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(54) **HAIR EXTENSION SYSTEM AND METHOD**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A hair extension system is provided that comprises a tube, which has a central tube opening therethrough. The tube formed of a malleable material, such as copper, capable of being flattened and opened reversibly. A strand of extension hair inserted through the tube opening and affixed to the tube by an attaching means, preferably a strong adhesive, on one side, leaving room to draw existing hair through the tube. The tube is capable of being opened at a later date to permit the tube to be repositioned on the stand of existing hair, closer to the scalp, and recompressed to bind the two strands therein. The tube may be manufactured in colors to match varying shades of existing hair. The system also provides crimping and opening tools for flattening and reversibly opening the hair extension tube.

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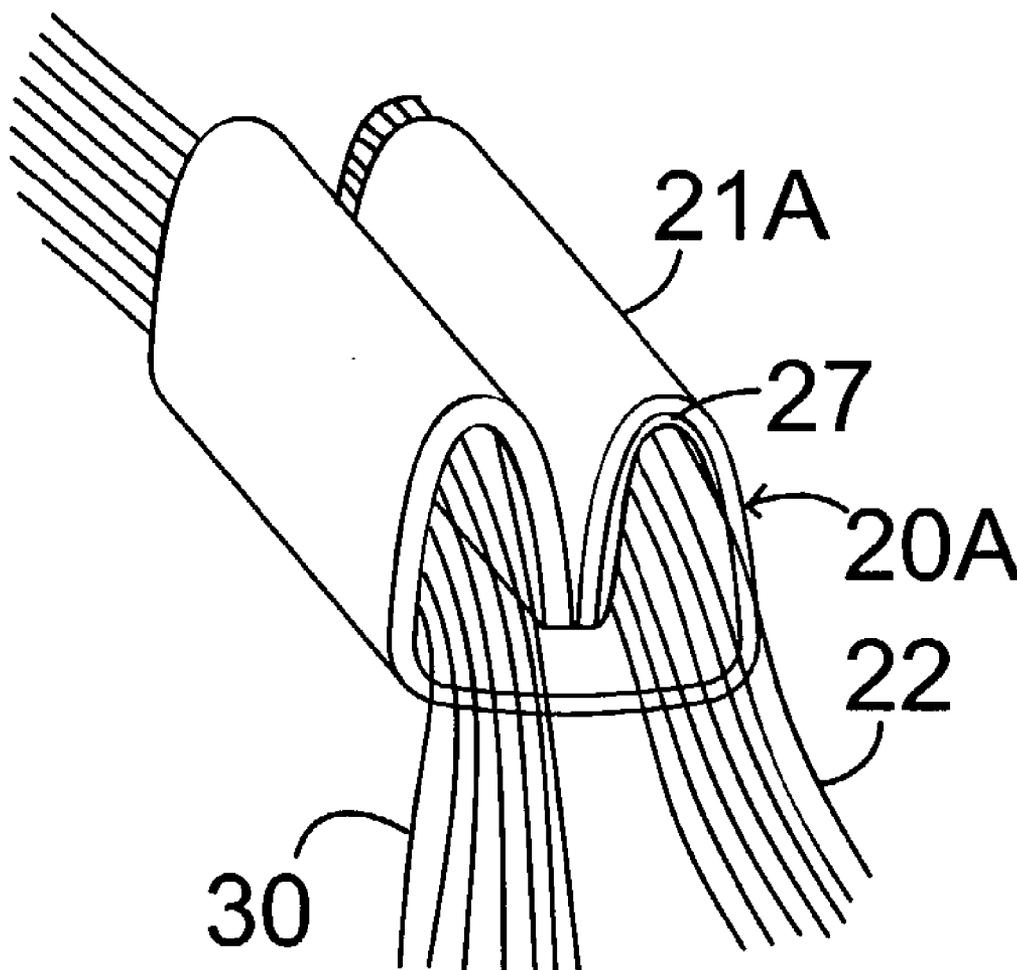
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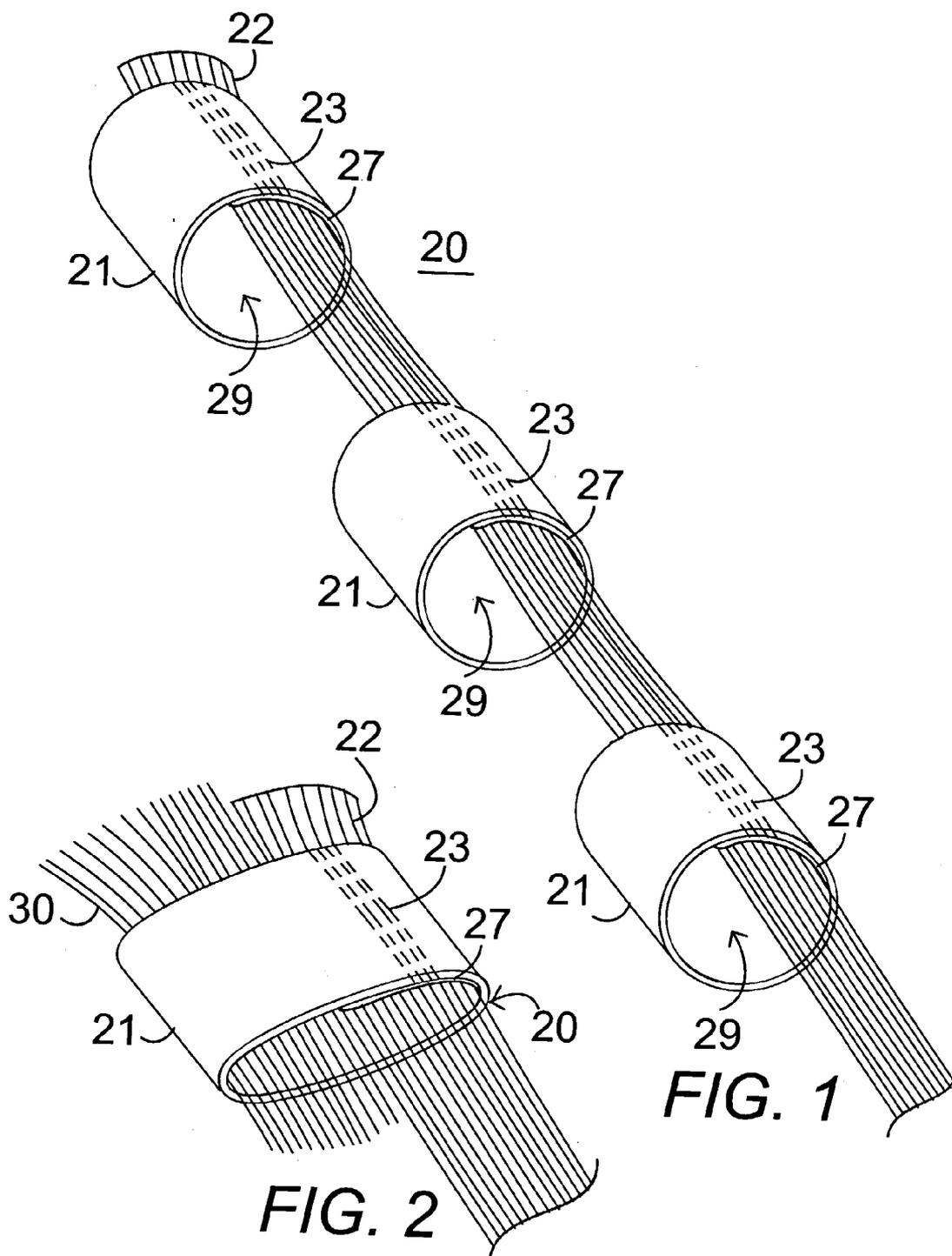
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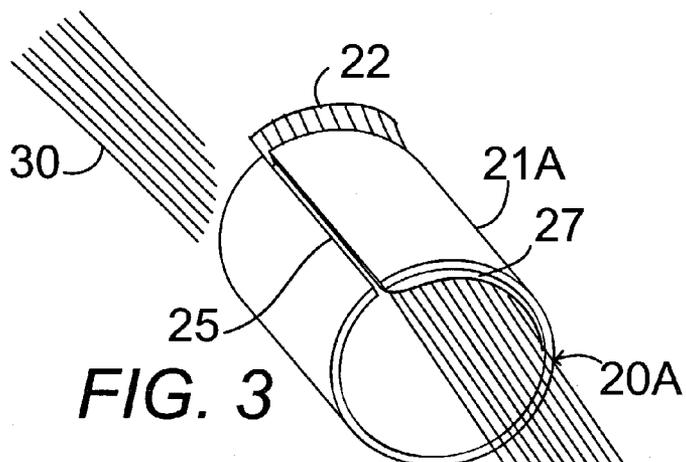


FIG. 3

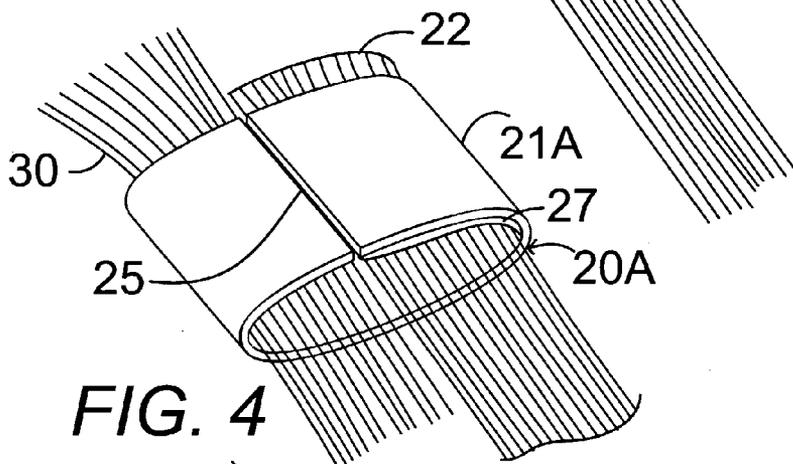


FIG. 4

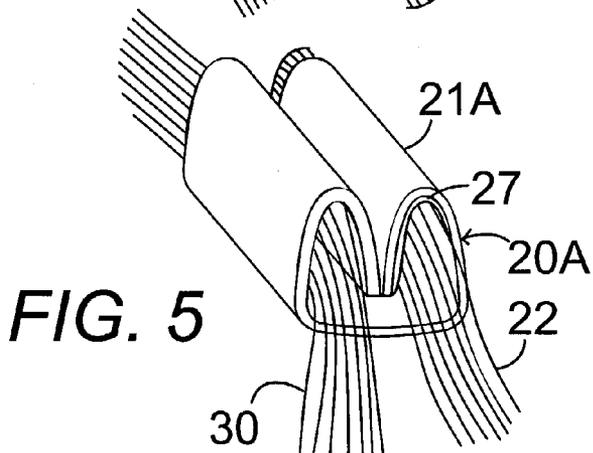


FIG. 5

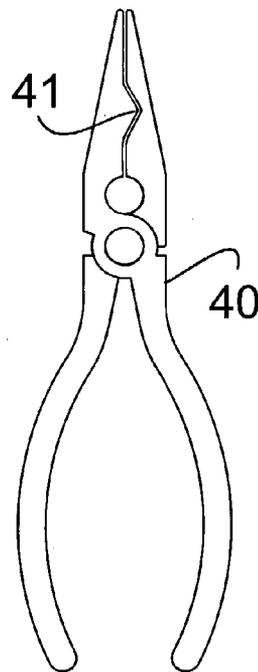


FIG. 6

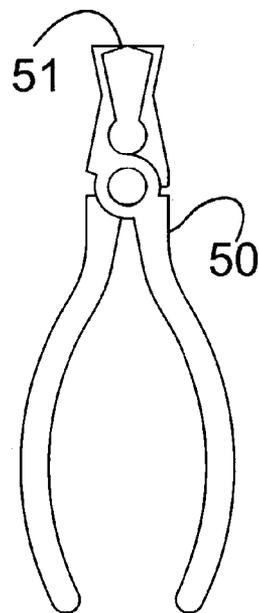


FIG. 7

HAIR EXTENSION SYSTEM AND METHOD

CLAIM OF PROVISIONAL APPLICATION RIGHTS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/450,624, filed on Mar. 3, 2003.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to hair extension and in particular to a hair extension system and method with the extension hair already installed on the extension connector for speed and ease of application.

[0004] 2. Description of the Prior Art

[0005] Hair extension is a natural looking way to have longer hair of any desired length in one installation session. Prior art systems and methods often involve painstaking and time consuming ways of braiding small quantities of existing hair with small quantities of extension hair, either shorn human hair or synthetic hair and then connecting the two together in a somewhat secure way to maintain the extension hair in place and achieve a natural looking long head of hair.

[0006] Because the look is more natural looking and more secure by interconnecting small strands of existing hair with extension hair, the process requires many small operations of interconnecting the small strands. Most of the prior art attempts at creating systems and methods of hair extension require lengthy expensive sessions to carry out the extension treatment.

[0007] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 6,405,736, issued Jun. 18, 2002 to Townsend, shows self adhesive hair extensions and a method of attaching them to the head of a wearer. The self adhesive hair extensions comprise a plurality of either natural or synthetic hair strands attached to a base support comprising a strip of woven material or hair attachment weave or welt at one end. A fastener comprising a self adhesive tape portion and removable backing is sewn or otherwise secured by stitching to the hair extensions in order to prevent the adhesive tape from being separated or repositioned during use. The method of use comprise separating a users hair along a part line into an upper portion and a lower portion wherein the upper portion is temporarily swept up and away from the part line. The removable backing is removed from the adhesive hair fastener exposing the removable self-adhesive tape, said self-adhesive tape is applied to the scalp or back of head of user.

[0008] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. D447,286, issued Aug. 28, 2001 to Diaz, claims the ornamental design for a hair extension.

[0009] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. D433,774, issued Nov. 14, 2000 to Diaz, also describes the ornamental design for a hair extension.

[0010] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 5,899,211, issued May 4, 1999 to Brown, discloses an artificial hair piece that includes an independent extension of synthetic human hair secured at one end to a stretchable, twistable, and foldable elastic loop or band. The opposite end of the extension can either be free or can be gathered and tied or otherwise bound. The elastic

loop can be used to secure gathered actual hair of a user into, for example, a ponytail. The hair extension can then be wrapped around the elastic loop to hide it from view and give the impression that the hair extension is securing the ponytail in place. The hair extension can be selected to match one or more characteristic of the user's own hair.

[0011] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 5,899,209, issued May 4, 1999 to McDonald, indicates a hair extension that includes hair strands affixed to a ring assembly. The ring assembly comprises an inner ring and an outer ring. The inner ring is configured to nest within the outer ring, with distal ends of the hair strands impinged between the inner and outer rings. A plait of a user's hair is inserted through the ring assembly of the hair extension. In one embodiment, the hair extension is attached to the plait with a band, or by sewing the hair extension to the plait. In another embodiment, the ring assembly is modified with a fastening assembly for fastening the hair extension to the plait.

[0012] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 5,894,846, issued Apr. 20, 1999 to Gang, puts forth a device for lengthening a person's own hair using artificial and/or genuine hair and for the permanent fastening of artificial and/or genuine hair. The invention is characterized in that a tube, which can be shrunk when energy is applied, is disposed above a thickened portion, secured in position, in particular a knot in a strand of a person's own hair and above an extension piece of artificial and/or genuine hair. An energy-application device, in particular in the form of heating irons, transfers thermal energy in a deliberate manner to the shrinkable tube. The method in which the device is used is characterized by the following steps; knotting a strand of the person's own hair, sliding onto the knot in the hair strand a fastening element which can shrink when energy is applied, sliding an extension strand of artificial and/or genuine hair into the tube; and shrinking the shrinkable fastening element by the application of energy.

[0013] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 5,868,145, issued Feb. 9, 1999 to Spann, concerns an improved hair extension and thickening process which reduces shedding, resists physical and chemical degradation, and which, further, provides for safely, easily, and cleanly removing the supplemental hair from the natural hair. A weft of natural or synthetic supplemental hair is suspended upon a mounting surface. A small bundle of supplemental hair is segregated from the weft. Liquid latex is applied thereto, and the latex is twisted into it so that the supplemental hair is thoroughly coated, intertwined, and bonded together at the junction so formed. Cyanoacrylate adhesive is applied to further bond the bundle of supplemental hair. The supplemental bundles are then permanently separated from the weft. The supplemental bundle may later be bonded to a person's natural hair through the use of a hot melt acrylic adhesive. Release and separation of the supplemental bundle from the person's natural hair is conveniently, safely, and cleanly obtained through the use of acetone.

[0014] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 5,813,418, issued Sep. 29, 1998 to Pillars, illustrates a color matched hair clip device with and without an unlocking key combination, and a method for adding and removing multiple hair extensions or tracks to a person's head without resorting to sewing or gluing as practiced conventionally. The hair clip device is made up of a comb element and a cover element which

“Ziplocs”.TM., with a locking guard element in the first embodiment. The U-shaped locking guard has a hooked sheath at each end. The cover element has two track snaps or hair extension holders under which the hair extensions are attached. The second embodiment dispenses with the locking guard and utilizes plastic snaps for both the hair extension holders, the comb teeth and the cover element for securing the hair extensions. The method of use comprises placing the comb element close to the scalp, engaging the end teeth of the comb with the sheathed ends of the locking guard, wrapping the natural hair around the comb to be held initially by the sheathed locking guard’s external hooks, and either interlocking the cover element with the locking guard or snapping the hair extension holders and the cover element for securing the hair extensions. A special key is provided for removal of the locking guard or the snaps of the hair clip device and the attached hair extensions. The key is designed to effectively perform the operation with a minimum of effort and without damaging the hair clip device.

[0015] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 5,752,530, issued May 19, 1998 to Traintinger, is for a method of attaching foreign hair to naturally grown scalp hair. First, a strand of scalp hair is combined with a strand of foreign hair. A clamping sleeve is slipped onto the loop of a loop catcher. Then the combined strand is inserted into loop and it is pulled into and through the clamping sleeve with the loop catcher. The combined strand of scalp hair and foreign hair are then preliminarily attached by pre-squeezing the sleeve. After the sleeve is properly placed in the vicinity of the scalp, the sleeve is finally pressed so as to clamp the foreign hair to the scalp hair. The sleeve, which is preferably of the same color as the hair, may be removed by prying it open with bent-nose pliers provided with the invention.

[0016] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 5,121,761, issued Jun. 16, 1992 to Meister, provides a method for the attachment of extensions or wefts of hair to the naturally growing hair of a person. First, the location of where the extension is to be attached to the person is determined. Then, the hair is parted along that location. The hair along the part is gathered together in small clumps. A crimpable anchor device is located onto each clump of hair. Each anchor device is positioned along the respective hair clump to a position near the scalp of the person. The anchor devices are crimped so as to secure their positions. Then, the extension is sewn to the clumps of hair using needle and thread. The needle and thread pass through the respective clumps at locations between the anchor devices and the scalp. The naturally growing hair is allowed to fall in place so as to cover the points of attachment.

[0017] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 5,107,867, issued Apr. 28, 1992 to Barrington, shows a reversible process for attaching permanent extensions to human hair in which strands of supplemental hair are joined with a thermostable adhesive to form a plug of supplemental hair. A coating of thermosetting adhesive is applied over the thermostable adhesive and cured. Strands of the person’s natural hair are threaded through a section of heat shrinkable tubing, the plug of supplemental hair is inserted into the heat shrinkable tubing, and heat is applied to the heat shrinkable tubing so that the thermosetting adhesive liquifies and joins the plug of supplemental hair and natural hair, and the heat shrinkable tubing shrinks in size to compress and seal the junction. The

permanent extension can be removed by reapplication of heat to the heat shrinkable tubing.

[0018] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 4,934,387, issued Jun. 19, 1990 to Megna, describes a process for lengthening the hair of persons who have short hair and for thickening the hair for those who have a relatively small amount of hair. The process comprises the steps of aligning supplemental hair with the natural hair, adhering the supplemental hair to the natural hair utilizing a colored thermoplastic glue, intertwining the warm adhered natural and supplemental hair together to permit a binding of the supplemental to the natural hair, and then styling the combined hair. A technique for preparing the thermoplastic glue is also disclosed.

[0019] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 3,530,862 issued Sep. 29, 1970 to Hudson, provides a hair piece made by aligning hair to a rod-like member, trimming the hair ends, grouping the hair covered rods together and coating the trimmed ends with an elastomeric binder to form a web-like base.

[0020] Prior art U.S. Pat. No. 2,621,663, issued Dec. 16, 1952 to Jenkins, discloses a method for permanently attaching commercial hair to live hair in which the attachment point is rendered invisible.

[0021] What is needed is a system and method of quickly interconnecting each small strand of existing hair with each small strand of extension hair to speed up the process while still retaining the natural look and strength of each connection.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0022] An object of the present invention is to provide hair extension connecting tubes with extension hair already attached to the connecting tubes for a hair extension system and method of quickly interconnecting each small strand of existing hair with each small strand of extension hair to speed up the process while still retaining the natural look and strength of each connection.

[0023] Another object of the present invention is to provide small inexpensive hair extension connector tubes with the extension hair preinstalled in half the tube, which makes the process of hair extension much easier for the hair stylist and much more affordable to the client due to the cost and time saved by the salon, requiring that the existing strand of hair merely be pulled through the tube adjacent to the strand of extension hair and the tube sealed to secure the two strands together

[0024] One more object of the present invention is to provide soft metal tubes that match the existing hair color which are fabricated from a very malleable metal, such as copper creates a highly effective and speedy device and method for hair extension by simply crimping the tube closed tight in a flat configuration securing the existing strand and extension strand together in the tube

[0025] An additional object of the present invention is to provide soft metal tubes, which also enable easy loosening of the tubes by prying them apart. The stylist can then push the tubes closer to the scalp and recrimp after existing hair growth has occurred to maintain the tubes close to the scalp so that they are covered by a layer of hair and not visible

[0026] In brief, a hair extension system comprises a series of short malleable tubes, each of which has a central tube

opening therethrough. The tube formed of a malleable material, such as copper, is capable of being flattened and opened reversibly. A strand of extension hair, either shorn human hair or synthetic hair, is inserted through the tube opening and affixed to the tube by an attaching means, preferably strong glue, on one side, leaving room to draw existing hair through the tube. The extension hair strand may be affixed to the tube by a sewing means in addition or as an alternative to an adhesive means. The tube is capable of being opened at a later date to permit the tube to be repositioned on the stand of existing hair, closer to the scalp, and recompressed to bind the two strands therein. The tube is easily concealed by the client's hair when it is positioned near the scalp. The tube may be manufactured in colors to match shades of existing hair, making it even lower in visibility.

[0027] A second embodiment of the hair extension tube has a longitudinal split in the tube running parallel to the strand of extension hair and is capable of being folded in half into a compressed V shape after being compressed flat.

[0028] The system also provides crimping and opening tools for flattening and reversibly opening the hair extension tube.

[0029] An advantage of the present invention is that the extension hair is preinstalled in half of the tube saving time in the installation process.

[0030] Another advantage of the present invention is that it is a highly effective and speedy device to use.

[0031] An additional advantage of the present invention is that the soft metal tubes are easily opened and closed.

[0032] One more advantage of the present invention is that it is the device may be adjusted closer to the scalp as the client's hair grows out.

[0033] Yet another advantage of the present invention is that the tubes are positioned close to the scalp so that they are covered by a layer of hair and not visible.

[0034] Still another advantage of the present invention is that the color of the tubes can be matched to the color of the client's hair.

[0035] A final advantage of the present invention is that it is much more affordable to the client due to the cost and time saved by the salon.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0036] These and other details of my invention will be described in connection with the accompanying drawings, which are furnished only by way of illustration and not in limitation of the invention, and in which drawings:

[0037] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the hair extension tube of the present invention encircling the pre-installed extension hair, in a non-flattened state.

[0038] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the hair extension tube of the present invention encircling both real hair and the extension hair, in a flattened state.

[0039] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the hair extension tube having a slot along the length of the tube, encircling both real hair and the extension hair, in a non-flattened state.

[0040] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the alternate embodiment of the hair extension tube of FIG. 3 in an intermediate flattened state.

[0041] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of the alternate embodiment of the hair extension tube of FIG. 3 in a final compressed V-shape.

[0042] FIG. 6 is an elevational view of a pair of crimping pliers used with the alternate embodiment of the hair provide an alternate V-shaped crimp.

[0043] FIG. 7 is an elevational view of opening tool pliers, which are used to open the flattened hair extension tube.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

[0044] In FIGS. 1 and 2, a hair extension system 20 comprises a short malleable tube 21 which has a central tube opening 29 therethrough. The tube 21 is formed of a malleable material capable of being flattened and opened reversibly.

[0045] The hair extension system 20 also comprises a strand of extension hair 22 pre-installed in the tube by inserting a strand of natural or synthetic extension hair through the opening of the tube 21 and attaching it to the tube 21 by an attaching means, preferably adhering the extension hair to the tube with a strong glue 27 or alternately or additionally sewing with thread or strands 23 of the extension hair itself. The strand of extension hair 22 is attached on one side of the tube 21 adjacent to a first end of the strand of extension hair 22 so the extension hair 22 is restricted to occupying approximately half of the opening of the tube 21. The remainder of the opening of the tube 21 remains open so that a strand of existing hair 30 from a person may be inserted into the tube adjacent to the extension hair. The strand of existing hair 30 is drawn through the remaining open portion of the opening of the tube 21 adjacent to the extension hair 22 in the opening, as shown in FIG. 2. The tube 21 is capable of being reversibly compressed to bind the two strands 22 and 30 of hair within the flattened tube 21, as shown in FIG. 2 and subsequently the tube 21 is capable of being opened to permit the tube 21 to be repositioned on the stand of existing hair 30 after the existing hair has grown, and recompressed to bind the two strands 22 and 30 therein.

[0046] In another embodiment of the hair extension tube 20A, shown in FIG. 3, the tube 21A has a longitudinal split in the tube 21A running parallel to the strand of extension hair 22 and is capable of being folded in half into a compressed V shape, as shown in FIG. 5 after being compressed, as shown in FIG. 4.

[0047] The system 20 or 20A further comprises a compressing tool (not shown) that comprises a pair of opposing pivotable flat faces, such as a pair of pliers capable of compressing the tube 21 or 21A after the existing strand of hair 30 is drawn into the opening, as shown in FIGS. 2 and 4 and further capable of compressing the tube 21A again, shown in FIG. 5, after the tube 21A is formed into a V shape.

[0048] The system 20A also includes a bending tool 40, shown in FIG. 6, that comprises a pair of opposing pivotable faces with a V-shaped protrusion 41 on one of the pair of

faces and a mating V-shaped recess on the other of the pair of faces. The bending tool **40** is capable of forming the compressed tube **21A**, shown in **FIG. 4**, into a V shape.

[**0049**] The system **20** or **20A** further includes an opening tool **50**, shown in **FIG. 7**. The opening tool **50** comprises a pair of opposing facing pointed wedge elements **51** capable of being inserted into the opening **29** of the tube **21** or **21A** after the tube **21** or **21A** is compressed and prying apart the compressed tube **21** or **21A** to reopen the tube **21** or **21A** to permit sliding the tube **21** or **21A** along the strand of existing hair **30**.

[**0050**] In practice, the hair extension method comprises a first step of forming a tube **21** or **21A** that has a central tube opening **29** therethrough. The tube **21** or **21A** is formed of a malleable material and is capable of being flattened, as shown in **FIGS. 2 and 4**, and opened reversibly.

[**0051**] The method comprises a second step of attaching a strand of extension hair **22**. The extension hair **22** is inserted through the opening of the tube **21** or **21A** and attached to the tube **21** or **21A** by an attaching means on one side of the tube **21** or **21A**, adjacent to a first end of the strand of extension hair **22**. The extension hair **22** is thereby restricted to occupying a first portion of the opening of the tube **21** or **21A** and a second portion of the opening remains open so the second portion of the opening is capable of receiving a strand of existing hair **30** from a person. The strand of extension hair **22** would be preferably attached to the tube **21** or **21A** by a strong glue **27** and alternately or additionally by a sewing means such as thread or strands of the extension hair **23**.

[**0052**] The method further comprises a third step of drawing a strand of existing hair **30** through the second portion of the opening of the tube **21** or **21A** adjacent to the extension hair **22** in the opening. The tube **21** or **21A** is capable of being reversibly compressed to bind the two strands of hair **22** and **30** within the flattened tube **21** or **21A**, as shown in **FIGS. 2 and 4**.

[**0053**] The method also comprises a fourth step of compressing the tube **21** or **21A** to bind the two strands of hair **22** and **30** within the flattened tube **21** or **21A**, as shown in **FIGS. 2 and 4**. Subsequently, the tube **21** or **21A** is capable of being opened to permit the tube **21** or **21A** to be repositioned on the stand of existing hair **30** and recompressed to bind the two strands **22** and **30** therein. The compression is achieved by using a tool (not shown) that comprises a pair of opposing pivotable flat faces, such as a pair of pliers, to compress the tube **21** or **21A** after the existing strand of existing hair **30** is drawn into the opening of the tube **21** or **21A**.

[**0054**] In an alternate embodiment of the device **20A**, shown in **FIG. 3-5**, the tube **21A** has a longitudinal split **25** in the tube **21A** running parallel to the strand of extension hair **22**. The fourth step comprises crimping the tube **21A** with the slit **25** at a central point in the tube **21A** after compressing the tube **21A**, as shown in **FIG. 4**.

[**0055**] The embodiment of the device **20A** also requires a fifth step of bending the flattened tube **21A** into a V shape. In the fifth step, the user would employ a bending tool **40**, shown in **FIG. 6** to form the compressed tube into the V shape. This bending tool **40** comprises a pair of opposing

pivotable faces with a V-shaped protrusion on one of the pair of faces and a mating V-shaped recess on the other of the pair of faces.

[**0056**] The second version of the device **20A** also comprises a sixth step of compressing the V shape tube **21A** into a flattened folded over tube **21A**, as shown in **FIG. 5** by using a compression tool (not shown) that comprises a pair of opposing pivotable flat faces.

[**0057**] The method further comprises a seventh step of prying apart the compressed tube **21** or **21A** to reopen the tube **21** or **21A** to permit sliding the tube **21** or **21A** along the strand of existing hair **30**, by using an opening tool **50**, shown in **FIG. 7**. The opening tool **50** comprises a pair of opposing facing pointed wedge elements **51** capable of being inserted into the opening **29** after the tube **21** or **21A** is compressed.

[**0058**] It is understood that the preceding description is given merely by way of illustration and not in limitation of the invention and that various modifications may be made thereto without departing from the spirit of the invention as claimed.

What is claimed is:

1. A hair extension system comprising:

a tube having a central tube opening therethrough, the tube formed of a malleable material capable of being flattened and opened reversibly;

a strand of extension hair inserted through the tube opening and attached to the tube by an attaching means on one side of the tube adjacent to a first end of the strand of extension hair so that the extension hair is restricted to occupying a first portion of the opening and a second portion of the opening remains open so that the second portion of the opening is capable of receiving a strand of existing hair from a person, the strand of existing hair being drawn through the second portion of the opening adjacent to the extension hair in the opening and the tube is capable of being reversibly compressed to bind the two strands of hair within the flattened tube and subsequently the tube is capable of being opened to permit the tube to be repositioned on the stand of existing hair and recompressed to bind the two strands therein.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the attaching means comprises an adhesive attaching means for gluing the stand of extension hair onto the tube.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein the attaching means comprises a threaded attaching means for sewing the stand of extension hair onto the tube.

4. The system of claim 3 wherein the threaded attaching means comprises sewing at least one of the strands of extension hair onto the tube.

5. The system of claim 3 wherein the threaded attaching means comprises sewing an external threading means between the strand of extension hair and the tube.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein the tube has a longitudinal split in the tube running parallel to the strand of extension hair.

7. The system of claim 1 wherein the tube is capable of being folded in half into a compressed V shape after being compressed.

8. The system of claim 7 further comprising a bending tool comprising a pair of opposing pivotable faces with a V-shaped protrusion on one of the pair of faces and a mating V-shaped recess on the other of the pair of faces, the bending tool capable of forming the compressed tube into a V shape.

9. The system of claim 8 further comprising a compressing tool comprising a pair of opposing pivotable flat faces capable of compressing the tube after the existing strand of hair is drawn into the opening and further capable of compressing the tube again after the tube is formed into a V shape.

10. The system of claim 9 further comprising an opening tool comprising a pair of opposing facing pointed wedge elements capable of being inserted into the opening after the tube is compressed and prying apart the compressed tube to reopen the tube to permit sliding the tube along the strand of existing hair.

11. A hair extension method comprising:

a first step of forming a tube having a central tube opening therethrough, the tube formed of a malleable material capable of being flattened and opened reversibly;

a second step of attaching a strand of extension hair inserted through the tube opening and attached to the tube by an attaching means on one side of the tube adjacent to a first end of the strand of extension hair so that the extension hair is restricted to occupying a first portion of the opening and a second portion of the opening remains open so that the second portion of the opening is capable of receiving a strand of existing hair from a person,

a third step of drawing a strand of existing hair through the second portion of the opening adjacent to the extension hair in the opening and the tube is capable of being reversibly compressed to bind the two strands of hair within the flattened tube;

a fourth step of compressing the tube to bind the two strands of hair within the flattened tube and subsequently the tube is capable of being opened to permit the tube to be repositioned on the stand of existing hair and recompressed to bind the two strands therein.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the attaching means comprises an adhesive attaching means for gluing the stand

of extension hair onto the tube and the second step comprises attaching the extension hair by gluing it to the tube.

13. The method of claim 11 wherein the attaching means comprises a threaded attaching means for sewing the stand of extension hair onto the tube and the second step comprises attaching the extension hair by sewing it to the tube.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the second step comprises sewing at least one of the strands of extension hair onto the tube.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the second step comprises sewing an external threading means between the strand of extension hair and the tube.

16. The method of claim 11 wherein the tube has a longitudinal split in the tube running parallel to the strand of extension hair and the fourth step comprises crimping the tube with the slit at a central point in the tube after compressing the tube and further comprising a fifth step of bending the flattened tube into a V shape.

17. The method of claim 16 further comprising a sixth step of compressing the V shape tube into a flattened folded over tube.

18. The method of claim 16 further comprising a bending tool comprising a pair of opposing pivotable faces with a V-shaped protrusion on one of the pair of faces and a mating V-shaped recess on the other of the pair of faces, wherein the fifth step comprises using the bending tool to form the compressed tube into the V shape.

19. The method of claim 18 further comprising a compressing tool comprising a pair of opposing pivotable flat faces and the fourth step comprises using the compressing tool to compress the tube after the existing strand of hair is drawn into the opening and the sixth step comprises using the compressing tool to compress the tube again after the tube is formed into a V shape.

20. The method of claim 19 further comprising an opening tool comprising a pair of opposing facing pointed wedge elements capable of being inserted into the opening after the tube is compressed and further comprising a seventh step of prying apart the compressed tube to reopen the tube to permit sliding the tube along the strand of existing hair.

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