

CHAPTER 18: Braiding and Braid Extensions

WHY STUDY BRAIDING?

Cosmetologists should study and have a thorough understanding of braiding and braid extensions because *these services are very popular with clients, it allows stylists to express their artistic ability, stylists should be prepared to work with every type of hair and hairstyle trends within every culture, and working with braid extensions gives a foundation for hair extensions which is a high-ticket service.*

Historically, African tribes were the first to use decorative braids. Egyptian women wore braids decorated with shells, sequins, and glass or gold beads. Women from India wore long, heavy braids as did Native Americans.

Natural Hairstyling- hairstyling that does not alter the natural curl or coil pattern of the hair; does not use chemicals or dyes

Braided hairstyles can take hours to complete. To avoid any misunderstandings and ensure a happy ending to the service, it is essential to complete a thorough and detailed client consultation.

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS (p. 509-514)

Before exploring various braiding techniques, it is important to have a good grasp of braiding basics.

Hair Analysis: What is Different? (p. 509-510)

- **Texture-** pay particular attention to the texture during the analysis of the client's hair and scalp
 - **Diameter of the hair-** is it coarse, medium or fine?
 - **Feel-** does the hair feel oily, dry, hard, soft, smooth, coarse, or wiry?
 - **Wave pattern or coil configuration-** is the hair straight, wavy, coiled, or curly? A **coil** is a very tight curl; it is spiral when lengthened or stretched; **textured hair refers to hair with a tight coil pattern**
 - **Density-** look for areas where the hair is thin
 - **Condition-** check for damage and breakage from previous braids or chemical services

- **Length-** make sure the hair is physically long enough to execute the braiding style
- **Scalp health-** ensure that the scalp is healthy and properly cared for

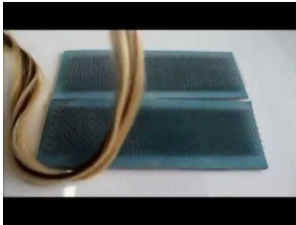
Tools for Braiding (p. 510-512)

- **Boar bristle brush (natural hairbrush)-** best for stimulating scalp as well as removing dirt and lint
- **Square paddle brush-** good for releasing tangles, knots, and snarls in short, textured hair and long, straight hair; cushion of air (**pneumatic**) in the brush paddle makes the bristles collapse when they encounter too much resistance; helps prevent breakage in fragile hair
- **Vent brush-** single or double row of widely spaced pins with protective tips to prevent tearing or breaking of hair; used to gently remove tangles on wet wavy or dry curly hair; always check tips-if even one tip is missing, discard the brush
- **Wide-Tooth comb-** glide through the hair with little snarling; variety of shapes and designs; have **long rounded tips to avoid scratching** the scalp; larger spacing of teeth allows textured hair to move between the rows with ease
- **Double-tooth comb (detangling comb)-** separates the hair as it combs; excellent for detangling wet curly hair
- **Tail comb-** excellent for design parting, sectioning large segments of hair, and opening and removing braids
- **Finishing comb-** usually 8-10 inches long; used while cutting; work well on fine or straight hair
- **Cutting comb-** used for cutting small sections; should be used only after the hair is softened and elongated with a blowdryer
- **Pick with rounded teeth-** useful for lifting and separating textured hair; has long widely spaced teeth and is commonly made of metal, plastic, or wood.
- **Blowdryer with pick nozzle-** a pick nozzle loosens the curl pattern in textured hair for braiding styles; it dries, stretches, and softens textured hair; use a hard-plastic pick attachment because metal becomes too hot
- **Diffuser-** dries hair without disturbing the finished look and without dehydrating the hair
- **Five-inch scissors-** used for creating shapes and finished looks, trimming bangs, and excess extension material
- **Long clips-** used for separating hair into large sections

- **Butterfly and small clips**- used to separate hair into large and small sections
- **Hood dryer**- remove excess moisture before blowdrying hair
- **Small rubber bands or strings**- use to secure ends
- **Extension fibers**- come in a variety of types: Kanekalon, nylon, rayon, human hair, yarn, lin, and yak
- **Hackle**- a board of fine, upright nails through which human hair extensions are combed; used for detangling or blending highlights and colors



- **Drawing board**- flat leather pads with very close fine teeth that sandwich human hair extensions; weighed down with books allowing a specific amount of hair to be extracted without loosening and disturbing the rest of the hair during braiding



Materials for Extensions (p. 512-513)

A wide variety of materials are available for hair extensions. It is important to remember that the cheapest product may not be the best. When buying a new product, buy a small amount and test it on a mannequin before using on a client.

- **Human hair**- gold standard; can be confusing and deceptive; most human hair is imported from Asia and has little information about how it was processed or if it is 100% human hair; only deal with suppliers you trust
- **Kanekalon**- manufactured, synthetic fiber of excellent quality; made in a variety of types with different names, colors, and textures; very durable
- **Nylon or rayon synthetic**- less expensive than other synthetics; available in varying qualities; reflects light and leaves hair very shiny; a drawback is that it has been known to break or cut the surrounding hair; less durable (can melt in high heat)

- **Yarn-** made of cotton or nylon blend; inexpensive; light, soft, detangles easily; does not reflect light; matte finish in braids; be careful of color- black in store may appear blue or green in natural light
- **Lin-** wool fiber imported from Africa; matte finish; only comes in black or brown; comes on a roll and can be used in any length and size; very flammable
- **Yak-** strong fiber from the domestic ox; may be used alone or blended with human hair

Working with Wet or Dry Braid?

- **Curly hair-** best to braid when dry; wet hair shrinks and cause too much tension on the scalp; if you must braid curly hair wet, be sure to allow for shrinkage to avoid damage to the scalp and hair
- **Straight, resistant hair-** best braided slightly damp or very lightly coated with wax or pomade to make it more pliable
- **Textured hair-** very fragile both wet and dry; blowdry hair for the braiding service which softens the hair, elongates the wave pattern, and makes it more manageable

BRAIDING THE HAIR (p. 514-519)

Braiding styles can be broadly classified as visible and invisible. Most any braided style can be used on a client with an oval face.

- **Visible braid-** a three- strand braid created with an underhand technique; created with an underhand technique (also known as plaiting); the left section goes under the middle strand and then the right section goes under the middle strand; often used for cornrowing because it is believed to cause less tangling
- **Invisible braid (also known as inverted braid or French braid)-** three strand braid created with the overhand technique; the first side section goes over the middle one and then the other side section goes over the middle one
- **Rope braid-** created with two strands that are twisted around each other; can be done on hair that is all one length or on long, layered hair
- **Fishtail braid-** simple, two strand braid in which hair is picked up from the sides and added to the strands as they are crossed over each other; best done on non-layered hair that is at least shoulder length

- **Single braids (also known as box braids and individual braids)**- free-hanging braids, with or without extensions, that can be executed using either an underhand or overhand technique; may be used with all hair textures and in a variety of ways
 - partings can be square, triangular, or rectangular
 - parting determines where the braid is placed and how it moves
 - single braids can move in any direction
 - the procedure for medium to large braids uses the underhand technique
- **Cornrows (also known as canerows)**- narrow rows of visible braids that lie close to the scalp and are created with a three-strand, on-the-scalp braiding technique
 - Consistent, even partings are the foundation of beautiful cornrows
 - Can be braided on hair of various lengths and textures
 - Long, straight hair- large cornrows are fashionable
 - Designer cornrows are increasingly popular
 - Flat, contoured styles can last several weeks when done without extensions and up to two months when applied with extensions
 - Feed-in Method- braid is built up strand by strand; uses less tension so it prevents breakage; looks more natural
- **Tree braids**- newer way to add hair for a longer, finished look; client's hair is braided along with an extension; the finished look shows more faux hair
- **Locks (also known as dreadlocks)**- separate networks of curly, textured hair that have been intertwined and meshed together; locking is done without the use of chemicals; hair locks in several slow phases which can take from six months to a year depending on hair density, length, and coil pattern
- **Twisting**- overlapping two strands to form a candy cane effect
- **Weaving**- interweaving a weft or faux hair with natural hair

Instructions for braiding and braiding with extensions can be found on pages 520-536 in your textbook.