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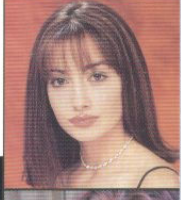
# *Just* **HAIR**

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# Hair Profiling

By Karen M. Shelton  
HairBoutique.com

Do you ever wonder why you experience bad hair days? How can simple strands of hair become such a challenge to manage? Although hair may look uncomplicated to the naked eye, in reality, hair is quite complex. Each and every hair has its own signature profile. There is no such thing as a perfect hair type or texture, however you can learn to understand your own hair's profile and how to coax your tresses to perform to their optimal best. Knowledge is truly power when it comes to minimizing misbehaved strands.

## Hair Texture

Genetically predetermined and unchangeable, hair texture is measured by the degree of fineness or coarseness of your hair, which varies according to the diameter of each individual hair. Texture is also defined by the cortex or middle layer of the hair's structure and by the feel of the hair, whether it is baby soft or rough and hard. In some cases hair can be permanently altered through chemical treatments. It is also possible for some people to have more than one texture on their head at the same time.





**Hair experts generally agree that there are four major types of hair texture:**

**Fine hair** has the smallest circumference. Fine hair can be soft and silky, and can feel like feathers. Unless it has been chemically altered, fine hair reflects light the best of the textures. When it is healthy, fine hair will often have a natural megawatt shine. Fine hair generally has a much thinner cortex and cuticle than other hair textures and generally does not contain the inner medulla.

**Medium hair** is the most common type of texture. Medium textured hair is neither super soft nor rough to the touch. Medium hair has lots of body and bounce, and usually holds either a blow-dry shape or any type of set well. It has the most styling flexibility of the three types. Although most medium textured hair usually contains the medulla, cortex and cuticle structural layers, there are exceptions.

**Coarse hair** has the largest circumference. Coarse hair can feel heavy and rough. Exceptionally coarse hair may feel a little like horse hair to the touch. The outside layers of coarse hair are often overlapped at the scales and raised from the shaft. It holds many styles with ease but can look wild and bushy with the wrong cut or style. It almost always contains three distinct layers known as the medulla, cortex and cuticle.

**Wiry hair** which has a very hard, glassy finish as a result of the way cuticle scales lie flat against the hair shaft. Wiry hair can also be coarse, medium or fine and usually contains all three structural layers.

Both fine and medium textured hair can be plumped up with hair shaft-swelling perms and color. They'll both get increased resilience and shape-holding power from setting lotions, mousses and hairsprays. Coarse hair can be calmed with rich conditioners and a helping of styling gel.

## Density

Your hair's complete profile also includes density.

**Thin hair** lays flat to the head, and can be sparse or become straggly. Often the scalp shows through the hair whether the hair is wet or dry. Many conditioners and styling products will weigh thin hair down. Remedies for thin hair are similar to fine hair. Perms and color applied to thin locks will swell the hair shaft. A variety of volume building products can be utilized to give hair a thicker appearance.

**Medium hair** is neither thick or thin. Medium density hair completely conceals the scalp when the hair is either wet or dry. Hair appears neither straggly or bushy. It has the flexibility to be thickened with chemical processes or to be compressed through styling or product use like gels and hair waxes.

**Thick hair** can be quite heavy making it challenging to deal with. It completely conceals the scalp when hair is wet and dry. It can be unruly, often having too much body. Thick or very thick strands can be tamed with an expert cut, layered or

blunt, that helps build shape and eliminates bulk. Hair worn longer will help compress some of the mass and gentle relaxing treatments will add bend and movement.

It is not uncommon for hair to be thicker or thinner on different parts of the head. One side of the head may contain more follicles. It also happens that hair can be thinner at or near the hairline. Although you can't increase or reduce the actual number of hair, you can maximize the advantages and minimize the shortcomings of each type.

## Type

How do you describe your hair—do you say it's stick straight, curly, wavy or kinky? The type of hair you have is determined by how much bend your hair has. All hair has some natural bend which can range from just a little in straight hair to a lot in curly hair. Your hair type is also determined by the shape of the hair shaft. Straight hair is round, wavy hair has an oval shape while curly hair is almost flat.

Hair also has an overall condition. It can be normal, dry, oily/greasy or chemically damaged. Although a normal condition is neither oily or dry, but just right, normal hair can become damaged through chemical processing and the result can be chronic dryness. Hair can be oily and dry at the same time, i.e. oily roots and dry ends.

Like all hair challenges, there are different products, treatments and remedies for different types of conditions. Chronically dry or damaged hair can benefit from special conditioning formulas and deep treatment masques while oily hair can benefit from special shampoos and handling. There is an endless supply of products developed to assist hair with special needs. The key to getting the right products for your hair is to understand its true genetic makeup and profile.

## Color

Your natural hair color is genetically pre-determined. The ultimate color of your hair is controlled by the pigment known as melanin which resides in the hair cortex layer. The amount and density of melanin your hair contains, along with the way it is distributed through your strands, actually determines your color.

If you don't like the color of your natural hair you can alter it in a variety of ways from total color coverage to color accenting with highlights or lowlights. Chemical hair processing is an entire complex topic in itself. However, it can generally be said that depending on the ultimate color goal, chemical hair coloring either removes melanin or deposits new color.

Perpetually good hair days can become the rule rather than the exception when you get to know your hair and understand its own unique profile

Hair Profiling is the first of a series of articles written by HairBoutique.com's Karen Shelton. Next month Karen discusses the various texture types and will go in-depth on products that will best compliment your hair and its pre-determined structure. As the series continues, you'll be able to analyze your own tresses, and discover the best way to take care of your glorious mane!



# Moments in Color

## Coloring Curly Hair

by Karen M. Shelton [www.hairboutique.com](http://www.hairboutique.com)

**N**aturally curly hair presents many challenges as those who have curls are more than aware of. A few months ago, Lara, a Hair Boutique visitor wrote to Ask Karen about the problems she was having achieving a good hair color for her naturally curly hair. She explained to me that it didn't seem to matter whether she applied the color at home or if she went to the salon. It was her opinion that the applied color always looked darker than she hoped for. She also complained that no matter what she did, she could not seem to achieve the amount of depth or shine that she wanted. What's a curly girl to do?

Lara's problem was not new to me. One of the most common problems I hear about curly hair is how to deal with adding color or highlights. While Lara has problems with applied color looking too dark and drab, many people with naturally curly hair experience problems with the color fading prematurely. Others find that adding color will increase dryness and brittleness of their curly hair.

### Basic Composition & Shape Of Curly Hair

Luckily, I had spent a lot of time on the phone chatting with world-famous curly hair expert, Ouidad. During our conversation Ouidad graciously spent a lot of time explaining the basic composition of curly hair. Ouidad told me that curly hair is "baby fine hair in the shape of a corkscrew. With curly hair, the fish scales stay up all the time."



"The cuticle of curly hair does not stay closed because of its shape. Consequently, the hair, if not treated correctly, easily becomes dry and feather like. Curly hair is very delicate and more prone to damage from improper treatment because the molecular layer is constantly exposed."





Because the cuticle of curly never completely closes, chemical treatments of any type (color, straightening) can have a major impact on the hair. If curly hair is already damaged or overly dry, the addition of chemicals in the form of color or highlights will only magnify the hair's damage.

Ouidad explained that "people think that curly, frizzy hair is tough, but it's really quite fragile. Curly hair requires special care and handling along with special products that nourish the unique structure of the hair.

### **Coloring Curly Hair**

I specifically asked Ouidad why color fades or seems to get lighter sometimes in curly hair. She reminded me "that since the curly hair cuticle never really closes, the actual molecular layer is constantly exposed and this results in both natural and chemically induced hair color fading."

I asked her opinion regarding coloring curly hair. I also inquired what color products she recommended. And Ouidad explained that if a person is willing to first relink the base of their hair by using products like her Ouidad Deep Treatment every two weeks, they can safely and happily color their hair. The use of Deep Treatment will rebuild the substance of the hair and this will allow the relinked hair to hold color longer and better. However, she warned that coloring should only be done by a professional with coloring expertise

that has knowledge of coloring curly hair.

### **Avoid Use of Permanent Color**

Ouidad strongly advises against the use of permanent color treatments because of their high concentration of chemicals which can damage the hair. Instead, she recommends using only semi-permanent or vegetable colors. Semi-permanent colors will give hair a richer, more beautiful color and will not fade like permanent colors do. They are less harsh and perform better overall. Regardless of your hair type, if you do color your hair, it will require special pre-color and post-color care. Ouidad recommends applying Deep Treatment to your hair three days before coloring, then again two weeks afterwards to seal and protect. In essence, Ouidad's Deep Treatment acts like a filler or toner in the hair shaft. With properly pre-color conditioned hair, the resulting color tones will appear more uniform from root to ends. The healthier your hair, the longer it holds the color and it is less prone to pre-mature brassiness or fading.

Color that is applied to curly hair can often look different than color that is applied to hair that is straight. Since naturally curly hair diffuses light, it may make the newly applied color dark and drab with little or no shine. Straight hair, on the other hand, has a naturally smooth surface which easily reflects light and therefore picks up the vibrancy and shine of applied color.



## Moments in Color

# Longer Lasting Hair Color

Hair Benders International (Chattanooga, TN); Photo: Tom Carson



by Karen M. Shelton [www.hairboutique.com](http://www.hairboutique.com)

Whether you have your hair professionally colored or you use a home hair coloring kit, you probably want to make your hair color last as long as possible. There are many ways to maximize your newly colored locks so that the color remains deep and vibrant as long as possible.

There are several techniques you can try for finding a great hair color you will love:

Select the hair coloring product that is most compatible

with your lifestyle. If you don't have time to redo your roots every three to four weeks, you may want to select a hair color shade that is only one to three shades lighter than your natural color. The closer you go to your natural hair color, the less your roots will show as they grow out. When your roots are less obvious, your hair color will last longer before you have to touch up your roots. Always select the type of coloring product that is easiest for you to maintain.

Apply a deep conditioning treatment to your hair a few days before coloring. The better conditioned your hair is, the easier the color will take and the longer it will last. Recently conditioned hair will also be softer and shinier. As an extra bonus, a deep conditioner will protect your hair against any possible damage from the color chemicals.

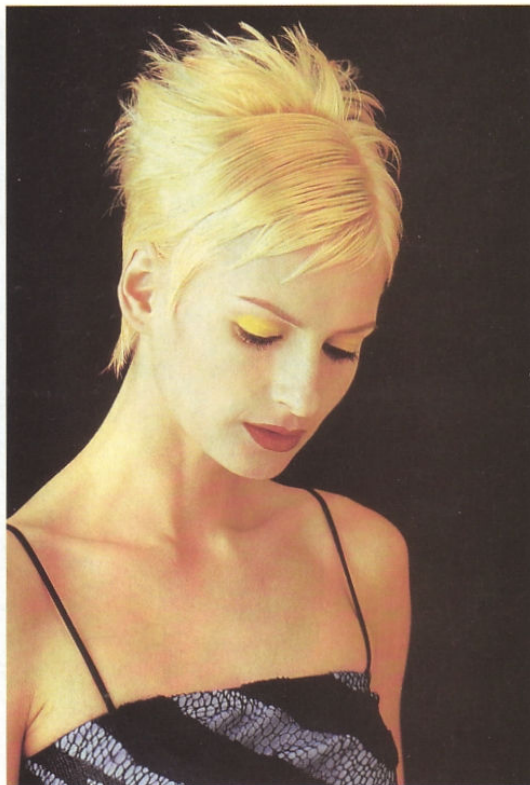
Color hair that has not been washed for one day. The natural hair oils will assist in making the hair color application more successful. The color will cling better to hair that is not dry.

Use a color enhancing shampoo between applications



Currie Hair/Skin/Nails; Stylist: Susan Noles; Makeup: Angela Iardella; Photo: Tom Carson





Stylist: Frances Dubose

to enhance and maintain the color. The color shampoos like Mine, Manic Panic, ARTec and Aveda's color shampoos are specifically designed to keep your color fresh as long as possible. Be sure to use the color shampoos religiously to maintain your color. The color shampoos will help you keep your color looking good until it is time for the next application. If you don't wish to use a color enhancing shampoo then at least use the most gentle shampoo that you can.

Avoid exposing your colored hair to the sun or chlorine in swimming pools. The sun may fade your hair color and the chlorine may damage the color. In some severe cases, if you have colored your hair a very light color the chlorine may leave a green tinge to your hair.

Keep your hair conditioned. Hair coloring will make your hair drier than normal. It is important to keep your hair conditioned and soft. Conditioned hair holds color better than dry, brittle or damaged hair. Conditioned hair also makes the colored hair shinier and brighter.

Add a temporary color to give you longer wear. There are several wonderful temporary hair colors now available on the market that will give your hair a temporary color that washes out after a few shampoos. If the roots seem to be growing out a lot faster than normal, or the

color looks a little faded, use a temporary color until your next permanent color application.

Use layered colors to prevent an overall faded color look. If your hair is colored all one color, or seems to fade fast after each color application, you may want to try a layered color look. The advantage to applying layered colors would be to have complimentary shades of darker and lighter colors which would reflect the light and give the color a multidimensional look. This would give your color a fresher, less faded look. It would also last longer because of the multiple shades woven into your hair. A professional colorist would need to assist you with layered coloring since it can be somewhat complicated.

### **Final Hair Coloring Notes**

If you use a home hair color kit be sure to read all the instructions before you begin and always have an extra box on hand in case you run out of the mix, have an unexpected spill or the bottle is damaged in any way.

If you visit a color professional, be sure that you carefully explain your lifestyle and time constraints. Be sure to select a color that you can maintain easily and will fit your pocketbook.