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How-to

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### Managing My Curls



Growing up I have always struggled with my hair. I grew up in a mixed-race family with a mother that had different hair than mine. My hair had lots of frizz and ringlets. Her hair was straight and easy to manage. She found lots of ways to keep my hair protected. As I got older, it was harder and harder for me to take care of my hair. No products worked and it was always frizzy. After many years of working in a beauty store and doing so much research, I finally have found a way to get my hair on the right track. I had to ask myself, what can I do to make my curls more manageable? What goes in the products that I'm using? What makes my hair this way?

Women with curly hair has gone through a struggle of maintaining their curly hair. Curly headed girls spend massive amounts on hair products and treatments that doesn't really work. Through my research and spending time with others with curly hair, I learned that there is

something called hair porosity. Hair porosity can affect how products enter your hair. It is important to know what type of porosity you have so you can spend money and time on products that will work for your hair.



What is hair porosity? The above article shows hair cuticles with different types of porosity. Hair porosity is how well our hair can absorb and maintain moisture. The porosity affects how moisture and oils from products by the flexible outer hair cuticle. The hair cuticle is formed from dead skin cells that help protect the hair shaft. Your hair porosity is mostly genetic, but it can change throughout time. Using heat and chemical treatments can change how your hair maintains moisture. There are three types of hair porosity.

1. Low- This type of hair is usually considered on the healthy side. When water hits low porosity hair, it tries to repel it. It also repels any type of chemicals you try and put on the hair. This type of hair can suffer from too much protein. Protein build up can happen when using too many protein rich products causing the hair to feel stiff and like straw.
2. Medium- Medium porosity usually has the right balance. It lets in the right amount of moisture and doesn't let too much of that moisture out. This type of hair has good results

with things like coloring and chemical straighteners. This porosity requires the least amount of maintenance.

3. High- High porosity hair has some damage to the cuticle. It has rough gaps in the cuticle that make it easy for the hair to retain too much moisture. This can lead to the hair being very frizzy and tangled. Especially in humid weather. This type of hair takes in lots of moisture, but it also loses that moisture very easily.



How can you tell what your hair porosity is? There are two types of tests you can try. The first one is the float test, and the other is the slip n slide test. The diagram above demonstrates how to do the float test.

**The float test: This is the test that seems to have the best results.**

1. Take a couple of strands of hair from your brush.
2. Fill up a bowl or cup of water and drop the strands inside.
3. Let the hairs sit for 2-3 minutes.
4. Analyze the results.

If the hair floats, you have low porosity. If the hair sinks, you have high porosity. If the hair stays somewhere in the middle, you have medium/normal porosity.

**The slip n slide test:** This is when you take the shaft of hair between your fingertips and slide them up toward your scalp. If there are little bumps, then you have high porosity. If it is smoother, then you can have low porosity. This method isn't as accurate as the float test.

### **Products for You!**

Now that you have figured out what your porosity is, it's time to figure out the right products and methods for you! So, you can have healthy and shiny hair!

- Low porosity can have something called protein build up. Too much of the protein can lead to the hair feeling very dry and hard. Almost like straw. It is important to use protein-free conditioners with ingredients like glycerin, which attracts moisture. Things like shea butter and jojoba oil work well with this type of hair. Lighter and liquid-based type products are the best products for this hair. Shea moisture features a great line of protein-free shampoo, conditioner and leave in cream. Stay away from products that have high protein ingredients like coconut oil and aloe vera.

- Medium porosity has the least type of problems. Adding in the occasional protein treatments won't hurt this type of hair. Most hair products seem to work for this type of hair. Very manageable.
- High porosity loses moisture so easily so leave in conditioners are this type of hairs best friend. Using an oil as a sealer can help keep the moisture in the hair. Using more than one product can help keep the moisture inside of the hair. Oils and butters seal the moisture inside the hair.

### **Now It's Time to Find Your Hair Products!**

I have been through so many trials and errors when finding hair products. Once I found out that my hair was low porosity, I finally found the products that would work for my hair. I made sure to read the ingredients on the bottle and pick things that would work for my hair. I avoided things with protein and coconut oil because they made my hair feel brittle. Instead I used things that have argan oil, marshmallow root and shea butter. I recommend this product to everyone with curls!



**Products for High Porosity:** Use things that give the hair all the extra moisture it needs! It's okay to layer products. Leave ins and oils will be your best friend. Monthly protein treatments will also help this type of hair.



**Products for Medium Porosity:** If you have this hair type, most products will work on your hair! I would recommend a simple curling cream!



**Products for Low Porosity:** If you have this type of hair, I recommend using protein-free stylers and treatments. Lighter products will work well with this type of hair! Hair milks and lightweight oils like, Jojoba oil!



Curly hair is sometimes frustrating and it can be really hard to take care of. I hope all these tips can help you achieve your healthiest curls!