

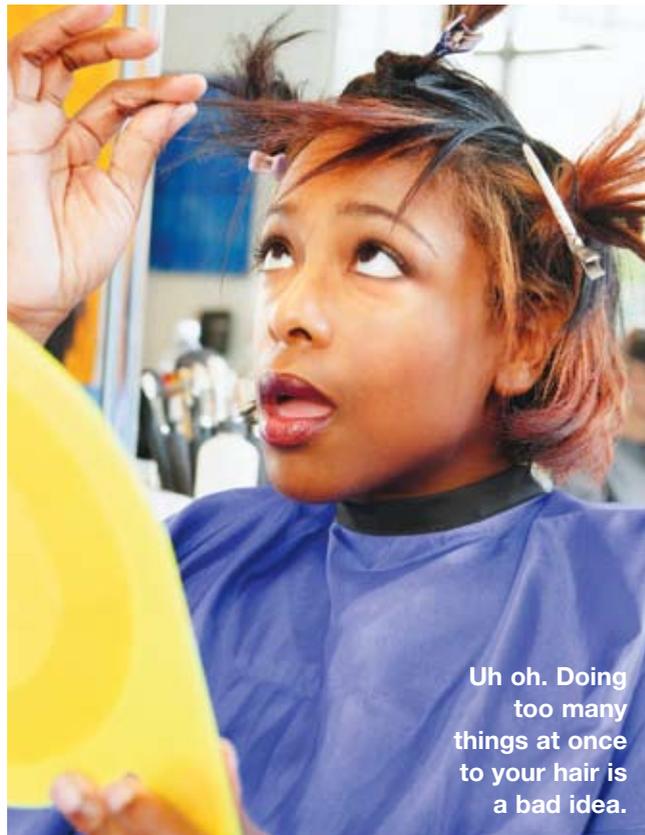
# Hair Care

WHETHER IT'S STRAIGHT OR CURLY, STYLED OR LEFT IN ITS NATURAL STATE, YOUR HAIR NEEDS TO BE PROTECTED.

**T**he hair on our heads isn't just there for looks. It keeps us warm by preserving heat," says Patricia Hyde, a clinical assistant professor of dermatology and pediatrics at Jefferson Medical College. By preserving heat, hair regulates the body's temperature. Therefore, it's important to keep each of the approximately 100,000 strands of hair on your head healthy in order to promote growth and to prevent it from falling out.

So how do you do that? First, you don't need to spend gobs of money on expensive hair-care products, or tons of time in the shower. Piling on chemically enhanced products or loitering under a scalding faucet often can inflict unnecessary damage to your hair.

Depending on what kind of hair you have and how active your lifestyle is, all you need is a regimen of shampoo (to rid your hair of dirt and extra oil from your scalp) and conditioner (to cover your hair with a coating that protects



Uh oh. Doing too many things at once to your hair is a bad idea.

the outer layer) to maintain healthy locks.

Here are a few basic—and inexpensive—ways to take care of your hair:

- **Know your hair type.** "People with dry, curly hair have different hair-care needs than people

with straight, fine hair," says Elliot N. Mostow, director of pediatric dermatology at the Children's Hospital Medical Center of Akron. So when buying products, make sure they are suitable for your hair type.

For instance, if you have dry hair, wash it less

frequently and use a gentle, moisturizing shampoo. Mostow says this will allow your scalp's natural oils to resurface, which will help your hair shine. If your hair is oily, it's fine to wash it frequently, but make sure you use conditioner after every shampoo.

- **Get a haircut.**

Regular haircuts are the simplest way to keep your hair looking great. Even if you're growing it out, chopping off split ends can prevent further damage.

- **Avoid over-processing.**

Excessive brushing or "having your hair chemically treated, such as getting your hair colored, bleached, straightened, or permed, can cause damage that may make the treated hair break off or fall out temporarily," Mostow says.

- **Watch your diet.**

Your hair is an extension of your body, so maintain a nutritious diet. The more energy-rich fruits and vegetables you consume and the more water you drink, the healthier you and your hair will be.

- **Go natural.**

Look at photos of you when you were a baby or toddler: Chances are you had beautiful hair. If your parents didn't overtreat your hair back then, why should you do so now? The more you embrace your hair in its natural state, the healthier it will be.

—Alexis Burling