



WRITING SAMPLE

Publication: LiveStrong.com

Publish date: March 2013

Baking Soda Rinse vs. a Clarifying Shampoo

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Over time, all the gels, lotions, pomades and other gunk you put in your hair to keep it looking fine start to build up and look like something less than fine. When your hair starts to feel sticky and to look limp and lifeless, you know it's time for a clarifying treatment to rinse the hair clear of all those impurities. Two common clarifying methods, a baking soda rinse and clarifying shampoo, each have pros and cons.

Baking Soda

Baking soda is a naturally occurring chemical compound. It cleans — quite well — by very gently abrading your scalp and hair; this abrasion, however, can be irritating to your scalp. Additionally, baking soda is very alkaline, with a pH of 9, and quite out of balance with your hair and scalp, which have a pH of about 5. This pH imbalance can lead to the hair becoming dry and brittle. If you choose baking soda to cleanse, you'll want to thoroughly hydrate your hair with a moisturizer. On the plus side, baking soda is very affordable and readily available.

Doing a Baking Soda Rinse

If you choose to try a baking soda rinse, prepare a solution consisting of 1 tablespoon of baking soda to every cup of water. Mix your solution really well, until it is clear. Get your hair wet in the tub, sink or shower and then pour the solution through your hair, massaging into scalp and hair. Rub the solution through your hair as you would shampoo, and then rinse thoroughly. Be sure to follow with a moisturizing hair conditioner, oil or butter.

Clarifying Shampoo

Clarifying shampoos are more likely to be pH balanced to match your hair and scalp. They also, however, are likely to be packed with drying and potentially irritating chemicals such as sulfates. They can also contain silicones, which add nice shine and slip to hair, but which are not water-soluble and tend to build up on hair, essentially defeating the purpose of a clarifying shampoo. Clarifying shampoos can be pricey, too.

Other Options

If you can't decide between a baking soda rinse and a clarifying shampoo, you might instead choose another option altogether. For example, you might use a shampoo with a gentler cleansing sulfate -- such as sodium cocoyl glycinate instead of sodium lauryl sulfate, suggests NaturallyCurly.com. Or you can opt to use haircare products that contain only water-soluble ingredients -- no silicones -- and therefore rinse out easily and thoroughly with water and cause no buildup. This eliminates the need to clarify your hair.