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Prevention News

The Healthiest Way To Dry Your Hair

The Right Way To A Perfect Hair Day?

Science says you're doing it wrong

By Nina Elias



Pop quiz: What's the healthiest way to dry your hair? If you said, "air-drying, obviously," you'd be mistaken. With the right technique, using a [blow-dryer](#) is actually *better* for your mane's health than letting it air-dry, according to a recent study from Korea.

Fake A Fuller Head Of Hair

How can that be? First, a little hair anatomy: Each strand of your hair is essentially a tube with an inner cortex and a protective outer layer (called a cuticle) held together by delicate

proteins. "When the [cuticle layer](#) is perfectly intact, then hair is very shiny and doesn't tend to break," says Jeff Donovan, MD, a board-certified dermatologist and hair restoration physician with Hair Club Medical Group in Toronto. Too much heat can damage the cuticle by trapping water inside the cortex and actually causing the water to boil (yikes).

Sounds like a case for air-drying, but get this: The study found that while the heat of a dryer can cause more damage than not using one, using a [hair-dryer](#) at the right distance and temperature can actually cause *less damage* than letting hair [air-dry](#). That's because when hair comes in contact with water, it swells. The longer the swelling goes on (say, for the 2 hours it took for hair to air-dry in the study), the more pressure it puts on the delicate proteins keeping hair intact, which can lead to more [damage](#).

Beauty

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Hair

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Here's the just-right formula for drying your hair the healthiest way possible:

First, let your hair dry naturally, about 70-80% of the way dry. Then, with your dryer on the coolest setting (don't touch that hot setting!), blow your hair dry, keeping the dryer about 6-inches away from hair at all times and moving it around continuously. Voilà: gorgeous, healthy hair, without the heat.

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