

# Is Your Hair Already Damaged?

## How to Easily Recognize Damaged Hair

The other day I was in line at a Starbucks and I overheard two women talking about their hair. The first woman complained that her hair was flat and very hard to style. Looking a little closer, I noticed that her hair was fine, sleek and silky and looked very lustrous, if not a little oily. As I listened, I learned that she had seen a commercial on TV for a conditioning treatment for "damaged" hair that promised sleek, silky, and MANAGEABLE hair and had been using it almost daily for almost a month.

The end result...her hair was hopelessly over-conditioned and totally unmanageable!

By contrast, the barrister at the Starbucks was a little older (almost middle-aged) woman whose hair was cut to shoulder length. It was painfully obvious that her hair had been colored and permed over the years. Her hair was frizzy and dry looking. And not to be totally negative...but it looked fried. This was another woman with damaged hair, and she was totally oblivious to it.

That got me thinking to myself "How is it possible for these two people to be so unaware of what it means to have damaged hair?" Or maybe worse yet...maybe they knew they had damaged hair...but had no idea how to fix it!

Recent studies have revealed that almost 70% of women believe their hair to be damaged.

Here are some of the classic signs of hair damage and ways to treat them effectively.

1. Rough Texture
2. Overly Porous
3. Dry and Brittle to the Touch
4. No Elasticity/Very Susceptible to Breakage
5. Becomes Spongy and Matted when Wet
6. Color Fades or Absorbs too Rapidly

The most common "visible" signs are - rough texture, over-porosity, dryness, and brittleness. These are generally caused by damage to an "over-extension" of the cuticle layer of the hair shaft. This can be caused from daily blow-drying, wind, harsh shampoos and chemical treatments. It can also be caused by flat irons, excessive heat or sun exposure.

By using conditioners that are pH balanced, protein-enriched, and moisture restoring, you can smooth the cuticle layer and protect the hair shaft from further damage. When hair is damaged it's important to use a good, moisture-rich conditioning treatment every week until it shows improvement, and to use a light spray-on, leave-in conditioner daily during

styling.

The problem of elasticity loss can be harder to diagnose. But think of a rubber band. Healthy hair can stretch up to 150% of its normal length - without breaking - and return to its original state. So, if you test one of your hairs...you should notice pretty quickly if your hair is actually elastic.

Often times, the best clue to poor elasticity is sitting right in your own brush. Do you have a lot of hair caught in your brush? Do you have to clean your brush often because of a build-up of hair in the bristles? Are these hairs "full-length" or are they much shorter than your normal hair. If they are shorter...you have a problem with breakage. The best treatment in this case is a good protein-rich conditioner, and/or weekly protein treatment, which will add strength to the hair shaft.

Issues with color absorption and retention, and sponginess and matting when wet, are also porosity issues, but on a more severe level. These levels of damage require very intensive treatment and constant care in processing and styling. Some people with this level of damage find it easier just to cut it off and start fresh. However, this may not be an option, so its best if you take care of your hair before it becomes so damaged.

The most important thing to remember is that your hair is NOT alive once it emerges from the scalp. Hair is nothing more than dead tissue. Because of this fact, don't be tricked into believing that hair products can heal or cure your hair damage. The conditioning treatments and products available today can help protect the hair, and can lessen some of the damage, but the best way to have truly healthy hair is always prevention.