

What to Ask Before You Start Locs

Starting locs is exciting, and it's also a commitment measured in years. Your consultation is the last point where everything is still reversible, so print this and take it with you.

TIME TO MATURE LOCS

12 to 24 months

SALON INSTALL

\$50 to \$800

RETWIST EVERY

4 to 10 weeks

What you need

- ☐ A photo of your hairline from about a year ago
- ☐ The date of your last relaxer, color or bleach
- ☐ A photo of the loc size you actually want

Ask about the method

- 1 Which method are you using, and why is that method right for my hair?
- 2 Will you maintain my locs by palm rolling or by interlocking?
- 3 What size will my locs be, and how many will I have?

Thicker locs pull less than thinner ones

Smaller locs mean you'll have more of them, each anchored by fewer hairs. The AAD's advice for thicker braids and locs is to keep them short: longer hair is heavier on the scalp and creates more tension.

Ask about the commitment

- 1 How often will I come back, and what does each visit cost?
- 2 If I want my locs out in two years, what are my options?
- 3 What products will you use, and where can I buy them?

Ask about your scalp

- 1 How tight is too tight, and what should I say if it starts to hurt?
- 2 My edges are fine. How will you adjust for that?
- 3 I still have relaxed or color-treated hair. Does that change anything?

Considerations

- If your hairstyle feels painful, the style is too tight. (AAD)
- In a review of traction alopecia patients, only 18.9% said they had never felt pain during or after having their hair done. Roughly four in five felt it, and carried on.
- "A little pain is normal" is the answer that should end the consultation.
- If your hair is relaxed or texturized, it's already weakened, and adding the tension of locs on top of that raises your risk of hair loss.
- Interlocking, backcombing and crocheting cannot be undone without cutting your hair.
- Early hair loss from traction alopecia can often regrow completely. If it's caught too late, then hair loss can be longer term.

Your first three months

- Photograph your hairline in the same light each month, and compare it. Note any concerns.
- Wash your hair on a schedule.
- Retwist on a schedule, not whenever they look frizzy.
- Frizz in the budding stage is normal as the locs are forming.

