Hair extension means are provided including a material portion with a plurality of apertures defined therethrough, and wherein a plurality of strands of extension hair and/or a hair weft is attached to the material portion.
HAIR EXTENSION MEANS AND METHOD OF ATTACHMENT

[0001] This invention relates to hair extension means suitable for the purpose of hair replacement and/or hair extension and a method of attachment of the same to a user.

[0002] The use of hair extensions for extending a user's own hair and/or for replacing hair in a user suffering from hair loss is well known. There are a number of known methods for attaching hair extensions to a user. These include:

[0003] a) Fusing—individual hair extensions are attached to a user's natural hair using protein glue and can be either hot fused or cold fused. A small plastic template is used to separate the hair extension from the rest of the user's hair. A small portion of the user's natural hair is pulled through an aperture in the plastic template and the hair extension is glued to the user's natural hair. The glued portion of the hair extension and the user's natural hair is rolled together to form a bond. This is a particularly time consuming process that can take between 2-4 hours. The method is generally undertaken by a professional hair stylist.

[0004] b) Pre-Tipped—this is similar to Fusing but an end of each individual hair extension is pre-tipped with glue. The pre-tipped end is bonded to a user's natural hair using a heating tool. The method is generally undertaken by a professional hair stylist and the hair extensions cannot be reused once they have been taken out.

[0005] c) Mini-Link or Micro-Link—strands of the user's natural hair are pulled through a mini-link with a special tool, together with the hair extension. A tool similar to pliers is then used to lock the hair extension and natural hair together in the mini-link. No glue is used to undertake this method but it is a time consuming method that is generally undertaken by a professional hair stylist.

[0006] d) Bonding—a hair weft is bonded to a user's natural hair using bonding glue. This method can be undertaken by a professional hair stylist or by a user at home. Use of this method can result in hair loss to the user.

[0007] e) Clip—a hair extension is attached to a clip and the user clips the hair extension to their natural hair in a suitable position. This method is generally undertaken by a user at home. The hair extensions are temporary and are not designed for use over an extended period of time. In addition, clipped hair extensions are susceptible to falling out.

[0008] f) Corn Rows—a plait is made in the user's hair and a hair weft is sewn onto the plait. This method can result in hair loss to the user.

[0009] g) Synthetic hair extensions can be platted into a user's natural hair.

[0010] h) A mixture of natural hair and synthetic hair extensions can be platted into a user's natural hair.

[0011] It will be appreciated that many of the above known techniques are time consuming to apply, expensive and rely almost entirely on some form of glue being used between the user's natural hair and the hair extension. This can cause damage to the user's natural hair and/or hair extension, the hair extension has to be removed after a relatively short period of time (such as for example 8-12 weeks) as the user's natural hair grows and removal of the hair extension typically causes damage to the same, thereby requiring the removed hair extension to be discarded and new hair extensions to be fitted. In addition, individual hair extensions typically include small clumps of hair strands bonded together. The individual hair extensions often do not sit flat on the user's head and so can appear bunched or look stringy, thereby making the hair extensions look unnatural.

[0012] It is therefore an aim of the present invention to provide hair extension means or a hair extension device that overcomes the abovementioned problems, that limits the damage to the user's own hair and which can remain in place in the user's own hair for a longer period of time.

[0013] It is a further aim of the present invention to provide a method of attaching hair extension means or device that overcomes the abovementioned problems, that limits the damage to the user's own hair and which can remain in place in the user's own hair for a longer period of time.

[0014] According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided hair extension means, said hair extension means including a material portion with a plurality of apertures defined therethrough, and wherein a plurality of strands of extension hair and/or a hair weft is attached to the material portion.

[0015] Preferably the hair extension strands and/or hair weft are attached to or adjacent a peripheral edge of the material portion, such as for example a lower peripheral edge of the material portion.

[0016] In one embodiment a single line, row, column or substantially linear arrangement of hair extension strands and/or hair weft is provided. In an alternative embodiment two or more lines, rows, columns or substantially linear arrangements of hair extension strands and/or hair weft are provided. The number of lines, rows, columns and/or the like can vary depending on how thick the hair extension means needs to be.

[0017] In one embodiment the hair extension strands and/or hair weft are attached to the material portion via sewing, such as machine sewing and/or the like. Alternatively, the hair extension strands and/or hair weft are attached to the material portion via any or any combination of sewing, adhesive, heating, bonding and/or the like.

[0018] In one embodiment the length of the proportion of the hair extension strands and/or hair weft joined to the material portion is approximately between 5-6 mm. This helps to add thickness to the hair extension. The length of the hair extension strands and/or hair weft not joined to the material portion can be any suitable length. Thus, the hair extension strands and/or hair weft are firmly connected to the material portion and are not simply joined by a point attachment or by simply being folded through an aperture defined on the material portion.

[0019] Preferably the hair extension strands and/or hair weft are provided in a line to form a hair extension strip or in a substantially straight linear or planar form on the material portion. Thus, in one embodiment the hair extension strands and/or hair weft forms a strip of hair on the material portion.

[0020] The material portion is preferably in a sheet like form, thereby allowing the material portion to sit substantially flat to a user's head in use.

[0021] In one embodiment the material portion includes a single layer of material. In an alternative embodiment the material portion includes two or more layers of material provided in substantially wholly or partially overlapping arrangement. This plurality of layers typically increases the
strength of the material portion. The two or more layers of material can be formed from a single layer of material portion that is folded over one or more times to provide the overlapping arrangement or the two or more layers of material can be formed from separate layers of material that are joined together in the overlapping arrangement.

[0022] If the material portion includes two or more layers of material in an overlapping arrangement, the apertures of the two or more layers can be substantially aligned, partially aligned or can be non-aligned. If the apertures are only partially aligned, this can reduce the size of the apertures, which can be advantageous depending on the hair type of the person to which the hair extension is being fitted to in use.

[0023] In one embodiment if the layers of the material portion are only partially overlapping, one or more free or peripheral edges of the material portion and/or the joining edges of the hair weft or hair strands to the material portion can be substantially aligned or can be offset from each other. The different arrangements can allow adjustment of the thickness of the resulting hair extension means.

[0024] In one embodiment if the material portion includes two or more layers, hair strands or hair weft can be attached to each of the two or more layers, to the two or more layers of the material portion, to at least two sides of the material portion, to a single side of the material portion, to a single layer of the material portion and/or the like.

[0025] Preferably the material portion is formed from substantially flexible material.

[0026] In one embodiment the material portion with the plurality of apertures defined therein is in the form of mesh, netting, lace and/or the like. In one embodiment the material portion is actually formed, at least partially from, natural and/or synthetic hair.

[0027] In one embodiment the material portion includes a plurality of loops joined together to form one or more rows, columns and/or the like. The loops define the plurality of apertures of the material portion.

[0028] In one embodiment the material is formed from or is provided with a coating of a substantially waterproof material, such as nylon, plastic, polyester and/or the like.

[0029] Preferably the plurality of apertures are provided at substantially evenly spaced locations on the material portion. This allows the user’s natural hair to be attached to the material portion in a substantially even manner. However, it will be appreciated that the apertures could be irregularly or differently spaced and/or spaced out of alignment with each other if required.

[0030] In one embodiment the plurality of apertures are provided in rows and/or columns on the material portion. Preferably the apertures in the rows and/or columns are substantially aligned, uniform or linear in form.

[0031] The type of material chosen for the material portion and/or the size of the apertures defined in the material portion typically depends on one or more characteristics of the user’s natural hair to which the hair extension means is to be fitted, such as the density of the user’s natural hair, the wave and/or texture of the user’s natural hair and/or the like.

[0032] In one embodiment the diameter of the apertures defined in the material portion is such so as to allow strands of the user’s natural hair to be threaded and pulled through the same in use. Preferably the diameter of each or one or more of the apertures can be between 1 mm-10 mm and further preferably between 2 mm-10 mm and yet further preferably approximately 2 mm. If the apertures are too small in the material portion, the user’s own hair cannot be easily pulled through the apertures and/or use of a tool with a hook fine enough to allow pulling through of the user’s hair may cause injury to the user’s head or scalp. If the apertures are too large, the user’s own hair does not provide sufficiently even support for the weight of the hair extensions or hair weft attached to the material portion.

[0033] The hair extension strands and/or hair weft can include natural hair and/or synthetic hair.

[0034] The length of the hair extension strands can be any suitable length or range of lengths as required.

[0035] The material portion can be of any suitable size, shape and/or design. In one example the material portion is substantially square or rectangular in shape. In one example the material portion is preferably of a size between 5 cm (approx. 2 inches)-60 cm (approx. 2 foot). For example, the material portion can be of such a size so as to fit around the circumference of a user’s head.

[0036] In a preferred embodiment the material portion includes 4 rows of apertures but any number or rows or columns of apertures can be provided.

[0037] The material portion can be substantially the same width of the hair extension strip and/or hair weft formed on the same or the material portion can be greater in width than the width of hair extension strip and/or hair weft formed on the same. For example, in one embodiment the material portion protrudes outwardly from either or both sides of the strip of hair extension strands/hair weft.

[0038] In one embodiment one or more sides and/or ends of the material portion can be sewn or provided with a finished edge if required. This increases the aesthetic appearance of the material portion and provides strength to the material portion.

[0039] According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of attaching hair extension means to a user’s natural hair, said hair extension means including a material portion with a plurality of apertures defined therethrough and a plurality of strands of extension hair and/or a hair weft attached to the material portion, said method including the steps of placing the material portion at a suitable position on a user’s head, pulling one or more strands of a user’s natural hair through at least one aperture in the material portion such that the user’s natural hair becomes attached to the material portion.

[0040] The pulling of the user’s natural hair through the apertures in the material portion is sufficient to integrate the user’s natural hair with the material portion, thereby providing a strong bond between the user’s natural hair and the material portion.

[0041] The material portion is typically placed as close as possible to the user’s scalp during the fitting process prior to pulling the user’s natural hair through the apertures in the material.

[0042] The material portion in one embodiment is placed adjacent the scalp such that the hair extension strands and/or hair weft are adjacent a lower edge of the material portion relative to a user’s head. The majority of the material portion extends above the hair extension strands.

[0043] A tool is used to pull the user’s natural hair through one or more of the apertures in the material portion. For example, an instrument with a hook provided at an end thereof, a hair pulling tool, a professional hair tool and/or the like could be used.
In one embodiment, strands of the user’s natural hair are pulled through substantially all or the majority of the apertures defined in the material portion in use in order to securely attach the user’s natural hair to the hair extension means.

The stylist fitting the hair extension means to the user typically starts integrating the user’s hair to the material portion at a first aperture on the material portion. The stylist repeats this process for as many apertures on the material portion as they consider is necessary to fully support the hair extension means in the user’s hair.

Preferably one or more sides of the material portion can be further attached to a user’s natural hair to further secure the material portion to the user’s scalp. For example, one or more strands of a user’s natural hair that have not been pulled through the apertures of the material and which are adjacent the material portion could be used to further attach the material portion to the user’s natural hair. This could include plaiting the un-pulled through hair with some of the pulled through hair. Any or any combination of one or more synthetic fibres, heating tools, micro-rings, micro-links could also be used to help this process.

In one embodiment the material portion is of substantially equal or greater width than the strip of hair extension strands. As such, the material portion typically protrudes either side or the hair extension strands. These protruding portions of the material portion or any part of the material portion can be attached to a user’s natural hair using connection means, such as a micro-ring or micro-link or via plaiting with artificial hair, fibre and/or the like.

The hair extension means of the present invention does not require removal in order to accommodate the user’s natural hair growth. Following a pre-determined time period of natural hair growth, the natural hair strands of the user can be re-pulled or further pulled through the apertures of the material portion to re-integrate the user’s natural hair to the material portion.

The present invention has a number of advantages over conventional hair extensions in that it is not essential to use glue and/or heat to bond the hair extensions to the user’s natural hair as it is with other conventional methods. As such, damage to the user’s natural hair is limited or substantially prevented. The material portion is formed of such material that it allows air to circulate around the user’s scalp when fitted to a user so as to prevent excessive user perspiration and/or irritation to the user. The present invention is a more cost effective solution. Since the hair extensions of the present invention can be provided in a strip rather than a clamp, the hair extensions can sit substantially flat to a user’s scalp, thereby making the hair extension look less stringy and more like natural hair compared to conventional hair extensions. In addition, since few connections are required to attach the user’s natural hair to the hair extension means, the hair extension means can simply be re-adjusted to accommodate for the user’s natural hair growth and the hair extension means do not have to be completely removed.

The present invention allows the weight of the hair extension strands to be more evenly distributed over the user’s natural hair and scalp. This provides a more balanced and natural look of the hair extensions when fitted to a user and is less damaging to a user’s hair follicles.

The present invention provides a single system that simply requires fitting to the user’s natural hair without the requirement for any additional hair pieces and/or significant amounts of bonding products.

According to a further aspect of the present invention there is provided hair extension means, said hair extension means including a material portion with a plurality of apertures defined therethrough and a plurality of strands of extension hair in the form of a hair weft, said hair weft attached to the material portion.

Embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying figures, wherein:

FIG. 1 is an example of a hair extension according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 shows the hair extension being fitted to a user’s natural hair;

FIG. 3 shows a further example of a hair extension according to the present invention;

FIG. 4 shows an example of how the hair extension in figure could be formed; and

FIG. 5 shows a yet further example of a hair extension.

Referring to FIG. 1, there is illustrated a hair extension 2 including a material portion 4 and a strip or weft of hair extension strands 6.

The material portion has an upper edge 8, a lower edge 10 adjacent which the hair extension strands 6 are attached, to a first side 12 and a second side 14. The hair extension strands or weft are typically strands of natural hair or a weft of natural hair that has been machine sown using thread 16 to the material portion.

The material portion in this example is in the form of lace including 4 rows of apertures 18 extending between the upper edge 8 and lower edge 10. The width of the edges 8, 10 is such that the material portion protrudes either side of the hair extension strip 6. As such, at least one column of apertures 18 are provided either side and above the hair extension strip 6.

In fitting the hair extension 2 to a user’s scalp 20, a stylist places the material portion as close to the user’s scalp as possible and substantially flat thereon. A hooked tool is used to pull strands of the user’s natural hair 22 through the apertures 18. In particular, the stylist starts at a corner of the material portion adjacent top edge 8 and works along each row of apertures (such as for example from side 12 to side 14) until all the apertures have the user’s natural hair pulled therethrough.

The user’s natural hair adjacent protruding sides 12, 14 of the material portion that are not pulled through apertures 18 are then plaited to the user’s natural hair that has been pulled through the material portion adjacent the protruding sides 12, 14. This can also involve the use of any or any combination of synthetic hair, fibre, a heating tool, small drop of bonding, a micro-ring or micro-link and/or the like if required.

Optionally, to further engage the pulled through user’s natural hair to the material portion, the user’s pulled through hair can be gathered together to form a connection, such as for example three separate connections. Synthetic hair and/or fibre can be used to plait these hair connections together and a heat tool can be optionally used to melt the fibre or hair together. The user’s hair and fitted hair extensions can then be styled in the normal manner.
In the event the user wishes to remove the hair extension, the stylist can simply remove the hair, fibre, connection and/or un-plan the hair without causing damage to the material portion, hair extension or the user’s natural hair. The hair extension can therefore be reused at a later date and there is no or little wastage.

Referring to FIG. 3, there is illustrated a further embodiment of hair extension means 100 in which the hair extension includes two layers of material portion 4, 4'. The layers can be formed from two separate pieces of material portion joined together along join/fold line 102 or the material portion can be formed from the hair extension means shown in FIG. 4 that is folded over around line 102.

It can be seen from FIG. 4 that the hair extension means 100 includes a single layer of material portion, such as lace, with hair wefts or strands attached adjacent a first peripheral edge 104 and a second peripheral edge 106. The material portion is folded over along line 102 to create a first material portion layer 4 and a second material portion layer 4'.

In the embodiment shown in FIG. 3, the hair weft or strands attached on one side of the hair extension 100 can be a spaced distance apart from peripheral edge 106, such that the joining portions 16 of the hair 6 to the material portion 4' and 4 are offset. However, the joining portions 16 on both sides of the material portion 4, 4' could be substantially parallel and aligned if required.

In the example shown in FIG. 5, two hair wefts or lines of hair 6, 6' are joined to the peripheral portion a spaced distance apart. The hair wefts are spaced apart in a substantially vertical direction with the hair weft in use (i.e. spaced apart along the axis between the top and bottom edges of the hair extension. This typically increases the thickness of the hair extension 200. It is to be noted that only part of the upper hair weft is shown for clarity reasons.

1. Hair extension means, said hair extension means including a material portion with a plurality of apertures defined therethrough, and wherein a plurality of strands of extension hair and/or a hair weft is attached to the material portion.
2. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the hair extension strands and/or hair weft are attached to or adjacent a peripheral edge of the material portion.
3. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the hair extension strands and/or hair weft are attached to the material portion via any or any combination of sewing, adhesive, heating or bonding.
4. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the length of the proportion of the hair extension strands and/or hair weft joined to the material is approximately between 5-6 mm.
5. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the hair extension strands and/or hair weft is provided in a line or in a substantially linear or planar form on the material portion or in a plurality of lines or plurality of substantially linear or planar forms on the material portion.
6. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the material portion is in a sheet like form and can include a single layer or two or more layers provided in a substantially wholly or partially overlapping arrangement.
7. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the material portion is formed from substantially flexible material.
8. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the material portion is in the form of mesh, netting, lace or looped material.
9. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the material portion is formed from or is provided with a substantially waterproof material thereon.
10. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein each aperture of the plurality of apertures are provided a substantially evenly spaced distance apart on the material portion.
11. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the plurality of apertures are provided at irregularly or different spaced distances apart and/or provided out of alignment with each other.
12. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the plurality of apertures are provided in rows and/or columns.
13. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the diameter of each aperture in the material portion is between 1-10 mm, optionally 2-10 mm and further optionally 2 mm.
14. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the hair extension strands and/or hair weft include natural hair and/or synthetic hair.
15. Hair extension means according to claim 1 wherein the material portion is substantially the same width of a hair extension strip and/or hair weft provided on the same, or the material portion is greater in width than the width of the hair extension strip and/or hair weft provided on the same.
16. A method of attaching hair extension means to a user's natural hair, said hair extension means including a material portion with a plurality of apertures defined therethrough and a plurality of strands of extension hair and/or a hair weft attached to the material portion, said method including the steps of placing the material portion at a suitable position on a user’s head and pulling one or more strands of a user’s natural hair through at least one of the apertures in the material portion such that the user’s natural hair becomes attached to the material portion.
17. A method according to claim 16 wherein the material portion is placed adjacent a user's scalp such that the hair extension strands and/or hair weft are adjacent a lower edge of the material portion relative to the user's head.
18. A method according to claim 16 wherein a hooked tool or hair pulling tool is used to pull the user’s natural hair through one or more of the apertures in the material portion.
19. A method according to claim 16 wherein strands of the user’s natural hair is pulled through substantially all or the majority of the apertures defined in the material portion in order to securely attach the user’s natural hair to the hair extension means.
20. A method according to claim 16 wherein the user's natural hair is further attached to the material portion via any or any combination of plaiting, connection means, one or more synthetic fibres, heat, micro-rings or micro-links.