

# AU NATUREL



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## The Special Needs of African-American Hair

Reprint of Article published on Hairfinder.com

We're all aware of the visible differences between the hair found in African-American and European-American people. There's the difference in the texture and wave pattern - African-American hair tends to be very coarse and either coiled or kinked - and in color - African-American hair tends to be black (with only rare variations). However, few people who aren't African-American realize that there are less visible differences.

African-American hair (we'll call it ethnic hair for the purposes of our discussion here) also tends to be porous, which means that moisture easily passes through the cuticle layer of the hair. You see, since ethnic hair tends to be coarse, the cuticle layer of the hair shaft tends to be raised, which means that even though it can readily absorb moisture it also loses moisture easily. Because of this, ethnic hair needs more assistance to stay healthy.

Where European hair can benefit from an occasional oil treatment, it can quickly become oversaturated by oils and be left lank and flat. On the other hand, Ethnic hair needs these oils to protect the hair. In fact, history shows us that oils were a daily part of the hair care process among the citizens of ancient Egypt (dating as far back as 3000 years ago). The oils provide a sealing barrier to hold in the hair's moisture, and keep it soft and manageable.

### Common Ethnic Hair Issues:

As we mentioned above, one of the common problems of Ethnic hair is dryness. For this reason,

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Special Needs of African-American Hair	1
Benefits of Massage Therapy	2
Hair Braids of the Bahamas	3
Is Your Hair Damaged? How to Recognize Damaged Hair	5

products designed for Ethnic hair are formulated with intense moisturizers, oils, and fats to help hydrate and lock in moisture.

Yet according to a national (American) study conducted earlier this year, the number one problem faced by women with Ethnic hair is breakage (60% of black women identified breakage as their number one problem). While the natural tendency toward dryness doesn't help, the major contributor to the problem of hair breakage among women with Ethnic hair is the methods used to style it. Approximately 80% of black women use some method to straighten their hair. These can range from chemical processes like relaxers and soft-curl perms to the use of heat-styling appliances like irons and blow-dryers.

Chemical relaxers are strong formulas that break the disulfide bonds of the hair allowing it to lie straight. Common relaxers contain strong alkalis that can swell the hair up to twice its normal size, and with hydroxide relaxers the bonds that are broken are permanently broken. Soft curl perms are processes designed to make the natural curl of the hair larger. Both relaxers and soft curl perms are very hard on the hair.

Heat styling is another process that is especially hard on Ethnic hair. The curling irons, flat-irons and straightening combs commonly used can use heat as

Please see *Special Needs* on page 4

## Benefits of Massage Therapy

Reprint of Article posting on [www.massagetherapy.com](http://www.massagetherapy.com)

### *The Benefits of Massage: Is Bodywork Right For Me?*

Massage provides relief to people of all ages—from infants to seniors—and from all walks of life—the weekend or competitive athlete to the home gardener or overstressed, overworked executive.

### *Treating the Body*

Massage therapy addresses a variety of health conditions, the most prevalent being stress-related tension, which, experts believe, accounts for 80%-90% of disease. Massage has been proven beneficial in treating cancer-related fatigue, sleep disorders, high blood pressure, diabetes, low back pain, immunity suppression, spinal cord injury, autism, post-operative surgery, age-related disorders, infertility, eating disorders, smoking cessation, and depression, to name just a few. Here's why:

Bodywork offers a drug-free, non-invasive and humanistic approach based on the body's natural ability to heal itself. Massage has many physiological effects, such as:

- Increasing circulation, allowing the body to pump more oxygen and nutrients into tissues and vital organs.
- Stimulating the lymph system, the body's natural defense, against toxic invaders. For example, in breast cancer patients, massage has been shown to increase the cells that fight cancer.
- Relaxing and softening injured and overused muscles.
- Reducing spasms and cramping.
- Increasing joint flexibility.
- Reducing recovery time for strenuous workouts and

*“Massage therapy addresses a variety of health conditions, the most prevalent being stress-related tension, which, experts believe, accounts for 80%-90% of disease.”*



*Massage Treatments will be available at Schatzi's in November 2006.*

eliminating subsequent pains of the athlete at any level.

- Releasing endorphins, the body's natural painkiller. For this reason, massage is being incorporated into treatment for chronic illness, injury and recovery from surgery to control and relieve pain.
- Reducing post-surgery adhesions and edema and reducing and realigning scar tissue after healing has occurred.
- Improving range of motion and decreasing discomfort for patients with low back pain.
- Relieving pain for migraine sufferers and decreasing the need for medication.
- Providing exercise and stretching for atrophied muscles and reducing shortening of the muscles for those with restricted range of motion.
- Contributing to shorter labor and reduced tearing for expectant mothers, as well as lessening the need for medication, minimizing depression and anxiety, and shortening hospital stays.

It's important to note that there are some conditions where massage is not recommended. For example, massage is contraindicated in people with:

- Certain forms of cancer

Please see *Benefits* on page 5



*Full body massage benefits mind, body and soul.*

## Hair Braids of the Bahamas

By Kathryn M. D'Imperio (Reprint of Article posted on 2005 Hair Care Article Directory - [www.haircarearticles.com](http://www.haircarearticles.com))

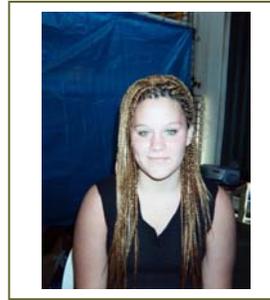
Beautiful seas of blues and greens, soft and sparkling white sand and sun that beats down, tempting a tan on one's exposed parts... these things are just a few signature traits of an unforgettable island vacation.

Relaxing by the poolside, enjoying the surf and sipping cocktails make a great start to a relaxing getaway from reality. Many will strive for the perfect golden glow while others may lather *tanned* limbs in coconut-scented sunblock. Perhaps the most common souvenir taken home from a week or two's stay in the Caribbean is a new hairstyle!

Many women and some men choose to don the tiny braids that often reveal their most recent escape from corporate life. Braided hairstyles are common in a number of other tropical locations, including Jamaica and countless other island destinations.

Offers to braid one's hair may be plentiful, depending on the time of day and location of the vacation. Women skilled in many styles of creative braiding may wander the beaches in search of their next clients, asking all those whom they pass if they would care for some braids.

In Nassau, the going rate per braid capped at about \$3. Vacationers could request as few or as many braids as they wished, in a number of fashions. Those offering the braids often were willing to negotiate on the price in order to secure more



*Braided Beauty is universal. Now, Cancun and Caribbean braids can be enjoyed without traveling quite so far. Come enjoy a relaxing experience in a professional and comforting environment ... at home.*

business for themselves, so the cost of having one's entire head braided may not be relative to having a few single braids done.

Once the number of desired braids has been determined, one should then select the braiding style. Common styles seen in The Bahamas include dozens of straight micro-braids - woven from roots to ends, cornrows fastened with beads at the crown, and cornrows ending in long braids.

Beads or tiny seashells may adorn braids and cornrows in the desired colors of the wearer. Popular styles seen this February consisted of cornrows ending at the crown in two alternating colors and long, micro-braids fastened off with a few beads on each one.

Some important hair and scalp care is necessary for those donning the stylish braids. Dabbing a bit of sunblock on the scalp is critical to preventing sunburn.

When shampooing, wearers of the braids should not shampoo the braids directly, but rather the scalp, allowing the suds to soak down the braids. To keep  
Please see *Hair Braids of the Bahamas* on page 5

### *Special Needs from page 1*

high as 400 degrees. Even dryers used for straightening use sufficient heat to leech much of the needed moisture from the hair.

### **Other Ethnic Hair Hazards:**

Another chemical process that can seriously damage Ethnic hair is coloring. Because Ethnic hair is traditionally black (level 1) nearly all hair color changes require some degree of lightening (bleaching) which can be very damaging to the hair if not carefully done. It is generally recommended that hair color not be lifted more than 4 to 5 levels from the natural color, which does limit the color choices available to women with Ethnic hair.

However, some women want lighter hair and in some cases go from their natural level 1 black color to levels 8 and 9 for bright blondes. This kind of lightening can result in straw-like texture on Ethnic hair even when done professionally and should under no circumstances be attempted without professional assistance. There are many high-end African-American professionals who have been campaigning against the trend of over-lightening Ethnic hair because of the hazards inherent in the process.

It is important to remember that damaged hair cannot be "cured". The only option is to treat the hair with products that will protect it from further damage and help the hair to "look" healthy. Think on this

when you are thinking of trying to lighten your hair. The first time you run your fingers through your hair and pull away with a handful of broken ends it will be too late.

All of these processes lead to stressed-out and weakened hair, prone to breaking. Because of this, Ethnic hair undergoing these processes must be treated frequently to strengthen the hair with proteins, re-hydrate the hair with moisture, and seal the hair against moisture loss. It's also imperative that the products used with Ethnic hair reflect these needs. There are many products currently available for Ethnic hair, and the hair care industry is releasing new product lines constantly.

### **Recommendations:**

In the case of Ethnic hair, it is important to use a gentle shampoo and conditioner containing moisture-rich ingredients, and to condition the hair every day, even when you don't shampoo. It is also important to use a light, oil-based treatment to lock-in the moisture and prevent damage from styling. This becomes doubly important if you use heated appliances. Finally, consider a deep-conditioning treatment at least once a week, and protein treatments on at least a monthly basis.

By taking attentive care to the needs of Ethnic hair, you can be assured that you will have healthy hair with which you can be completely happy.

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*"There are many high-end African-American professionals who have been campaigning against the trend of over-lightening Ethnic hair because of the hazards inherent in the process."*



*Schatzi's is a natural hair care oasis designed with your special needs in mind.*

### Benefits from page 2

- Phlebitis
- Some cardiac problems
- Some skin conditions
- Infectious diseases

Your practitioner should ask you about your specific health conditions and determine if massage, bodywork or somatic therapies are a good idea. In some cases, the practitioner may need your doctor's permission before providing services.

### Treating the Spirit

Massage also provides another therapeutic component largely absent in today's world: tactile stimulation, or, more simply, touch. In 1986, the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami published groundbreaking research on the effects of massage on premature babies. The preterm babies who received massage therapy showed 47% greater weight gain and six-day shorter hospital stays than the infants who were not receiving massage. But is this study evidence of what loving touch can do spiritually, or rather what massage can do on a physiological level? Regardless, babies are not the only benefactors.

Many adults have reported cathartic experiences on the massage table. As a therapist carefully unwinds a client's

stressed and tired muscles, the therapist may very well be unwinding the taut, pent-up emotions that one doesn't always have time to process in the middle of the day. And the feeling of being touched in a safe, caring, compassionate manner can be a very powerful experience, reminding the client that she or he is not alone in the world.

As studies continue to reveal the link between kinesiology and physical and emotional health, the effects of massage will be further documented. However, one need only experience a good massage to know it's beneficial to body and soul.

### Hair Braids of the Bahamas from page 3

braids in great condition longer, a light coat of conditioner on each one should do just the trick.

When removing braids, the best method involves coating braids with conditioner and gently unraveling them one by one. A warm shower with normal shampoo and conditioner products should restore hair to its usual texture and appearance.

## Is Your Hair Damaged?: How to Recognize Damaged Hair

Excerpt from article published on Hairfinder.com

The most readily visible signs - rough texture, over-porosity, dryness, and brittleness - are generally caused by damage to and over extension of the cuticle layer of the hair shaft. This can come from blow-drying, wind, harsh shampoos and chemical treatments, as well as other heat-styling methods and environmental influences. By using conditioners that are pH balanced, protein enriched, and moisture restoring, you can smooth the cuticle layer and protect the hair shaft from further damage. When hair is damaged it's important to use a

good, moisture-rich conditioning treatment every week until it shows improvement, and to use a light spray-on, leave-in conditioner daily during styling (*where appropriate*).

The problem of elasticity loss, susceptibility to breakage, can sometimes be hard to diagnose. Healthy hair can stretch up to 150% of its normal length - without breaking - and return to its original state. Unless your hair shows lots of broken ends and significantly shorter hairs than you noted before, you may not be aware that there is a real problem. The best

*"Healthy hair can stretch up to 150% of its normal length - without breaking - and return to its original state."*

Please see *Damaged Hair* on page 6

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**Embrace the Beauty of You.**

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*Web Site  
Coming soon!*

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### *Damaged Hair from page 5*

clue to poor elasticity could be sitting in your hairbrush (*or comb*). Do you have a lot of hair caught in your hairbrush (*or comb*)? Do you have to clean your brush (*or comb*) often because of built-up hair in the bristles? Unless you can tell that these hairs are all full-length and coming out at the root (in which case there may be other problems to be dealt with) you can be reasonably sure that you have a problem with hair breakage. The best treatment in this case is a protein rich conditioner, and/or weekly protein treatment, which will add strength to the hair shaft.

The most important thing to remember is that your hair is NOT alive once it emerges from the scalp. Like the free edge (white part) of your fingernails, the hair is dead tissue. Because of this, don't be tricked into believing promises made by products to heal or cure your hair damage. The conditioning treatments and products available today can help protect the hair, and can lessen some damage, but the best way to have healthy hair is always prevention. ©hairfinder.com

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