

Taming Your Hair Type

by Mia Wadsworth

Understanding Your Hair

On average we each have about 120,000 hairs on our head. The amount of hairs we have can be affected by genetic factors, what we eat, what we put on our heads and how we look after our hair.

The outside of the hair is called the cuticle. In strong, shiny hair lies flat allowing light to reflect from the shaft which creates shine. This also prevents moisture penetrating into the hair (which makes it frizzy) and stops moisture escaping from the hair shaft drying hair out.

There is much that can interfere with the cuticle from chemical processing to harsh brushing. There are many things you can do using the right hair care products and diet that can thicken and smooth the cuticle, giving shine and strengthen the hair shaft depending on what type of hair you have.

Knowing which products and styles to use to enhance your natural hair texture, color and condition is what this e-book is about.

Products For Your Hair Care Kit:

Shampoos: Shampoos are used to clean oils and dirt from your hair. Obviously all shampoos are not created equal and most modern shampoos can contain harsh detergents which strip your hair of natural oils and leave your cuticles wide open to damage and becoming brittle. Look for shampoos that do not contain Sodium Laureth or Sodium Lauryl Sulphates as these are highly aggressive and irritating to skin. They can also damage your hair follicles and retard hair growth. Good shampoos contain natural oils and other moisturizing ingredients that do not strip all of the natural sebum from the scalp and maintain the natural balance of your scalp and hair.

Conditioner: Conditioners are designed to add beneficial nourishing ingredients to your scalp and hair giving shine and protection and sealing your cuticles. Good conditioners will contain ingredients that mimic or compliment the natural oils in your hair and scalp. There are some oils such as macadamia and wheat germ which are close to human sebum. Conditioners that contain such oils are much better than products that contain silicone, an artificial shine enhancer that can build up on the hair shaft eventually making the hair look dull.

Hot Oil and Conditioning Treatments: Hot oils can dramatically increase the moisture content in your hair shaft. Use warmed (hot) oils to give your hair a

boost or mix up a natural treatment from delicious goodies from your kitchen, garden!

Shampoo Lingo and What It All Means

Clarifying: Shampoo specifically designed to clarify and detoxify your hair by removing a build up of hairstyling products.

Color Enhancing: Contain low levels of color enhancing ingredients to boost your color!

Color Protective: More gentle on your hair and does not strip the color like harsher shampoos.

Thickening: Panthenol is commonly used in thickening shampoos or sometimes a chemical that creates an electrical charge within the hair to stop them from sticking together making the hair look fuller.

Volumizing: These use thickening and firming agents to make the hair appear thicker.

Fast Drying: Contain ingredients in them that limit the amount of moisture the hair can absorb making drying and styling time faster.

PH-Balancing: Stops the PH balance becoming too acid or alkaline so that bacteria cannot thrive causing irritations.

Moisturizing: Most “brand” shampoos simply achieve their so called “moisturizing” properties by cheating. They reduce the amount of harsh cleansers which dry and strip your natural moisture from you hair (crazy I know). Others simply use milder cleansers. A good shampoo will not only use non stripping cleansers but also moisture boosting ingredients derived from nature or non toxic chemical sources (often also derived from nature) such as sodium PCA or aloe which are humectants (attract moisture to themselves).

Common Ingredients Used In Shampoos

Beer: Beer adheres to the hair surface creating the illusion of thickness.

Botanicals: Plant based ingredients that have medicinal or other beneficial properties that have various effects on ones hair.

Chamomile: A flower used to condition blond and red hair which also has lightening properties.

Vitamins: Applied topically, not internally, these also coat the hair making it look thicker. Vitamin B5 is one vitamin that actually penetrates the hair shaft and nourishes it.

Fruit Acids: These boost shine and condition hair by altering (or restoring) the hairs natural PH balance.

Protein: Hair itself is made of a protein called keratin. Most external proteins applied to the hair reinforce and strengthen it making it thicker.

Zinc Pyrithone: Zinc has the effect of slowing cell regeneration and so slows the flaking associated with dandruff. This is why it is commonly used in dandruff shampoos.

Panthenol: Panthenol is actually vitamin B5 which penetrates the hair shaft making it swell and thicken.

Fruit Sugars: These are also humectants which draw moisture to the hair out of the air.

Clay: Clay is sometimes used as a cleanser to lift impurities in hair instead of harsh detergents.

TYPES OF HAIR

Over Processed Hair: Over processed hair is Bleached, Permed, Relaxed, Colored or over dried through the use of straighteners, dryers etc. This type of hair is often very porous and dry and brittle.

Chemicals in perming, relaxing or coloring/bleaching products weaken the hair making it prone to break, frizz and split. Because they also open up the cuticles so they do not sit flat but are instead rough. This diminishes the amount of light reflecting off the shaft and makes it appear dull instead of shiny.

When it comes to treating over processed hair it is essential to add moisture back into the hair. This can be a little tricky getting the moisture into the ends which are usually the most dry, brittle parts of the strands without making the roots greasy.

- ❖ First choose a color protecting shampoo. It is best to avoid using too much shampoo at the ends of the hair. Instead apply the shampoo at the roots and lather there, then dilute the foam with water and massage the shampoo throughout the rest of the hair down to the roots. Then rinse out.
- ❖ Use a rich conditioner after towel drying the hair. Apply the majority of a rich conditioner to the ends of the hair and then massage towards the scalp. The porous nature of the hair will mean it absorbs the conditioner readily.
- ❖ Really damaged hair will need trimming as you cannot revive very brittle hair.
- ❖ Applying serum to the ends is also beneficial especially before using hair dryers etc.
- ❖ Using a UV filter spray (sunscreen for hair) will also help to protect your hair.
- ❖ Don't use an anti-dandruff shampoo as this will worsen its condition by drying it out more and irritate an already sensitive scalp from over treatment.
- ❖ Use a conditioning treatment once a week (the best I have found and personally recommend is Ojon's treatment made of pure Ojon nut oil - my miracle moisturizer!!).

Curly Hair: Curly hair is often dry and hard to keep looking shiny....if you have curly hair you know all about dreaded frizz!!! It also tangles easily and so can be damaged easily too.

Here are some tips for curly hair that will help you to tame your curls!

- ❖ Refrain from washing it every day, (shock horror). This will allow the natural oils condition, calm and de-frizz it.
- ❖ Use moisturizing shampoos and rich conditioners taking care to treat the ends well.
- ❖ Don't rub your hair when drying it with a towel, but squeeze the excess moisture into the towel and then add an anti frizz serum or mousse while it's still wet to hold the curls together.
- ❖ Use only a wide tooth comb or a brush made from boar's hair bristles or your fingers!
- ❖ Resist the temptation to dry your hair upside down as this is just the way to create plenty of frizz!
- ❖ Use a diffuser if you are using a hair dryer and do not dry your hair completely leaving a little moisture in the hair.
- ❖ To rejuvenate "bed hair" in the morning and add lift to your locks, just tip your head upside down and massage the roots and then flip your hair back again.

Wavy Hair: Wavy hair is usually coarse and thick so there's plenty to play with. Wavy hair can also be very frizzy because of static and it can be "boofy" because of the thickness or it. It should be dealt with similarly to curly hair as follows:

- ❖ Don't wash it daily as per curly hair.
- ❖ Pat/press dry, don't rub to prevent frizz.
- ❖ Use a light conditioner or a non thickening one.
- ❖ Use anti-frizz serum or styling creams that don't coat your hair with product but give shine and volume to the roots. Mousse is great for wavy hair
- ❖ Allow to dry naturally where possible
- ❖ Don't brush but run your fingers through your hair and "piece" segments of hair to define chunks of wavy locks.

Straight Hair: Normally fine and thin and tends towards greasiness rather than dry. You are lucky because achieving gloss and shine is easy. However achieving volume can be a little trickier so here's some tips for you:

- ❖ Choose a shampoo that's gentle with gentle cleansers and that you can use often as you need to wash your hair more than other hair types do.
- ❖ Also go for shampoos that contain panthenol (B5) as they de-static your hair so your hair strands don't stick together thus making your hair look thicker!
- ❖ Don't use any products with alcohol in them as they also make your hair strands stick together.
- ❖ Make sure you use a light conditioner so it doesn't weigh your hair down and NEVER use 2 in 1 shampoos or leave in conditioners.
- ❖ When drying your hair DO tip your hair upside down and dry the roots first giving volume.
- ❖ Don't use cream products but instead do use sprays and serums in your hair to keep the glossiness and not weigh it down.

- ❖ Another trick is to rinse your hair with luke warm water to flatten your cuticles.
- ❖ Don't overdo your hair by playing with it too much and use highlights in your hair to add texture and the appearance of body.

HAIR COLORING TIPS

Color can be used to enhance your natural shade or change your look/style completely. It's important to consider your skin tone and natural color so you enhance your glow (unless you are going for a gothic look of course).

Choosing your color: Both hair and skin are colored with melanin, olive and dark skinned people usually have darker hair. Blondes and red heads usually have fairer or paler skins. The best way to choose a color is to stick to a shade that's no more than two shades lighter or darker than your natural color. You can use highlights up to four shades darker or lighter to enhance the base colors in your hair.

Be careful when making a drastic change in hair color because if you choose the wrong shade, you can look washed out "flattening" your features or they can age you. If you have warmer skin tones with a more yellow or olive complexion, then you can go for red or coppery based dyes and brown chocolately blacks rather than blue blacks. If you have cool fairer skin, you can go for ashy or light blondes, brunette shades and bluey blacks.

Temporary Rinses: Wash-in wash out colors are water based and coat the hair shaft lightly with color. They usually wash out within a few washes unless you have bleached or colored hair, which are more porous and so may 'suck up' the color for longer. This combination of pre-colored hair and rinses can produce into some odd colors as well.

Semi-Permanent Colors: These coat your hair also but penetrate deeper into the top layer of the cuticle. Semi-Permanents will wash out after about 6 to 8 washes. Although great if you want a temporary change, they will fade quickly if subjected to strong UV light or chlorine from pools etc. It's best not to wash your hair for a few days after dying to let the color sink in and remember, porous or bleached hair will absorb more color and be more permanent.

Tone-On-Tone Colors: These are half way between semi-permanent and permanent colors and tend to wash out before they grow out which is the main difference between Tone-On-Tone and Permanent hair dyes. Due to their low levels of peroxide, they are not very good for lightening your hair, but more for adding extra depth, shine and body. Keep in mind that harsh shampoos will strip the color, especially shampoos with SLS in them.

Permanents: The main ingredients in most big brand Permanent hair dyes are ammonia, peroxide, resorcinol and phenylenediamine. Both resorcinol and phenylenediamine can cause mild to severe allergic reactions and sensitivities to these ingredients can build up over years of use resulting in a seemingly "sudden" reaction to them (Some scientists are debating that they are carcinogenic also). If you wish to use products containing these ingredients, it

is critical to patch test a small area behind the ear to ensure you do not react to them. Be warned though, in some cases this will not prevent an irritated scalp because you have not tested the whole scalp.

The color in these dyes holds the best and providing you use the right products (non stripping shampoo and moisturizing conditioners as well as UV sprays), and then the color stay in until it grows out.

Covering hair that is more than 50% gray may need special thought as the colors are a little different for coloring 'white' hair with no pigment. Take care to choose a color that takes this into consideration if you have lots of gray.

Highlights and Lowlights: Highlights are generally bleaching agents applied to strips of hair and low lights are the opposite, adding dark 'highlights' to your hair. Highlights and lowlights are great if you are worried about regrowth because they tend to disguise regrowth better than straight colors.

Henna: Henna is derived from a henna plant. Henna leaves your hair with a thick coating which can prevent conditioning ingredients from penetrating the hair shaft thus making your hair frizzy and dry. So although completely natural and some say safer than normal dyes, you should think carefully about using it, henna cannot be used in conjunction with other dyes, cannot be stripped so if far from your natural color, will need to be touched up and faded out (a little tricky because you are stuck with that color). It builds up over time too so you need to only do your roots. Henna has been known in rare cases to create sensitivity to colorants also.

With all hair colors or bleaches make sure you follow the directions carefully if using a 'packet' off the shelf home colorant.

Hair Styling Equipment: The best hair dryers will be between 1400 to 1600 watts and the ionic ones are even better because the negative ions help with hair conditioning to reduce static and non dry out the hair. Same goes for Straighteners, ceramic are better than stainless steel and the hotter the better also. Tourmaline is a precious stone that when added to ceramic plates on straighteners produces lots of ions to keep your hair in good condition and not frizzy.

Hair Styling Products

Mousse: Great for adding body, style and for defining curls without the frizz.

Gel: For sculpting and spiking with more hold than mousse and definition, don't use too much though otherwise you'll have 'crunchy' hair.

Wax: For tousled or messy styles needing control and shine. Once again don't use too much.

Hairspray: The finishing touch after styling to hold everything in place. Just remember not to spray too close to your hair.

Serum: Great to add shine and gloss without any hold, another finishing product!

Hair and Diet

Because hair is made of protein it is wise to eat good sources of protein rich in essential oils for hair growth.

Nuts are also good to increase shine by providing essential fatty acids giving it natural protection against moisture loss.

Green vegetables provide iron which is essential to ensure you are replacing the same amount of hair as is being lost. Hair loss is commonly related to an iron deficiency.

Taking good care of your hair and body will reward you with looking and feeling great! Using gentle and nourishing products is the first step to maintaining moisturized hair and scalp! We all have unique qualities in our hair and you can make the most the gift you were given of your individuality. I wish you all the best!!

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