BEAUTY & STYLE | Apr 24, 2009

Salon-Straight Locks



Q: Blow-drying my curly hair straight always takes so long. Is there an easier way to get sleek locks?

A: For those who spend hours each week manipulating their curls into submission, thermal reconditioning (aka retexturizing or permanent straightening) treatments can help you get the sleek, humidity-proof hair you've always wanted. "The new generation of retexturizing treatments can be used on many different hair types without the old fear of ruining it," says Edward Perruzzi, co-owner of the Private World of Robert Edward, a salon in Newton Centre, Mass. (Harsh chemicals were used in the past and would damage all but the coarsest locks.)

How it works: The straightening solution penetrates hair and breaks down the bonds that cause it to curl. This allows the stylist to physically alter the structure of each strand (a process that can take from two to eight hours, depending on hair length, density and type). Some use hot irons, while others simply comb the straightening solution through the hair, piece by piece (think of it as a reverse perm). Additional conditioners are often added to help soften and protect locks.

While the thought of cutting daily blow-dry time from an hour plus to a few minutes is appealing, know that straightening is expensive (\$150–\$600 depending on the technique, your hair and the salon). Also keep in mind that while the hair remains permanently straight, new growth will need straightening every three to nine months (about \$100–\$500). Retouches typically cost slightly less and take less time (about one to six hours), depending on the technique, since the solution is applied to the root only. To find a salon near you that offers the treatment, call (888) 755-6834. — Geri Bird

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