



# PROTECTING CROWNS

A brief guide to  
caring for  
black & brown hair



Black and brown youth, when removed from their homes, can be placed into environments where their culture is not reflected. These placements may be in rural areas without access to hair products and salons catering to textured hair. This guide is a resource intended to assist families, workers, and even youth to care for and protect their crown.

## A brief history lesson

From the beginning of the slave era and hundreds of years following, hairstyles had been heavily influenced by Eurocentric beauty standards. This led to harmful practices including the use of heat and chemicals to achieve sleek and smooth looks. The civil rights movement encouraged the reunification of black people to their natural hair.

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# Hair Care Terms

Here are a few terms you will hear as you begin to walk the journey of all things black hair. Keep in mind this is not a full list of terms, but it is enough to help guide your conversations and understanding of black hair.

**Bonnet:** A protective covering that is put over hair typically at night.

**Curl Pattern:** This refers to how “tight” or “loose” hair curls are.

**Cornrows:** These are braids plaited along the scalp.

**Detangling:** Going through the hair to ensure there aren't any knots. You may hear of “finger-detangling” which means no combs or hair tools are used to detangle hair.

**Deep Conditioning:** Use of a moisturizer and heat or steam to deeply moisturize and condition hair.

**Elasticity:** Refers to how long the hair is or can stretch before returning to normal state. You may also hear the term “shrinkage.”

**Edges:** These are often called “baby hairs.” They are typically styled hairs around the front or “edge” of the scalp.

**Hair Type:** Defines the structure of one's kink and curl pattern, which can be used to determine the best hair care routine.

**High Porosity:** This type of hair needs more oil or creams to retain moisture.

**Kinky:** Hair with tight coiled curls.

**Leave-in Conditioner:** A no-rinse conditioner to help retain moisture and protect hair from damage.

**LOC/LCO Method:** Refers to the way different moisturizers should be placed into black hair.

**Low Porosity:** This type of hair doesn't absorb water and treatments easily, which can cause product buildup on the hair surface.

**No-poo:** Use of using baking soda and apple cider vinegar instead of shampoo to clean the hair.

**Natural Hair:** Hair that has not gone through processes to change its texture.

**Pre-poo:** A product applied to the hair before shampooing.

**Protective Hairstyle:** Styles that keep the ends of hair away. These styles prevent damage from day-to-day styling, weather, and other elements.

**Perm:** Although this is a chemical designed to curl hair, this term is often used to refer to a method known to straighten hair.

**Regimen:** Hair care routine.

**Relaxer:** Chemical mixtures to straighten curly/kinky hair. This is an unhealthy practice that can burn and damage not only the hair, but scalp as well.

**Shrinkage:** The tightening of curls that makes hair appear shorter.

**Transitioning:** The process of no longer using chemicals and starting a natural-hair journey.

*Let's talk about hair care!  
Establishing a hair care routine is critical for healthy crowns.*



## Shampooing

Shampooing hair is important to remove product build up and dirt. It is important to recognize that black hair is drier and more prone to breakage. Everyday washing is harmful. Washing hair once every seven to fourteen days is best. If hair has been permed or relaxed avoid washing for 2-3 days. While in protective styles, focus on washing the scalp.

Use a pre-poo (such as coconut oil) and detangle hair before shampooing. Cleanse hair with a paraben & sulfate-free shampoo. Also, detangle while washing to ensure hair does not tangle while shampooing. Warm water helps hair to absorb moisture. Be mindful of your ends and avoid aggressive washing.

## Detangling

A night without a bonnet can create a disaster! Kinks and curls can easily become matted and tangled. Detangling is an important part to keeping natural hair healthy. Here are some tips to help during this process:

- Work in small sections. Part hair into sections (typically 4) before you begin.
- Moisture is KEY!! Never detangle dry. Use products that offer a “slip” to reduce tugging and breaking hair.
- Wide tooth combs & detangling brushes are best to help separate the hair.
- Start at the end. It is normal to want to start from the root, but you should start from the ends and work your way up. It prevents pulling out hair from the roots.
- Be patient and make time! Don't rush the process, doing so can create damage to the hair. Be sure to detangle while shampooing and in the conditioning process.

## Conditioning

After washing, gently wring hair to remove excess water. Apply conditioner avoiding the roots to prevent build up. After 5-10 minutes wash with cool water. This will help seal in the moisture. This step is highly important. Here are some tips:

- Condition every time you wash.
- To deep-condition apply conditioner to soaking wet hair that is parted into sections.
- Use a detangling brush to ensure all hair is covered.
- Cover hair with plastic cap, sit under a dryer or use blow dryer for 30-45 minutes. Rinse with cold water afterwards.

# Shampoo, Conditioning & Detangling Products

Here is a list of products that cater to the needs of black and brown hair. Remember this is a guide. Every crown is different and what works for some may not work for others.



## Shampoos:

### Best for natural hair:

- SheaMoisture Manuka Honey & Mafura Oil Intensive Hydrating Shampoo
- Tgin Moisture Rich Sulfate Free Shampoo
- Carol's Daughter Black Vanilla Sulfate Free Moisture Shampoo
- Cantu Sulfate-Free Cleansing Cream Shampoo

### Best for relaxed/permed or treated hair:

- Crème of Nature Mango & Shea Butter Shampoo.
- Carol's Daughter Black Vanilla Sulfate Free Moisture Shampoo.
- Pantene Pro-V Truly Relaxed Hair Lightweight Shampoo.
- OGX Shampoo for Relaxed Hair.

**Pre-poo:** Coconut oil works best. You can look for SheaMoisture's Extra Virgin Coconut Oil, which is also great for the skin. Typically, any brand of coconut oil will do if it is virgin and cold pressed. You can also use castor oil and olive oil. Other products include:

- African Pride Moisture Miracle Aloe & Coconut Water Pre-Shampoo
- Carol's Daughter Goddess Strength Ultra Shield Pre-Poo

**Conditioners:** You can use the accompanying conditioner that matches the shampoos listed. This list also includes the best conditioners for those deep conditioning days:

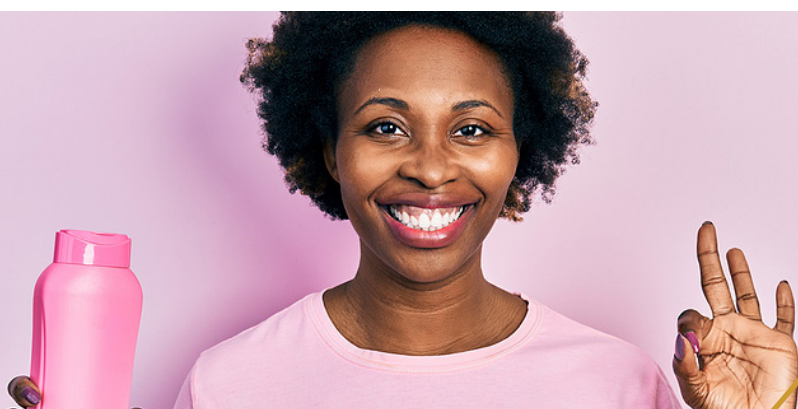
- SheaMoisture Raw Shea Butter Restorative Conditioner
- Suave Professionals Moisturizing Curl Conditioner
- SheaMoisture Jamaican Black Castor Oil Strengthen & Restore Leave-In Conditioner

### Other brands for textured hair:

- Emerge
- Love Beauty & Planet
- SheaMoisture Men's Line
- Young King Hair Care

### Some other important things to have are:

- Detangling Brushes
- Wide-tooth Combs
- Microfiber Towels



# Protective & Natural Hair Styles

Although a regular hair care routine is important, the way you maintain and style black hair is also essential to keeping crowns healthy. Below are some styles that can help protect and maintain black hair. Additionally, there are hairstyles to help natural hair breathe and air out.

**Cornrows**



**Box Braids**



**Dreadlocks**



**Top Knot**



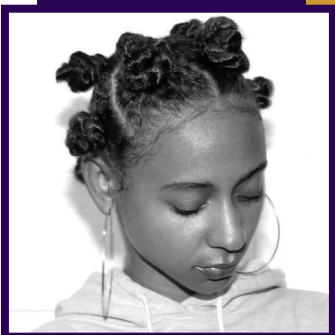
**Crochet Braids**



**Flat Twist**



**Bantu Knots**



**Afro**



**Wigs/Installs**



Many hairstyles use fake or human hair referred to as “weave” or “braiding hair.” You can find this hair at a local ethnic hair and beauty supply store. When in protective styles, it is still essential to care for the scalp. Use of braiding oils and hair “grease” is important to prevent dryness and irritation to the scalp.

**Tip: Consider styles that use little to no heat. Heat from blow drying and styling tools can lead to damage resulting in needing to cut or “chop” the hair.**

# The Cuts

Hair cuts also speak to culture and identity for black and brown people. When going to a barber, ask about the following styles:

**Low-top Fade**



**Short sponge twist**



**High-top Fade**



**Fade with Waves**



**Faded Mohawk**



**Kinky Twist Out**



**Here is a short list of other popular cuts:**

- Bald Fade
- Low fade
- 360 Waves
- Taper Fades
- Curls with Temple Fade

**In order to maintain styles, you need the products and hair care accessories. Here is a brief list of common must-haves:**

- Du-rag
- Wave / Stocking Cap
- Curl Sponge Brush
- Soft bristle brush
- Hair Grease

**Consider these products to maintain healthy hair:**

- Cantu Men's HairCare
- Hair Pomade
- Jamaican Mango & Lime
- SheaMoisture Twist Defining Cream
- Blue Magic
- B&B Super Gro

For young men, hair may be washed once a week compared to females. Be sure to keep hair trimmed and always cover up hair at night with a du-rag, wave cap, or bonnet.

***Braids are also protective styles and common for black and brown males. Don't limit their crowns to cuts.***



## It's a Journey!

Kinks, curls, fros, oh my! Black hair is beautiful but taming that mane can be overwhelming, exhausting, and a little annoying. However, it is important to remember that hair discrimination exists and the words we use to talk about black hair have a lasting impact.

There is no such thing as “good” or “bad” hair. There is just hair, and that hair may require different care. That’s okay! Celebrate the uniqueness of it all. Reaffirming and teaching young children and teens to embrace their hair builds their self-esteem and helps them as they establish their own identity.

## Ask For Help!

We are not born hair care experts so it’s natural that you will not understand everything. Never be afraid to ask questions. PA YAB does not endorse one product, platform, or resource over another. However, we have a list of resources that you can use to gain more knowledge and information regarding black and brown hair care.

## Social Media

- Young King Hair Care
- The Chic Natural
- Hair/Skin For Transracial Families

## Books

- Fros, Braids, Fades, & Waves: A Celebration of Black Boy Hairstyles
- Natural & Curly Hair for Dummies
- The 25 Rules For Natural Hair Care: The Ultimate Guide to taking care of your gorgeous curls and coils
- Chocolate Hair Vanilla Care: A Parent’s Guide to Beginning Natural Hair Styling



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