



Natural Hair Care (Part 2)

Mother Nature has provided us with lots of ingredients to keep our hair beautiful and healthy. We just need to find the ones that will suit our specific need best.

Besides external care, a healthy, wholesome diet is essential for strong, good looking hair. Our hair is made of keratin, which is basically a form of protein. Soft, glossy hair have smooth, healthy cuticles acting as protective barriers to keep our hair from becoming dry and tangled. These cuticles are formed by a kind of lipid structure called ceramides and are kept in good condition by natural oils. Therefore, foods rich in proteins and essential fatty acids, in particular, eggs, milk, fish, meats, avocado, black sesame seeds, plant oils etc, provide the 'raw materials' required by our hair for nourishment and regeneration. According to traditional Chinese medicine, the state of our hair is controlled and influence by our kidneys. Hence, to keep our hair looking youthful and healthy, it is important to keep our kidneys healthy too. This explains why Chinese herbs like He Shou Wu, which has affinity with the kidneys, are used for keeping the hair black and glossy.

External treatments on the other hand, replenish the hair directly by supplying moisture and other nutritive elements to the cuticles. In this issue, I will share with you a few favorite formulae that have served me well.

Formula 1: Henna Hair

Conditioning Crème

Non-coloring henna, also known as senna, is a great hair and scalp conditioner and tonic. Besides keeping the hair soft and lustrous, it also acts as an astringent for the scalp, helping to balance sebum production and stimulate circulation. Therefore it is an excellent overall hair conditioning ingredient.

Ingredients:

<i>Non-colouring henna/ Cassia Obovata</i>	<i>2 tablespoons (short hair) 4 tablespoons (long hair)</i>
<i>Plain, unsweetened yogurt</i>	<i>3 to 6 tablespoons</i>
<i>Very hot water</i>	<i>sufficient to form a paste</i>
<i>Rosemary essential oil</i>	<i>4 drops</i>
<i>Lavender essential oil</i>	<i>2 drops</i>
<i>Basil essential oil</i>	<i>2 drops</i>

How to prepare:

- 1. In a non-metal bowl, mix non-colouring henna powder with a small amount of hot water to form a thick paste.*
- 2. Allow to cool completely. Add yogurt and mix thoroughly.*
- 3. Set aside for 1 hour.*
- 4. Just before use, add essential oils and mix well.*

How to use:

- 1. Dampen hair with warm water. Squeeze away excess water gently until the hair is only damp but not dripping wet.*
- 2. Apply a small amount of sweet almond oil or extra virgin olive oil evenly onto your hair shaft, avoiding the scalp.*
- 3. Massage the conditioning crème thoroughly and evenly throughout your hair and scalp.*
- 4. If your hair is long, pin it up into a bun. Cover your hair with a shower cap.*
- 5. Let the conditioning crème work on your hair for 60 to 90 minutes.*
- 6. Rinse off the conditioning crème thoroughly with warm water. Shampoo your hair as usual, follow by a herbal conditioning rinse.*

Formula 2: Banana Hair Masque

Banana is packed with natural moisturizers and minerals to revitalize dull-looking, chemically-treated hair.

Ingredients:

<i>Large ripe banana</i>	<i>1 for short to medium hair 2 for long hair</i>
<i>Honey</i>	<i>2 teaspoons</i>
<i>Egg Yolk</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Extra virgin olive oil</i>	<i>1 teaspoon</i>

How to prepare:

- 1. Remove banana skin. Cut the banana into small pieces.*
- 2. Using a mortar and pestle, mash the banana until you obtain a smooth pulp.*
- 3. Add honey, egg yolk and olive oil to the banana and mix thoroughly until smooth.*

How to use:

- 1. Dampen hair with warm water. Squeeze away excess water gently until the hair is only damp but not dripping wet.*
- 2. Apply a small amount of sweet almond oil or extra virgin olive oil evenly onto your hair shaft, avoiding the scalp.*
- 3. Massage the conditioning crème thoroughly and evenly throughout your hair and scalp.*
- 4. If your hair is long, pin it up into a bun. Cover your hair with a shower cap.*
- 5. Let the conditioning crème work on your hair for 60 to 90 minutes.*
- 6. Rinse off the conditioning crème thoroughly with warm water. Shampoo your hair as usual, follow by a herbal conditioning rinse.*



Extra tips for naturally beautiful hair:

1. *Brush your hair every morning and night with a hair brush made with natural bristles. Make sure that the brushing is carried out while your hair is completely dry. Do not brush wet or damp hair. Brushing helps to remove dead skin cells from the scalp, promote scalp circulation, and distribute natural oils from the scalp to the hair shaft.*
2. *Massage your scalp daily using small and firm circular motions. This helps to stimulate the scalp. It is good for relieving stress and tension around the head area too.*
3. *After washing your hair, remove any tangles by combing it gently with a wide-tooth comb. Do not pull or tug at your hair.*
4. *Keep your hair brush and combs clean by washing it once a week.*