



DITCHING THE 'POO

**Washing your hair without soap,
shampoo and/or conditioner**

This might sound gross to some, but only because we've all been conditioned (pardon the pun) to think it just has to be gross. You don't need to use shampoo or conditioner when you wash your hair. I stopped using both in 1996 and haven't looked back.

Before I talk about what to do in order to go 'poo-free, here's the why.

First up, shampoo is very close to dishwashing liquid. Sure, it gets your hair clean, however, in

the process, it removes all the naturally-occurring oils that live there. Your body makes these to protect your hair and keep it soft and strong and we just get rid of them!

Shampoo was only introduced about a century ago. Before that, people used ordinary soap, which did the job of removing grease and dirt well enough. However, soap doesn't work well in alkaline water, and when water in cities became more mineral-heavy – that is, alkaline – soap didn't work as well. It made the scales on hair stand up, leaving it weaker and rougher. So



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shampoo was developed, and marketed as working in both hard and soft water.

Most shampoos contain all sorts of chemicals, including mineral oil, a byproduct when petrol is distilled from crude oil. It's added to shampoo along with hundreds of other ingredients – check out the labels; there's a lot there – to thickly coat the strands, giving hair an artificial shine. And since it can't absorb into skin, like the other ingredients, it acts as a barrier on the scalp, preventing oil from being released and, thus, requiring more shampoo to strip away the grease.

It's why the more shampoo you use, the more you need. And then to deal with the loss of those protective natural oils, we need conditioner. And to keep it styled, strong, and workable, we pile on the waxes, gels, mousses, and untanglers. It all adds up, time-wise and money-wise.

So, how do you ditch the 'poo?

- Just wash your hair normally in water. Simple as that. Warm water is best initially (and in the colder months), though after a period of adjustment, lukewarm or summertime cold water works well enough.
- There is a period of adjustment and it may take a few weeks to a month or so before you adjust to this new regime; I took about three weeks. There will be withdrawals: your body is used to having the oils stripped out during shampooing, so it might take time for your body to stop producing so heavily. Your

scalp may get itchy and oily and greasy, but it won't last. A natural balance will surface; things will calm down; you just have to be patient and persistent.

- You can wash your hair this way daily if you like. Certainly in the initial transition period, you may feel like it. However, once you're through that, unless you're doing a lot of strenuous activity, for example, riding a bike with a helmet every day, you won't need to wash that often. In fact, over time, you'll find you'll settle into a routine that may mean washing once a week. We're all different – and sweat differently – so there's no hard and fast rule on this one. I usually wash weekly. My hair doesn't get greasy or oily or dry out, but I just know when it's time for a refresh. After all these years, it has its own equilibrium, its own balance. And I live in a city, so you just have to wash it some time (lol). More often than perhaps if you're living in a less polluted environment.
- If you do need to use or want to use something to condition your hair, especially during the transition, use apple cider vinegar. (Some people use lemon juice.) You don't need much and it's best to dilute it with water – a tablespoon of vinegar to a cup of water – and massage it through your hair after a hair wash. Leave it on for as little or long as you like, then rinse it out and dry as per usual. It's best to use less vinegar if your hair is naturally oily. You may not need any at all. I rarely use it.

WORTH A LOOK

■ <https://theartofsimple.net/how-to-clean-your-hair-without-shampoo>