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Styling Your Scarf, Handkerchief, or Bandana

If you're coping with hair loss, scarves are another alternative to wigs and hats. There

Undercaps and headbands: An undercap or headband made with fabric like velvet can help keep scarves from slipping.

Scarf volumizers: If you want to create the illusion of having hair volume under your scarf, a scarf volumizer is an option. It also gives you more surface area to help you tie your scarf in different styles.

How to tie a scarf

Tying a scarf isn't as hard as it looks, but you can wear a turban under your scarf until you feel entirely confident about your tying skills. When you're more confident, a headband alone can be used to make tying easier. A padded scarf or hat liner can also hold your scarf securely, as well as adding fullness.

Square scarves

Square scarves can be tied in several styles. All the styles listed below start with these four steps:

1. Fold the scarf in half into a triangle.
2. Put the scarf on your head with the point of the triangle in the back.
3. Adjust the scarf so the front edge falls just below your natural hairline and the sides lay flat over your ears (covering half or all of your ears).
4. With the 2 ends of the scarf, make a single knot at the back of your head, over top of the pointed end of the triangle.

*Any of the styles listed below work well when placed at the back of your head or turned slightly to the side (like a side bow or a side rosette).

If you want your final style to fall to the side of your head, you can gently turn the scarf at this point, moving the knot from the back to the side of your head. You can also start out by tying the scarf on the side, rather than in back, if this is easier for you.

Square knot with ends loose

Follow steps 1-4 above, then:

- Tie the ends of the scarf a second time, into a square knot or a double knot.
- Leave the ends loose.

Bow style

Follow steps 1-4 above, then:

- Tie the ends a second time, into a bow (the same way you would tie your shoelaces).
- (Optional) Fluff the sides of the bow for more volume.

“Ponytail” with scrunchie or hairband

Follow steps 1-4 above, then:

- Wrap a scrunchie or hairband around the base of the scarf (near the nape of your neck) like you would with a ponytail.
- Wrap the scrunchie around the “ponytail” a second time.
- OR: Wrap the scrunchie around the ponytail a second time but stop halfway instead of pulling it all the way through. This creates a loose loop or a “messy bun” with the scarf.

*For this look, you can match the scrunchie to your scarf to help it blend in or play around with contrasting colors and fabrics.

Small rosette (bun)

Follow steps 1-4 above, then:

Like square scarves, oblong scarves can also be tied in several styles.

Basic wrap style

1. Start by folding the width of the scarf in half.
2. Place the scarf on your head in the middle of your forehead, just below your natural hairline. Center it so both sides of the scarf hang at equal length. *
3. Bring both sides of the scarf to the back of your neck. Cross the left side over the right so they overlap. Then bring both sides to the front of your head and cross the right over the left.
4. Bring both sides to the back of your head again. Make a small knot and tuck the ends into the wrap.

***All of the styles listed below start with steps 1 and 2 of the basic wrap.**

Large rosette (bun or top knot)

- Follow Steps 1 and 2 from the “basic wrap” style.
- Bring both sides of scarf to the back of your neck.
- Cross the left side over the right so they overlap.
- Make a knot, then twist both sides together so you have one long twisted strand.
- To create the rosette, take the twisted strand and wrap it around itself, pulling the end through the knot.
- For added security, use safety pins to hold the rosette in place.
- You can wear the rosette to the back of your head (like a bun) or at the top of your head (like a top knot).

For a top knot: Follow the steps above but flip the scarf (place the length of the scarf at the nape of your neck and gather the ends at the top of your head, just below your natural hairline).

Double twist wrap style

- Follow Steps 1 and 2 from the “basic wrap” style.
- Bring both sides of the scarf to the back of your neck.
- Cross the left side over the right so they overlap.
- Take one side at a time and twist the fabric from the top all the way down to the bottom.
- Grab one of the twisted sides. Wrap it around the front of your head and all the way

to the back. Tuck the scarf end into the wrap, near the base of your neck.

- Do the same thing to the other side of the scarf, wrapping it around your head in the opposite direction.

Wrap with twisted front and rosette back

- Follow Steps 1 and 2 from the “basic wrap” style.
- Bring both sides of the scarf to the back of your neck. Cross the left side over the right so they overlap.
- Make a knot.
- Take one side at a time and twist the fabric from the top all the way down to the bottom.
- Grab both twisted sides and wrap them around so they meet at the front of your head, just below your natural hairline.
- Take one side of the scarf and overlap it with the other side. Then with both sides in your hand, twist them once (one side over the other).
- Bring both sides of the scarf around to the back of your head. Tie a small knot at the nape of your neck.
- To create the rosette, follow the directions above for “large rosette” or “small rosette” (depending on how much fabric you have left to work with).

More resources

[Flyer: What to Do for Hair Loss](#)

Learn more about how to manage hair loss during and after cancer treatment.

[Where to Find Wigs, Scarves, and Hats](#)

The American Cancer Society EverYou™ program features a collection of quality wigs, headwear, and scarves.

[Hair Loss \(Alopecia\) ¹](#)

Certain cancer treatments, like chemo, make people lose some or all of their hair. Learn what to expect and how to cope with treatment-related hair loss.

[Choosing a Wig During Cancer Treatment ²](#)

Get tips on choosing and wearing a wig. Learn about different types of wigs, and how to

style and care for yours.

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/hair-skin-nails/hair-loss/coping-with-hair-loss.html
2. www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/hair-skin-nails/hair-loss/choosing-and-wearing-wig.html

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