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MALE GROOMING 101

THE ART OF THE QUICK FIX

It's taken hundreds of hours of observation and years of dating to make a conclusive determination, but we'll finally admit it: there are certain things that, no matter how hard we try, the majority of the straight guys in our lives will just never, ever care about. And unfortunately, beyond the basics (tooth brushing, beard trimming, hair-gel application), grooming seems to be one of them. Until, of course, there's a problem — and then they're suddenly pawing through our makeup drawers in search of some magical remedy. In hopes of pre-empting such scenarios, we've put together a little dude-friendly guide to the quick grooming fix. Feel free to stash a copy in your wallet, boys, should an emergency arise.

— Heather Bouzan

Area of Straight-Guy Indifference: Skincare

Emergency: A monster zit pops up before a big event.

Quick Fix: There are two categories of dude here: he who has a girlfriend — and, therefore, beauty-drawer access — and he who needs to improvise, quick. In the latter case, local makeup artist Andrea Ducharme of TheMakeupArtists.com suggests treating the affected area with a cotton ball dipped in rubbing alcohol; apply several times per day to help dry up the blemish. The girlfriended can utilize her cleanser and blemish cream — look for those fortified with salicylic acid — and might even consider sneaking a bit of oil-free concealer, best applied with a Q-Tip. "Tap just on the blemish and let it dry a bit," Ducharme counsels. "Then use a clean Q-Tip to lightly blend around the blemish."

Area of Straight-Guy Indifference: Hair Style

Emergency: His devil-may-care attitude lands him a terrible haircut.

Quick Fix: If his Sox cap is out of the question at the office, Nicholas Penna Jr. of SalonCapri suggests picking up a good hair gel — ideally, something with medium hold and no sticky residue. Use it to temporarily mask flaws by styling hair in the opposite direction of the mistake. "Turn your bad haircut into an opportunity to experiment with a new style or look," Penna advises. "It may not be the most comfortable style for you, but it will get you through the day!"

Area of Straight-Guy Indifference: Scalp Maintenance

Emergency: His lucky suit reveals a shoulder full of dandruff before a big interview.

Quick Fix: A quick brush of his shoulder should hold him through his meeting with HR, but if he has any hope of nailing the second round, he'll need to get his flakes in check. There really isn't a quick fix for dandruff, Penna explains, but an at-home apple-cider-vinegar rinse (yup, the stuff you'll find at the grocery store) can help exfoliate the scalp, alleviating some of the dryness, itch, and flaking associated with the condition. Penna also suggests switching to a less irritating chemical-free shampoo fortified with amino acids. And wear the gray suit next time. Just in case.

Area of Straight-Guy Indifference: Moisture (Filed Under: Lack Of)

Emergency: Chapped lips threaten to derail the perfect first kiss with his latest pursuit.

Quick Fix: Nothing kills the mood faster than sandpaper lips. Ducharme recommends exfoliating dry, peeling skin by rubbing lips with a clean, damp facecloth. Apply lip balm or Vaseline — she suggests stashing tubes in your car, desk, and bathroom for regular use during the colder months — and repeat if needed. Ducharme recommends preventative measures, too: "To prevent your lips from looking like tree bark in the first place, avoid licking your lips since this will actually make them chap more easily."