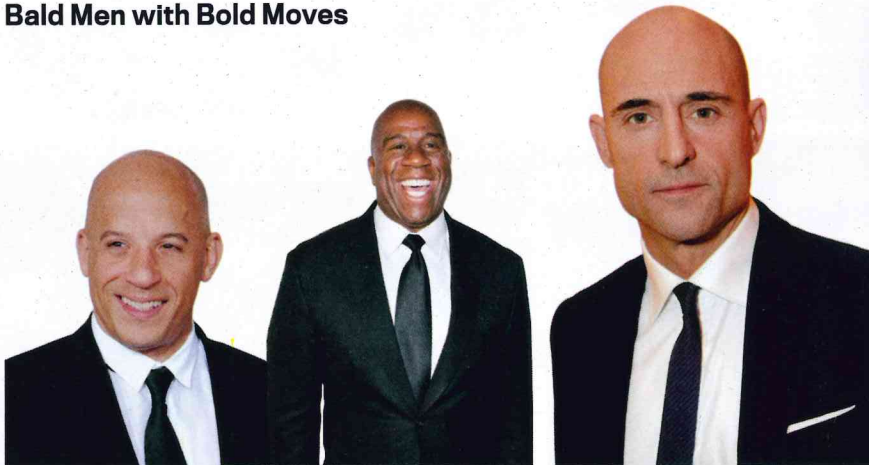


"Hair Is for P#\$\$ies!"

And other wisdom from **Corey Stoll**, *House of Cards* actor and damned handsome bald man

"In my teen years, I had a huge Jewfro. It eventually grew down to my shoulders. I hid behind it. Around 21, it started to thin out, and by age 27 it was just sort of amorphous. I wasn't interested in hiding anymore—behind a comb-over or treatments—so I just shaved it off. It was so liberating. I felt more confident than I ever had—more attractive and more like myself. There are women who have, uh, a thing for bald heads, too. Not to make it into a civil rights issue, but five years ago I would only have been able to get a role as a prison inmate or biker. Things have changed culturally. You don't have to be *The Rock* to be bald now. Normal guys do it. I can also look presentable just by throwing on a shirt and walking out the door. My girlfriend actually made me a T-shirt that says 'Hair Is for Pussies.' I don't wear it a lot, but it's a hit when I do." —AS TOLD TO ANDREW RICHDALE

Bald Men with Bold Moves



▲ Bedhead is no longer an issue in the post-follicular stage of life. You just look badass every single day. And this, men, is the hidden benefit of going hairless: Because the all-bald look is so striking and masculine, you seem twice as dapper (like a European hit man) when you put on a strong, dark suit.

Be Your Own Barber

It's easy with these three bald-guy essentials



Oster Classic 76 clipper

Quit paying someone else to buzz you. Buy your own pro-quality trimmer and make mowing your head a daily ritual. Fourteen blade sizes, sold separately, go all the way down to size 00000 (for a barely there stubble). osterstyle.com, \$125



Kiehl's Facial Fuel sunscreen and moisturizer

If anything sucks more than a sunburn, it's one on the virginal skin of your newly shorn head. So make sure your daily face moisturizer (you're using one, right?) also comes with an SPF number. kiehls.com, \$35



HeadBlade razor

Whereas most blades were built for your squishy cheeks, this head-specific razor is designed to give your structured dome that down-to-the-skin look. You wear it like a ring and run it over your lathered noggin like a snowplow. headblade.com, \$13