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Savvy Style: Pony Up and Find the Perfect Hairstyle

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By Jan Ross ~

The other night, my husband came home and declared ... *gently* (he is a wise man) that it might be nice to see a hairstyle other than a ponytail on my head. Instead of getting annoyed, I sagely nodded my (ponytailed) head and figured I was lucky he was not mentioning the ubiquitous sleeping pants and tee shirt ensemble.

Because he was right. A couple of years ago, I decided I wanted long hair again – long, long hair like I used to have in high school and college. I *love* it. And so does he. But it does require a bit of a time investment. And with all the exercise classes, diligently writing away on articles such as this one and a teensy bit of shopping, lunches out and drinks with the girls, that time is not always available. However, I do occasionally come up with a different hairstyle – and have made a little more effort to do so for him once in a while instead of just when heading out the door for lunch with the girls. So, here's what I do with the long mop of hair I have hanging down my back.



- 1. Ponytails.** Well, yeah. They still make an appearance. But I take a little more care with them now. Curl the ends with a flat iron (and if you don't have a flat iron, go buy one right this minute because they are completely fabulous), pull down a few tendrils and maybe tease up the front a bit or even take a piece of hair and twist it around the pony tail holder and you have a hairstyle instead of just a pony tail. Even though technically it's still a pony tail. *And maybe if I put on something besides sleeping pants, he won't notice the regular pony tail anyway.*
- 2. Buns.** Basically a pony tail that you have expended a little extra effort on, a bun can be as dressy or as casual as you like. Put it up high or very low on your neck or even over on the side. Braid it before you bun it and you have a completely different look. *And if you call it a chignon, you get serious hair credit.*
- 3. Braids.** I don't think you are going to want to go the two-braid route, unless you want to look like Heidi, but fix one braid hanging down your back with big hoop earrings and you have a whole gypsy look going on. Pull your hair over on one side and braid it hanging down in the front for a completely different look. Or even take a couple of braids and wrap them across your head like a headband. *If you can make this look work, go for it.*
- 4. Part Up/Part Down.** A more hair-savvy person would probably have a better name for this, but it's when you take part of your hair up in a mini-pony tail or braid and let the rest hang down in back. It's the perfect compromise – you hair is out of your face but still down so it's not technically a pony tail. *A win-win for both of you.*
- 5. Getting fancy.** When I have time and the inclination, I mess around and can come up with some different styles like a French Twist, French Braid (do the French do a lot with their hair or what? Why so many French hairstyles?), or even just a lot of curls just cascading down my back which requires a great expenditure of time and effort but *Damn I look good.*

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6. **Hair Accoutrements.** I'm a little embarrassed to tell you that I have an entire drawer devoted to hair devices. I have a whole closet devoted to shoes as well but that's a whole other topic. If you are going to do a pony tail, I say do it with a leopard print scrunchie. Yes, even though Carrie in "Sex in the City" was horrified by the idea of a scrunchie, I have a whole bag of them. And I use them often. *Along with headbands, barrettes, clips, and hairpins.*
7. **Fancy Hair Accoutrements.** When we were in Hawaii last year, one of the things I loved the most, aside from fresh pineapple *OMG fresh pineapple* was the flowers all the women were wearing in their hair. I immediately bought several beautiful flower barrettes and wore them the entire time we were there. And I never stopped, even when we returned home. There is no hairstyle that does not benefit from some fake flowers stuck in it, especially in the summer when you are wearing a sundress and eating on a patio. *Possibly eating fresh pineapple.*
8. **Even Fancier Hair Accoutrements.** Ooooh, sparkly! A bun *excuse me a chignon* is perfectly lovely by itself but stick some sparkly hairpins in it and you have taken it up a level that fancies up your LBD.
9. **And The Basics.** My hair may be in a ponytail but it's clean, shiny and in great condition. I have every hair product known to woman and use them often, experimenting to find the ones that make my hair look its best. Try hair masks, leave-in conditioners, mousse, gel, wax, spray until you find what works for you. It's been my experience that some of the cheap hair stuff is just about as good as the very expensive products, so go wild.
10. **And Even More Basic.** Your hair stylist is your friend. Unless she gives you a frizzy perm in which case you should never darken her door again. Talk to her about style, color, cut and then listen to her. She sees a lot of heads of hair and probably knows what is going to look good on you. Then pay regular visits. Even long hair needs a trim to keep it looking smooth and pretty.

Good luck with your hair. Now, give me a minute. I need to do something about this ponytail before he gets home.

Jan Ross is a freelance writer who specializes in travel writing and maintains a travel blog at <http://www.wanderlustwonder.com/>. She spend a lot of time taking care of her hair and an inordinate amount of time in a ponytail.

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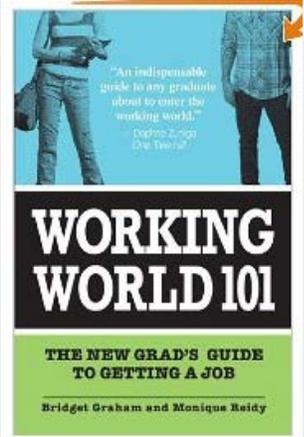
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