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Health

Jealous of long eyelashes? Why extensions may be a bad idea

Linda Carroll
TODAY contributor

Jan. 9, 2015 at 6:09 PM ET

Extensions may make your lashes more luxurious, but there could be a cost to the health of your eyes, a new study suggests.



Sergei Starus / FeaturePics

Long lashes are beautiful. But not too long.

Normal-length lashes protect the eyes by creating a zone of stagnant air just in front of our precious orbs, researchers say. But when lashes are longer, they actually funnel air to the eye's surface, and that can make them vulnerable to dryness and dirt, according to the study which was presented recently at the annual meeting of the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology.

"Long lashes catch the air and guide it to the eye surface," said the study's lead author Guillermo Amador, a researcher at the Georgia Institute of Technology. "They act as a channel."

The optimal lash length for protection? One-third the width of the eyes, the researchers discovered.

They first measured eyelash lengths in the animal kingdom and soon came up with an intriguing result. No matter whether it was a giraffe or a hedgehog, the length of the eyelashes was always one-third the width of the eyes.

To better understand this specialized ratio, they constructed a model eye with different lash lengths that they could subject to breezes in a wind tunnel.

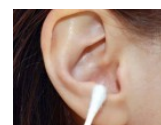
Lashes with the typical one-third ratio tended to protect the eye from drying and dirt by creating a zone of stagnant, or still, air just in front of the eye. With longer lashes, no stagnant zone resulted.

In fact, the longer lashes seemed to have the opposite effect, channeling airflow directly onto the eye.



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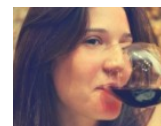
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With the longer lashes, the artificial eye surface was hit by more particles and also tended to dry out more because the direct flow of air led to evaporation.

Whether this effect actually occurs in women with extensions is something that could easily be tested, Amador said. If extensions actually cause the eye to dry out more, you would notice more blinking.

Dr. Deepinder Dhaliwal says she sees plenty of cases of dry eye in the many patients who lengthen eyelashes with mascara, as well as in those who use extensions.

“Dry eye is multifactorial, but I think this could be a contributing factor,” said Dhaliwal, an associate professor of ophthalmology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. “We know that having increased airflow around the eyes negatively impacts patients.

“This is a very interesting study because it talks about optimal eyelash length and shows that beyond that, the eye actually has more airflow onto the eyeball, and possibly along with that contact with dust or other particles.”

While dry eye could be an issue, that’s not the worst fallout from eyelash extensions, said Dr. Rosalind Vo, a corneal surgeon at the Stein Eye Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles.

One of the biggest problems is the glue used to stick them to the eyelids, Vo said. “It has high levels of formaldehyde and benzoic acid, both of which are harmful to the cornea,” she added. “On top of that, as the eyelashes grow out, the extensions tend to point towards the cornea and you can get corneal abrasions.”

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Jenna Wolfe
TODAY

3 hours ago



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AT HOME:

- 1. STAIR PUSH-UPS:** Start on the lowest step and do 3 push ups. Do the same as you move up the next four steps. Repeat as you move back down.
- 2. BUTT RAISES:** Do 20 on the floor and 20 with your heels on a couch: Repeat 5 times.



Butt raises

Samantha Okazaki / TODAY

AT THE OFFICE:

- 1. 30-SECOND DESK PUSH:** Put your palms on the underside of your desk and push upward as hard as you can for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

Related: [3 step-by-step workouts for beginners](#)

- 2. CALF RAISES:** Stand on a ream of paper so that the balls of your feet are planted solidly, but your heels are over the edge. Push up onto the balls of your feet and lift your heels so that you're standing on tip-toes. Lower back down. Do 25 reps, then repeat 3 times, with 10 seconds of rest in between.



Samantha Okazaki / TODAY

Step-ups

AT THE PARK:

1. TRICEP DIPS: To get in position, sit on a bench and put your hands at your sides, palms down. Lower yourself off the front of the bench with your legs out in front of you, your hands shoulder-width apart. To do 1 dip, lower yourself until your elbows form 90 degree angles, and then push yourself back to start. Do 15 dips with your hands on the bench, then turn around and do 10 push-ups, also with your hands on the bench. Repeat 3 times.

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2. STEP-UPS: Step up onto a bench with your left foot, then bring your right foot up, so that both feet are firmly on the bench. Then return to start by stepping down with your right foot first, then the left. That's 1 rep. Do 20 reps on each leg, then repeat the whole thing for 2 total sets.

Find more fit tips from Jenna Wolfe [here](#).

Looking to lose weight, get organized, and save money in 2015? [#StartTODAY!](#)

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Diet & Fitness

3 workouts for beginners: Get in shape anywhere with this fitness plan

Jenna Wolfe
TODAY

4 hours ago



If you want to get serious about getting in shape but don't know where to start, I've got the workout plan for you!

Here are the first three workouts you can do to [#StartTODAY](#): Each one builds upon the one prior. These workouts are upper-body and lower-body focused, and are really good for someone who is either just starting out or has only worked out for a little bit. Sprinkle these workouts in over the course of two or three weeks, while you're doing a treadmill or elliptical workout on the opposite days, and you'll be on track to hit your fitness goals in 2015!

WORKOUT # 1: Follow these [step-by-step instructions to do the the first workout](#) I crafted for TODAY's Jeff Rossen.

Related: [Use this grocery list, meal plan to lose up to 10 pounds this month](#)

WORKOUT #2

1. Alternate jogs / pikes

Start by doing 10 jogs in place, then 10 pikes. Then 10 jogs, 9 pikes. Then 10 jogs, 8 pikes. Count your way down to 1 pike.



Pikes

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2. Do 10 crab kicks, then 20 butt kickers: Repeat 5 times

Crab kicks:



Samantha Okazaki / TODAY

Butt kickers:



Samantha Okazaki / TODAY

3. Do 20 Figure 8's with 5 lb weights, then 100 butt raises on the floor: Repeat 3 times.

Figure 8's:



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Butt raises:



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3. Run 40 yards, then do 5 burpies. Repeat 5 times.

Burpies:



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4. Do 15 side punch outs, then 15 upper cuts. Repeat 5 times.

Side punch outs:



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Upper cuts:



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Bonus round, if you still have the time and energy:

5. Alternate standing alternating kicks / burpies

Start with 10 standing alternating kicks, and 1 burpie. Then do 9 standing alternating kicks, 1 burpie. Count your way down to 1 kick / 1 burpie.

WORKOUT # 3

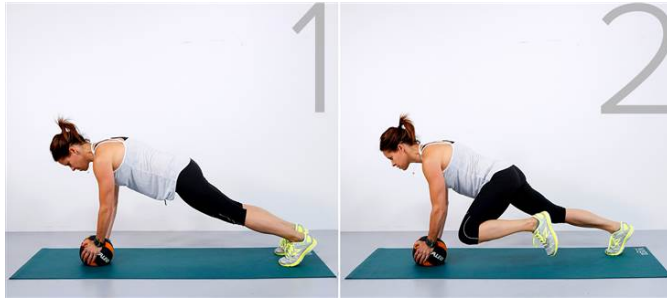
In this workout, you are going to repeat a quick circuit to get your cardio going, then mix in moves to strengthen different muscle groups.

Cardio circuit:

- 50 jogs in place
- 40 jumping jacks
- 30 butt kickers
- 20 high knees
- 10 squats

1. Alternate slow mountain climbers / jogs in place

Start with 10 mountain climbers / 20 jogs in place. Then 9 mountain climbers, 20 jogs. Count down to 1 mountain climber.



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2. Cardio circuit (see above)

3. Hop hop touches

Start with 10 hop hop touches, rest 30 seconds. 10 touches, rest 20 seconds. 10 touches, rest 10 seconds. 10 touches, rest 20 seconds. 10 touches, done.



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4. Cardio circuit

5. Crab touches

Do 10 crab touches on right leg, 10 on left leg, 10 regular crab touches.



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6. Cardio circuit

7. Jumping jacks

Start with 100 jumping jacks, then rest 20 seconds. Then 75 jacks, rest 20 seconds. Then 50 jacks, rest 20 seconds. Then 25 jacks, and you're done!

Find more fit tips from Jenna Wolfe [here](#). For more great tips on how to lose weight, get organized and save money this year, [head to #StartTODAY](#).

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