

Pro Hair Color Formula: The Basics

WHAT MAKES THE PRO HAIR COLOR YOU CAN GET AT SALLY BETTER?

The best tools are the ones used by professional colorists, and Sally Beauty is all about making pro color available for every DIY hair enthusiast!

The bargain-priced box dyes that you'll find lining the shelves of your local drugstore or supermarket might be a convenient option, but the tradeoff is a much lower quality color. The one-size-fits-all formula won't work for all hair types, and they're full of harsh chemicals any pro stylist would never *dream* of using on a client's hair. Needless to say, the results you get are lackluster at best.

Here's why you should ditch the generic box color for good and let Sally help you reach your PROtential:

 Pro hair color is fully customizable! You can adjust everything to fit your specific hair type and color goals.

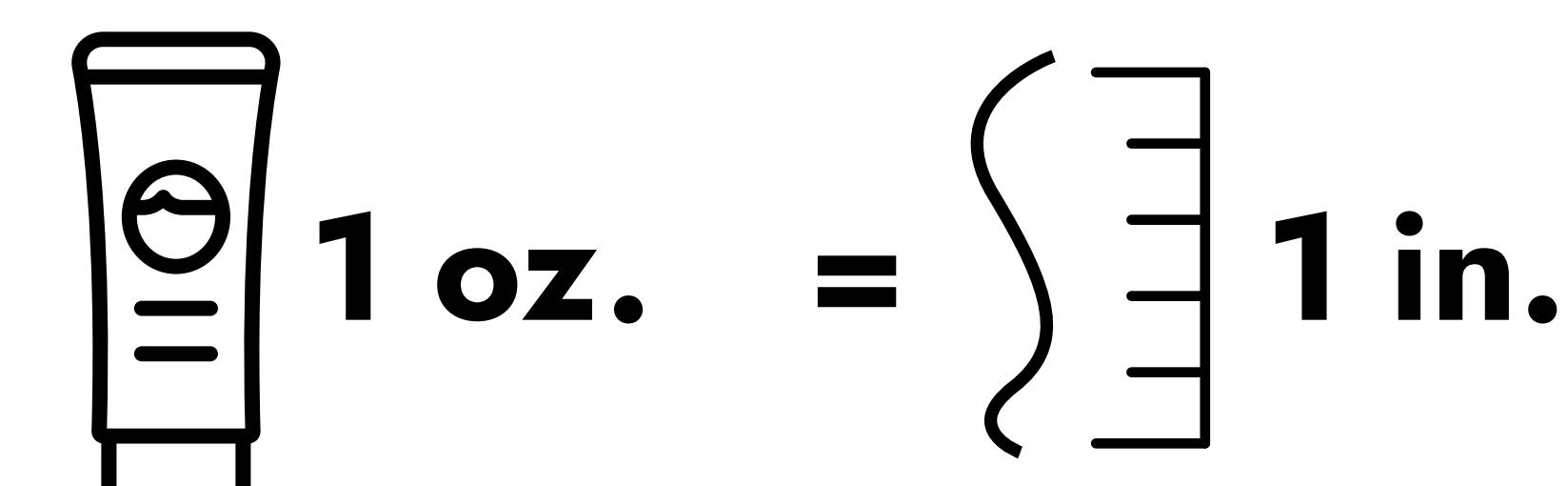
 Unlike box dyes, professional hair color formulas are often ammonia-free to protect hair from becoming dry and brittle.

 It's so worth the investment—damage caused by cheap box color ingredients can be hard to undo and end up costing you more to fix at the salon later.

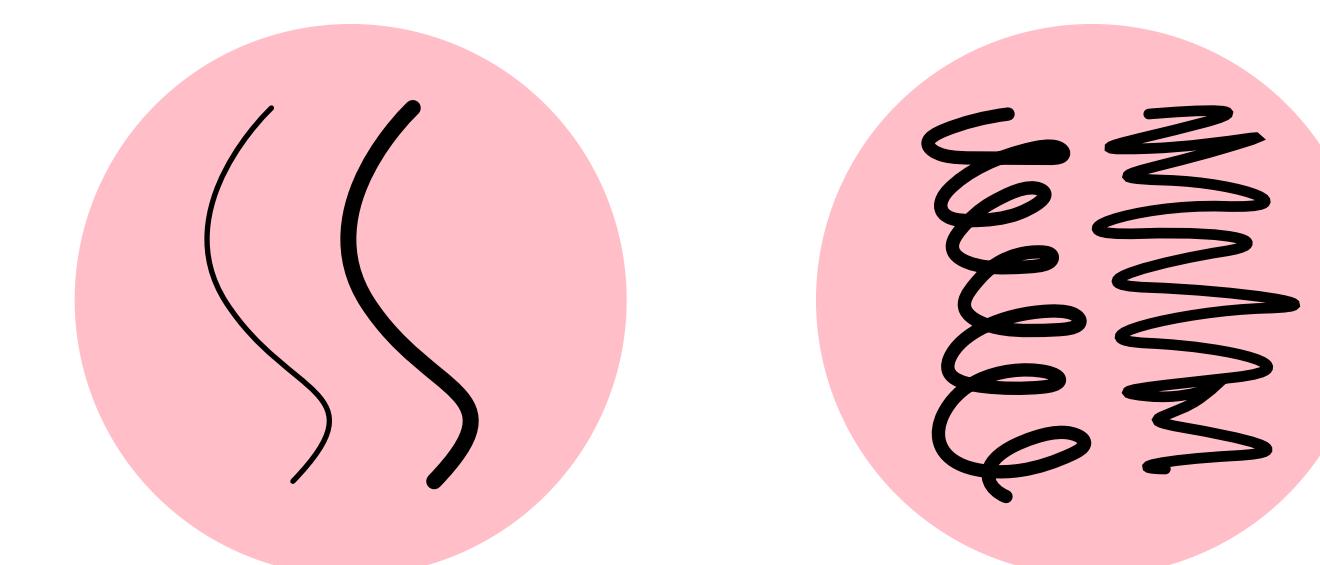
 Pro color makes your hair look way healthier! The formulas are made to be nourishing so your hair stays vibrant and maintains its shine.

HOW DO I FIGURE OUT HOW MUCH HAIR COLOR I NEED?

You might need more than one box of color formula depending on your hair length and thickness.



 A general rule to follow is that you'll need 1 ounce for every 1 inch of hair length.



 Always round up if you have thicker or coarser hair to ensure full coverage.

WHAT TYPE OF HAIR COLOR FORMULA SHOULD I USE?

Permanent Color

The longest-lasting option. Requires a developer and penetrates the natural hair cuticle to deposit color. It may fade a bit (and need a refresh) if not cared for correctly, but the effects are still there. Depending on your hair growth rate, you will need to retouch your roots every 4 to 6 weeks. Permanent color is great for covering stubborn grays, and the best choice for anyone looking to change up their look long-term.

Demi-Permanent Color

Temporary color that can last for about a month. Requires a low-volume developer to activate, but unlike permanent color it does not penetrate the hair cuticle. Instead, the pigment is deposited on the surface of the hair and will completely wash out after 24-28 washes. Demi-permanent is great for a temporary color change, or to give your current color a boost.

Semi-Permanent

A deposit-only, temporary hair color that will stain the hair for about 4-12 washes. It does not need to be mixed with a developer at all. Many vivid "rainbow" shades of hair color come in semi-permanent formulas to make them easy to experiment with.

Liquid vs. Crème

This refers to the consistency of the color formula. They both work exactly the same way, it's just a matter of preference.

Liquid is thinner and flows freely, which makes it great for all-over color application. It's used with a bottle and is simple to apply.

Crème is thicker in consistency. Once mixed it stays put, which makes it convenient for applying color in specific places. It's used with a mixing bowl and color brush. You may prefer to use crème for things like highlights or root touchups, but it's fine for all-over color as long as you section the hair and make sure not to miss a spot!

Understanding Color Tone

WHAT DO THOSE LETTERS AND NUMBERS ON THE HAIR COLOR BOX MEAN?

As you may have noticed, many professional hair color shades have a number-letter combination on the box. It simply indicates the level and tone of the specific hair color shade.

The first number is the level.

This number refers to how light or how dark the color is. When choosing a hair color, look at this number to determine which level your hair needs to be. That will help you figure out what volume of developer to use, or how many levels you need to pre-lighten. We'll learn more about levels, developer, and pre-lightening in the next section!

The second letter(s) refer to the tone and/or base pigment of the color.

The tones and base pigment of the color come in a range of hues that are generally cool, warm, or neutral. If there are 2 letters, that often indicates a very intense, pure version of that tone.



**PRO
COLOR
TIPS**

While the basic idea is universal, every color brand has their own specific color chart with slightly different terminology. You can find a full color chart on a brand's website.



HOW TO INTERPRET A COLOR LABEL

As an example, here is how the Sally-exclusive brand ion categorizes some of its tones:

| | |
|----|---------------|
| N | NEUTRAL |
| A | ASH |
| NB | NATURAL BEIGE |
| V | VIOLET |
| G | GOLD |
| R | RED |
| RC | RED COPPER |
| IR | INTENSE RED |
| RV | RED-VIOLET |
| M | MOCHA |

Now here are a few examples of how to interpret a shade based on the ion tone chart:



5N LIGHT BROWN

A level 5 (medium) brown with neutral, balanced undertones.



10V LIGHTEST COOL BLONDE

A level 10 (very light) blonde with cool, violet undertones.



7RR INTENSE RED

A level 7 (light) red that has very saturated red undertones.



Not sure which shade would look best on you? Try this old trick: if gold jewelry looks better on you, go for a warm tone. If silver jewelry looks better on you, go for a cool tone. If it's a tie, you would look great in neutral tone!

All About Developer & Lightening

WHAT IS DEVELOPER, AND HOW DO YOU USE IT?

Developer is mixed with your hair color to activate it—in other words, it allows the color molecules to penetrate the hair cuticle.

Different volume developers also provide more or less lift, and the right one for you depends on where you're starting and where you're going!

WHY DO DEVELOPERS COME IN DIFFERENT VOLUMES?

Developers come in volumes: 10, 20, 30, and 40.

This refers to how strong the developer is. Higher volumes provide more lift, lower volumes provide less lift.

WHAT EACH VOLUME IS MOST COMMONLY USED FOR:

**10
VOLUME**

Does not lift hair. Best for going any level darker than your current color, or if you start with light enough hair and don't need any extra lift.

**20
VOLUME**

Can lift hair 1-2 levels. Recommended for gray coverage or otherwise staying close to your natural color.

**30
VOLUME**

Can lift hair 2-3 levels. Results will be noticeably lighter than your starting level.

**40
VOLUME**

Can lift hair 3-4 levels. Results will be dramatically lighter than your starting level.



40 Volume Developer is very concentrated. Follow directions carefully and don't be afraid to consult a professional for advice!

WHAT DO "LEVELS" AND "LIFT" MEAN?

"Level" is how light or dark hair is on a scale of 1-10. Lightness and darkness is *value*, which is not the same thing as color or hue.

It might help to visualize levels as a spectrum of black to gray to white:



"Lift" refers to lightening hair by a certain amount, which is measured in levels.

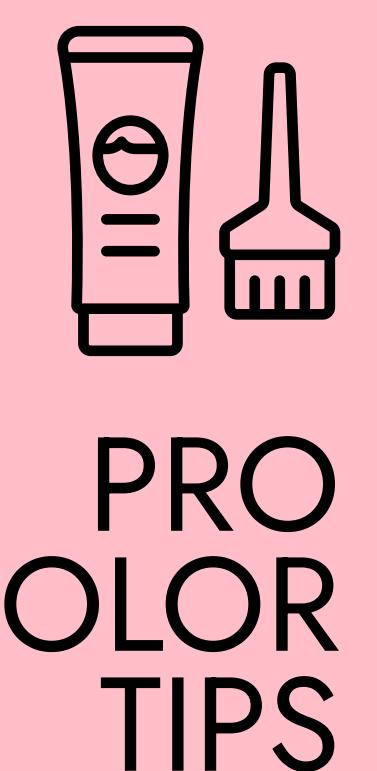
Brighter hair colors need to be applied to hair at a similar lightness level for best results, while going darker than your starting level requires no lift.

GOING DARKER VS. LIGHTER

When going darker than your natural color, the coloring process is simple and the same for everyone regardless of where they're starting at. Use a level 10 developer for any darker shade.

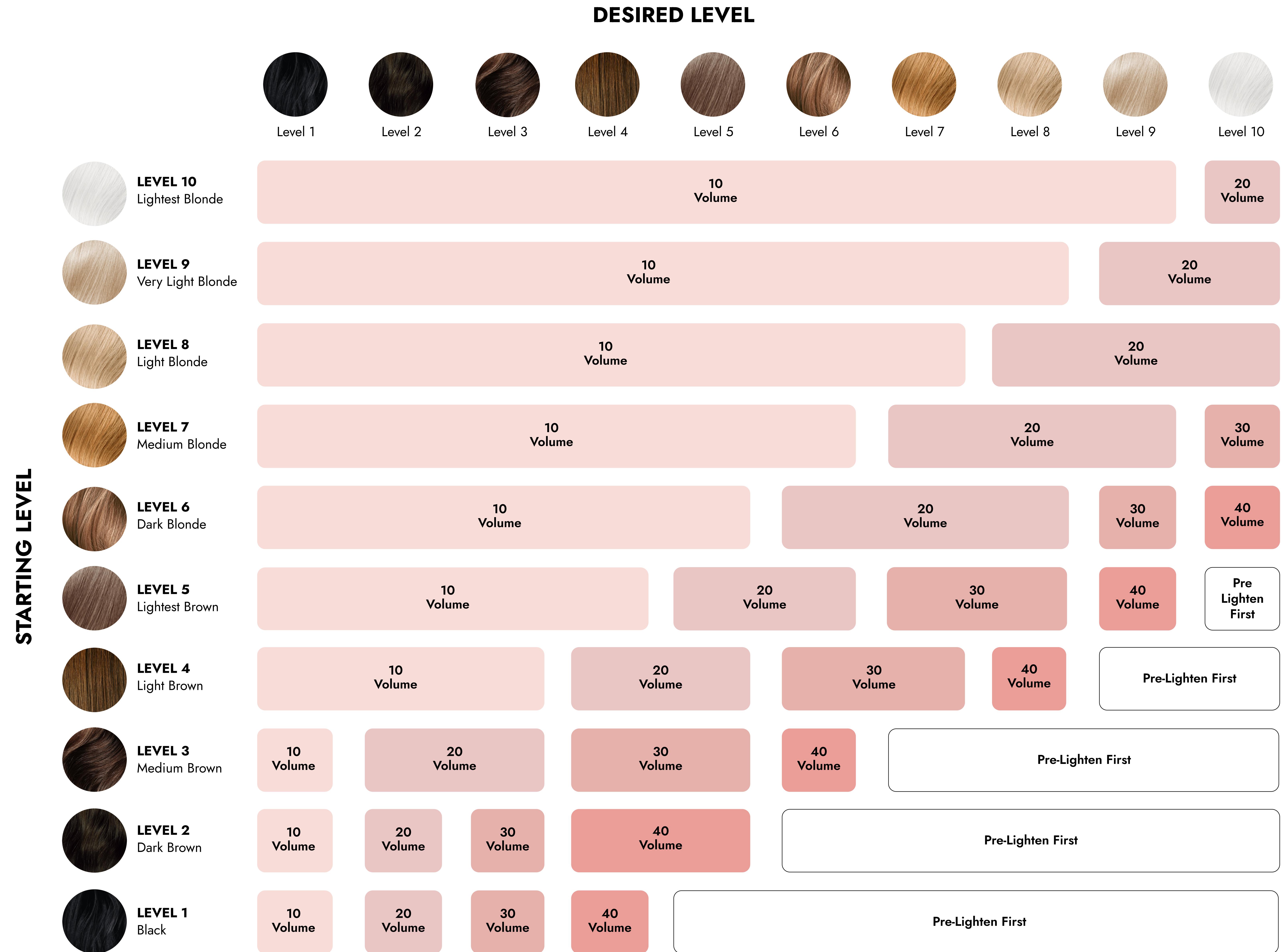
On the other hand, going lighter than your natural color will be different for everyone and requires more planning.

This is where the level chart comes in handy!



The name of your hair color shade will tell you which level you need in order to get that specific color. See "Understanding Color Tone" for more info!

Color Level Chart



USING THE LEVEL CHART TO FIGURE OUT WHAT DEVELOPER YOU NEED

See where your starting level & desired level intersect on the chart. This will tell you the level of developer you need to use with your color to get the correct results, or if you need to pre-lighten before you color.

Here's an example: Let's say I'm a brunette who wants to go strawberry blonde.

My natural hair color is light brown, which means I am starting around a level 4.

I look at some swatches and find a shade I really like, called 7RC Medium Copper Blonde. The first number of the name indicates that this shade is at a level 7, which makes it 3 levels lighter than my hair.

I would be able to achieve this shade by mixing my color with a 30 volume developer, which is strong enough to lift my hair the amount of levels needed.

WHAT IF THE CHART SAYS I NEED TO PRE-LIGHTEN?

If you are going from a very dark natural color to a much lighter color (anything over 4 levels higher), you may need to lift your hair more than a developer is able to by itself.

Use a lightening product to lift your hair as many levels as needed. Once that step is complete, you'll be able to apply your color.

See the section "How to Pre-lighten Your Hair" for step-by-step instructions!

Preparing for Color

ACCESSORIES YOU'LL NEED:

Bowl & Brush or Applicator Bottle

Use a bowl with crème hair color, or a bottle with liquid hair color.

Shower Cap

A shower cap is recommended to keep the hair dye contained so it doesn't get anywhere it shouldn't!

Disposable Gloves

We highly recommend that you wear gloves to protect your hands from getting stained and shield them from the chemicals in the hair dye.

Barrier Cream or Petroleum Jelly

Can be used on the skin around your face and neck to prevent staining or irritation.

Salon Cape or Old Clothing

Wear something you don't mind getting stains on!

HOW TO DO A PATCH TEST

Helps to see if you will have any allergic reactions to the hair color. Patch test 48 hours before coloring.



What You'll Need:

- Hair Color
- Cotton-tip applicator
- Absorbent cotton pad
- Bandage

Time:

48 hours before color application

How To Patch Test

1. With soap and water, wash a 1" circular area in elbow bend or behind ear touching the hairline. Pat dry with cotton pad.
2. Use cotton-tip applicator to apply a small amount of hair color from the tube to test area.

⚠️ If testing Permanent or Demi Permanent Hair Color, ensure Color is also mixed with Developer.

3. Let the spot dry. Do not wash or disturb the area. Cover the area with a bandage and check test area at 24 and 48 hours. If no reaction has occurred after 48 hours, you're ready to color!



Do not use hair color if you get these reactions: burning, itching, swelling, eruption, or irritation.



Patch Testing is recommended prior to each color application for safe product use. Even if you've used a product before, allergic reactions can still happen!

HOW TO DO A STRAND TEST

Apply hair color to a small, hidden strand of hair to make sure it's the color that you want.



What You'll Need:

- Hair Color
- Applicator brush
- Non-metallic bowl
- Gloves

Time:

20-40 minutes

How To Strand Test

1. Apply a small amount of hair color to a small strand of hair. Wait 20 to 40 minutes, depending on desired result. Rinse, dry, and assess the results.



If you do not see desired results: Processing time, pre-lightened level, or shade selection may need to be adjusted.

How to Apply Hair Color

COLORING YOUR HAIR

What You'll Need:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hair Color | Time: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developer (for demi-permanent or permanent color) | 20-40 minutes (Depending on results of Strand Test) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cape or old clothing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum jelly | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-metallic bowl | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shower cap | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After color treatment | |

How To Color Your Hair

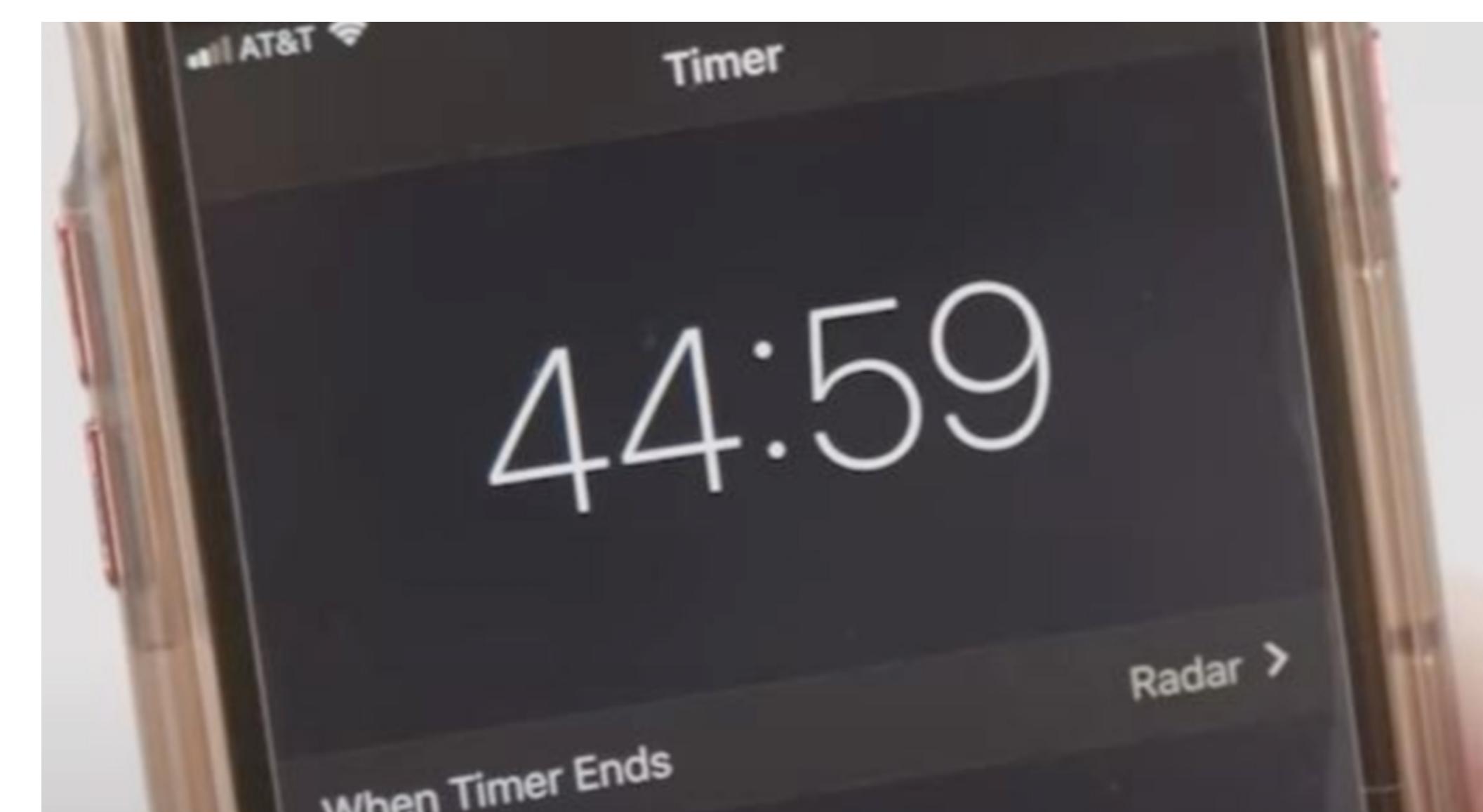
1. Wear a cape or wear old clothing to protect against stains. Protect forehead against stains by applying some petroleum jelly to hairline and around ears.



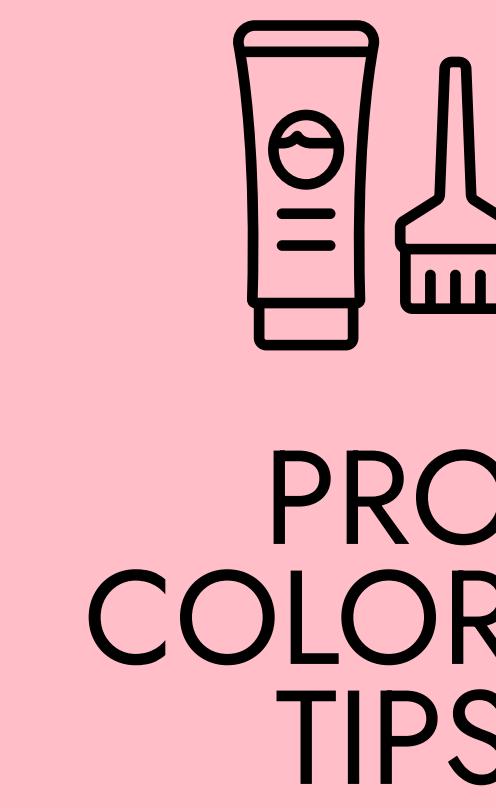
2. Wear gloves. Put hair color into a non-metallic bowl. If using developer, mix it into the bowl with the color using a 1:1 ratio. Apply color to dry hair with a brush or bottle. Be sure all parts of the hair are fully coated.



3. Leave hair color on to process for 20 to 40 minutes. Check hair every 5 to 10 minutes to check for desired result.



4. After processing, rinse hair and use after color treatment to lock in the color.



For the most vibrant result, apply to pre-lightened hair. Pre-lighten with lightener to the desired level of lift.

The degree of lift achieved with pre-lightening will directly affect the vibrancy and intensity of the final result. Hair pigment must be taken into consideration. If hair is orange or a dark yellow, this will contribute to the final color.

IMAGE/ARTWORK

How to Pre-Lighten Your Hair

For most of us who want to achieve the perfect platinum blonde or rock super bright shades, some degree of pre-lightening is necessary.

Lightener (often called “bleach”) is mixed with developer to open the hair cuticle and, unlike hair color, it removes pigment from your hair instead of depositing it. This way, when you apply the color afterwards, the hue will come out brighter and more accurate.

Think of it like an artist priming a canvas for paint!

IMAGE/ARTWORK



Lightener causes a chemical reaction when it comes in contact with metal objects. Never use a metal bowl or metal hair accessories when lightening.

PRO COLOR TIPS

SOME THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE USING BLEACH LIGHTENER:

You'll Have To Manage Some Damage

Hair damage is unavoidable when lightening. This is because bleach works by roughing up the cuticle and breaking the disulphide bonds in your hair. Bonding repair treatments are highly recommended for anyone lightening their hair.

Bleach Has A Strict Time Limit

Never bleach for longer than one 50-minute session at a time.

Very Dark Or Resistant Hair Requires Patience

It likely won't get the amount of lift it needs within 50 minutes and you'll need to lighten it slowly with a lower (20) volume bleach over 2 or 3 sessions, with at least a few days in between each individual session. Throughout the process be sure to nourish your hair with deep conditioning treatments and avoid heat styling or shampooing.

Your Hair Type Can Affect The Lightening Process

Fine, smooth hair lightens more easily than coarse, thick hair. If you have textured hair it's likely to be more resistant to bleach. Be aware that lightening can alter the texture pattern of curly hair. Gray hair is also difficult to bleach; use the maximum processing time for best results.

PRE-LIGHTENING HAIR

What You'll Need:

- Lightener
- 20 or 30 volume Developer
- Non-metallic bowl
- Applicator brush
- Gloves
- Cape or old clothing
- Shampoo

Time:

50 minutes or less
(Processing time determined by test strand results)

- Mix Lightener with Developer in a non-metallic bowl. A 1-1.5 ratio of lightener to developer is normal, but follow the specific instructions on your lightener package for best results.

 **Use a 20 Volume Developer if you have dark or coarse hair and expect to need more than one lightening session.**

- Use brush to saturate your hair with Lightener mixture. Work in small, thin sections. Apply the bleach an inch away from the scalp for the first 30 minutes and apply it on the roots after. Your roots are much easier and faster to bleach — they typically only need 15 minutes or so.

 **Do not use on hair on other parts of your body. Do not use if you have any wounds or abnormal conditions on your scalp.**

- Process for the length of time determined by your strand test, or until the 50-minute limit. Check your hair's progress every 10 minutes. As your hair lightens it will go through different color phases. Dark hair will start lightening to red/orange, medium hair will start lightening to orange/yellow, and light hair will start lightening to a pale yellow.

 **Do not leave on for more than 50 minutes!**

- Rinse thoroughly and lightly shampoo.

 **While a mild sensation is normal, severe burning is not. Rinse off bleach immediately if your scalp becomes painfully irritated.**

How to Maintain Your New Color

While your hair color can fade with time and exposure to stress, there's lots of things you can do to keep it looking gorgeous!

ADJUST YOUR HAIRCARE ROUTINE:

- Heart icon: An after-color treatment, applied to your hair immediately after rinsing, helps protect and prolong your new color by sealing in pigment, moisture, and shine.
- Heart icon: Wait a minimum of 24 hours before shampooing your hair after coloring.
- Heart icon: Make sure to choose color-safe products for your haircare routine, as many clarifying shampoos have harsh ingredients that can dry out and strip color-treated hair.
- Heart icon: When washing your hair, don't use hot water! Focus on massaging shampoo into the roots and allow the length of your hair to be gently cleansed by the runoff as you rinse. This helps keep the hair that gets less oil from your scalp from drying out.
- Heart icon: Don't wash your hair everyday if you don't need to—dry shampoo and conditioner can help you manage oily hair in between washes.

THINGS TO AVOID:

- Heart icon: Avoid heat! When using styling tools, use a heat protectant and try a lower setting. Also try not to overexpose your hair to hot water and don't use hot oil treatments.
- Heart icon: Chlorine is not your hair color's friend. If you must swim, try using a leave-in conditioner before taking that dip!
- Heart icon: Steer clear of direct sunlight for prolonged periods. Wear a hat or keep your hair in a protective style during outdoor activities. You can also try a UV protectant hair spray.
- Heart icon: Don't expose your hair to chemicals that will dry it out. Avoid products with ingredients like sodium lauryl sulfate, sodium laureth sulfate, sodium chloride, or alcohol.
- Heart icon: Be careful with dandruff shampoo. Make sure you're using a brand or formula that is labeled as color-safe.

IN-BETWEEN TOUCHUPS:

- Heart icon: If you need a bit of root coverage on short notice, you can use temporary hair color that washes off after one use. They are available in sprays, pomades, and powders.
- Heart icon: While demi and semi-permanent colors are meant to fade, if you want to rock it a little longer a color-depositing conditioner can help refresh your color in small increments.



PRO COLOR TIPS

With semi-permanent color, you can also add a small amount of the color itself into your everyday shampoo or conditioner. This is especially useful for maintaining bright rainbow shades!

REPAIRING DAMAGE:

- Heart icon: Hair and scalp-friendly oils like coconut, jojoba, and Jamaican black castor oil can help replenish your color treated hair, keeping it super nourished and healthy!
- Heart icon: Bonding treatments are the gold standard for repairing damage and highly recommended for anyone who has chemically treated their hair. There are bonding shampoos, conditioners, treatments, oils, masks, and even additives you can mix into your lightening or coloring products.
- Heart icon: When it's time for a touchup, only reapply lightener or color with developer to the roots in order to minimize chemical exposure on hair that's already been colored.

- Heart icon: Get regular trims to remove split ends, which don't hold onto color pigment as well as healthy hair does. This can help prevent fading at the ends that makes your hair color look uneven.

Need one-on-one advice from a pro?

Brand stylists are available to answer product and technical questions and provide hair color recommendations!

ION

1-800-859-3112

Hours of Operation:

9:00am-6:00pm Monday-Friday EST

STRAWBERRY LEOPARD

1-855-826-7502

Hours of Operation:

8:00am to 5:00pm Monday–Friday CST

BLOND BRILLIANCE

BEYOND THE ZONE

GVP (GENERIC VALUE PRODUCTS)

SALON CARE

1-855-299-3529

Hours of Operation:

9:00am-6:00pm Monday-Friday EST

WELLA

1-866-722-4146

Hours of Operation:

Monday-Friday 8:30a-8:30p EST

Saturday-Sunday 9a-6p EST

AGEBEAUTIFUL ALL ABOUT CURLS ZOTOS PROFESSIONAL

1-800-242-9283

Hours of Operation:

9:00am–8:00pm EST Monday-Friday

CLAIROL PROFESSIONAL

1-800-221-4900

Hours of Operation:

8:30am to 8:30pm Monday – Friday

9:00am – 6:00pm Saturday & Sunday EST

L'OREAL

1-800-345-5014

Hours of Operation:

9:00am-5:00pm Monday-Friday EST

DARK & LOVELY SOFTSHEEN-CARSON

1-800-442-4643

Hours of Operation:

9am-5:30pm Monday-Friday EST

MANIC PANIC

1-347-233-1486

Email:

customerservice@manicpanic.com

Hours of Operation:

9:00am-5:00pm Monday-Friday EST