

GOING BALD CAN BE A BLOW TO YOUR SELF ESTEEM BUT A HAIR TRANSPLANT COULD BE THE ANSWER

*Article by: Jonathon Moran
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- ❖ Hair transplants could change your life
- ❖ Baldness is an option, it isn't compulsory
- ❖ The procedure didn't hurt at all
- ❖ Look like a totally different person

I HAVE hair and I love it, particularly the rogue grey sitting at the front of my hairline. Having a hair transplant has been cause for embarrassment for many, but for me it's changed my life.

There have long been two things that bother me about my appearance: my hair and my weight. My weight I can deal with by exercising and eating well, but the lack of hair on my increasingly receding hairline wasn't going to magically reappear.

My biggest nightmare was the thought of going completely bald. Seeing Bert Newton show off his toupee in his clichéd gag makes me cringe. So, too, does seeing old-school hair plugs. But the technology is much better these days and apparently more blokes are having transplant surgery — they just don't talk about it (former soccer champ Mark Bosnich has had it done).

So after much deliberation, and prompting from my now-late mum and a mate who'd undergone surgery, I took action in December 2012.



Jonathon Moran before the procedure.

Source: News Limited

Moran's receding hair bothered him. *Source: News Limited*

My first consultation was at hair surgeon Dr Russell Knudsen's offices in Double Bay, Sydney, and I left feeling pretty good. "Baldness is an option, it isn't compulsory," he said as he inspected my head. "You can't cure baldness but you can control it."

A few weeks later I was in the chair at Dr Knudsen's surgery — once I'd made up my mind, it was simply a matter of booking it in and hoping for a good result. The procedure was scheduled for a Friday morning to give me the weekend to recover.

THE SURGERY

The procedure itself took about nine hours. I arrived just after 8am and was seated on what looked like a dentist chair, with a rug over my legs. The full day surgery started with a local anaesthetic in the back of my head, and at the front. The back is where Dr Knudsen took a large graft of skin, basically cutting from behind my left ear to behind my right ear.

It sounds gruesome but it didn't hurt at all. It just means I'll have a scar if I ever choose to shave my hair off. In fact, I'm proud of it — it's like a badge of honour.

As rock music played from speakers overhead, I relaxed and slowly fell asleep as Dr Knudsen worked on my locks.



Moran undergoes the hair transplant procedure at the Knudsen Clinic in Double Bay. *Source:* News Limited



Moran post hair transplant procedure at the Knudsen Clinic.

Source: News Limited



Jonathon Moran is pictured having a hair transplant procedure at the Knudsen Clinic. *Source:* News Limited

Once the graft was cut, a number of nurses sat and worked with pieces of my scalp under a microscope, separating the follicles into clusters of one, two and three hairs. That's the natural way your hair grows, I was told. To get the most natural look, the hairs have to be transplanted in these compositions. Every now and then Dr Knudsen topped up the local anaesthetic.

By about 5pm I was tired and restless but the whole day had gone well. In total, Dr Knudsen had transplanted some 2700 individual grafts, which translates to more than 5200 individual hairs. I was told that a percentage of the hairs would grow, while a large proportion would likely fall out and start growing a few months later. The whole process would take a year.

My case was severe and would cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000. That's a lot of money but it was well-spent considering how I feel now.

As I walked out of the surgery with a paper bag of painkillers, I bumped into another journalist who told me that her mum had recently had the operation.

EARLY DAYS

I was nervous about the recovery, mostly because I didn't want to look silly.

I was due to be MC at a lunch two days later with a bunch of well-known faces and was a little anxious about wearing a baseball cap in the heat. I wasn't embarrassed, it was just uncomfortable and I looked a little icky without the cap, especially because I sweat heaps.

For the first week I wore a tennis sweatband around my head at night, which held everything together when I walked around the house. A week later I was on national TV doing my regular gossip segment on the Seven Network's The Morning Show and I wore a Christmas hat — thank goodness for Santa.



Moran 6 months after the procedure. *Source:* News Limited

A lot of the hairs fell out and I felt nervous and worried that I'd done something wrong and they wouldn't grow as hoped; it was a strange feeling. Eventually pretty much all of them fell out. I freaked out, thinking that I'd endured the whole process for nothing, but my hair slowly began to grow back. There was an awkward phase of a few months when the front of my head looked like a baby chicken's fluff.

Having my first haircut a few months in was liberating. I felt like a new person and could only imagine how it would look when the stubble grew into full hair.

That's when my little grey hair came through. Someone suggested I pull it out. No way — I earned every hair on my head.

THE FINAL RESULT



Last September, I went for a check-up with Dr Knudsen, who said my hair was about 80 per cent grown. "I can barely recognise you," he told me. "I'm very happy with that."

Inside, I was high-fiving myself because I couldn't imagine it being better than it was. I love going to the hairdresser now. I even like going out of the house with my hair messy and no product. It feels good. Seeing photos of myself then and now makes me laugh. I look like a totally different person.

Even though I'm a journalist, it's hard to explain in words what the surgery has done for my confidence and how happy it's made me feel.

More than a year on from the procedure and Jonathon Moran is more than happy with the result.

Picture: Nigel Lough

Source: Supplied

HAIR LOSS 101

Male pattern baldness is the most common type of baldness in men, but other causes include:

- * Autoimmune disorders
- * Obsessive plucking of hairs
- * Hormonal irregularities
- * Scalp fungal infections
- * Medication-induced hair loss
- * Vitamin or mineral deficiency
- * Stress hormones

Outside of hair transplants, there are several treatment options: prescription oral medications; shampoos (from \$12.99); vitamin supplements (about \$22); lotions to support hair growth (about \$29); lasers that promote circulation (about \$580); plus laser combs, powders and hairpieces.

WHAT ABOUT HAIR LOSS IN WOMEN?

Minor pattern hair loss occurs in more than half of women at some stage, particularly as they age. It can be moderate or severe in about 20 per cent of cases.

Trichologist David Salinger says he's seen a 20-fold jump in younger women experiencing hair loss compared to 30 years ago.

“One reason [for this] is the oral contraceptive,” he says.

“The progestogens in some of these pills have a male hormonal (androgenic) effect on the hair, which can aggravate or trigger genetic thinning in women with the genetic disposition.”

A number of treatments are available for female pattern hair loss, including the over-the-counter and topically-applied minoxidil lotion (not recommended for pregnant or breastfeeding women) and doctor-prescribed medications that lower the levels of the male hormones implicated in female hair loss.