

Chapter 8: How to Henna Your Hair

How Do You Henna Your Hair for the First Time?

If you have never dyed your hair, it is necessary to dye the full length of your hair with Ancient Sunrise® powders.

If you have previously dyed your hair with chemicals, it is necessary to dye the full length of your hair with Ancient Sunrise® powders. You won't be able to perfectly match the chemical color, and the dividing line will show. Henna and cassia will also repair damage from chemical processes; it benefits your hair to do the full length.

Shampoo your hair before you begin to apply the Ancient Sunrise® paste; your hair must be very clean. Some people apply the paste to dry hair, and some apply to wet hair.

On all the tests you've done on hair harvested from your hairbrush, decide which mix gave you the results you really like. How much powder should you mix to dye your hair? How long is your hair? In general,

- 100g powder mixed into paste will dye short hair.
- 200g powder mixed into paste will dye collar length straight hair.
- 300g powder mixed into paste will dye shoulder length straight hair.
- 500g powder mixed into paste will dye waist length hair.

These are the total amounts of powder needed. If you are mixing brunette, half henna and half indigo for very short hair, you'll need 50g each of henna and indigo, and so on. ¹

Very thick hair or abundant locks require more paste. It is better to mix more than you think you'll need. If you have leftover henna paste, you can put it in your freezer in a plastic freezer bag, and thaw it for later use. If you freeze leftover henna paste regularly, you will always have some leftover to use if you run short.

What tools will you need?

- **Mixing bowls:** you will need one or two bowls or containers to mix your powder. If you're only mixing 100g of powder, a leftover plastic food container with a snap lid will do. If you're mixing more, you'll need a larger bowl. A big plastic bowl or two left over from a summer picnic is a good choice. If you are mixing henna only, you'll need one bowl. If you are mixing both henna and indigo, you'll need two. Plastic and crockery bowls are preferred, but if you already have one, a stainless steel bowl won't do any harm.

¹ For complete information on formulation of color, see chapter 7, Mixing and Testing

- Spoons: for larger amounts of paste, you'll need a large, sturdy spoon; a big wooden spoon is helpful. For 100g of powder, a soup spoon is large enough. Wood or plastic spoons are preferred, but a stainless steel spoon won't harm your mix.
- Towels and cape: wrap an old dark colored towel around your shoulders, or get a stylist's plastic cape. Henna gets messy! Have some additional old towels nearby.
- Plastic gloves: Ancient Sunrise® henna and indigo will stain your skin. Cassia will not. Wear gloves so your hands and fingernails won't be stained for three weeks.
- Combs and brushes: use a comb with a long tail to section your hair. You may either use a large tinting brush to apply the henna to your hair, or you may simply apply and push it into the hair with your hands.
- Plastic wrap: a roll of cling wrap will keep the paste in the bowl and on your hair from drying out. It is difficult to shampoo dry henna paste out of hair! You may re-purpose a plastic bag to cover your bowl and hair if you don't have plastic wrap.
- Scarf or cap: if you're apt to be seen by people who won't understand why you're wearing saran wrap on your head, pull on a scarf or cap.

How much time should you set aside for the project?

- Prepare your Ancient Sunrise® henna one day before you intend to apply it. It takes about ten minutes to mix henna powder into paste.²
- It takes a stylist about half an hour to apply Ancient Sunrise® henna, indigo, or cassia to hair. It may require more time for you to do it yourself.
- Choose a quiet pastime, or plan a nap for the time the paste is dyeing your hair. Leave the henna in your hair at least two or three hours for good color saturation. Henna often takes four or more hours to cover resistant gray. Six hours seems to be the maximum amount of time necessary to stain hair with henna. You can speed this process up considerably if you have a bonnet dryer, though you should be careful to keep the plastic wrap on your hair if under heat. Dried henna paste is very difficult to wash out of hair. If you take a nap under an electric blanket or in the sunshine, you'll reduce the dyeing time by about 1/3. Indigo stains more quickly, and in a two-step henna indigo black process, the indigo can be rinsed out after about two hours.
- Shampoo the paste out of your hair when you are finished. Be generous with the shampoo, conditioner, and water; it takes some work to get all of the paste out of your hair and down the drain.

Shampoo your hair to wash the paste out of your hair. Many people find that conditioner helps slide all the paste out of the hair. People with very thick or long hair find that lying down and

² For complete instructions on henna dye release, see Chapter 7, Dye release: When Will the Henna Paste Be Ready?

soaking in a tub of hot bathwater and pretending to be a ‘swamp maiden’ helps rinse all the paste from the hair.

Checklist Before You Begin to Henna your Hair

- Do you have your henna, indigo, and/or cassia?
- Do you have something mildly acidic and filtered or distilled water?
- Do you need CMC powder for your indigo?
- Do you have hard water? If so, do you have ancient Sunrise® Rainwash?
- Do you have gloves? Henna will stain your hands.
- Do you have a comb for sectioning your hair?
- Do you have some sort of clips to separate your sections?
- Have you shampooed all the conditioners, oils, and products out of your hair?
- Do you have plastic wrap to cover your henna bowl while you wait for dye release?



- Do you have some bowls and spoons? Metal won’t hurt your mix, but plastic and crockery are ideal.
- Do you have some old towels to drape over your neck and clothing? Henna does not stain cotton but indigo will. Henna and indigo will stain silk and wool. Neither will stain polyester. It’s good to have some washrags to dab paste off the forehead and ears.



- If you're mixing more than 100g of henna, use a large plastic bowl. Big plastic picnic salad bowls are perfect for the job. If you mix more than you need, you can freeze the extras to use later. You cannot freeze extra indigo.
- If your arm gets tired from mixing a large amount of henna, a kitchen chopper will do the job.
- Do you have plastic wrap to wrap around your hair when it's finished? Do you have scarves to tie over the plastic wrap if you need to look presentable?



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