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Friday, July 24, 2009

Basic Regimen & Products for HEALTHY Natural Hair



Post inspired by a reader. Thank you for your questions, and I hope this can answer some of them.

Part of perfecting a regimen is learning what your hair likes and dislikes. But before you reach that point ... before you come to know your hair, **where do you begin?**

One and half years ago, I went natural and had the same question. My years of using a relaxer could not prepare me for what was about to come. My chemically straightened hair was accustomed to products that my newly natural hair now despised. My hair care regimen also had to radically change. I

went through a year of trial and error before I finally "figured it out". During that process, I determined the following basics which I hope can be a good start for newbie naturals.

In time, as you learn your hair, you can tweak the "basics":

*CLEANSE THE HAIR WEEKLY

A clean scalp is vital for healthy growth. Cleansing the hair is also a product of good hygiene. Start by washing your hair 1x a week and tweak it from there. In between washes, does your scalp or hair feel extra dirty? If so, increase the frequency of your washes. If your hair is 5 inches or longer, I highly recommended washing in braided sections.

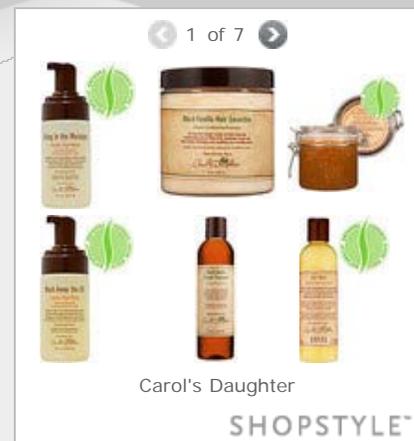
Choosing a shampoo: It is important to invest in a weekly shampoo that lacks Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS), which is a surfactant that may be too harsh for the hair and scalp. I generally gravitate towards shampoos containing mainly natural ingredients to be on the safer side.

Product recommendations: Creme of Nature (the old formula in the green bottle), Giovanni Tea Tree, Castille Soap diluted mixture (recipes [here](#)), Chagrin Valley Shampoo Bar

*DEEP CONDITION AFTER EACH WASH

Whether you wash 1x a week or 3x a week, follow it up with a deep conditioning session. Why? Because each wash rinses away the benefits of the previous the deep conditioning session. Deep conditioners are important because they temporarily bind to (and sometimes penetrate into) the hair protecting and smoothing the strand until the next wash. Undo each braid, apply the conditioner, and rebraid. Be sure to allow the conditioner to sit for at least 15 minutes before rinsing.

Choosing a deep conditioner: Look for one that contains strengthening ingredients, such as coconut oil, hydrolyzed collagen, hydrolyzed keratin, etc. The type of ingredient depends on how much strengthening your hair requires. I suggest starting with a



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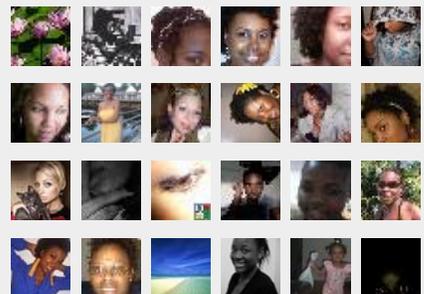
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coconut-oil based conditioner and working your way up if need be. I also recommend finding a deep conditioner that has 'slip' and softens, both of which ease the detangling process. Deep conditioners like this usually contain cholesterol and/or cetyl alcohol.

Product recommendations for strength: Coconut honey deep conditioner (recipe [here](#)), Homemade egg conditioner (recipe [here](#))

Product recommendations for strength & slip: Lekair Cholesterol; LustraSilk Cholesterol mixed with egg OR coconut oil; add olive oil to either for more slip

***DETANGLE WITH EACH DEEP CONDITION**

Our curls, coils, and kinks like to tangle upon themselves, so detangling regularly is a necessity for many naturals. I highly recommend detangling the conditioner-soaked hair with a wide tooth comb. Take down a braided section, detangle, and rebraid the section. Then rinse off the conditioner.

***SEAL AFTER EACH WASH & MOISTURIZE AS NEEDED**

Water is the best moisturizer out there for natural hair. After a good wash and deep conditioning session, you can follow up with an oil or butter to seal in the water. In between washes, if your hair gets dry, you can apply a bit of water or do a full-on rinse and then re-seal. Another option is using a water-based spritz.

Choosing a moisturizer: Go straight for the water or look for water-based moisturizers (where water will be the first ingredient listed).

Product recommendations: Water, Homemade spritz of rosewater and glycerin (a humectant), S-Curl, Neutrogena Triple Moisture Silk Touch Leave-in

Choosing a sealant: Look for products that contain oils and/or butters.

Product recommendations: Homemade whipped shea butter (recipe [here](#)), coconut oil, olive oil, avocado oil, castor oil, Jane Carter Nourish & Shine

TWIST OR BRAID YOUR HAIR & VOILA!

Wear the twists/braids (great protective style!) until your next wash or unleash for a twistout. (See twistout instructions [here](#).) Be sure to wear a silk scarf to bed or use a silk pillow case to protect your cuticles as you sleep. Other styles for natural hair - protective and low manipulation - can be found [here](#).

Extra steps you may want to include in your regimen:

***CO-WASH IF NEEDED:**

If you find that frequent shampooing is drying to your hair, you may want to explore using a conditioner to wash. Just wet your hair, apply conditioner, and massage your scalp and hair as usual. After rinsing the conditioner the out, seal and style.

Choosing a conditioner: Look for a non-heavy inexpensive conditioner. Heavy conditioners will build up on the hair too quickly.

Product recommendations: V05 Champagne Kisses, V05 Honeydew Smoothie, V05 Passionfruit Smoothie, V05 Blackberry Sage Tea

***CLARIFY IF NEEDED:**

If you find that regular shampooing does not adequately remove product buildup from your hair, you may want to explore clarifying. Start with doing this once a month and then adjust as needed.

Product recommendations: V05 Kiwi Clarifying Shampoo; Baking Soda and water mix followed by Apple Cider Vinegar rinse

****INTERNAL HEALTH:**

If your internal health is not on point, work on it. Drink sufficient water, get plenty of rest, exercise, and include the hair foods (click [here](#)) in your diet! Internal health as just as crucial to hair care as external care.

Posted by Loo at 8:15 AM

Reactions: interesting (0) cool (1) next (0)

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Thank you for this post:
My hair anniversary was this May, and I'm still learning about my hair, I have everything down but how to work with

1. Hair knots
2. Dry Ends

Thats keeping me from any significant lenght, I would love for you to touch on those two topics

Love the blog!
[July 25, 2009 7:15 PM](#)

 Loo said...

You're welcome! Happy Belated Nappiversary.

Sure thing. I'll discuss the topics in separate posts. Thanks for dropping by!
[July 26, 2009 9:09 AM](#)

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 - ▶ August (15)
 - ▼ July (15)
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 - ▶ April (13)

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