

Parting with the part

As work and casual styles blend, men are no longer drawing the line in their hair

By Suzanne S. Brown

After generations of coifing to the left or right, guys are giving up on the line that separates one side of their hair from another.

Why the parting of ways?

Hairdressers and salon owners say it's because modern men want hair that multitasks just like their PDAs. No-part styles allow them to wear their hair neat and groomed for work or spiky and sexy on the weekends – without a lot of fuss.

And we're not just talking about younger guys; the style is hot for men 25 or 65. Though those older guys might be favoring it for another, less-discussed reason: the part-free do is today's equivalent to the old comb-over.

"No one is middle-aged anymore," says Bill Chrismer, owner of two Gentleman's Quarters salons in Denver. "They want to look younger and have a hairstyle that is edgier." But they might not have as much to work with as they used to.

"A lot of guys are concerned about thinning hair or hair loss," says Craig Hanson, creative director of Denver-based American Crew men's hair products. "A part is a line of demarcation that shows what you don't have. If you can stir up a bit of that hair on your head, the lack of hair is a little less noticeable and shows you're in control of how you look."

As he points out, parting with the part isn't sweet sorrow, because keeping one can make men look out of fashion.



Hanson and others say the trend to casual attire being accepted everywhere from the workplace to houses or worship also has spurred men to want to relax hairstyles to match their wardrobes.

"Guys have their different personalities from 9 to 5, at night and on the weekends," says Alicia Marantz, West Coast editor for the trade magazine Modern Salon. "On their days off, they want to be able to express themselves and not be so parted and rigid."

Men also have more styling options than they once did, says Jessica Hafetz, vice president of operations for American Male, a salon chain that will open a location in Wheat Ridge Thursday. "They no longer have to get the same haircut."

She hit the magic word: The key to the no-part look is the cut and the products used to style it. Rather than the blunt chops of the past, layered haircuts allow hair to be styled messy and spiky for nights or weekends, or combed and tamed for the office.

