

CURLS

Photo of hair looking sciencey

To get started, it helps to understand what your hair is made of

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WHAT HAIR IS MADE OF

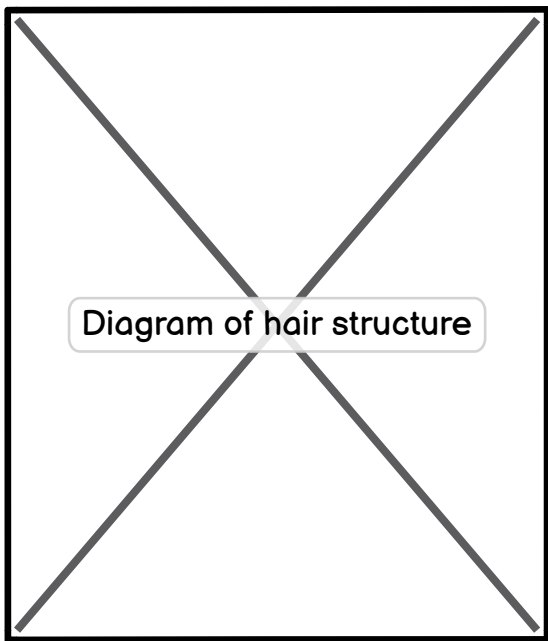


Diagram of hair structure

The shaft of a strand of hair consists of three distinct layers: cuticle, cortex and medulla (usually).

The **cuticle** is the outside layer, it is made of scale like keratin structures which overlap like tiles on a roof, keeping the insides nice and safe. When the parts of the cuticle are all laying flat, nice and tidy, you get shiny tresses! The cuticle naturally becomes brittle over time, through washing, the elements and styling. Oils can help keep the keratin flexible and prevent breakage.

The **cortex** is the thickest part of the hair strand, and sits inside the cuticle. The pigments and proteins which give hair its colour and degree of curl exist here. When colouring or perming it is this layer which is affected most heavily.

The **medulla** is the core of the hair strand, in most hair types. However, in fine fair hair the medulla sometimes simply doesn't exist! It is not known exactly what the medulla does, or why it is present in some hair types but not others. It is theorised that the medulla plays a role in supporting or creating the structure since it most often appears in thicker, darker hair strands.

Lush Cosmetics

THE ROOT OF THE CURL

FOLLICLE SHAPE

The follicle shape is thought to be the largest determining factor in hair type. The rounder the follicle, the straighter the hair. If a follicle takes a more oval shape the hair it produces will be curlier.

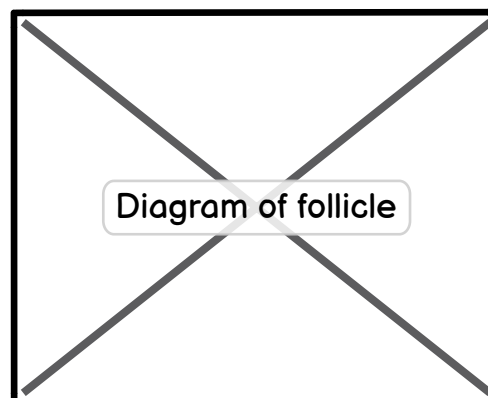


Diagram of follicle

FOLLICLE DIRECTION

The angle of the follicle relative to the skin also help to determine the degree of curl in a hair. A follicle which is perpendicular to the scalp will grow straight hair, any change in this angle contributes to the degree of curl.

Learn about hair types next!

Helix



