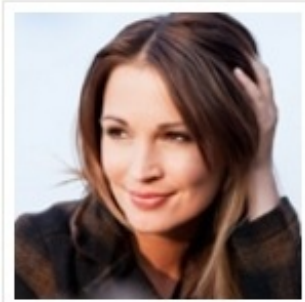


Beautiful You

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The Best Habits for Beautiful Hair!

By Aly Walansky



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Our hair can be our sexiest asset -- or our biggest regret. The secret is to keep it in its best shape possible. Here, from top experts, are healthy hair habits you can adopt now to keep your locks looking great.

Shampoo Smart

Real Answers

Q: I've heard about buying carbon credits to offset my family's carbon footprint. Does it really do any good?

A: Buying carbon credits sounds like a good idea, but it may not be your best option.

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You already know to shampoo your hair, but make sure you're doing it correctly. Comb your hair before getting in the shower, and avoid washing in really hot water, which can take the bounce out of your locks. Finish your final rinse with a blast of cold water, says Missy Ambrosini, a senior stylist based at Giovanni & Pileggi salon based in Philadelphia. It closes the hair cuticles so that the light bounces off them, resulting in extra-shine. And if you're trying to control dandruff, be sure to lather twice to loosen and remove the flakes from your scalp.

Sunnie Brook Jones, a hair and makeup artist and a celebrity stylist for Head & Shoulders, recommends clients use a clarifying shampoo weekly. This removes buildup from styling products and cleansers that may form on your hair and it gives you a fresh surface to begin creating your style. *[Disclosure: Head & Shoulders is the sponsor of this content.]*

Don't Skip the Conditioner

Conditioning after your wash helps repair damaged hair cuticles and prevent frizz. Try one containing nourishing plant-based extracts such as Argan oil, tea tree oil, aloe or macadamia.

Jones also suggests doing a 20-minute deep conditioning session once a week. You can use either your favorite brand of conditioner or a homemade mask like this one: Mash the meat of an avocado with 1 cup of mayonnaise. Rub your desired conditioner into your hair and cover your head with a shower cap for 20 minutes. Rinse with your usual shampoo.

Eat Right -- and Exercise Often

A diet rich in vitamins and nutrients will give you gorgeous hair. In particular, foods with biotin, a water-soluble vitamin necessary for cell growth, are extremely helpful for hair health and beauty. New York nutritionist Sharon Richter, RD, recommends biotin-rich foods like Swiss chard, carrots, almonds, walnuts, milk and halibut. Heather Hausenblas, Ph.D., a nutritionist from the University of Florida and the author of many scientific books and journals, recommends supplementing with the vitamin Keratin Booster, which contains biotin and resveratrol and is specifically designed to encourage hair health.

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*visible flakes, with regular use

Pop Quiz

How many stay-at-home dads are there in the U.S.?

- 158,000
- 437,000
- 1 million

Answer

Have Your Say

Did your kids do any schoolwork this summer?

Regular exercise is essential not only for the body, but for healthy hair, too. Increasing the oxygen in your blood circulating around your body will also increase your hair's growth by providing an extra boost of oxygen to your hair's follicles, says Hausenblas.

Spread the Love

Before you go to bed, brush your hair to distribute oils from the roots to the ends. Hair tends to be drier as you move down the hair shaft, and your own natural oils are a great conditioner between washes, says Ambrosini. But *never* use a brush on wet hair -- that can cause breakage and flyaways. Instead, use a wide-tooth comb.

Color Wisely

When coloring your hair, ask your colorist for a gloss treatment, says Jones. This will act like a top coat on your treatment and replenish the amino acids lost during the dye process. A gloss also helps prolong color -- most glosses last 4 to 6 weeks -- and delivers incredible shine.

Looking for a dramatic color change? Beware of trying to do it yourself, cautions Farouk Systems Creative Stylist Anna Cantu. Too much bleaching and self-coloring can dry out the hair and break it. Stick to a professional hairdresser and tell your stylist your color preferences.

Photo: Corbis Images

Aly Walansky is the senior editor of *LovingYou.com*, the beauty and fashion editor for *MyGloss.com*, a style columnist for *SheKnows.com*, and a contributor to *The Huffington Post* and *About.com*. She's been rated one of the top beauty bloggers by *New Beauty Magazine* and *Star Magazine*, and she's live-blogged from locations ranging from the *Miss America* pageant to the *Emmy Awards*. She is a frequent contributor to [Life & Beauty Weekly](#).



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- Yes, I bought workbooks for them
- Yes, they went to summer school
- No -- summer is for fun!

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