





Restyle

Is your style suffering from fatigue since a new baby arrived on the scene? *Kate Farr* speaks to some fashion and beauty gurus who will help you feel like you again.

Motherhood is a time of many changes, not least to your personal style! With the arrival of a baby comes significant shifts in your priorities and, as time goes on (and you finally emerge blinking from the fog of newborn sleep deprivation), it is often normal to feel that your own wellbeing has taken a back seat to your growing family's needs.

A lack of time to exercise, apply makeup, make hair or nail appointments, or deal with post-baby weight that just won't shift... feeling like you'll never be quite back to normal IS now the new normal, which can cause a real knock to your confidence. We chatted to some of Hong Kong's expert hair, makeup and wardrobe stylists to get their perspective on re-learning to face the mirror with a smile... even with baby drool on your shoulder!

Hair

Let's take it from the top. Rennie Fensham, mother of two – now-adult – children and owner of Hollywood Hair, explains that new motherhood can be a testing time for your tresses. “During pregnancy, hormonal changes prevent normal daily hair loss, so your hair may appear fuller during this time... which is a nice bonus!” She continues, “Sometime after delivery, it's perfectly normal for hair loss to start up again; this is usually just shedding the previous nine months' build-up, but if my clients are concerned about excessive hair loss, then I always recommend that they rule out any underlying health issues with hormone balance, zinc and iron level checks. Major shedding can also be a sign of low thyroid function, so trust your instincts and if something doesn't feel right, then always get it checked by your doctor.”

Assuming your hair has the full bill of health, then it's on to the next hurdle – how to style it? Where you may previously have spent half an hour each morning straightening and spraying before work, you may now find that a hastily scraped-back pony is quite literally the high point of your day. Finding the time to book a six-weekly appointment for a cut and colour may well feel about as likely as finding a unicorn in your bathroom.

Before despairing, Rennie suggests a heart-to-heart with your hairdresser. “New mums often sit in my chair and ask me to just chop everything off, but I wouldn't encourage any really drastic transformations straight after having a baby. Work with your stylist to make gradual tweaks over time, rather than a radical change that you might regret later. This could be something as simple as adding subtle highlights or a sweeping fringe to freshen up your look.”

It's also important to be realistic. “When it comes to the

right style, everything starts with time,” says Rennie. “How much time does the mum have each morning? How often can she come to the salon for maintenance? Budget is also important, as is her lifestyle; does she do a lot of sport? Does she regularly attend events that require a glamorous look? We need to know all of this to accurately advise what will – and won't – work.”

And Rennie's final words: “There is no point in us creating a gorgeous hairstyle in the salon that requires a full team of professionals to maintain once you get home! A great stylist will always send their client home with the knowledge,



aftercare and product tips they need to recreate their look themselves.”

Makeup

What was once a fun way to express yourself through colour can feel like essential battle camouflage once a baby comes along, delivering not just cuddles and joy, but eye bags and wrinkles!

Jaime Smith of Smudge Makeup Artistry is a freelance makeup artist, who often works with new mums. They offer one-on-one lessons aimed at getting the best out of clients’ existing cosmetics and skincare routines, or establishing a whole new one better suited to their changed lifestyle. As a mum to two young kids herself, Jaime relates to the challenges that parenthood brings. She says, “I know the constraints that new mums face; between hormonal skin changes and simply not having enough time to apply elaborate makeup between feeding, changing and naps, new mums need a straightforward routine with as few products as possible to get their best look quickly.”

Jaime suggests that before splurging on new makeup miracles, it is best to start with the skin. “Skincare is so important! You cannot plaster over fine lines and large pores with tons of makeup, as this will often just accentuate the very things we’re trying to hide – especially as we age. Focus on treating skin on a dermatological level first to create the best possible base for your makeup.”

For busy mums short on time – and what mum isn’t? – she suggests products that work a double shift. “Choose multi-tasking products like primer containing anti-ageing or colour-correcting properties, or foundation with SPF for additional sun protection.” Jaime also believes in keeping it simple on a day-to-day basis, with makeup that conceals flaws while enhancing your natural beauty. “An easy look should take

you no more than about 10 minutes... although with practice, and a crying baby to motivate you, you can do it in five!”

A spring clean can help with motivation. “Not only is old makeup a breeding ground for germs, but SPF goes bad, products dry up and consistency changes, so if it smells off, is visibly separated or just has been with you since university, chuck it out!” says Jaime. “Once you give your kit a good clean out, you have room to buy new products and kick-starting a new routine with brand new stuff to play with is way more



fun! Use fingers for foundation and concealers as the warmth will really help to melt the product into the skin. Good brushes are a must-have for applying shadows and powder makeup like bronzer or blush quickly and precisely (MAC have some great ones). Carry a small ‘repair kit’ in your baby changing bag with a few essentials for humid Hong Kong days... and remember that primer will deliver a longer-lasting finish.”

Clothes

Sheryl Bolden and Catherine Martsch share a passion for helping mums to feel comfortable in their own skin through careful curation of their clothes. As founder of personal styling company Make My Wardrobe Work, Sheryl found an ideal collaborator in Catherine, whose boutique LoveIt is a long-standing Soho go-to for women of all shapes, sizes and stages of life.

Sheryl explains the concept. “I passionately believe that every woman can look fabulous regardless of size, shape and budget. We bring the latest looks and styles from LoveIt direct to your door, which is invaluable for busy mums who simply don’t have time to shop. They can try clothes on at home and we’ll ensure that everything not only looks amazing on them, but also works with what they have already.”

So when it comes to identifying what will and won’t fit with your new role as mum, Sheryl offers the following tips. “Comfort and practicality are normally top of the list. Mums often need to re-establish a style identity; I work with them to understand their personality and everyday life so that their new look reflects both them and their lifestyle.”

Catherine elaborates, “We understand the difference in needs of brand new mums versus mums who have young children... Our design team works to address some of the body sensitivities that many mums

face post-baby. For example, we have a range of pencil skirts in fabrics that have a tummy control aspect, and tops that make it easy to breastfeed without getting undressed.”

As for the benefits that shaking yourself out of a style rut can bring, Sheryl says, “Firstly, you have to want to make a change. Taking ownership of your look can help you to regain a sense of self – your baby may still wake at night, but you can control how you look at playgroup. Believing that you look beautiful is the first step to feeling great about yourself.”

Catherine agrees, saying, “Even wearing jeans and a casual t-shirt in the right cut and colour will create positive energy for the day ahead, and those who have confidence in their appearance glow from the inside out. Women who come for styling sessions quickly realise that it takes no more than five minutes to look superstar fabulous, rather than plain and frumpy.”

Catherine suggests starting with a minimalist approach. “It’s better to have five things in your closet that are made for your shape, fit you perfectly and are in colours that make your eyes shine and your skin and hair glow, than 50 average ones!” Sheryl suggests achieving this with some judicious pruning. “Mark every item in your wardrobe out of ten, and get rid of anything that doesn’t score a seven or above!” she says. “Know the outfits that look amazing on you, take photos and stick them on the side of your wardrobe door. When you only have three minutes to get dressed, you’ll know exactly what to wear.”

So, the message from all of our experts is clear. New motherhood doesn’t have to signal the end of your individual style. And although new parenthood isn’t always an easy ride, Hong Kong’s expert stylists are there to help you tackle any bumps in the road... in style. 🍷

