



FIND YOUR EQUATION

It's best to assess your hair when it's damp. The quickest way to determine the letter for types 1 and 2 is to run a single strand between your fingers. If you can't feel it, it's fine (A); if you can almost feel it, you've got medium-textured hair (B); if you can really feel it (you may notice bumps as well), it's coarse (C). For 3s and 4s, the letter relates more to the shape of your curls, though your hair can still be fine, medium, or coarse.

1, 2, 3, 4, GORGEOUS!

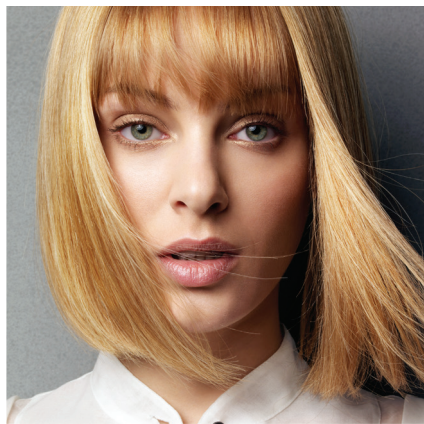
Want softer, bouncier, healthier strands? It's a numbers game: Use this handy chart to find your unique type and texture—and get ready for your best hair ever. BY *Holly Carter*

WHAT NEVER GOES out of style? Embracing the hair you were born with—whether you're well acquainted with what naturally grows from your scalp or (after years of chemical straighteners, blow-outs, or perms) barely remember what your untouched strands look like. So we're turning back to the game-changing identification system of Oprah's former longtime hairstylist, Andre Walker. He created it more than 20 years ago for his

book, *Andre Talks Hair!*—and the idea continues to be followed and built upon.

First, find the number that corresponds to your hair type: straight (1), wavy (2), curly (3), or coiled (4). Then zero in on the letter (A, B, or C) that identifies your texture (fine, medium, or coarse) or curl pattern to help you devise a personalized care and styling regimen. Turn the page to get started. And in case you're wondering, Oprah is a 4B.

1
STRAIGHT



- A FINE AND CAN GET OILY
- B MEDIUM WITH SOME VOLUME
- C COARSE AND HARD TO HOLD A CURL

CUT

Because straight hair has a smooth, flat surface, split ends can be obvious, says celebrity stylist Jenny Cho. **Stick to the standard snip schedule: every six to eight weeks.** To create fullness for all 1s, Walker recommends solid hairstyles cut straight across, like a bob. The exception: A lightly layered lob will encourage movement but still keep length, says Cho—good for type 1As.

CARE

Healthy straight hair can be strong, but also tends to go limp, says Walker. **A volumizing shampoo and conditioner may help bring out bounce and body**, particularly for As and Bs. If you have fine hair, put conditioner on the midlengths to ends, not your scalp. Bs and Cs should add a leave-in conditioner for “extra nourishment without heaviness,” says Cho.

STYLING

Rough-drying (using just your hands and the blow-dryer) helps add volume. Cho suggests picking your styling product based on what you’re going for: a light oil on damp hair for shine, thickening balm for fullness, mousse for bounce, or dry shampoo at the roots of clean fine-to-medium hair to prevent oiliness.



2
WAVY



- A FINE WITH AN S SHAPE
- B MEDIUM S SHAPE AND PRONE TO FRIZZ
- C COARSE S SHAPE AND TENDS TO FRIZZ

CUT

Ride those waves—your hair is right in the middle of the texture spectrum; **whatever length you choose, soft layering is the way to go**, says Dickey of Hair Rules Salon in New York City. For stylish versatility, Cho suggests a trendy shag cut, a look with face-framing layers and chopiness throughout.

CARE

Your hair tends to be on the drier side, so infuse it with moisture, starting with a gentle, hydrating shampoo and conditioner. Finer hair needs to be washed more often than thicker strands—about twice a week, says Shai Amiel of Capella Salon in Studio City, California. If you have medium hair, you can shampoo every five days; with coarse, you can stretch it to a week.

STYLING

Type As love lightweight products—think mousses or gels—since the fight against flatness is real. **Apply stylers to towel-dried hair, staying away from roots** so hair doesn’t get weighed down. For B and C waves, add a cream (just on ends for Bs) to reduce fly-aways and add control, Dickey says.



3
CURLY



- A LOOSE RINGLETS
- B TIGHT CURLS
- C CORKSCREWS

CUT

Walker recommends layers to keep those ringlets bouncy and create fullness and flow. Know that layering your hair to wear it curly is a commitment—it could look choppy if you decide to straighten it later. If you change up your texture often, be sure to let your stylist know, so your cut can look great blown out or natural.

CARE

Kick off your routine with a nonsudsing shampoo. If you’re an A, you may be able to skip conditioner altogether, says Dickey. A popular option for Bs and Cs between weekly shampoos: co-washing (applying conditioner instead of shampoo to wet hair and rinsing it out). But don’t bypass your scheduled cleansing, says Walker: “You have to remove build-up for hair to get nutrients.”

STYLING

Hydration and frizz control are key concerns. **The solution is simple: water, water, water**, says Amiel. Styling starts in the shower. “When hair is wet, product is absorbed well and curls can set with more definition,” says Dickey. Loosely curled As can benefit from combining products, like a mousse for volume and a cream or serum for frizz control. Bs and Cs can go for heavier creams or jellies.



4
COILED



- A TIGHT SPRINGS
- B Z-SHAPE
- C VERY TIGHT COILS OR Z-SHAPE

CUT

Coiled hair is best cut dry. Both Dickey and Walker prefer to blow hair straight before snipping so split ends are more apparent. Another technique: Amiel asks clients to come to his salon with clean, dry hair so he can see the shape and give each coil its own cut—literally. Generally, tightly coiled hair doesn’t need to be trimmed very often—about every three months—if it’s not being damaged by heat styling.

CARE

Try a weekly strengthening treatment. Apply coconut oil to dry hair, wait 30 minutes, then shampoo, says Amiel. **Wash weekly with a nonsudsing formula and deep condition with a mask.** Dickey suggests co-washing (conditioning and rinsing) between shampoos to reset curls—Cs can even do so daily. Why? When you rehydrate, you’ll see the curl pattern better. A leave-in conditioner also helps.

STYLING

Products should be applied to sopping-wet hair. Start by using curling cream on the fastest-drying section, says Amiel. To help clump tight coils together, Dickey suggests a palm-rolling technique: “Massage cream into your palms and rub it into hair,” he says. For definition or to unify your coil pattern, wrap small sections around a straw, says Amiel. While it’s in place, air-dry or diffuse.



WAVY: CHRIS GRAYMER/TRUNK ARCHIVE; CURLY: BETH STERNBAUM/THELICENSINGPROJECT.COM