

Thicken Up Your Thinning Lashes

It's not your imagination. Your once lush lashes might actually be thinner these days – a byproduct of aging and sometimes just too much wear and tear. Fortunately, there are ways to thicken up your fine fringe, instantly with makeup and over time with solutions that can promote new lash growth.

By Krista Bennett DeMaio



Why lashes thin

First, a primer on puny lashes: The biggest cause of thinning lashes is age-related, explains Jody Levine, M.D., a dermatologist and AOB Med Spa National Director. "Aging decreases the skin's ability to retain moisture and leads to hormonal imbalances," she says. When certain hormones drop, it can result in decreased follicle stimulation, slowing down the growth of new hairs, including your lashes. "Eye infections, thyroid imbalance, and vitamin deficiency are common causes of thinning lashes, but it can also be caused simply by wear and tear from eye rubbing or poor makeup habits." Here's how to protect and thicken the lashes you do have and get growing again.

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Switch to a gentler makeup remover

Rubbing and tugging on your lashes while removing mascara can make delicate lash hairs fall out prematurely. To save your strands, switch to a cream or oil-based remover, which breaks down makeup. Pat it off (don't pull), says Levine.

Try: Boots Botanics All Bright Soothing Eye Makeup Remover (\$6, ulta.com)



Try A Growth Serum

Think of these conditioning lash serums like fertilizer. By providing follicles with the right nutrients, they provide an optimal environment for hair growth. "Lash conditioners containing nutrients such as plant extracts, amino acids, vitamins, and peptides are the most effective for strong, healthy lashes," says Levine.

Try: Rapid Lash Eyelash Enhancing Serum (\$50, ulta.com)



See Your Doctor

By now, you've probably heard a thing or two about Latisse, the FDA-approved prescription strength drug that has been proven to make lashes thicker and longer. It doesn't come cheap: A 30 day supply is about \$120, but dermatologists say you will see results – at least as long as you're using the product.



Try A Primer

Prep thin lashes with a pre-mascara treatment. The formulas condition and coat fragile lashes, temporarily boosting lash thickness. They also include polymers, which help your mascara stay on longer.

Try: Clinique Lash Building Primer (\$15, sephora.com)



Extend At Home

If salon extensions are just too much of a splurge, consider new at home kits that let you get the look for just one day. The two-part systems include fibers that adhere to your natural lash and black mascara. The combo makes lashes look longer and thicker – until you wash it off.

Try: Physicians Formula Eye Booster Instant Lash Extension Kit (\$15, drugstore.com)



Apply An Overnight Mask

Before you hit the pillow, coat lashes with a thick ointment such as Vaseline, says Levine. By moisturizing and protecting lashes, the Vaseline prevents breakage and fall out. "It improves the overall health of your lashes as they grow, similar to the way a conditioner treats split ends on hair," she says. Olive oil or castor oil will also do the trick.

Try: Vaseline Petroleum Jelly (\$5, drugstore.com)



Wear Mascara Right

"Misuse of mascara is a major cause of lash thinning," says Levine. The biggest no-no: leaving it on over night, which can cause the delicate lash to break. Also, "never use the same tube for more than three to six months, as bacteria can build up and cause infection," she says.

A lash-thickening mascara to try: L'Oréal Paris Voluminous Butterfly Intenza Mascara (\$9, lorealparisusa.com)



Get An Extension

Lash extensions – like false lashes that last around two months – will give you a darker, longer, fuller-looking fringe in about two hours. Done in salon, the tech uses glue to bond synthetic hairs to your natural lashes, one by one. The results come at a price though; expect to shell out at least \$200 for the service.



Connect The Dots With Liner

It might seem odd to suggest eyeliner to thicken up lashes, but by using a fine-tipped one to draw teeny-tiny dots in between eyelash hairs along the lash base, you can create the illusion of a fuller fringe.

Try: Maybelline Define-A-Line Eyeliner in Ebony Black (\$4, target.com)

