

DIFFERENZE SAYS 'HAIRLO'

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Build your hair Profile

WHAT IS A HAIR PROFILE?

Let us look at what the word 'Profile' means for a minute. It means "the process of gathering or collecting information about a person based on that person's characteristics or behavior. So in building a hair profile, the characteristics lists below will be helpful in building your hair profile to understand what products to use as well as styling choices.



1. PH

pH - power of Hydrogen is the measure of acidity or alkalinity in a substance or solution. The measuring scale ranges from 0 - 14. Products, solutions or substances with a pH of below 7 is acidic, 7 is neutral, above 7 is alkaline.

Healthy hair and scalp oil from the *sebum* has a pH range of 4.5-5.5. At this range, acidity from natural hair:

- Prevents fungi and bacteria from growing in the hair and scalp.
- Keeps hair cuticles closed to keep the moisture in.
- Makes hair healthy and shiny.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

When you use a product that is highly alkaline, it causes the cuticles to open up. When the cuticles of your hair are open, it dries up shortly after even after moisturizing. Open hair cuticles allow moisture to quickly leave and evaporate into the air. When you use a product that is highly acidic, it can cause the cuticles to contract and close which will eliminate frizz. So it is advisable to use products within the 4.5-5.5 range and also to test the pH of shampoos and conditioners by using testing strips which can be bought at the local drugstore or supply store. Some products don't list the pH levels so its best to have it tested.

Notes :

Sebum is the natural oil produced by the sebaceous gland (attached to the hair follicle) to lubricate the hair shaft and scalp. The sebum is unable to travel in a straight path down the hair shaft due to the coily and kinky nature of our hair hence making it dry.

HOW TO BALANCE PH IN YOUR HAIR

High pH shampoos (above 7) causes flakes, itching, dry scalp, eczema, fungi or bacteria on your scalp, because it is possible that your hair and scalp have too much alkali which is stripping away your natural acidic sebum that fights bacteria and fungi. Lower pH shampoos (below 7) causes less frizz and breakage. It is recommended to use a shampoo with a pH of 6 or 7. You can find more information about this on the internet.

Carefully read the labels on your hair products, a pH between 4 to 7 works well on hair. Use testing strips to find the pH of the product you want to use. Discontinue the use of any product outside of the 4 to 7 pH range.

Rinse your hair after washing with pH balanced shampoos and conditioner to return your hair to a neutral level, rather than an acidic one.

Use a natural acid to bring your hair into an acidic pH range, if your hair is naturally oily. You can pour aloe vera juice in a bottle and mist it over your hair to close the cuticle and remove frizz. Alternatively, dilute apple cider vinegar with water until it reaches a pH level of 4.

Apply a leave-in conditioner to wet hair to return your hair to the 4.5 to 5.5 natural acidity, if your hair is naturally dry or damaged.

2. POROSITY

Is the ability for your hair to absorb and retain moisture. Porosity is usually genetic, but it can change depending on heat treatments, chemical processing, pollution (environmental damage). There are 3 levels to describe your hair porosity

- Low: hair that has tightly compact cuticles due to genetics and does not easily absorb moisture. Products that have a low pH should be avoided and a recommended use of a shampoo that contains baking soda because it has a high pH which will raise the cuticle to allow moisture in.
- Medium hair: is able to absorb and retain moisture well but over processing can lead to high porosity hair.
- High hair that has been damaged by processing. It will let the moisture in and out easily. This damage can be repaired by applying a protein treatment and using shea butter to seal in moisture after the treatment.

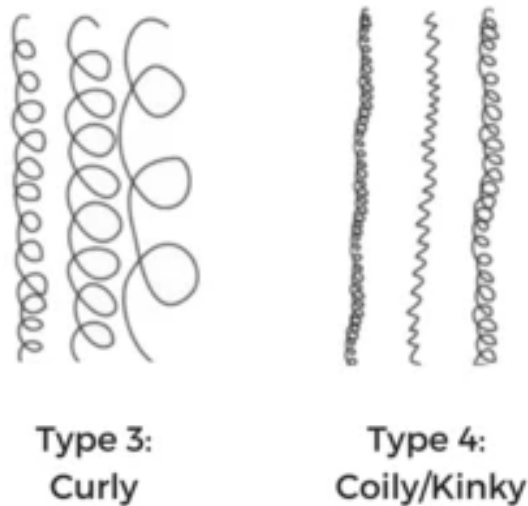
TEST YOUR POROSITY

Take a strand of your hair from a comb or brush, drop it in a clean glass of water. If the strand immediately sinks to the bottom of the glass, your hair is of high porosity. If it lingers at the top for a while and gradually sinks to the bottom of the glass, it's of medium or normal porosity and if it floats at the top of the glass, it is of low porosity.

Low porosity hair shrinks as a result of it drying faster within minutes.

3. TYPE

It is not scientific but it is a system that helps place hair into separate categories based on the texture with one head of hair having more than one texture. As black women, we have type 4 or kinky hair. This hair type has tight coils and is very fragile because it is naturally dry because of the inability of the serum to travel down the hair shaft due its coily nature, so needs more care to avoid breakage. It is divided into 3 sub groups a, b and c.



4. SCALP MOISTURE

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Lower pH shampoos (below 7) causes less frizz and breakage. It is recommended to use a shampoo with a pH of 6 or 7. You can find more information about this on the internet.

5. ELASTICITY

Is the length of how the hair stretches and returns to its normal length without breaking, yassssss ladies, the shrinkage is real.

- Low elasticity is easily prone to breakage due to its lack of moisture, heat damage or chemical relaxers or processing.
- Normal and High elasticity hair is less likely to break because it is not affected by factors that are associated with low porosity hair.

TESTING HAIR ELASTICITY

Take a strand of your hair and stretch it for a few seconds. If it bounces back, then your hair is normal to high elasticity. If it doesn't bounce back or breaks, then your hair is low elasticity which shows it is weak and more likely to break even more during brushing or combing. To improve the condition of low elasticity hair, always keep your hair moisturized, reduce the number of chemical processing sessions and apply a protein conditioner during your hair care regime.

6. DENSITY

This is the number of strands per square inch on your scalp with an average density of 2200 strands per square inch. Low density hair can be increased by massaging your scalp regularly with a warm oil or oils of your choice in a circular motion, to increase the blood circulation in your scalp for healthy roots.

You can judge your hair density by taking a look at it in its natural state. If you can see your scalp without parting it, then you have low density hair. If you can see your scalp with little or no effort then you most likely have medium density. If it's difficult to see your scalp, you have high hair density.

Using light products in low density hair is helpful so as not to weigh your hair down and make it look greasy or lifeless. Thicker gels and creams are usually ideal for high density curly hair. Medium density hair does well with light leave-ins and spray-in leave-in conditioners. Knowing your hair density also helps to identify what type of hairstyles are best suited for you. If your stylist does a hair density test, or, if you already know your hair density, it's easier to pick out styles that will suit you well.



SOURCES OF INFORMATION

WIKIHOW.COM

NATURALCURLY.COM

THE BLACK WOMAN'S
HAIR BIBLE (LISA C
JOHNSON)

GOOGLE.COM