

Plaiting and twisting techniques

{Braids and dreadlocks}

Dreads or dreadlocks are often believed to be a hair style for Rasta's or afro hair but they are becoming very popular with hippy and beach cultures too. Not a hairstyle for everyone but with so little information out there on how to produce this type of hair, how could we overlook it?



If you have Caucasian hair the method for creating dreads differs greatly from that used when you have Afro hair. So decide on your hair type and follow the instructions below:

Method for Caucasian Hair

Dreads have become quite popular and although not suited to Caucasian hair, they are possible. The curlier your hair is naturally, the easier it is to achieve this look by following option 1. If your hair is dead straight or Asian then you will need to follow option 2.

Option 1

This method of making dreadlocks will result in fine neat dreads rather than large chunky ones. You basically won't get them to matte and hold if you make them too large. It is possible to very carefully, brush out these dreads if you don't like the result. They may also unravel on their own if your hair is only slightly curly or soft in texture, but you will have had the look for a few days at least.

This is very time consuming and a friend to help out would be great, especially for the back. You may find a hairdresser that will set your hair in this way, but the fact is that it takes so long that the cost will be high. Ring or book a consultation first and get a price quote.

Tools and bits and pieces you will need:

A strong gel or mousse

A selection of silky material strips. The material needs to be cut into lengths 3 to 4 cm wide (3 inches) and 2 and a 1/2 times the length of your hair.

Strong wax to finish

Method:

- Take a rough section 1 to 2 cm (half to 3/4 inches) square.
- Apply your gel etc to the whole length of the section.
- With a small amount of wax on your finger tips, rub and slightly [backcomb](#) the base of your section.
- Tie one end of your material strip over the base of the section that you just formed.
- With a little more wax on your finger tips rub, fingers backcomb lightly and twist the hair along its length. Basically the rubbing/backcombing 'mattes' or 'knots up' the hair and the twisting holds it in place.

- Once the section becomes stiff from twisting, hold the twist tightly and pick up the long end of your material strip. Bind it around your twisted hair. It is very important to bind in the opposite direction to the way you twisted the hair. You will know straight away if you get this wrong as the whole thing will unravel!
- When you get to the ends of your hair, bind back on yourself a couple of cm's and then tie off as you would a bandage by tearing the fabric down the middle a little way and knotting.

- You guessed it! Repeat until the rest of your hair is bound and leave overnight.
- Remove the strips of material and spray with firm hold spray.

Over the next few days you will have to decide whether you are into this new look as you will either need to keep it up or let it begin to unravel.

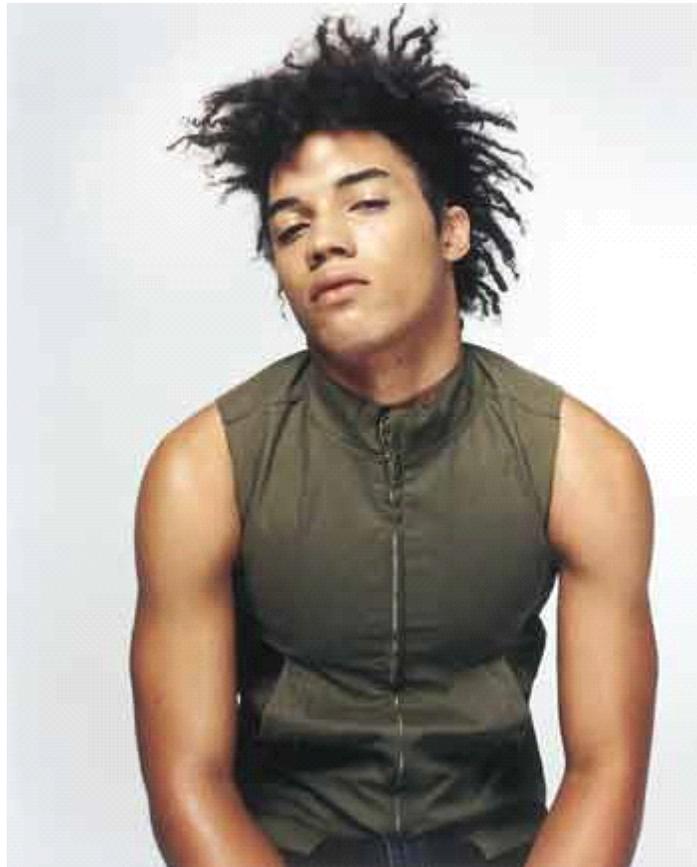
If you decide to go with it then any unwinding or separation should be dealt with by using a small amount of wax and the, by now, practiced rubbing and finger backcombing motion!

As your hair grows you will need to repeat the whole operation on the new hair ones you have about 5 cm's (2 inches).

Option 2

You cannot achieve dreads without using a form of perming you need to consult a professional hairdresser. Not just any hairdresser though as this is not something that you learn to do in basic hairdressing school! It's best to make a few phone calls first to find out if there is a hairdresser in your area who does this type of work. You will find that salons that don't do this will be happy to point you in the right direction. Once you have found the right hairdresser, you will need to have a one-on-one consultation to ascertain whether your own hair is up to this process as it puts lots of stress on it.

Although what you want to do when you perm hair in this way, is make it into "bad" condition, there is a big difference between that and making it fall out by overstressing it! Once all that has been worked out, get a quote. This can be very expensive as it takes ages. I once did this to a guy with Asian hair who asked to look like Maxwell (and he did by the end of it) but it took a whole day! Oh, I should mention that you can look pretty silly whilst all this is happening and you may not want to invite your friends along!



Method for Afro Hair

Afro hair, if left to its own devices will dread naturally, although the size and neatness of each dread may be unpredictable. For a more refined and slimmer dreaded look:

- separate your hair into sections that represent the type of dread effect you are after.
- You then simply begin to twist the sections of hair with a little wax.
- As you twist the strands, rub the hair at the same time to 'matt' it together slightly.

At first you will find the hair tends to unravel a little, but as it does, go over each strand again with some wax then re twist and rub. It is important to always twist the strands in the same direction to avoid unraveling.

As your hair grows you will need to twist and rub the roots from time to time.

The only down side of this look is that when you've had enough of it, the only way out is to go for the big chop!

Ever wanted to know how to make a plait or braid for yourself or your daughter? This is the hair care solution with hair tips and diagrams to help you get it right. The Virtual Salon brings you some of the most enduring and beautiful ways of managing your long hair, braiding or plaiting. A good home made plait created using our information is a hair style that will impress your friends with your styling abilities. These classic plaiting styles are dateless and the various methods will suit a variety of different head and face shapes. They are also a great way of managing hair by keeping it neat and tidy and for kids that can mean nit free!

Tools and other items you will need:

- Covered elastic bands
- Paddle or similar brush to remove tangles
- A little hair spray
- A clip to keep hair not being plaited out of the way
- Possibly a few bobby pins or grips or fine hair pin if you have layers to secure any stray bits!



SIMPLE BRAID

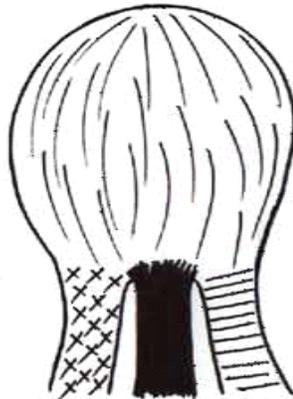
This is the plait that sits away from the head and can also be used to create waves. If you were after the type of plait that follows the curve of the head, that's called a *French plait*. You need reasonably long hair for a simple plait, if your hair is long but you have some shorter layers, a French plait might work better.

Tools and other items you will need:

- Covered elastic bands
- Paddle or similar brush to remove tangles
- A little hair spray
- A clip to keep hair not being plaited out of the way
- Possibly a few pins or grips or odd pin if you have layers to secure any stray bits!

Method:

1. Brush your dry hair through to remove tangles. Sweep it back into the nape and divide it into 3 equal sections.



2. Take 2 of the sections in your left hand separated with one of your fingers, and the third section in your right hand. Then take your right hand over the top of the middle section whilst at the same time passing the middle section to your right hand and the section originally in your right hand, to your left. This will leave you with 2 sections in your left hand as before.



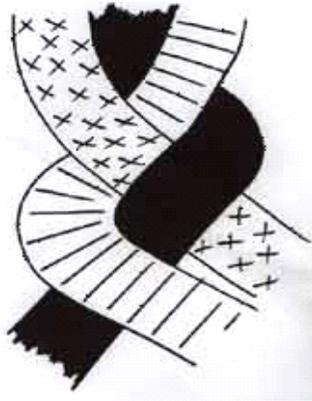
3. Now cross the outside section that is in your left hand over the new middle section. You can use your right hand to grab this and bring it across, leaving you with 2 sections in your right hand.



4. Now pass the section from the outside right, over the middle.



5. You should now have the beginnings of the plait. Keep on crossing right over center and then left over center.



6. When you reach the ends of your hair, secure it with a covered band.



Try this on someone else first or on the piece of hair that hangs down in front of your face as I did to write these instructions! Once you have a rhythm going it is actually very easy.

French braids and plaiting

There are many variations of French braiding or plaiting, like the whole head plait straight down the centre of the head, placing the braid to one side or both and partial head French braids as in the images below. The difference between this type of plait and the simple three-strand plait is that you are constantly picking up more hair and adding it to the French plait (or 'braid'). To create another hair style plait variation you can reverse the directions below and have an 'inside out' braid. You will need plenty of practice as with any hair plaiting it gets easier and faster as you do, if you are planning to do this to your own hair a few muscles should be gained so that you can hold your arms up for the time needed)!



A side French braid can be glamorous
for school! This hair style from Paloma



a French braid used to hold back masses of
curls in this hair style



Johann Cuthbert combines a French braid with a top knot for this hair style

Tools and other items you will need:

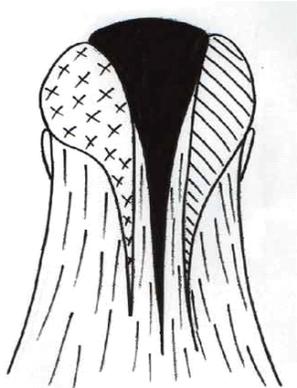
- Covered elastic bands
- Paddle or similar brush to remove tangles
- A little hair spray
- A clip to keep hair not being plaited out of the way
- Possibly a few pins or grips or odd pin if you have layers to secure any stray bits!

Simple French Braid

This is a single braid that follows the curve of the back of the head. Your hair needs to be quite long for this; a few layers won't matter as long as they reach from the side of the head to the centre back and pass it by about 10cm. You will need to know how to do a basic plait to understand the instructions. If you need some help with this first then return to [simple plaiting](#).

Method:

1. Separate the front (including sides) of your hair from the back. Some people prefer to separate the top leaving only the sides to be added in later but this is a little more difficult. Draw the separated hair back to the crown of your head and divide it into 3 equal strands.



2. Do a quick left over center, right over centre (as in the simple plait) to start.



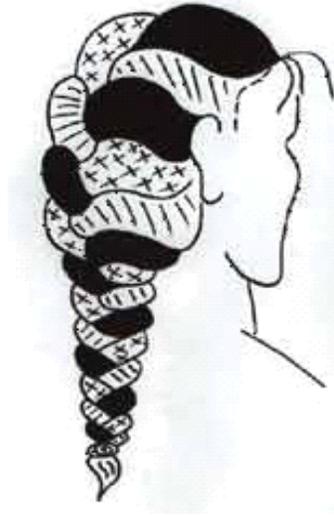
3. As you continue, add extra hair taken from directly underneath each new section about to be crossed over. Then go ahead and cross it over. The amount of hair you pick up should be about the same each time.



4. Your braid will naturally follow the curve of the head as you pick up and include the new hair. Keep going until you reach the nape and all of your hair has been included.



5. Finish with a simple plait and secure with your covered band when you reach the ends of your hair .



Tips:

- Don't try to make the braid too neat to begin with, master the technique then improve on the neatness.
- Try to keep your tension and section size the same when working on neatness.
- Use your little finger to section, this will allow you to hold the rest of the hair firmly whilst picking up the new hair.
- For a variation, you can finish the braid just above the nape and turn it under to form a roll that can be pinned in place.

Side French Plaits (as shown in image at top of page).

Method:

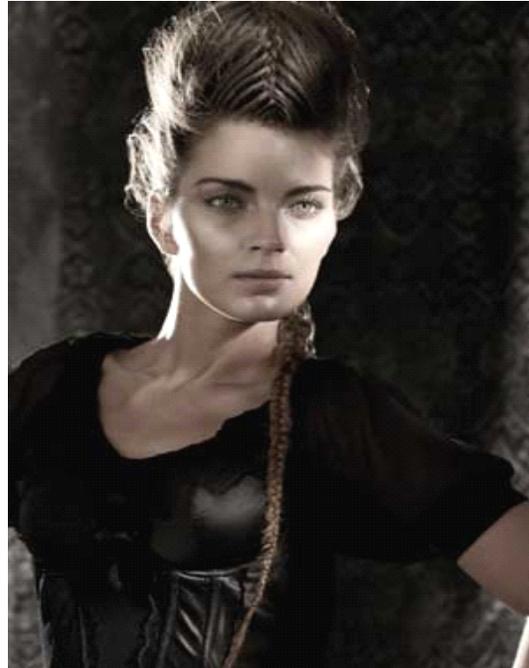
1. Find your normal parting or create a straight down the middle parting (if you have any shorter pieces of hair that may not reach the center back if parted to either side).
2. From the crown to the nape separate your hair into two halves.
3. Clip one side out of the way and begin to plait the other.
4. Divide this side into three sections at the front hair line and plait it as you would for a normal French plait (see above).
5. When you get as far as the nape, remove the clip from the other side and use it to hold the plait in place whilst you do the second side.
6. Once you have both sides plaited as far as the nape, combine the hair and plait as you would for a simple plait until you reach the ends. Secure with a band.
7. If your hair is shorter, then secure with the band at the nape and tuck it under itself, holding it in place with a few pins.

Fish tail plating

The fishtail plait or braid is one of the most popular pages in the whole of the www.VirtualHairCare.com hairstyles information resource pages and with over 500 hair style pages and hair style galleries that is saying something about what we all want to know about our hair. If you are want to make a fishtail, French or simple plait we have the diagrams and how to tips that will help create the hairstyle braid you want right here.



Alternative use of fishtail plaiting from Hayley Mears



Clever use of the fishtail plait in the fringe

The basic gist of this form of plaiting is that you don't have to keep the sections separate for any longer than it takes to cross them over each other. The finished result should look like the herring bone pattern you see reproduced on fabric. Here are two variations.

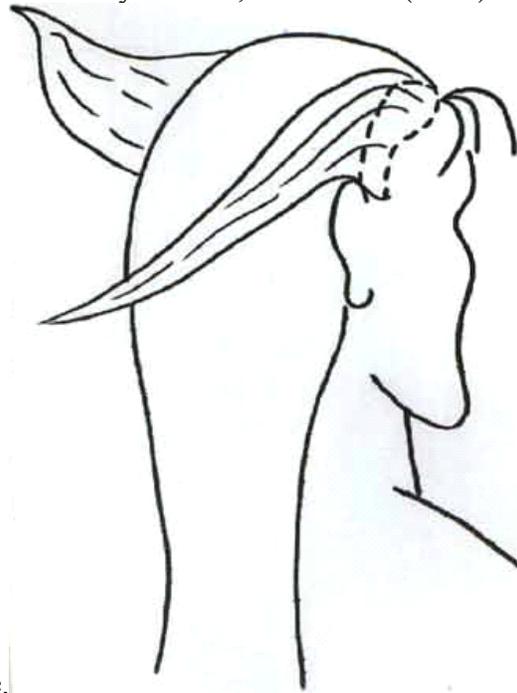
Tools and other items you will need:

- Covered elastic bands
- Paddle or similar brush to remove tangles
- A little hair spray
- A clip to keep hair not being plaited out of the way
- Possibly a few pins or grips or odd pin if you have layers to secure any stray bits!

Method 1: (for a single fish tail down the back of the head):

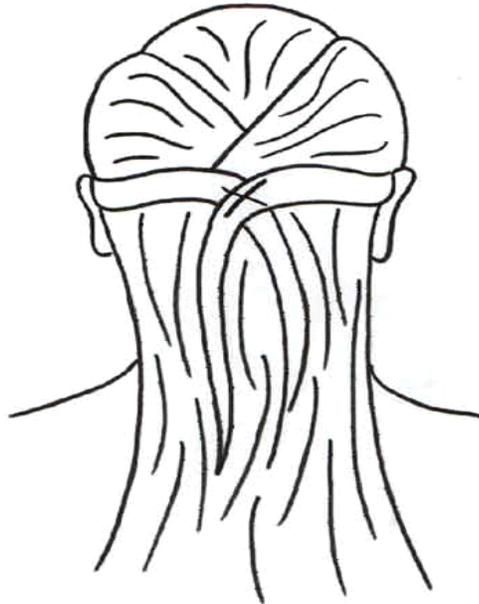
1. Brush your hair through so that it is easily separated with your fingers.

2. Take a section from either side of your face, about 3 cm (or 1") deep, running



from sideburns to temple.

3. Draw the sections back towards the crown and cross the right section over the left.
4. Using your right hand press the cross over point to the head to hold the hair in place.
5. Use your left hand to pick up a new section from the left side. Take it from under the first section and make it about the same size.
6. Take the new section of hair over the right-hand section and, as you do so, swap to hold the hair down with the left hand at the cross over point. The ends of the sections will naturally fall down the middle and merge with the rest of the



hair.

7. With the right hand now free, use it to pick up another new section from the right, cross it over the section from the left, held down in the middle. Again, as you cross over, change the hand that is holding the hair pressed to the head.
8. Simply keep repeating this until you run out of hair. If you get lost, remember that the side from which you last took a section should correspond with the hand holding the hair in the middle. Therefore you are always about to take your new section from the side that the free hand is on.
9. As you pass beyond the nape or can no longer take hair from the sides, continue by taking hair from the underneath of your "ponytail" and crossing this hair over at the centre front.
10. Secure at the end with your covered band, it looks good if you use a fine section of hair to wrap over the band to cover it.



Method 2: (for a fish tail braid that starts from a ponytail in the nape of the neck or 'bunches' either side):

This is really simple, especially once you're familiar with method 1 above.

1. Gather your hair as if to place it in a ponytail or 'bunches'.
2. To start, take a section of hair from the left and right and then cross right over left, hold the cross over point in place with the right hand.
3. With the left hand, take a section from underneath and bring it round to the front and cross it over the middle.

4. Hold it pressed to the rest of the hair with the same hand, so freeing up the right hand.
5. Using the right hand, take a section from underneath the ponytail and bring this round to the front from the right side, cross it over the middle and hold in place with the right hand freeing up the left.
6. Keep repeating steps 3,4,5 until you run out of hair and then secure with a covered band.

You can do this either tightly or loosely to get different effects; you do however need long hair if you are going for the loose version, else it will simply unravel.

PONYTAIL

Ponytails are often seen as a quick and easy hairstyle to keep hair off the face for sport or work, they can even be used to re-style dirty or messy hair quickly in a neat way. Have a look through our ponytail gallery of styles and you will see that they can be a striking high fashion hair style too.

A less known use is as the foundation of more elaborate hair up styles, where multiple bunches of hair are used as support and s secure anchor for bobby pins.



They are however not the most flattering for many face shapes. If you would not cut your hair very short then they may not suit you. If you wear your hair tied back more often than not, then why do you have all that hair? Maybe a shorter look that you can manage would suit your lifestyle better and be more flattering. Just a thought!

Saying that they are easy does not mean that they don't come without the odd problem, so a few points to note:

With all ponytails, excessive tension can cause breakage. Always go *gently* when making a ponytail, as using too much force can result in a very nasty condition called tension alopecia. This is *permanent* hair loss and leaves you looking like you are receding. This is often caused during childhood so please moms, be especially careful.

The use of coated rubber bands or soft scrunchies is another important point, as they will not break or damage the hair. A sign that you are getting hair breakage from bands is when you see a line of shorter hairs 10 to 15cm (4 to 6 inches) from the scalp.

Headaches from ponytails can also be caused by excessive tension combined with the weight of the hair. Try Alice type bands to keep your hair off your face or cut it a little to relieve some of the weight.

Some Tips:

- The best way to achieve a good clean looking pony tail is to brush the dry hair back, gather it in one hand then slips a band from around the fingers of the other hand over it.
- If your hair tangles as you pull it through the band try wrapping ribbon around the hair and securing with a couple of fine hair pins.
- If your hair is exceptionally thick it can often be very difficult to get a clean smooth finish to the hair on the scalp, as sections of it tend to lump and clump forming bumps. Try making the pony tail in two sections the first from just below the crown down to the nape and secure. The second section being the rest of your hair from hairline to crown can then be smoothed with a [pad brush](#) and secured over the first section with a second band.
- Finally use a little hair spray over the head and smooth your hands immediately over the surface following the line of your head to remove any frizzy bits. Don't be tempted to use gel or an oil/gloss for this as your hair will look greasy.

For a variation try a ponytail with side twists:

- Part your hair down the center.
- Working one side at a time, take a rough section of hair that encompasses all of the hair from the parting to the temple.
- Pull it back away from the face and twist it at the same time.
- When the first section feels tight against the scalp, take a similar sized section immediately behind it and twist that in with the first.
- Repeat this adding in more hair until all the hair on one side is used up and secure it in the nape with a band whilst you repeat the process on the other side.
- To finish, either leave both sides separate or join them together. Leave the loose hair hanging down your back.

This is a great ponytail if your hair is layered around the face and would normally fall out, as the twisting holds in the shorter bits