



Eyelash Extensions 101

Help your clients get their glitz on for the holidays

By Phyl Baker

In high school, I actually thought about gluing short hairs to my own eyelashes for added length ... that was way back in 1969. Little did I know that individual eyelash extension products had been available for many decades. At recent beauty trade shows, many estheticians in their 70s said eyelash extensions had been around since at least the 1930s. One woman said, "Honey, those aren't new. I have been doing them for 40 years!" In his museum collection, Marvin Westmore, a third-generation owner at the famous Westmore Academy of Cosmetic Arts, has boxes of individual eyelash extensions that date back to the 1920s. Six years ago, after learning that eyelash extension kits were available to beauty professionals, I went on a mission to learn everything possible about them. I wanted them for myself and today can't imagine not wearing them. It is so nice to wake up in the morning and look ready for the day. Your clients will agree.

Rick Giase photography.

Product Advances

I first took classes on applying eyelash extensions that were two to four hours in length, and focused only on the application process. As a registered nurse, I quickly noticed there was no mention of sanitation and safety. This got my attention. As I see it, the standard for training now is, and should be, two full days. Adhesives and extensions have improved greatly in the last few years.

Whether you are new to the industry or may have attempted to build an eyelash extension before, now is the right time to investigate this new income source.

Industry demand has created some great new products and opportunities for eyelash extension experts. This service is evolving into a salon and beauty industry standard. Improvements in adhesives and training have elevated this once elite and obscure service into salons everywhere. Eyelash-extension clients demand skilled estheticians using brand-name products.

A full set of eyelash extensions, applied by a trained, skilled technician, can command an average fee of \$250, according to estheticians I've spoken with around the country. This service has the potential to produce clients returning for maintenance every two to three weeks, just as nail rebasing does. The service requires from 90 minutes to three hours to complete, depending on the look desired and the number of extensions applied. A full set is usually 40–80 individual extensions per eye, depending on each person's natural eyelashes. Average maintenance or rebooked appointment fees will range from \$50 to \$100 and require about 30–60 minutes every two weeks. Many practitioners charge by the time involved or by the number of extensions applied. The beauty and ease of eyelash extensions can be “addictive” and create steady revenue for your practice.



Eyelash extensions require maintenance visits after the initial application, which can be lucrative for you.

Individual eyelash extensions are vastly superior to the self-applied cluster, flare, or strip lashes commonly sold in retail beauty aisles. Individual eyelash extensions produce a completely natural but dramatic appearance when professionally applied by a trained esthetician.

Dramatic Touches

Applying eyelash extensions is a skill that requires specialized training and hours of practice. It also requires good eyesight, steady, nimble fingers on both hands, an eye for detail, and the perfectionism that makes eyelash extensions “pop” far beyond what mascara does.

Synthetic black extension lashes are those most commonly used, but extensions are available in many colors, including red and green (think holiday parties). Synthetic extensions hold their shape and are available in many widths, lengths, and curve styles. Some think natural lash extension hairs are thinner and tend to lose

their curve. Embellishments like glitter, feathers, and rhinestones can add drama to special occasions, but most clients will simply want longer, more beautiful eyelashes. You can point out to them how much time they'll save by not applying and removing mascara.

Practice Makes Perfect

Properly applied eyelash extensions are virtually undetectable, even under magnification. The key is careful one-on-one application using proper amounts of adhesive and allowing each lash to affix independently. Too much adhesive will result in clumps and messy-looking extensions that will stick together. Improper application can damage natural eyelashes and can be very uncomfortable. Beautiful and effective eyelash applications require patience, time, skill, and quality products. In my experience, estheticians should not charge full fees until they've refined their skills, which I believe



With practice, you can achieve a natural look or something more dramatic.



Clients won't need mascara after your session.

takes a minimum of 12 sets of 60–80 extensions per eye to master. There will probably never be a shortage of volunteer models while you practice. New skin care professionals and models usually want longer extensions than is necessary for a great look, so practicing on many different people to create a variety of looks is wise.

The equipment required for eyelash extension technicians is comparable to the equipment required for facials. You'll need a massage or esthetic table with an adjustable head, a bedside table to hold tools, sanitation or sterilization products, cotton swabs, tissues, and a high-quality, complete eyelash extension kit. Complete eyelash kits will contain adhesive, adhesive holder, adhesive remover, application tweezers, a client brochure, extensions in a few basic sizes, microfiber swabs, protective undereye pads, and tape.

Be sure to discuss the procedure with the client and have them sign the Associated Skin Care Professionals liability

release form. They should arrive without eye makeup, although mascara remnants will still need to be removed because that's essential to a good application.

Allow three hours for a full-set appointment; the allotted time will usually decrease with practice. Prepare for the client by setting up and organizing all sanitized equipment. Explain what you are doing while preparing the client for the procedure. Help them choose extension lengths, assist them onto the table, and make sure their backs and knees are comfortable and that the room temperature is acceptable, as they will be lying on the table for quite a while. Be sure to offer breaks if needed. Many clients will sleep through the whole appointment.

To apply eyelashes, use tweezers to grasp the extension on the pointed end, then dip it about halfway into a pool of adhesive. Avoid getting adhesive on the tweezers. Use your opposite hand

to isolate a single, natural eyelash. The synthetic eyelash will be applied gently to the natural lash. This sounds like a simple feat, but it's tricky and requires a lot of practice. The technique is repeated on each eyelash, using different extension lengths and thicknesses until the desired look is achieved.

A skilled esthetician will be able to produce a totally natural or dramatic look that simulates Mother Nature's best work. It is important for the extensions to be applied evenly and in the proper direction. Most important, they should not be clumpy and stuck together with globs of glue. Correctly applied, eyelash extensions will eliminate the need for mascara, as the extensions create a look that is dark, lush, and full. The application process is tedious and time-consuming for a full set of correctly applied eyelash extensions, but the finished product is worth the time and effort.

Cautions and Precautions

Clients will need to treat their extensions gently—no rubbing or scrubbing with a washcloth. Only non-oily makeup removers should be used since oils can break down adhesive and shorten the life of the extensions. Careful grooming with a tiny brush may be all that is needed between appointments. Warn clients that natural eyelashes continue to shed, taking the extensions with them. Many clients are not aware that eyelashes shed and re-grow. An excess of eyelash shedding may mean the client is not a good candidate for this treatment, but this is rare. It's also rare, but possible, that some will be allergic to the products. At the initial consultation appointment, four to eight extensions can be applied to each eye to determine sensitivity. Wait two weeks for any reaction before applying a full set. Thinner adhesives dry very quickly, but require more speed and dexterity since there is less time to position the substance correctly. Novices, or those with less dexterity, may be better starting with a thicker, slower drying adhesive that is more forgiving. Highly skilled and trained estheticians can request a fast-drying adhesive from some manufacturers.

Estheticians can find training opportunities for eyelash extension application at www.ascpskincare.com on the home page in the Continuing Education calendar. §

Phyl Baker is an RN, licensed esthetician, certified nutritionist, and founder of NaturaLash, a family-owned business. She and her husband of 35 years, Bill, have four grown children, one grandchild, two dogs, and four cats. Contact Baker at www.naturalash.com.

Thanks to Carmen Avery for the photo shoot at her studio in Greenwood Village, Colorado. www.carmensbeautyroom.com



It's best not to charge for a full set of lashes until you are practiced and confident.



A fast-drying adhesive is only for the very skilled.