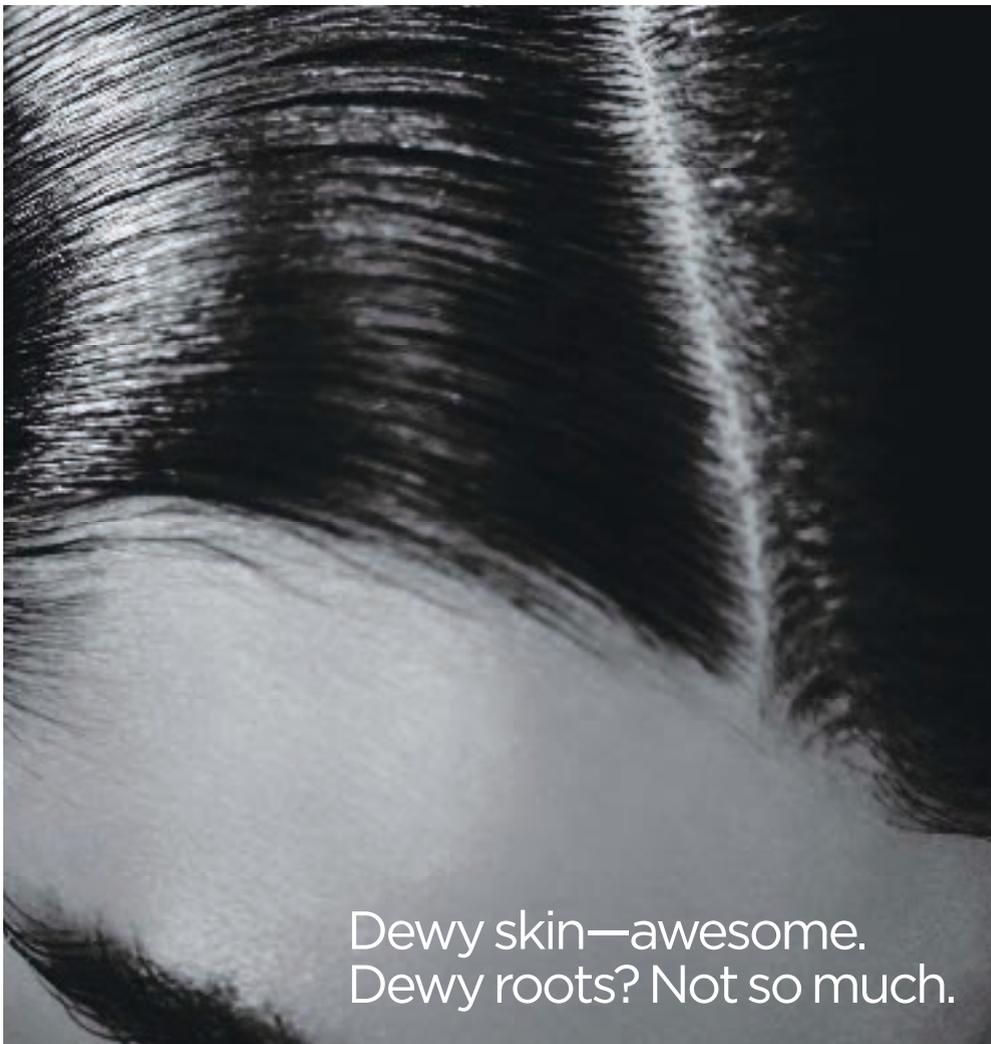


Your hair is having a meltdown—and you're not helping! You're washing less, styling more, and using harsh products that create a cycle of abuse. Read on for our roots-to-ends rehab that delivers major...

# TRESS RELIEF

*By Ali Finney*



Dewy skin—awesome.  
Dewy roots? Not so much.

## scalp

You're happier and healthier surrounded by supportive friends, right? Ditto for your hair. In a recent report, P&G scientists found that a strand growing in a bad scalp environment—one with flakes, inflammation, or itchiness—is less equipped to deal with stressors like heat styling or sun damage later on. Which means it's more likely to break than one sprouting from a healthy zone. Unfortunately, docs are seeing a lot more of the former these days.

One reason: Dyeing our hair blonder and blonder (the peroxide—ouch!). But even more common, a newfound dependence on dry shampoo—like, using it for a week straight.

This creates so much buildup at the roots, it's causing scalp issues like seborrheic dermatitis (inflamed, oily scales) and folliculitis (tiny red pimples). While a spritz of powder here or there won't hurt, "you should certainly not use it every day," says West Islip, New York, dermatologist Kavita Mariwalla, M.D.

Those with finer textures produce more oil and should aim to wash every other day, while those with coarser hair (and less sebum) can extend that time frame to three. Routine cleansing—which, unlike dry shampooing, carries away buildup and sweat and doesn't just soak it up—goes a long way toward rehabbing a hurting scalp. If you've still

got issues, though, consider enlisting these special ops.

### FOR A DRY, FLAKY SCALP Exfoliant

This tends to be a hereditary condition, but it's an environment that can also be created—and anyone who's felt the burn during a hair-lightening sesh knows exactly

#### Spot That Flake

If they're flat and yellow, you likely don't have dry scalp—you've got the type of dandruff that exfoliating won't fix. Zinc pyrithione shampoo is still the best way to neutralize dandruff-causing yeasts. Though the technology itself hasn't changed in years, the formulas have. **Head & Shoulders Green Apple Shampoo** (\$5, at Walmart) leaves hair shockingly silky, and it smells like a sun-kissed orchard.

what we're talking about. The ammonia in hair dye raises the pH on the scalp to above its normal range, which can dry it out to the point of flaking (looks like small white specks). Manual exfoliation helps nix the dust. **Kérastase Gommage Chronologiste** (\$44, [kerastase-usa.com](http://kerastase-usa.com)) has apricot-seed beads with enough oomph to pick up product grime and flakes but not large enough to cause irritation. Except on "those with thinning hair," says New York City dermatologist Dendy Engelman, M.D. "Scalp exfoliants can be too rough on weak follicles."



### FOR AN OILY SCALP Pre-Shampoo Treatment

Greasy roots are more than an aesthetic problem. "Not only do we have cellular debris and skin turnover that we need to slough off," says Engelman, "but we also have sweat glands and body odor glands on the scalp that can cause a proliferation of bacteria." That bacteria can breed the folliculitis pimples mentioned earlier (fun!). To help prevent or remedy the situation, Engelman suggests massaging in a couple drops of a soothing serum, like **Phyto Phytopoléine Botanical Scalp Treatment** (\$40, [phyto.com](http://phyto.com)), 20 minutes



before showering. It contains oil- and bacteria-busting rosemary and sage to help with inflamed pores and avert more breakouts. If pimples persist, wash daily with a shampoo containing salicylic acid, like Neutrogena T/Sal Therapeutic Shampoo (\$7.14, [neutrogena.com](http://neutrogena.com)).

# lengths

Like a stereotypical middle child, the area between root and tip is oft forgotten—but there are plenty of reasons to give it some TLC. “Hair is basically shingled proteins, and when it’s exposed to sun, heat, or any kind of pollution, those shingles can lift up,” says Los Angeles hairstylist Aviva Perea. “That enables products to get stuck, which can create a gunky film.” Here, silicones—not dry

shampoo—are the main offender. These smoothing agents are found in everything from heat protectants to traditional shampoos, and according to cosmetic chemist Randy Schueller of TheBeautyBrains.com, if they get trapped on your hair shaft, they can leave hair looking heavy and dull.

Hard water is also to blame for a matte mane: The calcium and magnesium in shower water are positively charged and latch on to hair, which is negatively charged. That

reaction parches strands. “The drier your hair is, the more prone to breakage it will be,” says Perea. “Think about it: It’s easier to snap a dry noodle than a wet one.” Meet the buildup busters that aim to restore luster.

## MONTHLY Clarifying Treatment

While your day-to-day shampoo is pretty good at removing styling ingredients, some things don’t easily dissolve with normal

cleansing, like special polymers that help thwart humidity. To remove these kinds of ingredients, you need a shampoo with added muscle: Clarifying formulas contain higher levels of surfactants that are able to take off clingy silicone, fatty alcohols, and oily residue left behind, explains Schueller; be sure to rub it over

lengths, not just at roots. If you dye your hair, choose a product that’s color-safe, such as **Pantene Purifying Shampoo** (\$5, at drugstores), which is infused with fade-resisting antioxidants, or **Oribe The Cleanse Clarifying Shampoo** (\$44, [oribe.com](http://oribe.com)), which contains volcanic ash to wipe out product accumulation without stripping dye molecules.



Out, damned mineral deposits!

## WEEKLY Hair Vinegar

Picture a chalky, calcified showerhead. The same thing can happen to your own head over time if you don’t nix the hard-water minerals that glom on to lengths. One thing that works? Rinsing with apple cider vinegar, which lowers the pH of the mineral buildup enough to break it apart. But who wants their hair to smell like an egg dye kit? New products offer the benefits with a more sophisticated scent—**Christophe Robin Purifying Hair Finish Lotion** (\$48, [beautyhabit.com](http://beautyhabit.com)), for instance, uses a not-at-all-sour-smelling sage vinegar as its acidic agent. Once a week, spritz it onto dry hair from roots to tips and run your fingers through strands to distribute.



# ends

Depending on your hair length, your ends have seen close to two years of damage caused by everything from heat styling with blow-dryers and irons (this chips away at the outer layer) to, worse, chemical processes like coloring (they alter hair's internal structure). Hair is made up of lipids and proteins (a.k.a. keratin), which

are linked by naturally occurring disulfide bonds. To change hues, those bonds are often severed. "Anytime you do a color treatment, you're breaking down the cuticle and the cortex, which is what gives your hair strength," says Adrian Wallace, senior colorist at the Rita Hazan Salon in NYC. "The tips are weaker than other portions because they've already been through this process many times." Today's wild color trends—particularly

ombré, which targets only the vulnerable bottom lengths—can be especially harsh on the ends.

Once an end splits, there's nothing that can permanently make it go back together. But you can put a bandage on it. These treatments bring new tech to the vanity table so you can prevent the breakage or at least buy yourself some time before springing for a trim.

## TANGLE TACTICS

Detangling your hair can lead to a split-end bonanza if you're not careful—and gentle. The ideal method: In the shower, with conditioner still in, use a wide-tooth comb or (our fave) the flexible-bristled Wet Brush (\$10, [thewetbrush.com](http://thewetbrush.com)). Strands are never easier to un-knot than in this moment, meaning you're less likely to hack at them with your brush like a machete later.

## IN SALON

### Bond Builder

To help prevent the weakening that happens during most chemical processes, colorists add a special polymer into clients' dye mix via a product like B3 Brazilian Bond Builder (about \$25 a pop, [brazilianbondbuilder.com](http://brazilianbondbuilder.com) for salons) or Matrix Bond Ultim8 (from \$15, [matrix.com](http://matrix.com) for salons). The aim is to cement down the lifted cuticles that can eventually result in split ends, so hair is healthier and shinier for up to six weeks. "The adventurous colors that are so popular now, like platinum and pastels, were off the table a few years ago because they took such a toll on strands, causing major breakage," notes Wallace. "A treatment like this is a game changer for getting a bold shade without ruining your hair in the process."

## AT HOME

### Split-End Mender

First-gen menders worked the same way as leave-in conditioners: They smoothed the split from the outside. Updated versions, like **Tresemme Split Remedy Leave-In Conditioning Spray** (\$5, at drugstores), contain a polyelectrolyte complex, a glue-like polymer "that gets inside the split and pulls it back together," Schueller says. It's not as long-lasting as a bond builder, but it's impressively effective, staying active for three shampoo cycles. ■



Entering Splitsville.  
Population: 0.