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Hair Straightening & The Hair Brush Straightener

Hair straightening can be broken down into two categories; permanent and temporary. Permanent hair straightening methods are defined as forms of chemical processing for the hair, which will last several months until new hair begins to grow (Watson, 2022). Some examples of permanent hair straightening methods are keratin treatments, Japanese thermal straightening, Brazilian blowouts, and hair rebonding. On the other hand, temporary hair straightening methods will not last after the hair gets washed and are easy to do at home (Hati, 2021). Temporary hair straightening methods include using a blow dryer, a hot comb, straightening iron, and hair straightening brushes. Most recently there has been a trend towards using the temporary hair straightening method of hair straightening brushes, with brands such as Dyson and Revlon releasing popular products.

Using heat as a temporary hair straightening method has been around for centuries and dates back to Ancient Egypt. It is said that the Ancient Egyptians would use hot iron plates and the direct heat applied onto the hair would help them to achieve straight hair, although this method was very damaging to the hair (Bronte, 2022). The inventors and innovators of the first hot combs are Marcel Grateau and Madam C.J. Walker. Grateau was a Frenchman who is often credited with being the first inventor of the hot comb, and popularizing among white European women (James, 2019). Later, Madam C.J. Walker would patent her own version of the hot comb which had wider teeth so it was easier to use on African-American women's hair. She is credited with not only improving the hot comb but also popularizing it and making it more widely

available especially among African-American women (Zainab, 2022). Both hot combs were the earliest forms of the hairbrush straighteners that we have today. It can be argued that if Madam C.J. Walker and Marcel Grateau hadn't invented these hair combs; we might have never had hairbrush straighteners that we use today.

Today the technology used for hair straightening brushes has improved immensely, and there are a variety of different options on the market. Brushes are designed to not cause as much heat damage to the hair as the first hot combs did, as well as straightening the hair more efficiently, and being an overall safer product to handle. The benefit of using a hairbrush straightener over a traditional hair straightener is that they are designed with functions that can smooth hair, prevent frizziness, add volume, and cut the amount of time it takes to style your hair in half (Lane, 2022). With all the technological improvements of hair straightening brushes it has diminished the demand for traditional hair straighteners which can be more damaging to hair and not work as efficiently.

Hair straightening brushes can range in price from \$30.00 to \$600.00 depending on the brand. With the trend towards straight hair and companies seeing the consumer demand for the brushes there are several different brushes on the market offered by many different brands. Some of the best brushes on the market currently are the Dyson Airwrap, Drybar Brush, Infiniti Pro by Conair, and the Revlon Brush (Rud, 2022). Dyson's Airwrap brush is one of the most expensive ones on the market selling at \$600.00. With the brushes having such a large range of prices it makes them accessible to people of all socioeconomic levels and can cater to several different types of hair textures.

Hair straightening brushes have gained a lot of popularity recently with straight hair styles trending for 2023. One major hair trend for 2023 has been straight hair with a middle part,

“We are seeing Kim Kardashian turn Cher’s straight hair to a more modern look.” (Shunatona, 2023). With straight hair gaining popularity in 2023 consumers want a product that will give the best results while also making sure they are protecting their hair. These brushes provide consumers with the best method to achieve trendy straight styles. Another recent hair trend that has contributed to the popularity of hair straightening brushes are curtain bangs. The brushes are the perfect tool to use to easily style bangs and keep them perfectly styled throughout the day.

To conclude, the beauty ritual of hair straightening can be traced so far back into history yet is still a relevant ritual in today’s society. We can see ritual transformed throughout the year by innovators such as Marcel Gratteau and Madam C.J. Walker, who were vital in keeping the ritual alive and in improving upon the products that are needed to execute the ritual. Fast forwarding to today where hair straightening brushes are now so widespread and the technology has come so far. Although we may not think about hair straightening as a beauty ritual that has been part of society for so long, it is truly remarkable to see how it remained a relevant beauty trend and ritual over the span of hundreds of years.

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