

BEAUTY

FLUFFY BROWS, ANYONE? THE RISE OF SEMI-PERMANENT MAKE-UP

Step away from the Towie brows and tattooed-on lip liner — the new generation of treatments are natural-looking and worth a try



The writer Laura Kennedy after having a lash lift and tint, invisible hair extensions and brow lamination

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Do the words “semi-permanent beauty” conjure up frightening thoughts of heavy, unnatural block brows, XXL fake lashes and long talons reserved solely for reality TV stars? Well, it’s time to rethink. Long-lasting beauty

treatments (let's call them that instead) have had a makeover — and the demand for them is at an all-time high. According to the British Beauty Council, “Brow microblading is one of the top-searched tweakments this year, and the number of people typing ‘permanent eyeliner near me’ into Google has increased by

1,000 per cent over the past five years.” Suman Jalaf, founder of Suman Brows, adds that, “Semi-permanent make-up is no longer a slightly scary fringe area of beauty. It's become key to the effortlessly polished look of many clients who have demanding corporate jobs and little time.”

Indeed the people stepping forward to have their lashes darkened and nails lengthened have changed. Take England's Lionesses as

an example: beauty experts rave about the treatments they have done, including ombré brows, to keep them looking polished on the field. But the idea of a treatment that can't be washed off is frightening to many. Does it hurt? Can it be reversed? How much will it cost? These are some of the most common questions we get asked. So here is our guide to all you need to know about the new wave of semi-permanent offerings, including the treatments I've tried (and loved).

Brows

Brow lamination

This chemical treatment straightens and tints the hair, forcing it upwards to create big, fluffy brows that certainly make a statement. Natural isn't quite the word, but if you covet a Lily Collins brow without make-up faff in the morning (I do), look no further. The aftercare is a little fussy: no oils or moisturisers should go near the brow hair at all afterwards. Also I had to leave my brows completely untouched for 24 hours after the treatment, during which time they looked a bit like two damp cartoon moustaches, but they were wonderfully fluffy once I was able to rinse and dry them. Due to a childhood injury, I have a gap in one brow that still requires a bit of pencil to fill in, but otherwise I'm good to go in the morning. For me, lamination has been more than worth it, leaving me looking distinctly less scruffy, even first thing.

Length of treatment 45 minutes

How long does it last? Six to eight weeks

Cost £75

Pain None

Try Suman Brows at Hershesons, London W1 and SW1 ([hershesons.com](https://www.hershesons.com)), or the Browry, Manchester ([@thebrowry](https://www.thebrowry.com))

FYI You'll need a patch test in advance, so factor this in.

Brow microblading

This is far more long-lasting, so being a bit of a commitment-phobe, I haven't tried it — but Style's beauty director, Sarah Jossel, is a huge fan. First, the area is numbed and then a hair-stroke-effect tattoo that deposits a pigment matched to your hair colour is created using a specialist tool with a fine blade. The result is even, full and defined — but still natural-looking — brows.

Length of treatment 1 hour 15 minutes to 2 hours, with a few days' healing period and a follow-up session after four weeks

How long does it last? Nine months to two years

Cost From £650

Pain A mild scratching sensation

Try Sherrille Riley, Nails & Brows, London W1 (nailsandbrows.me), or Shavata Singh, locations in the UK and Ireland (shavata.co.uk)

FYI Brows will appear darker when you first look in the mirror, but they fade to a more natural result.

Lashes and eyes

Lash lift and tint

Some of us have a serious problem with mascara migration. I am some of us. A lash lift elevates and tints the lashes, giving more length and volume than mascara can. During my treatment, my upper lashes were lifted enough to ensure the hairs no longer touch the skin under my brows. This means that mascara — if I want to wear it — won't transfer any more. My therapist also gave my lashes the perfect bespoke curl — and me a dedicated lash-wash product to go home with and a mini fan (yes, really) to air-dry my lashes after washing. There are no limitations in terms of skincare and make-up. I look more awake all the time, don't need mascara and the lashes have lasted perfectly several weeks in. Tinting after the lift dyes the transparent tips, giving you more lash instantly.

Length of treatment 1 hour 45 minutes

How long does it last? Up to eight weeks

Cost £99

Pain No pain, but your eyes will be closed for the treatment

Try Teresa Smith at I Love Lash, London WC2 (ilovelash.com), or the Treatment Rooms, Brighton (thetreatmentrooms.co.uk)

FYI Avoid mascara for a couple of days before your appointment for best results.

Tattoo eyeliner

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A pen-like tattoo machine (but gentler) deposits pigment along your lash line for a perma liner. A huge time saver for those who won't leave home without eyeliner, but I haven't gone there as I want to have the choice to go without it. These days the pros can create anything from a natural line to a bold enhancement such as a winged effect.

Length of treatment 1 hour 30 minutes, plus a touch-up appointment after eight weeks

How long does it last? Eighteen months to two years, though a maintenance appointment is encouraged after one year

Cost £350

Pain Mild discomfort

Try Stephanie Jackson at SJ Brows, London SW7 (sjbrowslondon.com)

FYI Jackson recommends opting for a liner look that feels natural when you are wearing no other make-up, as this is what you will wake up with each morning.

Face

Faux freckles

Tattooing on freckles? Yes, really! It may sound bizarre but implanting freckle-toned pigment into the skin to mimic natural freckles has gained popularity over the past few years. It's quite the commitment so perhaps only go there if you find yourself spending too much time applying freckles daily with a lip or eyeliner, which is already a huge trend among twentysomethings.

Length of treatment 30-40 minutes.

How long does it last? One to three years on average, with retouching. If left unretouched, the freckles will fade (like some natural freckles) but

not disappear completely

Cost From £249, including a consultation, first appointment and retouch appointment

Pain A slightly scratchy sensation

Try Renée Cleovoulou at the Dermatography Clinic, London E1

FYI Choose an expert with up-to-date training in newer pigments that won't change colour or spread over time, and who prioritises a natural approach

Hair

Invisible hair extensions for volume

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I went to see the hairstylist Domenico Casella bleary-eyed early one Thursday morning and walked out a couple of hours later with the best hair of my life. He added 20 small Balmain tape extensions at the back of my head, having matched their tone to my caramel highlights. The extensions are so flat and light I can't feel them at all, and they don't get in the way of upstyling — so there's no risk of Love Island-style tape reveals ruining the voluminous updos I'm certainly too lazy and time-poor to create myself anyway.

Length of treatment 30 minutes to 2 hours, including a haircut

How long does it last? Up to five weeks, after which extensions can be re-taped and reapplied a maximum of twice

Cost £250, plus the cost of the hair (from £300)

Pain None

Try Balmain tape extensions with Domenico Casella, senior stylist at Neville Hair and Beauty, London SW1 (nevillehairandbeauty.net)

FYI Tapes are faster to apply — and better for fine hair — than traditional bonds. Use your usual shampoo, but keep conditioner away from the roots as it can break down the bonds.

Nails

Builder gel for nails

BIAB (that's Builder in a Bottle) gives nails a plump and Jelly Baby-ish overlay that results in a polished look but doesn't grab attention. You'll have a "goes with everything" set of nails you won't get bored with after three days. Shian Paul, owner of the up-and-coming nail salon Shian Nails & Beauty, gave me a pared-back mani using the pinky-nude shade Teddy, which has lasted through all manner of typing and sink-cleaning frenzies, and has allowed my natural nails to grow safely to impressive lengths without any breakage.

Length of treatment About an hour, though it can take longer depending on your chosen look and finish

How long does it last? Two to four weeks, after which time you will need an infill or have to get the gel soaked off in the salon

Cost From £37

Pain None

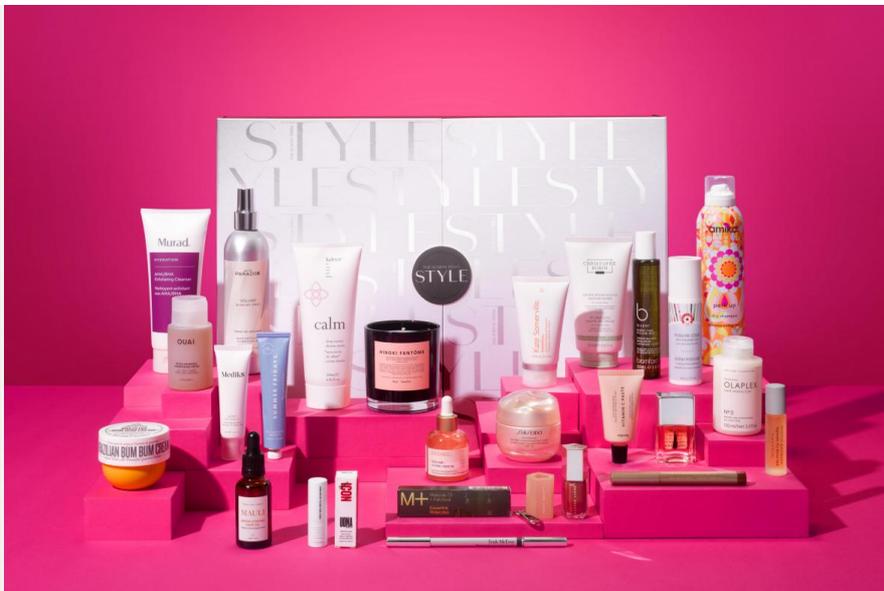
Try A builder gel manicure at Shian Nails & Beauty, London E8 (shiannails.com), or NAF! Salon, Glasgow (nafsalon.com). FYI BIAB has a thicker consistency than standard gel polish, which helps to improve nail strength. The added protection means nails can grow steadily, with less chance of snapping.

. . . and what you need to know about the removal process

The semi-permanent make-up industry is largely unregulated, so it is essential to do thorough research and commit to a treatment only after a consultation and once you are completely happy. As with tweakments like Botox and fillers, this should not be about prioritising a deal. These treatments can last on your face for years, and if you're unhappy with the result, removal is expensive and can take several sessions. Eyebrow treatments are the most commonly removed, says Briony Garbett, CEO at NAAMA, a London-based studio specialising in laser tattoo and cosmetic tattoo removal on all skin tones.

Permanent-make-up removal at NAAMA starts at £237 per session, and requires multiple sessions depending on what you want to remove (naamastudios.com).

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