

# The Hair-story of Trichology

By Farhan Shah

Believe it or not, trichology is a scientific and medical practice that has more than a century of history and research. We delve into the art and science of trichology, dispel many of the myths associated with it, and check out one of Singapore's leading trichological centres – TK TrichoKare.

## THE HISTORY OF TRICHOLOGY

The roots of trichology, derived for the Greek word for hair, were first planted around 1860 in a London barbershop by an academic named Professor Wheeler. It was not officially known as trichology until much later though in 1902, the same year that the first official professional association for trichologists – the Institute of Trichologists – was formed.

About 60 years later, the first trichology course was developed in 1974 at the University of Southern California under the guidance and mentorship of David Salinger, former vice-president of the Institute of Trichologists and executive director of the then-newly-formed International Association of Trichologists (IAT).

Before a trichologist is certified and can practice, he has to ace the theoretical aspects and is required to go through one hundred hours of clinical training under the supervision of an IAT-approved trichologist. In Singapore, TrichoKare requires its trichologists to be certified by the IAT.

## HAIR LOSS MISCONCEPTIONS

### • Frequent shampooing causes hair to fall out

A few well-meaning but ill-informed people might warn you that frequently shampooing your hair will accelerate hair loss. The reason why not shampooing one day and then, shampooing on the next, seemingly causes more hair to fall out is because when you don't wash your scalp, the hair that would normally come out gathers at your head, only falling when you shampoo your hair.

### • Frequent wearing of hats or helmets can cause hair loss

The oft-perpetuated misconception is that the scalp isn't able to breath

under the headwear and thus, hair falls out. Fortunately, that is not true. You can wear hats or helmets every day and it will not affect your hair. However, hats or helmets that fit very tightly around the head might possibly cause thinning on the sides due to the blood circulation being cut off and the headwear repeatedly rubbing itself against the side of your head.

### • Plucking one grey hair means three new strands of hair will grow back

Oh, if only this is true! Unfortunately, plucking one grey hair means that particular hair is gone forever. Each strand of hair lasts for about two to five years for men and four to six years for women, so when you pluck the grey hair, you've essentially killed it before its time to drop out. New hair will only grow in its place later on.

## THE TRICHOKARE EXPERIENCE

With four locations strategically located around Singapore (Novena Square, The Clementi Mall, nex and orchardgateway) and one of the most stellar customer service I've experienced, TrichoKare is all ready to capitalise on the burgeoning Singapore market.

TrichoKare uses premium European herbs, and is the first ISO 9001 certified trichological centre that provides European herbal hair remedy customised to suit respective scalp and hair conditions.

I was invited by the folks at TrichoKare to give their signature services a try – a blend of premium European botanical hair remedies and rigorously researched treatments – and I immediately agreed. My shower drain was starting to breed giant hairballs and as much as I tried to console myself, the mirror always gave me a stark reflection of the truth.

My friendly trichologist, Jane Ang, patiently explained to me the process of hair loss and scanned my hair. The results were somewhat encouraging: I had really thick hair and a generally healthy scalp which, while not devoid of sebum or dandruff, was normal in Singapore's hot weather. However, the hair at my temples were beginning to recede due to the undefeatable villain of aging and some of my hair was weak at the roots.

I also gained a wealth of knowledge about hair during my visit:

- High testosterone levels do not automatically mean rapid loss. Conversely, low testosterone levels also do not mean you're immune to hair loss. Rather, it's how the testosterone in your body reacts with an enzyme called 5-alpha reductase. Some scalps are very sensitive to dihydrotestosterone – the chemical that is produced when testosterone and 5-alpha reductase combine.
- While highly stressful episodes in your life do lead to sudden hair loss, it's not immediate. It can actually take up to three months before the stressful period in your life starts affecting your hair growth.

Every treatment is customised to the needs and problems of each customer, so Jane prescribed a few procedures to strengthen my hair follicles and roots. The best part of the one-and-a-half-hour process though was the relaxing scalp massage that every customer can enjoy, a treat for anyone who works in a stressful office environment.

## INTERVIEW WITH PRINCIPAL HAIR SPECIALIST, AUDREY SIM

Audrey Sim has been with TrichoKare for more than a decade and has successfully made 1,500 people very happy with their hair. Over the years, Audrey has become friends with many of her customers, talking about their personal problems and even sharing baking recipes!

"It is a privilege to be a hair specialist and understanding the scalp as well as helping people," says Audrey. 



Audrey Sim, Principal Hair Specialist  
& Hair Specialists trained under a certified Trichologist