

# Hair Restoration Techniques: A Comparative Study of FUE, FUT and Non-surgical Methods

Jason Richard\*

Department of Trichology and Cosmetology, Kazan State Medical University, Butlerova Street, 49, Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia

## Introduction

Hair loss is a prevalent issue affecting both men and women worldwide, with various techniques available to address this condition. Among the most popular methods are Follicular Unit Extraction, Follicular Unit Transplantation, and non-surgical treatments such as platelet-rich plasma therapy, hair laser therapy, and topical solutions. This study compares these methods based on their efficacy, cost, recovery time, and side effects. The research highlights the advantages and limitations of each technique, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of their suitability for different patient profiles. Hair restoration techniques have advanced significantly over the years, driven by the need to address the increasing global demand for aesthetic treatments. Hair loss can be caused by a variety of factors, including genetics, age, hormonal changes, and environmental stress. While traditional hair restoration methods like wigs or hairpieces provided temporary solutions, recent developments in surgical and non-surgical techniques offer more permanent and natural-looking results. Follicular Unit Extraction, Follicular Unit Transplantation, and non-surgical treatments, evaluating their effectiveness, cost, recovery time, and risks. This study is a comprehensive review of existing literature on FUE, FUT, and non-surgical methods, including clinical trials, patient testimonials, and expert opinions. The study uses data from research articles published between 2010 and 2023 to provide an up-to-date comparison of the procedures.

## Description

FUE is a minimally invasive hair transplant technique that involves extracting individual hair follicles from a donor site (usually the back or sides of the scalp) and transplanting them into thinning or bald areas. This technique is favored for its ability to create a more natural-looking hairline [1-3]. FUE is known for its high success rate, with studies showing that between 85-95% of transplanted follicles take root and grow in the new location. The procedure results in minimal scarring, making it ideal for patients seeking discreet treatment. The final appearance often resembles natural hair growth, and the results are typically permanent. FUE is more expensive than FUT due to the labor-intensive nature of follicle extraction. Costs vary widely, with an average price range of \$4,000 to \$15,000, depending on the number of grafts and the clinic's location. The recovery period for FUE is relatively short, with most patients able to resume normal activities within 5-7 days. However, complete healing may take up to 6 months, with full hair growth visible in about 12 months. Common side effects include swelling, redness, and mild discomfort at the donor and recipient sites. There is also a risk of folliculitis (inflammation

of the hair follicles), scarring, and, in rare cases, poor graft survival. These risks can usually be minimized by selecting an experienced surgeon.

FUT, also known as strip harvesting, involves removing a strip of skin from the donor site and dissecting it into individual follicular units before transplanting them to the recipient area. While it is a more invasive technique compared to FUE, it is highly effective for patients with significant hair loss. FUT offers excellent results, particularly for patients requiring a large number of grafts. The survival rate of grafts is also very high, with success rates similar to FUE. However, the linear scar left behind in the donor area may be noticeable, especially with shorter hairstyles. FUT is generally less expensive than FUE, with costs ranging from \$3,000 to \$10,000, depending on the number of grafts and the clinic. The price is lower due to the less labor-intensive nature of follicle extraction. The recovery time for FUT is longer than FUE, with patients typically needing 7-10 days to recover from the procedure. Swelling and discomfort may persist for several days, and patients must avoid strenuous activities for up to 4 weeks.

The main disadvantage of FUT is the linear scar it leaves behind, which may be noticeable if the patient opts for a short haircut. Other risks include infection, graft failure, and the possibility of excessive scarring. However, these risks can be minimized with proper post-operative care. PRP therapy has been shown to improve hair density and thickness in many patients, though the results are often subtle compared to surgical options. LLLT has mixed results, with some studies reporting moderate success, particularly for early stages of hair loss. Topical solutions like Minoxidil are effective for many users, especially for those with mild to moderate hair loss. Finasteride is highly effective for male pattern baldness, but it may have side effects like sexual dysfunction in some patients. Non-surgical treatments are generally less expensive than FUE and FUT. PRP treatments typically cost between \$1,500 and \$3,000 per session, and results may require ongoing maintenance. LLLT devices range from \$200 to \$600, while medications like Minoxidil and Finasteride cost about \$20 to \$100 per month.

The recovery time for non-surgical methods is minimal, with no downtime required. PRP injections may cause temporary scalp tenderness or mild swelling, while LLLT and topical treatments do not have any recovery time. Side effects for non-surgical methods are generally mild and include scalp irritation (Minoxidil), sexual side effects (Finasteride), and temporary discomfort. There is no risk of scarring or infection, making these methods more attractive to patients seeking a less invasive option. Each of the hair restoration methods discussed has its strengths and weaknesses. FUE is ideal for those seeking a minimally invasive procedure with minimal scarring and faster recovery [4,5]. FUT remains a highly effective method for patients requiring large graft numbers, although the linear scar can be a concern for those preferring short hairstyles. Non-surgical methods, such as PRP and topical treatments, offer viable alternatives with fewer risks and lower costs, but they may not provide the dramatic results of surgical options.

## Conclusion

The choice between these methods depends on several factors, including the severity of hair loss, budget, preference for invasiveness, and lifestyle. Patients should consult with a qualified hair restoration specialist to determine the most suitable option based on their individual needs and expectations. Hair restoration techniques have made significant advancements, offering a

\*Address for Correspondence: Jason Richard, Department of Trichology and Cosmetology, Kazan State Medical University, Butlerova Street, 49, Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia; E-mail: richard.jason@gmail.com

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wide range of options for individuals seeking to combat hair loss. FUE and FUT provide permanent solutions with varying degrees of invasiveness, while non-surgical methods offer less invasive alternatives with potentially fewer side effects but may require ongoing treatments. By considering factors like effectiveness, cost, recovery time, and side effects, patients can make informed decisions to restore their hair and regain confidence.

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## Conflict of Interest

None.

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