



Balayage is a hair coloring technique which is designed to create very natural-looking highlights which grow out without developing a noticeable and obvious root. Many stars and models use balayage on their hair, and in response to popular demand, many salons offer balayage, especially in urban areas. Some pride themselves on their balayage technique, considering themselves artisans of the craft and offering training to people who are interested in learning balayage.

This coloring technique emerged in Paris in the 1970s; the word “balayage” is French for “to sweep,” a reference to the way in which the color is applied. After crossing the pond to the United States, balayage became extremely popular in the late 1990s. In the United States, you may see balayage spelled “balliage.”

When hair is colored with the balayage process, the highlights are painted on by hand in a sweeping motion which moves from the base to the tip of the hair. At the base, the color is applied very lightly, while at the tip, the color is very heavy. The result is a chunky highlight which looks naturally sunbleached, and as the hair grows out, the root will be concealed for the first few months by the thinner color applied to the base of the hair.

Performing balayage is time consuming, and it requires a good eye and a very steady hand. However, many people feel that the end result is worth it. Unlike foiled highlights, which look very uniform and a bit unnatural, hair which has been subjected to balayage simply looks like it has been out in the sun. The highlights can be subtle or more intense, depending on the desires of the client, and balayage isn't just for blondes: it can also be applied to brunette and red hair.