

Curl, interrupted

After years of irons and angst, I learned to love my untamed mane

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Writer Dahlia Kurtz grown to love her curls. (Jack Boland/QMI Agency)

My hair is not so much a style as it is a landmark. Blond corkscrew curls bounce out in every direction, often signaling my arrival in a room.

It garners compliments – and sometimes insults, like the “ch-ch-ch-Chia” from the 20-something as we passed each other in a mall. But I’m OK with it because I have embraced who I am. Yes, some people may have a romance, some a bromance, some a fromance.

It hasn’t always been this way though.

Growing up I hated my hair – The Beast. As a teen I’d contort my neck over an ironing board, set the iron to “cot” and my mom press out my locks.

Once I accepted the curl, The Beast became The Beastiful.

More than 65% of women have curly or wavy hair. The multi-billion-dollar hair-straightening market (in the U.S. they hide this, but it doesn’t mean it’s not there).

“It’s your head, not your hair, that needs straightening,” says Lorraine Massey, co-owner of Devachan Salon and *Girl: The Handbook*. “Curls are like our fingerprints. It’s nature. And everything in nature is 100% unique.”

Every one of her clients has tried to fight the curl, but Massey believes people should fight for them instead. “Curl is a trend; they’re a lifestyle.”

If you fight them, not only will you lose, but you will also lose a lot of money.

Ceilidh Costello, a senior hairstylist at Marc Anthony Salon in Toronto, estimates about two-thirds of her clients

“A few eventually let me diffuse their hair and couldn’t believe how curly and pretty it looked,” she says.

According to Massey, the quest for straight hair is based on a lie. She notes many women covet Jennifer Lopez’s hair, while it’s actually chin length and curly.

“At the end of an L.A. party, there’s nothing but extensions on the floor,” Massey says. So stop chasing what does

Eliminating the ‘poo

Both Costello and Massey chastise shampoos with sulfates.

Massey, who has her own line of DevaCurl products, even suggests not using “‘poo” at all. “It dehydrates hair and water. Look for 100% sulfate-free products. Open the bottle and squeeze, if you see a bubble it’s got sulfates,” she

She recommends washing with conditioner. “A cheap conditioner is better than an expensive shampoo.”

Cut, colour and blowdry

Shrinkage has another meaning to curly girls. Wet hair can spring up to 10 inches or more once it dries. So cut hair

If you go for dyes or highlights, follow Massey’s rules and cleanse them out with conditioner.

As for permanent straightening, Costello warns, “It’s probably the biggest mistake you could make. (Other than the look, which is not sexy.)”

A “reformed straightening addict,” Massey doesn’t even like blowouts. “I never saw anything good come out of a blowout. You ever consider ironing your favourite Chanel dress? You singe your dress just one time ... same for your hair.”

Don’t fear the frizz

They say “frizz is a curl waiting to happen.”

It’s taken me most of my life to make it happen, and now it’s part of what defines me – and what gives this five-foot woman extra inches of height.

We all develop our own tips and tricks for working with our tresses, but no matter how you do it, face it curl on.

Curl talk – With some tips from Lorraine Massey

- No ‘poo: Condition only. Mix with brown sugar for scrubbing power and massage scalp with fingertips.
- Don’t towel dry: Gently scrunch hair with a microfiber towel or T-shirt.
- Toss combs and brushes: Fingerpick while wet from end to root.
- Product: Emulsify conditioner with product in hands. Apply to wet hair.
- Blowdriers: If you must blow dry, use low heat, a diffuser and leave about 20% damp.
- Relaxers are the devil: Period.
- Sleep on satin pillowcases: They maintain oils, moisture, curl shape and are great for skin.

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