

*Techniques to Achieve  
Naturally Healthy Hair*



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# Introduction

*“The way we talk, the way we walk, sing, dance, pray, laugh, eat, make love, and finally and most important, the way we look, makes up each of our cultural heritage. There is nothing like it or equal to it, it stands alone in comparison to other cultures. It is uniquely, beautifully and personally ours and no one can emulate it.”*

*Barbara Ann Teer, 1968*

As we have entered the “green movement” era, we are considering ways to green every aspect of our lives including the use of hair care products and processes.

Healthy hair is something that everyone in every culture strives to achieve regardless of length and texture. Hair is as different as the people it belongs to and accepting and knowing how to care for your hair is an important part of the goal to have healthy hair.

No one person has the same hair texture. Textures can range from tightly coiled hair to straight and everything else in between. Determining your hair texture helps you understand which styles work best to help you achieve that healthy head of hair. People may have more than one texture type which makes caring and styling a challenge.

This guide shares information to achieve beautiful-trendsetting styles, techniques for maintaining and caring for your natural tresses, and information on chemical use and the potential effects on your hair and body. The guide also shares tips on selecting safe, less toxic ingredients.

# Know What's in Your Hair Products

## What's in your products?

Everyday we use multiple personal care products that contain potentially harmful ingredients. Think about how many personal care products you use in a single day, a year and over your lifetime. Small amounts of toxic chemicals add up and can accumulate in our bodies.



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not approve the safety of personal care products before they are sold. Of the 10,500 chemical ingredients used in the personal care products, just 11% have been assessed for health and safety. So what does this mean? Hundreds of chemicals – some safe and some known to be hazardous – are present in our personal care products. Because countless new compounds are developed each year, it's hard for even the most savvy consumers to know about them all. The good news is that there are some easy and affordable alternatives available to every consumer.

Many companies are now making less toxic products and are striving to make non toxic products in the future. Nonprofit organizations such as the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics encourages the cosmetic industry to pay attention to consumer demands for safer products.

This guide aims to give you some general information on natural hair care techniques, to help point you in the right direction when selecting products and to inspire you to make a few small changes in your own routine that will be healthier for your entire body.

## Natural/Organic Products

The word “natural” on a product label doesn't always mean it's safe or natural. Many products are being marketed as natural and/or organic but have ingredients that raise health concerns. Reviewing the ingredients on the label is one way to be sure the product is true to its claims. Be aware that potentially problematic chemical ingredients can hide behind the word “Fragrances.” Before purchasing products you may want to visit the Skin Deep Safety Database [www.safe-cosmetics.org](http://www.safe-cosmetics.org) or [www.goodguide.com](http://www.goodguide.com) to research products to find the safest alternatives.



# Top 10 Ingredients of Concern

Check the list of ingredients in your hair products. Ingredients at the start of the list are in the greatest quantity in that product bottle:

**1. LEAD:** Found in hair dye and red lipsticks. Lead is a carcinogen – check EPA’s lead website. Lead usually isn’t labeled in personal care products. **Therefore, look for products labeled “Lead-free!”**

**2. SODIUM HYDROXIDE:** Is a caustic metallic base. It is used as a strong chemical base in the manufacture of hair relaxers and industrial cleaning products. It drives chemical reactions and the neutralization of acidic materials. Sodium hydroxide will cause chemical burns, permanent injury or scarring, and blindness if it contacts unprotected human or animal tissue. **Looks like this on a label: Lye**

**3. FORMALDEHYDE:** Often referred to as “formalin,” is used as a preservative and has been linked to cancer, developmental and reproductive problems and asthma. It is primarily used in nail polishes, shampoos and bleach. **Looks like this on a label: formaldehyde, formalin, formic aldehyde, oxomethane, oxymethylene.**

**4. PHTHALATES/FRAGRANCE:** Typically not listed on labels because the chemicals are hiding in the “fragrance.” Forms of “fragrance” are in the majority of personal care products such as perfume, moisturizers, soap, shampoos and candles. **Looks like this on the label: DEHP, DBP, BBP, DINP, DIDP, DNOP, BPA.**

**5. HYDANTOIN DMDM:** A preservative/emulsifier derived from formaldehyde, a known carcinogen commonly used in children’s conditioners & detanglers. **Looks like this on the label: 1,3-BIS (HYDROXYMETHYL)-5,5-DIMETHYLIMIDAZOLIDINE-2,4-DIONE (+) ; 1,3-DIMETHYLOL-5,5-DIMETHYL HYDANTOIN; 2,4-**

**6. PROPYLENE GLYCOL (PG):** As a “surfactant” or wetting agent and solvent, this ingredient is actually the active component in antifreeze. **Looks like this on a label: Propylene Glycol, Proptylene Glycol, 1,2-Propanediol. Related synthetics: PEG (polyethylene glycol) and PPG (polypropylene glycol).**

**7. SODIUM LAURYL SUFATE (SLS) & SODIUM LAURETH SULFATE (SLES):** SLS is used in testing labs as the standard ingredient to irritate skin. SLS and SLES are used more widely as one of the major ingredients in hair conditioner and about 90% of all shampoos and products that foam. A small amount generates a large amount of foam, and when salt is added it thickens to give the illusion of being thick and concentrated. **Looks like this on the label: SLS, SLES, DEA, TEA, MEA.**

**8. COLORANTS/SYNTHETIC COLORS:** Colorants are found in makeup and beauty products to create color, and most are derived from coal tar which has been linked to cancer. **Looks like this on a label: D&C, FD&C.**

**9. DEA (diethanolamine) MEA (momoethnanolamine) TEA (triethanolamine):** These are commonly found in most personal care products that foam, including bubble baths, body washes, shampoos, soaps and facial cleansers. May strip away vital amino acids like serine, histamine, glycine, alanine and lysine from hair and skin protein (keratin). **Looks like this on a label: Cocamide DEA or MES, Lauramide DEA, etc.**

**10. HYDROQUINONE:** Used as an active ingredient in over-the-counter products such as skin lighteners, hair bleaches, concealers, facial cleansers and sunscreens with SPF 15 or higher. **Looks like this on a label: 4-Dihydroxybenzene, P-Dioxybenzene, 4-Hydroxyphenol, P-Hydroxyphenol, 1,4Benzenediol.**

For more printable Items of Concern go to [www.efc9.org](http://www.efc9.org).

# What is the Texture of Your Hair?

*Webster's dictionary defines "texture" as: the surface look or feel of something; the basic makeup of a surface; distinctive or identifying characteristics.*

Texture is simply what you see and feel. It's the actual straightness, curliness, softness, roughness and/or coarseness of the hair's surface. There are four basic hair textures, wavy, tightly coiled, straight and very curly. For this guide's purpose grey hair has been included as it's own texture because of its different growth pattern and difficulty to manage. Below are examples and descriptions of the different hair textures. We all have similar hair textures but no one texture is alike. Your hair texture is uniquely yours.

## TIGHTLY COILED



Tightly coiled hair is series of spirals or curls wound tightly together one on top of the other which gathers or retracts.

## VERY CURLY



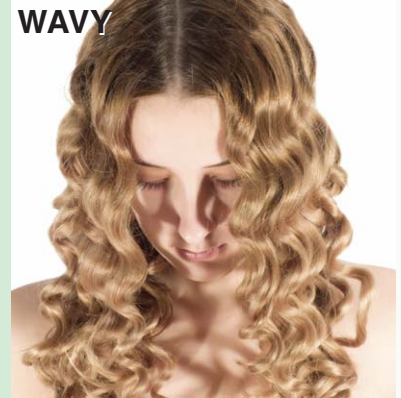
Very curly hair has the same pattern as wavy hair with a shorter distance between the curve like bends which results in a tighter look.

## STRAIGHT



Straight hair is perfectly vertical or horizontal without a curve or a bend.

## WAVY



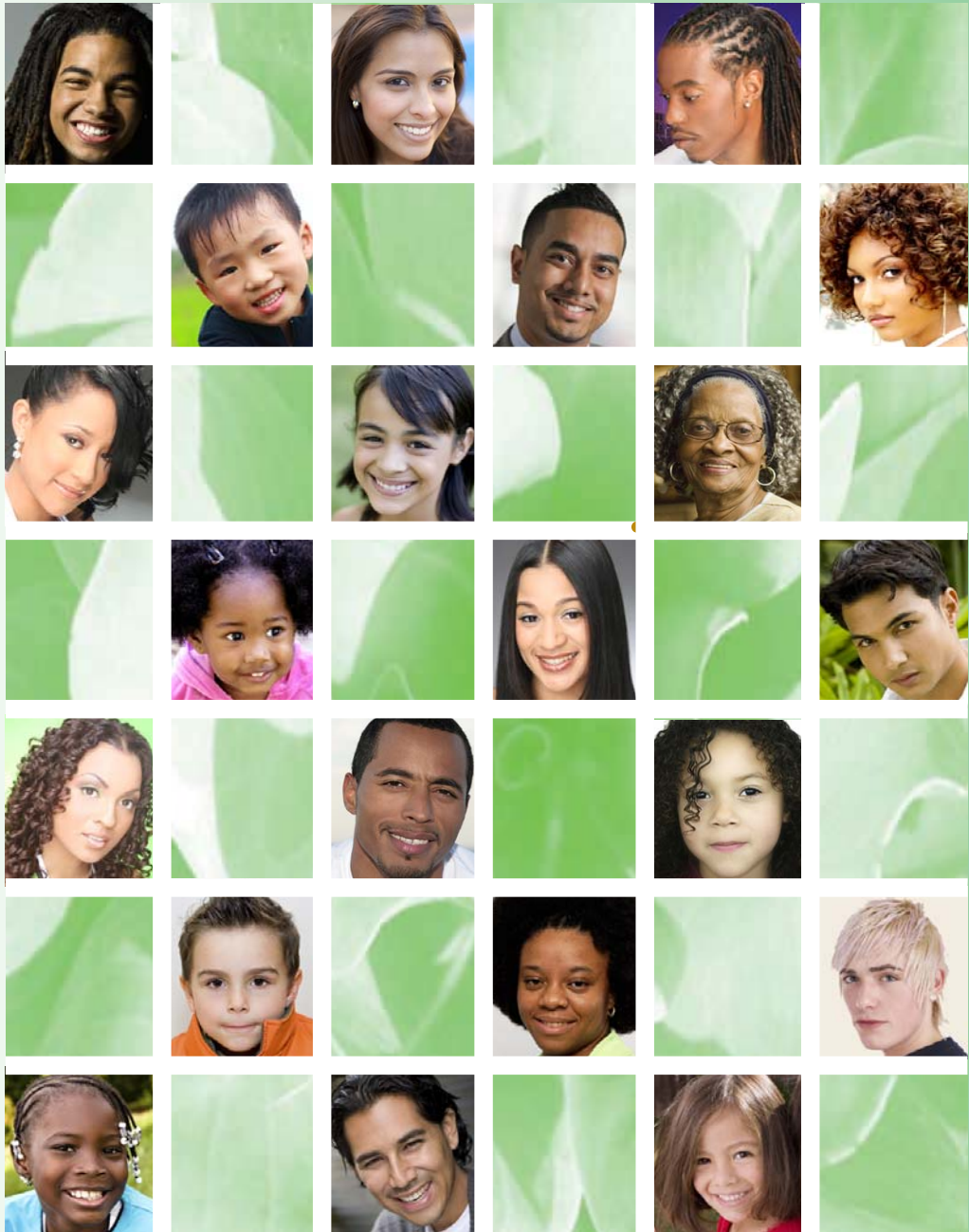
Wavy hair has a wave patterned outline and does not lay straight but rather side to side or up and down curve like bends.

## GREY



Grey hair has a texture all its own: it may be very coarse and/or wiry. Due to possible lack in Vitamin B-12 and declining melanin production it can also be very dry.

# Styles for Everyone



## Braided Pony Tail:

*This is a very easy, yet very fashionable hairstyle.*

Supplies: comb, flexi rod hair rollers, natural pomade/oil

Both curly and tightly coiled hair needs moisture, moisture, and more moisture. Always condition your hair after washing and choose conditioners thick in texture or use a leave in. When convenient let hair air dry. When applying heat to the hair to style use the lowest setting possible to achieve desired result. Remember while selecting your hair products to read the labels and try to avoid products containing certain hormones and multiple ingredients and chemicals.



### **FACT**

*The average person sheds up to 100 hairs a day!!!*

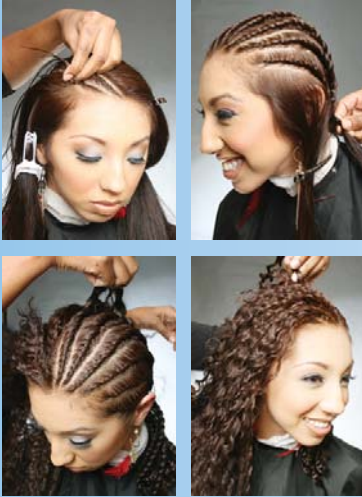
- Simply part the hair into small sections.
- Take each section and divide into three strands.
- Coat the hair with a pomade, and/or oil.
- Coil the strands around each other working from the roots to the nape of the neck.
- Repeat over the entire head.
- Grab sections a few braids at a time and roll from ends up with hair rolling rods.
- Allow to air dry or use a dryer on lowest possible setting.
- Remove rods, finger separate and apply oil.



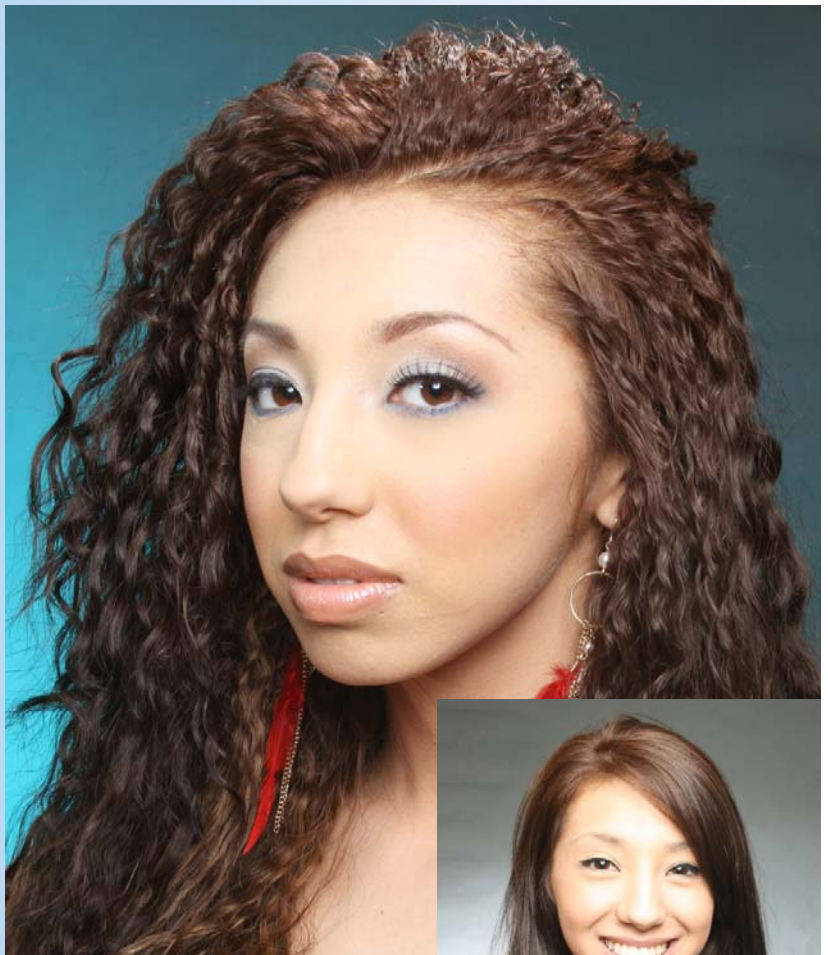
## Crimped/Crinkled:

*This can be easily done without using too much heat or chemicals such as perms or texturizers.*

Supplies: hair clips, comb, setting lotion



- Apply a moisturizer you have carefully selected by reading the ingredients, then part hair into sections beginning at the front of the hair line, ending at the nape of the neck. Each section should be approximately 1 to 2 inches in diameter depending on preference.
- Divide into two's and twist from hairline to the end, picking up pieces of hair as you twist back.
- Once your hair is twisted, you can add rods or use a clip or rubber band to keep from unraveling.
- Dry on the lowest possible setting. When completely dry unravel twists and style as desired.



**FACT**  
*90% of scalp hairs are growing and 10% are resting.*

## Rod Set:

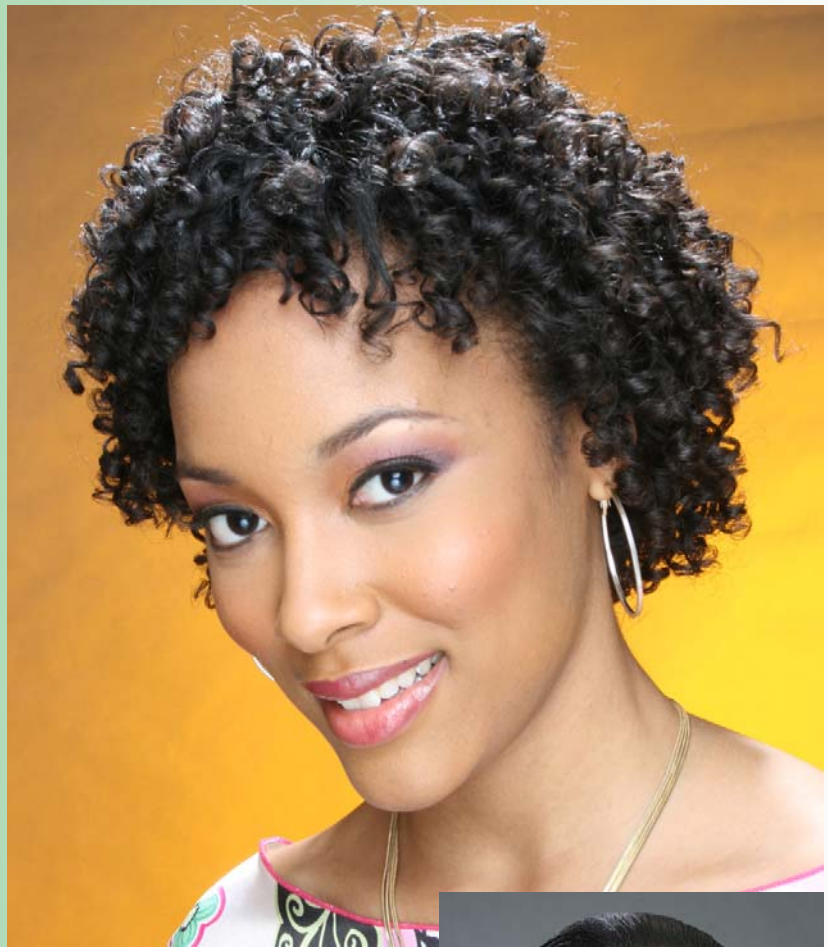
*This style is easily achieved: it is a great look for business or fun.*

Supplies: hair clips, comb, flexi rods, setting lotion, natural oil

The texture of your hair will determine if you should set your hair immediately after shampoo and conditioning. If your hair is more coarse or more fine, it should be set immediately after rinsing the conditioner. If you are using a leave-in it should not be rinsed.



- Start to section your hair and roll from tip to root with rods in the size of your choice. If your hair is thicker and straighter you should allow hair to air dry or use a warm blow dryer until it's just damp to cut down on your dry time once the hair is set.
- Dry with the lowest possible setting; once completely dry unroll the rods and finger separate, adding oil as needed.



### **FACT**

*The number of hairs on the average head is 100,000.*

- Remember to choose the products based on *your* hair texture and style desired.
- The less harmful beauty products you use, the more you control your daily chemical exposure.



## Flat Iron Look:

*This is a classic easily maintained style, great for women on the go.*

Supplies: hair clips, ceramic flat iron, preferably with temperature setting dial, small toothed comb, hard bristled brush for wrapping, satin scarf



- Make sure your hair is washed and completely dry before applying any heat.
- Start at the nape of the neck and part your hair into small to medium sections from ear to ear.
- Grab a small section preferably toward the back of your hair approximately 2 inches in diameter and gently rub iron on the root of your hair.
- If the hair sizzles or smoke appears remove iron immediately and allow your hair to cool and lower the setting on the flat iron.

- Clamp iron at the root of the section and pull to the end, curve the iron up or down to achieve a bend at the tip of hair.
- Repeat this process over entire head from back to front.
- Once hair is straightened to preference add oil and style as desired. To maintain sleekness wrap hair around the crown of your head and sleep in a satin bonnet or scarf.



## Natural Curls

Supplies: wide tooth de-tangling comb, natural oil, leave in conditioner, blow dryer with diffuser

Many multi-ethnic people have natural curls when their hair is wet and would like to keep that look once the hair dries. Remember to thoroughly moisturize the hair and use proper products for your hair type. As always don't forget to read those labels.

For naturally curly hair with more definition here's a great technique:



- Wash hair at least one time per week (the other days just rinse).
- Detangle hair each day by using a leave-in conditioner and combing through using a wide tooth comb.
- Saturate hair and apply a hair oil.
- Hair can be braided while damp and let air dry if possible.



### **FACT**

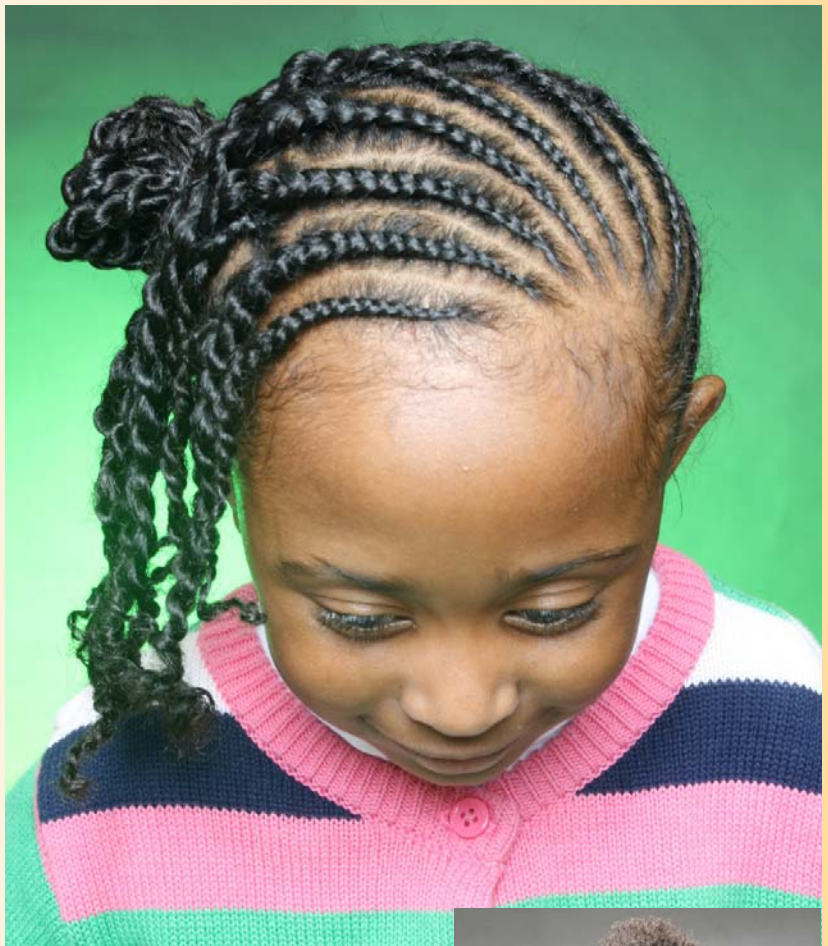
*Female hair grows  
more slowly than  
male hair*

- Once hair is dry, unbraid, add a little oil and finger style.
- In the winter use a diffuser on the lowest temperature, gently stretching the hair as you dry it.

## Children

Supplies: wide tooth comb for detangling, small toothed comb, brush, natural oil

The majority of children have what is called “virgin hair.” The term virgin hair simply means the hair has had no chemical processing at all. Most children of color or multi-ethnic children often wear pony tails, braids, and twists.



- When styling your child's hair remember not to pull too tightly, especially around the hairline.
- Make sure to maintain your child's hair by washing and conditioning 2-4 times monthly.
- Conditioning is a very important step and should never be skipped.
- Keep the ends trimmed as needed to prevent breakage
- Never perm, relax, or dye your child's hair.
- Be sure to pay attention to the ingredients in your shampoos, conditioners, oils and any other products used. This will help to ensure you are not exposing your child to unnecessary chemicals.

### **FACT**

*The lifespan of the human hair is three to seven years.*



## Men's Styles

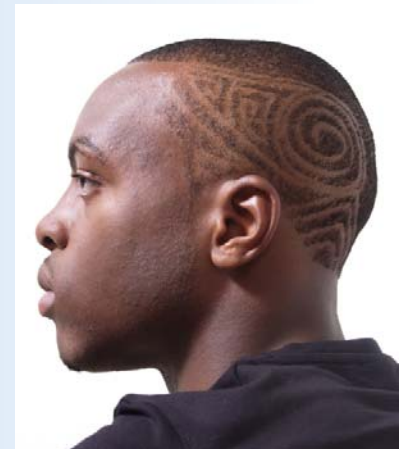
Men follow trends too. They don't just wash and cut their hair. Pomades, mousse and gels are used daily to achieve desired styles. Lots of men dye their hair to cover grey or just for style; whatever the occasion any dyes used should be carefully scrutinized, especially the darker hues. Dyes that are darker in color may contain significantly more damaging chemicals than the lighter shades.

Although dyes are a quick and easy solution for grey hair, using it too often and using it on facial hair may be a potential health hazard.

When possible, look for less toxic alternatives, such as natural coloring agents or vegetable based colors.

### **FACT**

*Did you know...male hair is more dense than female hair?*



# Natural Ingredients for Your Hair Care

## Shea Butter:

Is a tree native to Africa which has soothing, moisturizing and protecting effects, also known as *Butyrospermum Parkii*. It displays a protective role against UV rays because of its cinnamic acid content. Shea Butter returns luster to skin and hair, and also protects the skin and scalp, especially in over-processed and/or heat treated hair.



*Shea Butter*

## Chamomile:

Is a member of the daisy family and is an herb that purifies, calms and soothes with virtually no adverse effects so it can be used for long periods of time. The active ingredients in chamomile are called essential oils and flavonoids which are good for healing skin and scalp irritations.



*Chamomile*

## Sunflower Oil:

Has high amounts of Vitamins A, B, D and E, minerals, lecithin, insulin, and unsaturated fatty acids and is an excellent moisturizer because of its emollients. Emollients are known to soften skin and hair without leaving an oily residue.



*Sunflower Oil*

## Avocado Oil:

Is a rich heavy oil, more penetrating than most oils. It is therefore good for dry hair and skin. It is obtained from the pulp of the avocado pear and has a deep green color. It is stable, natural oil, rich in vitamin E. Avocado also contains Vitamins A, B1, B2, D, and Beta carotene. It is classified as monosaturated oil and is best suited for dry hair and skin.



*Avocado Oil*

## Witch Hazel:

Is extracted from the bark and leaves of the Hamamelis tree and is an astringent and gentle cleanser which removes build-up on the hair as well as the scalp; it also helps to fight dandruff.



*Witch Hazel*

## Olive Oil

Is obtained directly from the olive after it has been harvested. It is made into a paste from which the oil is collected. Olive oil conditions and improves the strength and elasticity of the hair, helping to prevent breakage. It's also very good for "frizzy" and/or damaged hair.



*Olive Oil*

The background of the page is a light green color with a subtle pattern of concentric circles. In the top left corner, there is a large, detailed illustration of a halved avocado, showing its green flesh and brown pit. In the top right corner, there are several smaller, realistic-looking green olives. In the bottom left corner, there is a small illustration of an olive branch with several leaves and a single olive.

## Recipes to Try

### **Avocado Conditioner:** *Helps hair to shine*

1. Mix 1 small jar of real mayonnaise with avocado in a medium sized bowl.
2. Squish the mixture with your hands until it turns a light green, minty color.
3. Apply the mixture directly onto your hair, making sure you cover every strand from the scalp to the tip.
4. Cover your head with a shower cap, and leave on for 30 minutes. Rinse thoroughly.
5. If you have naturally oily hair, you may want to wash your hair with a gentle shampoo afterward as well.

### **Olive Oil Conditioner:** *Helps fight flyaways*

1. Pour a generous amount of your regular eco-friendly conditioner into your hand – enough so that it covers your entire palm.
2. Mix in 1-2 tablespoons of Extra Virgin Olive Oil into the conditioner. Use a mixing bowl if easier.
3. Apply the mixture onto the bottom half of your hair, focusing on the ends.
4. Gather your hair together so that it sits at the top of your head and cover with a warm wet towel.
5. Leave on for 20 minutes, and then rinse out in the shower.
6. If you have naturally oily hair, you may want to wash your hair with a gentle shampoo afterward as well.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **How can I control very curly and frizzy hair?**

Make sure that you are conditioning the hair properly to ensure adequate moisture. A conditioner free from harsh chemicals should be used after every shampoo. You may also want to use a leave-in conditioner if your hair is extremely dry. Olive oil helps with frizz; this will also help to keep the hair manageable and soft.

## **How can I make brittle and dull hair look shiny and healthy?**

Look for a shampoo and conditioner that are both gentle and offer deep moisturizing formulas. Avocados, olive oil and are great for penetrating dry dull hair.

## **How can I keep my hair more manageable?**

Conditioning your hair regularly and keeping it well nourished and moisturized is the best way to attain manageable hair. You may use a light oil spray to keep the cuticle layers smooth and tamed. In addition, a good deep conditioning treatment twice a month would help to keep the hair manageable. Remember to always detangle your hair thoroughly.

## **Is it safe to flat iron my healthy hair?**

Flat ironing is a heat process that will straighten the hair by making a physical reshaping of the hair shaft. As the hair is subjected to moisture or humidity, your natural texture will return. While it's true that the hair can be damaged by using too much heat, this technique is less caustic than applying a relaxer to your natural hair. Select flat irons with a temperature gauge and select the lowest setting possible to achieve your desired style.

## **How do I get my dull, wiry grey hair to shine?**

Before washing rub a lemon over your entire head from root to end. This process will help remove stains from grey hair. Select a gentle shampoo and conditioner that contains Vitamin E. If hair is still dull try the avocado recipe in this guide.

## **Can I remove a relaxer or perm from my hair?**

Some chemical bonds in the hair are destroyed when the hair is relaxed or perm. The part of the hair that has been relaxed will never be "natural" again. The only way to get rid of relaxed/permed hair is to cut off the relaxed part or grow it out which may cause some breakage. There's lots of information online that explains ways to transition from relaxed hair to natural hair.

## **Does diet affect the condition of my hair?**

Absolutely! Your hair can directly represent the overall health condition of the body. A diet with severe deficiencies consequently can result in malnourished hair. To promote good health for your hair, eating a healthy diet consisting of fruits and vegetables and staying hydrated will help to maintain your naturally healthy hair. Healthy eating equates to a healthy body, including your hair.

## **Are hair dyes safe?**

Some studies have linked hair dyes containing coal tar with a higher risk of certain cancers, while other studies have not found this link. You can reduce your risk by using less dye over time. If you still consider dyeing your hair there are safer alternatives to using chemicals. Check the safe cosmetic database to find less hazardous dyes and always follow directions and always conduct a patch test to minimize damage and an allergic reaction.

# How Green is Your Salon?

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

### REJOICE!



Salons are going green and it makes good sense. The average salon uses a range of chemicals and consumes important resources such as water and energy. There are a number of things to look for when selecting a salon that is environmentally conscious. If your salon is new to “green” practices you can encourage them to adopt healthier practices that can reduce costs and their environmental footprint. Enjoy the added benefits of knowing that your choices will not harm your body or the environment. These practices can make your salon experience a healthier, safer, happier place to be pampered.

Does your salon do any of the following?

### REDUCE

#### Limit Chemical Exposure

- Use less toxic, safer, natural products
- Use pumps instead of aerosol containers
- Use products with low volatile organic compound content
- Use eco-friendly products for disinfecting and cleaning
- Have indoor air quality plants such as peace lily, bamboo palm, or mums to help clean the air of chemicals such as formaldehyde, benzene, and carbon monoxide

#### Conserve Water

- Have a low flow plumbing system
- Reduce hot water usage, use warm or cool temps when possible
- Turn off water when not in use

#### Minimize Waste

- Use refillable containers for products
- Use a dispensing system for shampoo and conditioners
- Use products with alternative packaging that uses less plastic and cardboard
- Offer water in reusable glasses, instead of plastic water bottle

#### Conserve Energy

- Use energy efficient lights throughout the salon
- Use Energy Star equipment

### REUSE

- Give used magazines to other organizations, friends and customers
- Make empty containers and cardboard available to other businesses
- Require suppliers to take-back empty refillable containers

### RECYCLE

- Install recycling bins for office paper, cardboard, plastic, magazines
- Compost hair clippings and donate to an organization to make mats for oil spill clean-up.

*For more information, check with your counties local Green Business Program for certified Green Salons.*

## REFERENCES & RESOURCES

### **Black Women for Wellness**

<http://www.bwwla.com/index.php>

### **California Safe Cosmetics Program**

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cosmetics/Pages/default.aspx>

### **Clean Hair, Clean Air**

<http://www.thegreenguide.com/personal-care/clean-hair-clean-air>

### **Eco Friendly Beauty**

<http://www.everydayhealth.com/green-health/eco-shopping/eco-friendly-beauty.aspx>

### **EWG-Safety Guide to Children's Personal Care Products**

<http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/special/parentsguide/summary.php>

### **Good Guide-Best Hair Care Products**

<http://www.goodguide.com/browse/152782-hair-care/top#>

### **Locks of Love**

<http://www.locksoflove.org/>

### **Matter of Trust-Recycling Program-Hair Oil Spill Mats**

<http://www.matteroftrust.org/programs/natural.html#mats>

### **Nappturality**

<http://www.nappturality.com/modules/wfsection/index.php>

### **National Nail Salon Alliance**

<http://nailsalonalliance.org/>

### **Natural Hair-Get Creative with Homemade Recipes**

[http://www.pioneerthinking.com/ep\\_naturalhair.html](http://www.pioneerthinking.com/ep_naturalhair.html)

### **Premature Sexual Development in Children Following the Use of Estrogen or Placenta Containing Hair Products**

<http://cpj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/37/12/733>

### **Recycling Made Easy-Setting up a recycling initiative in the salon**

<http://www.hji.co.uk/blogs/business/2006/12/recycling-made-easy-1.html>

### **Skin Deep: Safe Cosmetic Database**

<http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/index.php?nothanks=1>

### **Teens Turning Green**

<http://www.teensturninggreen.org/about-us/teens-for-safe-cosmetics.html>

### **Top 10 Natural Body Care Products**

<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/top-10-natural-body-care-products.html>

### **The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry**

<http://www.herizons.ca/node/227>

### **Waste Minimization for Beauty Salons and Barbers**

<http://environment.gov.ab.ca/info/library/6274.pdf>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We could not have completed this project without your help and support.  
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### Contributing Partners

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Samantha Hicks, Xavier University  
Keesh, Makin Faces Make-up  
Alex "D' Looks" Matthews, Glamorous Life Salon, Oakland, CA  
Keif Savage, Keif Savage Photography  
Teresa, FaceArt Make-up  
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