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## LET'S BE COMPLEMENTARY

Looking good – feeling great!

### Hair & Beauty Workshops

If you're feeling wiped out, after a gruelling course of cancer treatment, and are having a bad hair year, putting on the glitz for the party season is probably the last thing on your mind. But it could actually help your recovery.

In this image-conscious 21<sup>st</sup> century we all like to look as good as we can, and if a quick glance in the mirror shows a happy, healthy face looking back at us, we immediately feel a bit better. Research has shown that harnessing the power of the mind and thinking positively can help people recover quicker than those who have a negative take on life.

"A healthy body starts with a happy attitude, a sense of purpose and a total feeling of self worth and value," says Chris Woollams in his best-seller *Everything You Need to Know To Help You Beat Cancer*. "This feeling directly stimulates the nervous and endocrine systems, making your immune system and cellular biochemistry stronger...this is the way to beat cancer – and indeed all illness."

Patrick Swan has spent nearly 30 years in the looks industry and gives invaluable tips and advice, on looking healthier than you feel, at his free monthly hair and beauty workshops at breast cancer charity the London Haven Trust. In his informal, two-hour sessions Patrick deals with everything from how to deal with hair loss to the effects of chemotherapy on the skin. "There isn't a woman out there who doesn't enjoy a little bit of pampering. It's a boost – a feel-good factor," says the hair and make-up expert who has enhanced both Madonna's and Julia Roberts' good looks. "When you are feeling really down and unfeminine, it's nice to have the environment where you can indulge yourself."

There's a lot of laughter and fun as Patrick moves from woman to woman, at the Haven, answering questions and demonstrating quick tips with blusher and concealer. "I'm a one-off experience," he jokes. "I give people advice and try to cover everything they might need to know, and then send them off to get on with it. I show the women simple techniques that put smiles on their faces. In fact I always ask everyone to give me a big smile and then put a little blusher on the apple of the cheek," he explains. "The paler they look, I'll put a little on their nose, chin, and above their brow. I apply blush as you would get the first rays of the sun on your face – to give everyone a healthy glow."

### Hair loss

As up to 12 women a month go along to Patrick's workshops, he sees people with varying degrees of hair loss or re-growth, and helps them deal with whatever stage they're at. "It will come back," he assures. "In the meantime I give advice on what women can use as head wraps, and on where to get more fashionable wigs than those supplied by the NHS. There are easy ways to make a wig not look like a wig, by cutting a fringe on it so that it looks like it belongs to you. I also show how to deal with it day in day out, because most people won't have the luxury of having someone come in to fluff their wig."

Patrick is well aware that not everyone likes to wear a wig, so he also gives tips on how to make short hair look good. "I had a lady at my last seminar whose hair had just grown back and looked fantastic. She was about to have chemo again and we talked about her trying cold caps this time (apparently, they cool the scalp and you wear them while having chemotherapy). There has been a lot of success with people not losing as much hair.

"If people are losing lots, I tell them to cut it off. I try to be as reassuring as possible that this is a time to reinvent yourself." Patrick makes minor adjustments to people's hair at the sessions, and suggests ways of helping it grow back without going to the hairdresser. "I think that's a

trap a lot of women find themselves in because they don't really know how to grow their hair back," he says.

"Primarily they should leave it alone. I show them how to tuck it behind their ears, creating a style, and also how to give it direction. It's a fact that everyone's hair grows between ¼ to ½ an inch a month. It takes a year for hair to grow from a free scalp to the chin, if you want a bob. I suggest going to have a shaping every three or four months, to keep a line in it. I can see someone who has taken a year to grow their hair, and someone still struggling after two years because they have gone to the hairdresser too much. If you're trying to maintain a style you should go every six to eight weeks, but otherwise every three or four months is fine. Look at the top models. You see them going from having very short hair to very long in a year. The idea is to change the style, not try to put back one you had. You evolve. I stress and encourage that. It is not a scary option. It's a fallacy that cutting the hair strengthens it. What helps hair is by taking care of your body. If you eat well, your stress levels are down and you're not on any heavy medication, your hair will grow and look healthy. The ramifications of drugs, stress, poor diet and lack of water all come out in the hair."

Patrick advises having a balanced - not a vegetarian diet - including oily fish and lean meat, and drinking two and a half litres of fluids, including water, a day. Also the occasional glass of red wine "if it helps keep your stress down".

How cancer treatments affect the skin

Chemotherapy poisons cancer cells with chemicals, while radiotherapy targets them with ionising radiation. Either way it's a huge onslaught and the side effects take time to recover from. "I see women with tremendous dryness of the skin," says Patrick. "If they're a little bit overweight they will tend to flush a lot and can also be prone to oedema. Blotting perspiration with a tissue helps with the flushing, and drinking as much water and fluids as you possibly can will hydrate the skin, as well as using barrier creams or moisturisers. Stretch classes are good, because exercise increases the circulation to the skin and keeps it healthy.

"I try to encourage people not to put too much foundation on, while they're having chemotherapy, because we don't really know the effects of the chemicals in the foundation. I enjoy using water-based tinted products, which don't give blanket coverage so they allow the skin to breathe. I don't really subscribe to the, as I refer to it, 'Estee Lauder/Joan Collins' slap-it-on approach to make-up - unless that's your personality. I don't believe everyone has to have everything on their face, just blusher, lipstick, eye shadow and camouflage cream (concealer). I use that to cover blemishes, and around the eyes to avoid that sunken, inset look during illness."

Party Party

When it comes to the over-the-top Christmas party look, Patrick believes less is more. "The catwalk is all theatre, but you don't have to look like a freak to get dressed up. A classic beauty look never changes. Put somebody in a beautiful gown and add a little eye shadow, to make the eyes look open, mascara and beautifully done eyebrows (I brush them in with powder rather than a pencil, if someone's lost them during chemo, as it's more effective and longer lasting). Then add blush, where it makes you look healthy, and a lipstick colour that's complementary to the shape of your mouth, how you've done your eyes and your dress. If you do that and your hair is groomed, you can look fabulous in anything."

Right, no wonder women around the world love Patrick's no-nonsense "I cut through a lot of the bullxxx and marketing" approach to make-up. He doesn't charge the Haven for his work because "I see it as my way of putting something back. I love what I do there," he explains. "I feel as if I am giving people really sound advice that they can take away with them and know that they have not just been talked down to by a sales person behind a cosmetics counter. I'm not there to sell products, just to advise."

To find out more about Patrick's monthly workshops contact The London Haven Trust on 020 7384 0099. For non-breast cancer related queries, or to book him for a seminar please go to the contact page on this site.

Anyone wanting information about toxin and carcinogen-free make-up and beauty products contact the icon office - [www.iconmag.co.uk](http://www.iconmag.co.uk).