

FYI

# The breakdown: air-dry vs. hairdryer



Some people swear by their favourite hairdryers to get the best blowout that last all day, while others would never step out of their air drying routine, for it brings out a natural finish. This has been an ongoing debate for ages, and shows no signs of stopping anytime soon, mostly because both have their pros and cons, and eventually, it all boils down to preferences.

## HAIR DRYERS

### Pros

The blow dryer is a very convenient tool that allows us to achieve flawless hairstyles in minutes. There are many newer models with many different coatings that minimise damage from the heat. Different tools that come along with it also help the process. Overall, it is a lifesaver for those days when our hair is just not feeling up to the mark.

### Cons

We have all heard that blow drying is not particularly good for your hair. This is because our hair is coated with a layer of cuticle designed to protect the hair from damage. When heat is applied regularly, the cuticle breaks down and lets the heat pass through to the hair. This makes it more prone to damage. The hair also loses moisture a lot faster than it otherwise would, making the hair brittle and frizzy.

Drying hair with a blow dryer right after a wash is also very harmful. When you wash your hair, the water gets absorbed and the hair swells up. But when you expose this hair to a lot of direct heat instantly, the fibres in the hair contract quickly. This sudden shift causes the hair to break, and the cuticles to crack, making your hair rough. This could also lead to hair fall.

## BLOW DRYING THE RIGHT WAY

If you are someone who has to use a blow dryer most of the time, or on a regular basis, you need to get maximum protection for your hair. Let your hair sit for around 10 to 15 minutes, and then proceed with the dryer. One should also go for heat protectant sprays, as these can be applied right before the blow dry. Try to use a diffuser with the blow dryer as well, since it will reduce the heat.

When you start with the blow dryer, begin at the lowest heat and slowly increase it only if you really feel like you require it. Do not start with the highest heat setting as it will be hard on your wet hair and will cause breakage.

## AIR DRYING

### Pros

First off, this requires no tools, or excess heat, which can be detrimental to hair. It allows your hair to breathe and gives it a natural finish. And the best part is that you will not need extra care or treatment for your hair to reverse any damage from air drying.

## Cons

Air drying may seem like something with no drawbacks, but if not properly managed, it can lead to a number of issues. Letting the hair dry too slowly can cause colds, especially during winter. Many people are tempted to brush their hair while wet because it will help with the drying process, but this will stretch the strands at their weakest, resulting in split ends and damage.

Rubbing the hair with a towel comes as second nature, but that needs to stop. We get that wrapping your hair into a towel right after a shower is unavoidable, but avoid the vigorous rubbing right after. This ends up breaking your hair while it is still wet and weak.

Letting your hair freely blow in the air can also cause knots, leading to split ends. And going out with wet hair thinking the outside air will dry it, is even worse. In the summer, you are exposing the weak wet hair to extreme heat and to excessive dryness in the winter, which will make the hair dry and brittle. And you also risk making your hair look stringy.

## THE RIGHT WAY TO AIR DRY

Instead of a towel, get a nice smooth t-shirt and use it to dab your hair. This will nicely air dry your hair without creating the unwanted frizz. If you must use a towel, opt for super absorbent ones that will not require too much rubbing. Dab on the hair to dry it out.

Avoid using a hairbrush on wet hair; instead use your fingers to run through the hair to let air in and it will help speed up the drying process.

## BREAKING IT DOWN

Time plays a big part in your decision. If you are in a hurry and have very thick hair, then blow drying is your only option. Just make sure to take the right precautions. If you happen to have more time, go for letting your hair dry naturally. Follow up with some light hand blow drying to set it in place afterwards.

The hair dryer you are using also plays an important part. Look for ones that are damage minimising.

Ultimately, both methods have their equal share of good and bad. At the end of the day, a lot of it comes down to what suits your daily routine. While some might have the time to air dry their hair, others may be in a hurry, and just have to go with the hairdryer. However, it is wise to not get used to the heat on an everyday basis, and if you are left with no choice, do remember to take care of your hair every once in a while to reverse the heat damage.

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