

Shed or Broken?

The Wash Day Sorting Mat

CurlCentric

curlcentric.com/shedding-vs-breakage

Free to print. No email required.

1 • COLLECT

Wash and detangle as usual. Keep the hair that comes out, from the drain and from your hands.

2 • SORT

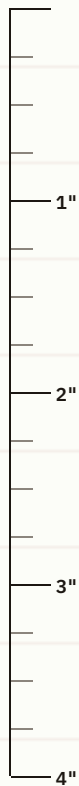
Lay each hair strand in the appropriate column below. Look at the root end: you'll see either a small pale bulb or no bulb at all.

3 • COMPARE

Look at which column is fuller. What matters is how the two piles compare, not how much hair came out.

SHED — has a bulb

Full length • pale club at the root end • fine tapered tip



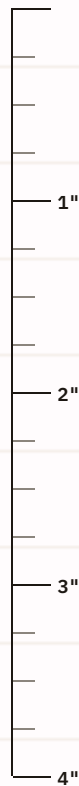
inches

This pile is normal. A shed hair finished its cycle and was already replaced underneath. Even a large number here is usually just the days between washes adding up.

Roughly how full?

BROKEN — no bulb

Short, uneven pieces • frayed or blunt ends • no root



inches

This pile is the fixable one. Breakage is mechanical. Look at detangling, tension, heat, and protein-moisture balance before you look at products.

Roughly how full?

Reading it: mostly bulbs means you're shedding, and the only question is the amount. Mostly fragments means you have a breakage problem, and the amount barely matters. Most people find both, and that's completely normal. Normal shedding runs 50 to 100 hairs a day (American Academy of Dermatology), so multiply by the days since your last wash before you decide anything is wrong. See a dermatologist if shedding runs past six to nine months, if your part is widening, or if the scalp itself is sore, flaking, or inflamed.