



Olive Oil: The ultimate hair conditioner

Over at [Wise Bread](#), Nora has been holding forth on some unexpected ways to use [powdered milk](#) and [toothpaste](#), ranging from softening your skin to filling holes in the wall. This entertaining discussion reminded me of something I learned from a dorm-mate in college. She had long, spectacular, radiantly shining black hair, the envy of every woman and the ruination of every man who saw her. One weekend she showed us how she used plain olive oil to condition her hair to a high pitch of beauty. Here's her secret:

You need:

- about a cup of olive oil (less, if your hair is short)
- shampoo
- plastic wrap
- three old, clean bath towels
- paper towels
- a bonnet hair dryer, a gooseneck lamp or other incandescent lamp that you can move close to your head, or a warm, sunny day
- a clean utility or kitchen sink in which to wash your hair

Prepare your tools: Pour about a cup of olive oil into a measuring cup, if your hair is shoulder length or longer; for shorter hair, you can use a half-cup or so. Place this, the paper towels, and the bath towels near at hand where you will wash your hair. Pull out a couple of lengths of plastic wrap, about two or three feet long, and lay them out neatly on the countertop.

Don't use the shower for this process! Olive oil dripped on the floor of a shower is extremely slippery and dangerous. Bend over a large sink to wash your hair and apply the oil.

First, wash your hair and thoroughly rinse out all the shampoo. Don't apply commercial conditioner. When your hair is clean and well rinsed, towel dry it until it's just damp. Set the wet towel aside. Now, again bending over the sink, apply the olive oil to your hair. Gently rub it in well, so that all your hair and your scalp are bathed generously in olive oil.

Grab a few paper towels and wipe the oil off your hands. Now take the plastic wrap and wind it around your head, turban style, so your hair is firmly covered. Grab the dry bath towel and wrap it around your head over the plastic wrap. This towel should be an old one, not your favorite guest towel!

What you want to do now is keep your hair warm for at least a half-hour; better, for an hour or so. One strategy is simply to keep the towel wrapped tightly over the plastic wrap and let your body heat keep the hair warm.

Another is to drape the towel over your shoulders to absorb leaks and sit beneath a lamp with an incandescent bulb. A gooseneck lamp is good for this purpose; some floor lamps can be adapted to work, too. A third strategy is to sit outside in the sun for a while, allowing the sunlight to warm the wrapped hair.



But the best technique is to use an old-fashioned bonnet hair dryer. Wrap another couple layers of plastic wrap around your hair to try to minimize drips as much as possible. Slide the hair dryer over the plastic-wrap turban and turn the dryer to “high.” A half-hour or forty-five minutes of this treatment is extremely effective.

Whichever approach you choose, after your hair has marinated in olive oil for 30 minutes to an hour, it’s back to the sink, shampoo bottle in hand.

Shampoo your hair twice. If it’s very long, you may want to shampoo three times. If your hair still feels like it has any olive-oil residue, shampoo it again. Rinse well after each shampooing. Now towel-dry your hair with the third towel you set on the counter, and voilà! You’re ready to proceed with your regular styling and grooming routine.

If your hair looks at all limp or oily after you’ve styled it, you’ll need to shampoo again to remove the last residue of olive oil. One more shampooing should do the trick. To avoid this, be sure to shampoo and rinse thoroughly the first time around.

The effect of an olive-oil conditioning is amazing. It utterly does away with any dryness and frizzies, and it seems to last a long time—at least a month.

Clean-up

Olive oil, not surprisingly, is...well, *oily*. The towel used to wrap your plastic-wrap turban and keep drips off your shoulders will end up with a lot of olive oil on it. Wash thoroughly, preferably by itself in the washer. Sprinkle the absorbed oil liberally with Spray’N’Wash or a similar product and allow to stand for at least an hour. Then apply some liquid clothes detergent or a paste made of dry detergent and water to the areas that took up the oil. Finally, wash in *warm water* on a long cycle. It may take a couple of washings to completely remove the oil from the towel. This is why it’s best to use an old, tattered towel for the purpose! The other two towels, if you used them only to dry clean hair, should be fine—just don’t wash them in with the oily towel.

Source: funny-about-money.com