CHAPTER 18

Braiding and Braid Extensions



Courtesy of Carlos Payne-Solid Gold Studios.

Chapter Outline

Why Study Braiding and Braid Extensions?

Understanding the Basics

Braiding the Hair

Procedures

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Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- ☑ **LO1** Explain how to prepare the hair for braiding.
- ☑ **LO2** Demonstrate the procedure for cornrowing.

Key Terms

Page number indicates where in the chapter the term is used.

cornrows (canerows)
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fishtail braid
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invisible braid (inverted braid, French braid)
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locks (dreadlocks)
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natural hairstyling
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overhand technique
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single braids (box braids, individual braids)
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twisting
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Courtesy of Preston Phillips.

▲ **Figure 18–1**
A contemporary braiding style.

From its origins in Africa to its widespread use today, hair braiding has always played a significant role in grooming and beauty practices. In some African tribes, the statement made by a person's braiding went beyond mere appearance or fashion. Different styles of braiding signified a person's social status within the community. The more important a person was, the more elaborate his or her braiding would be. Today, braiding styles continue to communicate important signals about a person's self-esteem and self-image (**Figure 18–1**).

Hair braiding reached its peak of social and esthetic significance in Africa, where it has always been regarded as an art form to be handed down from generation to generation. This art form can require an enormous investment of time, with some elaborate styles taking up to an entire day to complete. Because braiding is so time consuming, it is regarded in many African cultures as an opportunity for women to socialize and form relationships.

WHY STUDY BRAIDING AND BRAID EXTENSIONS?

Cosmetologists should study and have a thorough understanding of the importance of braiding and braid extensions because:

- These services are very popular and consumers are interested in wearing styles specific to their hair texture.
- These techniques provide an opportunity for stylists to express their artistic abilities and to add another high-ticket service to their current service menu!
- All professional cosmetologists should be prepared to work with every type of hair and hairstyle trends within every culture.
- Working with braid extensions exposes cosmetologists to the fundamental techniques of adding hair extensions, which is another lucrative service for the stylist and the salon.



Historically, the first highly decorative braids were seen among African tribes. Many of these tribes, such as the Zulu, were and still are identified by their distinctive hairstyles. As early as 3000 BC, Egyptian women wore braids or plaits decorated with shells, sequins, and glass or gold beads. Ancient paintings from India show women with long, heavy braids. Additional evidence shows that the Anasazi, who (circa AD 100) populated what is now the American Southwest, also favored braids, as did later Native Americans.

The revival of cultural hairstyles in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the banning of wearing braids in many professions and even high schools, which in turn lead to lawsuits. Suppression was followed by acceptance and mainstream adaptation, and today, braids are as acceptable as any other hairstyle in most modern workplaces.

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Braiding salons have sprung up in many areas in the United States. These salons practice what is commonly known as **natural hairstyling**, which uses no chemicals or dyes, and does not alter the natural curl or coil pattern of the hair. While the origins of natural hairstyling are rooted in African-American heritage, people of all ethnicities appreciate its beauty and versatility. In the twenty-first century, natural hairstyling has brought a diverse approach to hair care. Natural hairstyling can be elaborate, simple, traditional or trendy. In all cases, offering your clients many different styles of braiding can inspire your creativity as a hair artist, and create a greater sense of client loyalty.

Some braided styles take many hours to complete. These more complex styles are not disposable hairdos to be casually brushed out. In fact, with proper care, a braided hair design can last up to three months, with six to eight weeks being preferable. The investment in time and money is high for both the client and stylist. After you spend hours braiding a client's hair, the last thing you want is to have the client reject it and demand that all the braids be removed. Giving your clients a thorough and detailed consultation is the best way to avoid misunderstandings and ensure a happy ending to every natural-styling service. Always fill out a client card during the initial consultation, and update it every time the client returns.


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▲ Figure 18–2
Wave pattern or coil configuration.

Understanding the Basics

Before exploring the various braiding techniques, it is important to have a good grasp of braiding basics. During the consultation, you will be analyzing the condition of your client's hair and scalp, paying particular attention to the hair's texture (**Figure 18–2**).

Hair Analysis: What Is Different

In braiding and other natural hairstyling, texture refers to the following three qualities.

- **Diameter of the hair.** Is the hair 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, curly, or coiled? A coil is a very tight curl. It is spiral in formation and, when lengthened or stretched, resembles a series of loops. For the purposes of this chapter, the term *textured hair* refers to hair with a tight coil pattern.

In addition to texture, consider the following:

- **Density.** Look for areas where the hair is thin.
- **Condition.** Check for damage and breakage from previous braids or chemical services.

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FYI

Within the natural hairstyling/braiding world, hair is referred to as *natural* or *virgin* if it has never had any chemical treatments. Some people use these terms even more narrowly, adding "no exposure to thermal styling tools" to the definition. Techniques used in natural hairstyling include braiding of extensions; *twisting*, overlapping two strands to form a candy cane effect; *weaving*, interweaving a weft or faux hair with natural hair; wrapping; and locking to create what are called African locks or dreadlocks.

Some states have separate natural hairstyling licenses. Furthermore, state regulatory agencies may define the term *natural hairstyling* in different ways. Stylists who hold only braiding, natural hairstyling, or locktician (sometimes spelled loctician) licenses—as opposed to full cosmetology licenses—cannot perform chemical services, such as coloring, perming, or straightening the hair.

For African-Americans, braided styles are a proud acknowledgment of their cultural heritage. However, their use is not limited to African-Americans. People today borrow and enjoy styles and traditions from many different cultures.



- **Length.** Make sure that the hair is physically long enough to execute the braiding style.
- **Scalp health.** Check the condition of the scalp to ensure that it is healthy and properly cared for.

Carefully checking the hair and scalp is essential for a good outcome. If the hair has extremely thin areas, for instance, the braid thickness will be noticeably different in these areas. In addition, damaged hair should not be braided since it will further stress the hair. Because everyone has thinner, finer hair around the hairline, you should never choose styles that place excessive tension in this area.

Tools for Braiding

Artists are only as good as their tools, and this adage applies equally to cutting, coloring, and creating natural hairstyles. No matter what length and texture the hair might be, certain tools are essential in order to master various braiding techniques (**Figures 18–3** and **18–4**).

- **Boar-bristle brush (natural hairbrush).** Best for stimulating the scalp as well as removing dirt and lint from locks. Nylon-bristle brushes are not as durable, and many snag the hair. However, soft nylon brushes may be an option for fine, soft hair around the hairline.
- **Square paddle brush.** This brush is good for releasing tangles, knots, and snarls in short, textured hair and long, straight hair. Square paddle brushes are pneumatic because they have a cushion of air in the head that makes the bristles collapse when they encounter too much resistance. This is key to preventing breakage in fragile African-American hair.
- **Vent brush.** This brush has a single or double row of widely spaced pins with protective tips to prevent tearing and breaking the hair. Vent brushes are used to gently remove tangles on wet wavy or dry curly hair, as well as on human hair extensions. Always check the protective tips before using a vent brush on the hair. If even one is missing, discard the brush.
- **Wide-toothed comb.** These are available in a variety of shapes and designs, and they glide through hair with little snarling. The teeth, which range in width from medium to large, have long rounded tips to avoid scratching the scalp. The distance between the teeth is the most important feature of this comb; larger spacing allows textured hair to move between the rows of teeth with ease.
- **Double-toothed comb (detangling comb).** This tool separates the hair as it combs, making it an excellent detangling comb for wet curly hair.

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▲ Figure 18–3
Combs and brushes used in braiding.



▲ Figure 18–4
Clips, blowdryer, diffuser concentrator, nozzle, and scissors.

- **Tail comb.** A tail comb is excellent for design parting, sectioning large segments of hair, and opening and removing braids.
- **Finishing comb.** Usually 8 to 10 inches in length, finishing combs are used while cutting. They work well on fine or straight hair.
- **Cutting comb.** This tool is used for cutting small sections. It should be used only after the hair is softened and elongated with a blowdryer.
- **Pick with rounded teeth.** This tool is useful for lifting and separating textured hair. It 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, and it dries, stretches, and softens textured hair. Use a hard-plastic pick nozzle because metal attachments become too hot.
- **Diffuser.** Dries hair without disturbing the finished look and without dehydrating the hair.
- **Five-inch scissors.** This tool is used for creating shapes and finished looks, and for trimming bangs (fringes) and excess extension material.
- **Long clips.** These are used for separating hair into large sections.
- **Butterfly and small clips.** These clips can be used to separate hair into large or small sections.
- **Hood dryer.** Use a hood dryer to remove excess moisture before blowdrying hair.
- **Small rubber bands or string.** Use these to secure the ends.

STATE REGULATORY ALERT

Lockticians specialize in creating and grooming locks. Although some states may require them to hold a braider's license, they are not braiders. Even if a lockticians license is the only license you hold, state and federal regulations require you take specific preventive measures against the spread of germs and infectious disease.

All surfaces and tools in the salon must be cleaned and disinfected after every client. You should always check with your state's regulatory agency regarding specific requirements in your state.

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Implements and materials you will need for extensions are listed below.

- **Extension fibers.** These come in a variety of types: Kanekalon®, nylon, rayon, human hair, yarn, lin, and yak.
- **Hackle.** A hackle is a board of fine, upright nails through which human hair extensions are combed; they are used for detangling or blending colors and highlights.
- **Drawing board.** Drawing boards are flat leather pads with very close, fine teeth that sandwich human hair extensions. The pads are weighed down with books, allowing a specific amount of hair to be extracted without loosening and disturbing the rest of the hair during the process of braiding.

Materials for Extensions

A wide variety of fibers are available for the purpose of extending hair. It is important to keep in mind that the fibers you use will largely determine how successful and durable the extension will be. Although it may seem like a good idea to buy the least expensive product, in the long run this may not prove to be the most economical solution, especially if you are buying hair fabric in large quantities. You may get stuck with a lot of material, for instance, that does not give you the results you desire. When buying a new product, buy in small quantities and test the fiber on a mannequin before using it on a client.



▲ Figure 18–5
Human hair is the gold standard for hair extensions.

The following materials are most commonly used for hair extensions:

- **Human hair.** Human hair is the gold standard for hair extensions. Unfortunately, the human hair market can be a confusing and sometimes deceptive business. Most human hair is imported from Asia, with little information about how it was processed, or even if it is 100 percent human hair. This makes it very important to deal only with suppliers you know and trust (**Figure 18–5**).
- **Kanekalon.** A manufactured, synthetic fiber of excellent quality, Kanekalon is made in a wide variety of types, with different names, colors and textures. Many companies that offer synthetic hair goods use a line or brand made of Kanekalon. Some Kanekalon fibers are high-heat resistant, some are especially made for braided styles, and others mimic human hair as closely as possible. Durable, soft, and less inclined to tangle than many other synthetics, Kanekalon holds up to shampooing and styling. This durability is one of the reasons it is an extremely popular fiber for use in hair additions and extensions (**Figure 18–6**).
- **Nylon or rayon synthetic.** This product is less expensive than many other synthetics and is available in varying qualities. It reflects light and leaves the hair very shiny. A drawback of nylon and rayon is that



▲ Figure 18–6
Kanekalon is a top-of-the-line synthetic fiber used for hair extensions.

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both of these fibers have been known to cut or break the surrounding natural hair. In addition, repeated shampooing will make these extensions less durable, and they may melt if high heat, such as that from a hot blowdryer, is applied.

- **Yarn.** Traditional yarn used to make sweaters and hats is now being used to adorn hair. It can be made of cotton or a nylon blend, and is very inexpensive and easy to find. Yarn is light, soft, and detangles easily. It is available in many colors, does not reflect light, and gives the braid a matte finish. While yarn may expand when shampooing, it will not slip from the base, making it durable for braids. Be careful when you purchase yarn because some products may appear jet black in the store but actually show a blue or green tint in natural light.
- **Lin.** This beautiful wool fiber imported from Africa has a matte finish and comes only in black and brown. Lin comes on a roll and can be used in any length and size. Keep in mind that this cotton-like fabric is very flammable.
- **Yak.** This strong fiber comes from the domestic ox found in the mountains of Tibet and Central Asia. Yak hair is shaved and processed to be used alone or blended with human hair. Mixing human hair with yak hair helps to remove the manufactured shine (**Figure 18–7**).



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▲ **Figure 18–7**
Yak blends beautifully with human hair.

Working with Wet or Dry Hair

In general, it is best to braid curly hair when it is dry. If curly hair is braided wet, it shrinks and recoils as it dries, which may create excess pulling and scalp tension. In turn, the tension can lead to breakage or hair loss from pulling or twisting. If you are using a style that requires your client's hair to be wet while you manipulate it, you must allow for shrinkage in order to avoid damage to the hair and scalp.

Straight, resistant hair is best braided slightly damp or very lightly coated with a wax or pomade to make it more pliable. After you shampoo the client's hair, towel blot the hair without rubbing or tension, using several towels if necessary. Apply a leave-in conditioner to make combing the hair easier. Begin combing at the ends of the hair strand and gently work out the tangles while moving upward toward the scalp. Use a wide-toothed or detangling comb for this purpose, and then blowdry the hair. Wax, pomades, pastes, or lotions can be used to hold the hair in place for a finished look. Brush the hair with a large paddle brush, beginning at the ends, just as you did with the comb.

Textured hair presents certain challenges when styling. It is very fragile both wet and dry. Because most braiding styles require the hair to be dry, blowdrying is the most effective way to prepare the hair for the braiding service. Not only does blowdrying quickly dry the hair, it softens it in the process, making it more manageable for combing and

CAUTION

While braiding is one of the most beautiful expressions in professional hairstyling, placing excessive tension on the hair can lead to a condition called *traction alopecia*. This condition is particularly prevalent among African-American women and children. It begins with scalp irritation and excessive flakiness, and eventually leads to hair loss, particularly around the hairline. Wearing excessively tight braids (tight enough to pull the hair or impede circulation to the scalp) over a prolonged period of time can lead to permanent hair loss. Keep in mind that while braids are beautiful, they must be without excessive tension to avoid long-term follicle damage.

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sectioning. Blowdrying also loosens and elongates the wave pattern, while stretching the hair-shaft length. This is great for short hair, allowing for easier pick up and manipulation of the hair. Make sure to control the hair while blowdrying to prevent frizzing! ☑ LO1

PROCEDURE 18-1 Preparing Textured Hair for Braiding SEE PAGE 520

Braiding the Hair

Braiding styles can be broadly classified as visible and invisible. A **visible braid** is a three-strand braid that is created with an underhand technique. An **underhand technique**, also known as **plaiting**, is one in which the left section goes under the middle strand, then the right section goes under the middle strand. This technique is often used for cornrowing because many braiders believe it creates less tangling.

Interestingly, the underhand technique has nothing to do with holding the palms up or down.

An **invisible braid**, also known as an **inverted braid** or **French braid**, is a three-strand braid that is produced with an **overhand technique**. In an overhand technique, the first side section goes over the middle one, then the other side section goes over the middle strand. You can start with either the right or left section; what is key is that the side sections go *over* the middle section (**Figure 18–8**).

The following discussion and procedures will provide you with a basic overview of foundational braiding styles. These techniques are important to master because all of the more advanced and trendy braiding techniques build upon these. Once you have become proficient with these techniques, your creativity—along with additional training and practice—will allow you to create some of the most complex and beautiful styles you and your clients can imagine.

The procedures begin with the most basic and move on to more complex techniques, including braided extensions.



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▲ Figure 18–8
Braided French twist.

Rope Braid

The **rope braid** is created with two strands that are twisted around each other. This braid can be done on hair that is all one length or on long, layered hair. Remember to pick up and add hair to both sides before you twist the right side over the left.

PROCEDURE 18-2 Rope Braid SEE PAGE 522

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Fishtail Braid

The **fishtail braid** is a 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. It is best done on non-layered hair that is at least shoulder length.

PROCEDURE 18-3 Fishtail Braid SEE PAGE 524

Invisible Braid

The invisible braid uses an overhand pick-up technique. It can be done on or off the scalp and with or without extensions. This style is ideal for long hair, but it can also be executed successfully on shorter hair with long layers. If you are dealing with straight, layered hair, apply a light coating of wax or pomade to the hair to help hold shorter strands in place. Procedure 18–4 demonstrates one braid down the back of the head.

CAUTION

If you notice a scalp disorder during the hair and scalp analysis you perform prior to braiding, be sure to advise your client to seek medical attention.

PROCEDURE 18-4 Invisible Braid SEE PAGE 526

Single Braids

Single braids, also known as **box braids** and **individual braids**, are free-hanging braids, with or without extensions, that can be executed using either an underhand or overhand technique. Single braids can be used with all hair textures and in a variety of ways. For instance, two or three single braids added to a ponytail or chignon can be a lovely evening look.



The partings or subsections for single braids can be square, triangular, or rectangular. The parting determines where the braid is placed, and how it moves. Single braids can move in any direction, so make sure to braid in the direction you want them to go. As you are braiding, you are styling and shaping the finished look. The procedure for medium-to-large single braids uses the underhand technique.

Extensions for single braids come in a wide range of sizes and lengths, and are integrated into the natural hair using the three-strand underhand technique. Fiber for extensions can be selected from synthetic hair, yarn, or human hair; the selection is vital in determining the finished style. Braiding must be consistent and close together.

As part of the consultation step, open the package of extension fibers and show them to the client to verify that the color is correct. Remove the fibers from the package and, if necessary, cut them to the desired length. Place half the extension fibers in the bottom portion of the drawing board and sandwich them with the upper portion of board. To secure the hair extensions, place a heavy object on top of the board, such as a large book. This allows you to easily extract the appropriate amount of fibers

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for the braids. Hair extensions can also be separated and dispensed by a free-hand method.

PROCEDURE 18-5 Single Braids without Extensions SEE PAGE 528

PROCEDURE 18-6 Single Braids with Extensions SEE PAGE 530

Cornrows

Cornrows, also known as **canerows**, are narrow rows of visible braids that lie close to the scalp and are created with a three-strand, on-the-scalp braiding technique. Consistent and even partings are the foundation of beautiful cornrows. Learning to create these partings requires patience and practice. Using a mannequin to practice will help develop your speed, accuracy, and finger and wrist dexterity.

Cornrows are worn by men, women, and children, and can be braided on hair of various lengths and textures. For long, straight hair, large cornrows are a fashionable and elegant hairstyle. Designer cornrows have become increasingly popular, with elaborate designs that demonstrate the stylist's skill and creative expression. The flat, contoured styles can last several weeks when applied without extensions, and up to two months when applied with extensions.



Cornrows with Extensions (Feed-in Method)

Extensions can be applied to cornrows or individual braids with the feed-in method. In this method, the braid is built up strand by strand. Excess amounts of extension material can place too much weight on the fragile areas of the hairline and will tighten and pull the hair to leave an unrealistic finished look. By properly applying the correct tension when using the feed-in method, the braid stylist can avoid an artificial look and prevent breakage.

The traditional cornrow is flat, natural, and contoured to the scalp. The parting is important because it defines the finished style. The feed-in method creates a tapered or narrow base at the hairline. Small pieces or strips of extension hair are added to fill in the base, bringing the adjoining braids closer together. This technique takes longer to perform than traditional cornrowing. However, a cornrow achieved by the feed-in method will last longer and look more natural, without placing excessive tension on the hairline. There are several different ways to start a cornrow and feed in extension pieces.

During the cornrow process, when picking up hair at the base, the hair directly underneath the previous revolution must be incorporated

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ACTivity

Braids can be created in different lengths and styled into a variety of updos that suit your client's facial shape. Working with classmates, determine one another's facial shape, based on the following major types. Then, experiment with artistic ways to create updos and interwoven braided styles that work with the different types of facial shapes.

- An oval face is egg-shaped, and most any braided style suits this facial shape.
- The elongated face is a too-long oval and requires a style with more width at the sides.
- A round face is wide at the cheeks and will benefit from a style with height, such as one in which braids are gathered high on top and secured below the crown in back.
- A square face has a strong, square jaw line, which is minimized by allowing longer braids to frame the face.
- Heart-shaped faces are wide at the forehead and narrow at the chin and jaw.
- Pear-shaped faces are the opposite: narrow at the forehead and wide at the chin and jaw. For heart-shaped faces, use bangs or sweep braids across the forehead; for the pear shape, do the opposite by bringing at least some braids forward to create the illusion of a narrower chin line.

When styling braids for updos, you can coil them around the head, sweep up and intertwine some sections and then secure them with a braid or band, and even create a side chignon to draw attention away from an elongated face. Use the head shape to guide your style choices, and secure groups of braids by wrapping two or three other braids around them. With some styles, your biggest challenge will be discovering ways to hold up heavy braids (**Figure 18–9**).



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▲ Figure 18–9
Upswept braids elongate a slightly wide face shape.

into the braid. The hair that you pick up must never come from another panel or from a lower part of the braid. The same is true when executing any braid technique. Overextending or misplacing the beginning of the extension leaves the hair exposed and unsupported, which can lead to breakage and hair loss in that area. This is particularly true when adding extensions at the hairline. If the extension is not made secure by two or three revolutions before picking up, it may shift away from the point of entry. ☑ LO2



PROCEDURE 18-7 Basic Cornrows SEE PAGE 533

PROCEDURE 18-8 Cornrows with Extensions SEE PAGE 535

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Tree Braids

Tree braiding is a newer way to add hair for a longer look. The client's hair is braided along with an extension, but the finished look shows mostly faux hair. Braiders report that tree braids take about four hours, making them faster than some other techniques. Tree braiding techniques are still evolving, and there are many ways to do them.

Some braiders add individual strands of hair, which are braided along with the natural hair and tied in place about half an inch from the root area. In this technique, a few very short braids can be seen standing up along the front hairline, then the hair extension (long and unbraided) flows freely to create the look of naturally long, straight hair.

Tree braids can also be created by adding long, loose pieces of hair to cornrows. After a few sections are braided together, a small section of the extension is pulled out and left to hang free. This technique continues all along the cornrow. When the look is completed, the free-hanging sections of the extensions completely conceal the cornrows, creating the look of naturally long, straight or wavy hair, depending on the texture of the extensions.



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▲ Figure 18–10
Spiral the hair with the comb.

Locks

Locks, also known as **dreadlocks**, are separate networks of curly, textured hair that have been intertwined and meshed together. Hair locking is done without the use of chemicals. The hair locks in several slow phases, which can take from six months to a year depending on the length, density, and coil pattern of the hair (**Figure 18–10** and **Table 18–1**).

DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES OF LOCKS

PHASE	CHARACTERISTICS
PHASE 1	Hair is soft and is coiled into spiral configurations. The coil is smooth and the end is open. The coil has a shiny or a glossy texture.
PRELOCK STAGE, PHASE 2	Hair begins to interlace and mesh. The separate units begin to puff up and expand in size. The units are no longer glossy or smooth.
SPROUTING STAGE, PHASE 3	A bulb can be felt at the end of each lock. Interlacing continues.
GROWING STAGE, PHASE 4	Hair begins to regain length. Lock may still be frizzy, but also solid in some areas.
MATURATION STAGE, PHASE 5	Locks are closed at the ends, dense and dull, and do not reflect light.

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Table 18–1 **Developmental Phases of Locks.**

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▲ Figure 18–11
Finished coils.



Courtesy of Preston Phillips.

▲ Figure 18–12
Locks.

Locks are more than just a hairstyle; they are a cultural expression. There are several ways to cultivate locks, such as double twisting, wrapping with cord, coiling, palm rolling, and braiding. Locks will also form themselves in textured hair that is not combed or brushed out. As demonstrated by the Rastafarians of Jamaica, leaving coily hair to take its own natural course will cause it to intertwine and lock. Cultivated African locks have symmetry and balance.

The three basic methods of locking are:

- **The comb technique.** Particularly effective during the early stages of locking while the coil is still open, this method involves placing the comb at the base of the scalp and, with a rotating motion, spiraling the hair into a curl. With each revolution, the comb moves down until it reaches the end of the hair shaft. It offers a tight coil and is excellent on short (1-inch to 3-inch) hair (**Figures 18–11** and **18–12**).
- **The palm roll.** This method is the gentlest on the hair, and it works through all the natural stages of locking. Palm rolling takes advantage of the hair's natural ability to coil. This method involves applying gel to dampened subsections, placing the portion of hair between the palms of both hands, and rolling in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction (**Figure 18–13**). With each revolution, as you move down the coil shaft, the entire coil is formed (**Figure 18–14**). Partings can be directional, horizontal, vertical, or brick-layered. Decorative designs and sculpting patterns are some of the creative options you can choose.
- **Braids or extensions.** Another effective way to start locks involves sectioning the hair for the desired size of lock and single braiding the hair to the end. Synthetic hair fiber, human hair fiber, or yarn can be added to a single braid to form a lock. After several weeks, the braid will grow away from the scalp, at which time the palm roll method can be used to cultivate the new growth to form a lock.

Shaping dreadlocks takes patience and commitment on the part of clients. In the beginning, clients must have frequent professional hair shapings to ensure a good outcome.



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▲ Figure 18–13
Roll the hair between the palms.



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▲ Figure 18–14
Roll down the coil shaft.

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PROCEDURE 18-1

Preparing Textured Hair for Braiding

Implements and Materials

You will need all of the following implements, materials, and supplies:

- Blowdrying cream or lotion with oil or glycerin base
- Butterfly clips
- Conditioner (protein or moisturizing)
- Detangling solution (four parts water to one part cream rinse or oil) in spray bottle
- Neck strip
- Shampoo
- Shampoo cape
- Tail comb with large rounded teeth
- Towels

Preparation

- Perform PROCEDURE 15-1 Pre-Service Procedure SEE PAGE 323

Procedure



1 Drape the client for a shampoo. If necessary, comb and detangle the hair.

2 Shampoo, rinse, apply conditioner, and rinse thoroughly.

3 Gently towel dry the hair.



4 Part damp hair from ear to ear across crown. Use butterfly clips to separate front section from back section.

5 Part the back of head into four to six sections. For thick textured hair, make more sections to allow for increased ease and control. For thinner hair, use fewer sections. The front half of the head, where hair is less dense, can be sectioned in three or more sections. Separate the sections with clips.

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6 Beginning on left section in the back, start combing the ends of the hair first, working your way up to the base of the scalp. As you go along, lightly spray each section with detangling solution if needed. The combing movement should be fast and rhythmic, without creating tension on the scalp. Use a picking motion to comb through the hair.



7 After combing thoroughly, divide the section into two equal parts and twist them together to the end to hold the section in place.

8 Continue with the other sections of the hair until the entire head is sectioned.

9 Place client under a medium-heat hood dryer for five to ten minutes to remove excess moisture.



10 Open one of the combed sections. Using fingers, apply blowdrying cream to hair from scalp to ends.





11 Using a pick nozzle attachment on a blowdryer, hold hair down and away from client's head as you begin drying. Use comb-out motion with the pick, always pointing the nozzle away from client. As ends relax and stretch, continue to use the pick nozzle to comb through and smooth sections. Use moderate tension, and direct air flow down the hair shaft to smooth and seal the cuticle. Blowing directly on scalp can cause a burn or discomfort. When the blow-out is completed, the hair is ready to braid.

Post-Service

- Complete PROCEDURE 15-2 **Post-Service Procedure** SEE PAGE 326

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PROCEDURE 18-2

Rope Braid

Implements and Materials

You will need all of the following implements, materials, and supplies:

- **Blowdrying cream or lotion with oil or glycerin base**
- **Butterfly clips**
- **Conditioner (protein or moisturizing)**
- **Detangling solution in spray bottle**
- **Hair accessories or ornamentation (if desired)**
- **Neck strip**
- **Rubber bands, fabric-covered elastics, or other implements for securing the ends**
- **Shampoo**
- **Shampoo cape**
- **Styling and finishing products**
- **Tail comb with large rounded teeth**
- **Towels**

Preparation

- Perform PROCEDURE 15-1 **Pre-Service Procedure** SEE PAGE 323

Procedure

1 Drape the client for a shampoo. If necessary, comb and detangle the hair.

2 Shampoo, rinse, apply conditioner, and rinse thoroughly.

3 Gently towel dry the hair, then blowdry it completely.



4 Take a triangular section of hair from the front. If client has bangs (fringe), begin behind the bangs.



5 Divide the section into two equal strands. Cross the right strand over the left strand.

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6 Put both strands in right hand with index finger in between and palm facing upward.



7 Twist the left strand two times clockwise (toward the center).



8 Pick up a 1-inch section from the left side. Add this section to the left strand.



9 Put both strands in your left hand with the index finger in between and your palm up.



10 Pick up a 1-inch section from the right side and add it to the right strand.



11 Put both strands in your right hand with your index finger in between and your palm up.



12 With your hand in this position, twist toward the left (toward the center) until your palm is facing down.



13a Work toward the nape until the style is complete.



13b Secure with a rubber band.

14 When you run out of sections to pick up, another option is to create a rope ponytail with the remaining hair. Twist the left strand clockwise (away from the center) two or three times. Place the strands in your right hand, index finger in between and palm up. Twist the palm down (toward the center), right hand over left.

15 Repeat these steps until you reach the end of the hair. Secure ends with a rubber band.



16 Finished look.

Post-Service

- Complete PROCEDURE 15-2 Post-Service Procedure SEE PAGE 326

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PROCEDURE 18-3

Fishtail Braid

Implements and Materials

You will need all of the following implements, materials, and supplies:

- **Blowdrying cream or lotion with oil or glycerin base**
- **Butterfly clips**
- **Conditioner (protein or moisturizing)**
- **Detangling solution in spray bottle**
- **Hair accessories or ornamentation (if desired)**
- **Neck strip**
- **Rubber bands, fabric-covered elastics, or other implements for securing the ends**
- **Shampoo**
- **Shampoo cape**
- **Styling and finishing products**
- **Tail comb with large rounded teeth**
- **Towels**

Preparation

- Perform PROCEDURE 15-1 Pre-Service Procedure SEE PAGE 323

Procedure



1 Drape the client for a shampoo. If necessary, comb and detangle the hair.

2 Shampoo, rinse, apply conditioner, and rinse thoroughly.

3 Gently towel dry the hair, then blowdry it completely.



4 Take a triangular section from the front. If the client has bangs (fringe), begin behind the bangs. Divide this section into two equal strands.

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5 Cross the right strand over the left strand. Place both strands in the right hand, index finger in between and palm up.



6 Cross this section over the left strand and add it to the right strand.



7 Place two outer strands in the left hand, index finger in between and palm up.



8 Cross this section over the right strand and add it to the left strand. You have now completed an X shape.



9 Put both strands in the right hand, as in step 5.

10 Move your hand down toward the nape with each new section picked up.

11 When you run out of sections, secure the hair with an elastic band to hold.



12 Finished look.

Post-Service

- Complete PROCEDURE 15-2 **Post-Service Procedure** SEE PAGE 326

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PROCEDURE 18-4

Invisible Braid

Implements and Materials

You will need all of the following implements, materials, and supplies:

- **Blowdrying cream or lotion with oil or glycerin base**
- **Butterfly clips**
- **Conditioner (protein or moisturizing)**
- **Detangling solution in spray bottle**
- **Hair accessories or ornamentation (if desired)**
- **Neck strip**
- **Rubber bands, fabric-covered elastics, or other implements for securing the ends**
- **Shampoo**
- **Shampoo cape**
- **Styling and finishing products**
- **Tail comb with large rounded teeth**
- **Towels**

Preparation

- Perform PROCEDURE 15-1 **Pre-Service Procedure** SEE PAGE 323

Procedure

1 Drape the client for a shampoo. If necessary, comb and detangle the hair.

2 Shampoo, rinse, apply conditioner, and rinse thoroughly.

3 Gently towel dry the hair, then blowdry it completely.



4 At crown of head, take a triangular section of hair and place it in your left hand. Divide the section into three equal strands, two in your left hand, and one in your right hand.

5 Place your fingers close to the scalp for a tight stitch. For a looser stitch, move away from the scalp. Cross the right strand (1) over the center strand (2). Strand 1 is now in the new center, and strand 2 is now on the right.

6 Cross the left strand (3) over the center section and place it in your right hand.

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7 Place all three strands in your left hand with your fingers separating the strands.



8 With your right hand, pick up a 1-inch x 1-inch section of hair on the right side. Add to strand 2 in your left hand.



9 Take the combined strands in your right hand and cross them over the center strand. Place all the strands in your right hand.



10 With your left hand, pick up a 1-inch section on the left side. Add this section to the left outer strand (1) in your right hand.



11 Take the combined strands and cross them over the center strand.



12 Place all three sections in your left hand, pick up the right side, and add to the outer strand (3).

13 Remember that the outer strands are added to and then crossed over the center. Continue these movements until the braid is complete. Secure the braid with a rubber band, then with



14 Finished look.

Post-Service

- Complete PROCEDURE 15-2 **Post-Service Procedure** SEE PAGE 326

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PROCEDURE 18-5

Single Braids without Extensions

Implements and Materials

You will need all of the following implements, materials, and supplies:

- Blowdrying cream or lotion with oil or glycerin base
- Bobby pins
- Butterfly clips
- Conditioner (protein or moisturizing)
- Detangling solution in spray bottle
- Hair accessories or ornamentation (if desired)
- Light essential oil
- Neck strip
- Oil sheen
- Rubber bands, fabric-covered elastics, or other implements for securing the ends
- Shampoo
- Shampoo cape
- Styling and finishing products
- Tail comb with large rounded teeth
- Towels

Preparation

- Perform PROCEDURE 15-1 Pre-Service Procedure SEE PAGE 323

Procedure

1 Drape the client for a shampoo. If necessary, comb and detangle the hair.

2 Shampoo, rinse, apply conditioner, and rinse thoroughly.

3 Gently towel dry the hair, then blowdry it completely.

4 Apply a light essential oil to the scalp and massage the oil into the scalp and throughout the hair.

5



5 Divide the hair in half by parting from ear to ear across the crown. Clip away the front section.

6 Based on the style that you and the client have selected, determine the size and direction of the base of the braid.

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7 Part a diagonal section in the back of the head about 1-inch wide, taking into account the texture and length of the client's hair.

8 Divide the section into three even strands. Place your fingers close to the base. Cross the left strand under the center strand and then cross the right strand under.



9 Pass the outer strands under the center strands, moving down the braid to the end. Secure the end as desired.



10 Move to the next subsection. Working systematically, repeat the braiding movement by passing the alternating outside strands under the center strand. Maintain an even tension on all strands.



11 Move across the back, and take the next diagonal parting. Continue procedure until the entire back is completed.



12 Then, move to the front and repeat the procedure in the front section.

13 Try to build up speed and accuracy to create straight and even braids. Rubber bands are optional to finish each braid.



14 Apply an oil sheen product as desired by your client for a shiny finished look.

Post-Service

- Complete PROCEDURE 15-2 **Post-Service Procedure** SEE PAGE 326

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PROCEDURE 18-6

Single Braids with Extensions

Courtesy of Carlos Payne-Solid Gold Studios.

Implements and Materials

You will need all of the following implements, materials, and supplies:

- **Blowdrying cream or lotion with oil or glycerin base**
- **Bobby pins**
- **Butterfly clips**
- **Conditioner (protein or moisturizing)**
- **Detangling solution in spray bottle**
- **Drawing board**
- **Extension fibers**
- **Hair accessories or ornamentation (if desired)**
- **Neck strip**
- **Oil sheen**
- **Rubber bands, fabric-covered elastics, or other implements for securing the ends**
- **Shampoo**
- **Shampoo cape**
- **Styling and finishing products**
- **Tail comb with large rounded teeth**
- **Towels**

Preparation

- Perform PROCEDURE 15-1 **Pre-Service Procedure** SEE PAGE 323

Procedure



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1 Drape the client for a shampoo. If necessary, comb and detangle the hair before shampooing.

2 Shampoo and comb, then blowdry the hair completely

3 Prepare the extension fibers.

4 Apply a light essential oil to the scalp and massage the oil into the scalp and throughout the hair.



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5 Part the hair across the crown from ear to ear. Clip away the front section.

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6 Part a diagonal section in the back of the head, at about a 45-degree angle, from the ear to the nape of the neck. For a medium-size braid, this section can be from ¼-inch (0.6 centimeters) to 1-inch (2.5 centimeters) wide, depending on the texture and length of the client's hair.

7 Using vertical parts to separate the base into subsections, create a diamond-shaped base.



8 Select the appropriate amount of extension fibers from the drawing board. The extension should always be proportional to the section that it is being applied to. For tapered ends, gently pull extension fibers at both sides so that the ends are uneven. Then fold the fibers in half.



9 Divide the natural hair into three equal sections. Place the folded extension on top of the natural hair, on the outside and center portions of the braid. If desired, wrap one side of the extension two or three revolutions around the base of the natural hair and re-divide into three equal sections.



10 Once the extension is in place, begin the underhand braiding technique. Remember that the outer strands should cross under the center strand. Each time you pass an outer strand under the center strand, bring the center strand over tightly so that the outside strand stays securely in the center. As you move down the braid, keep your fingers close to the stitch, so that the braid remains tight and straight.

11 Continue braid to the desired length. Small rubber bands can be used to hold the ends in place, or you can tie them off with string and cut off the ends of the string. Other optional finishes, such as singeing (heat sealing), are considered advanced methods and require special training.



12 The next section should be above the previous section on a diagonal part, moving toward the ear.

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PROCEDURE 18-6

Single Braids with Extensions continued



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13 After several sections have been completed, alternate the direction of the diagonal partings so that a V-shaped pattern forms in the back of the head.



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14 Once the back is finished, create a diagonal or horizontal parting above the ear in the front. As you get closer to the hairline, be aware of the amount of extension hair that is applied to the hairline. Do not add excessive amounts of fiber into a fragile hairline. The fiber should always be proportionate to the hair to which it is being applied.

15 After the entire head has been braided, remove all loose hair ends from the braid shaft with scissors.



Courtesy of Carlos Payne-Solid Gold Studios.

16 If using human hair, spray hair ends with water to activate the wave in the extensions. The finished braids will look quite natural.

Post-Service

- Complete PROCEDURE 15-2 Post-Service Procedure SEE PAGE 326

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PROCEDURE 18-7

Basic Cornrows

Implements and Materials

You will need all of the following implements, materials, and supplies:

- Blowdrying cream or lotion with oil or glycerin base
- Bobby pins
- Butterfly clips
- Conditioner (protein or moisturizing)
- Detangling solution in spray bottle
- Drawing board
- Extension fibers
- Hair accessories or ornamentation (if desired)
- Neck strip
- Oil sheen
- Rubber bands, fabric-covered elastics, or other implements for securing the ends
- Shampoo
- Shampoo cape
- Styling and finishing products
- Tail comb with large rounded teeth
- Towels

Preparation

- Perform PROCEDURE 15-1 Pre-Service Procedure SEE PAGE 323

Procedure



1 Drape the client for a shampoo. If necessary, comb and detangle the hair before shampooing.

2 Shampoo and comb, then blowdry the hair completely.



3 Depending on desired style, determine the correct size and direction of the cornrow base. With tail comb, part hair into 2-inch sections (or smaller, depending on the desired style) and apply a light essential oil to the scalp. Massage oil throughout scalp and hair.



4 Start by taking two even partings to form a neat row for the cornrow base. With a tail comb, part the hair into a panel, using butterfly clips to keep the other hair pinned to either side.

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PROCEDURE 18-7 Basic Cornrows continued



5 Divide the panel into three even strands. To ensure consistency, make sure that strands are the same size. Place fingers close to the base. Cross the left strand (1) under the center strand (2). The center strand is now on the left and the former left strand (1) is the new center.



6 Cross the right strand (3) under the center strand (1). Passing the outer strands under the center strand this way creates the underhand cornrow braid.



7 With each crossing under or revolution, pick up from the base of the panel a new strand of equal size and add it to the outer strand before crossing it under the center strand.



8 As you move along the braid panel, pick up a strand from the scalp with each revolution, and add it to the outer strand before crossing it under, alternating the side of the braid on which you pick up the hair.

9 As new strands are added, the braid will become fuller. Braid to the end.



10 Simply braiding to the ends can finish the cornrow; small rubber bands can be used to hold the ends in place. Other optional finishes, such as singeing (heat sealing), are considered advanced methods and require special training.



11 Braid the next panel in the same direction and in the same manner. Keep the partings clean and even.

12 Repeat until all the hair is braided, and apply oil sheen for shine.



13 Finished look.

Post-Service

- Complete PROCEDURE 15-2 Post-Service Procedure SEE PAGE 326

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PROCEDURE 18-8

Cornrows with Extensions

Implements and Materials

You will need all of the following implements, materials, and supplies:

- **Blowdrying cream or lotion with oil or glycerin base**
- **Bobby pins**
- **Butterfly clips**
- **Conditioner (protein or moisturizing)**
- **Detangling solution in spray bottle**
- **Drawing board**
- **Extension fibers**
- **Hair accessories or ornamentation (if desired)**
- **Neck strip**
- **Oil sheen**
- **Rubber bands, fabric-covered elastics, or other implements for securing the ends**
- **Shampoo**
- **Shampoo cape**
- **Styling and finishing products**
- **Tail comb with large rounded teeth**
- **Towels**

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Preparation

- Perform PROCEDURE 15-1 **Pre-Service Procedure** SEE PAGE 323

Procedure

1 Drape the client for a shampoo. If necessary, comb and detangle the hair.

2 Shampoo and comb, then blowdry it completely.

3 Prepare the extension fibers.

4 Apply a light essential oil to the scalp and massage the oil into the scalp and throughout the hair.

5



5 Starting at the hairline, part off a cornrow base in the desired direction. No extension is added at the starting point. If the hair extension is required because of a thinning hairline, apply minute amounts, as small as 5 to 10 strands. Divide the natural hair into three equal strands.

6



6 With the first revolution, cross left strand 1 under center strand 2.

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PROCEDURE 18-8 Cornrows with Extensions continued

Here's a Tip

During the cornrow process, when picking up hair at the base, the hair directly underneath the previous revolution must be incorporated into the braid. The hair that you pick up must never come from another panel or from a lower part of the braid. The same is true when executing any braid technique. Overextending or misplacing the beginning of the extension leaves the hair exposed and unsupported, which can lead to breakage and hair loss in that area. This is particularly true when adding extensions at the hairline. If the extension is not made secure by two or three revolutions before picking up, it may shift away from the point of entry.

For a professional finish, always trim any ends that may stick up through the braid. Holding your scissors flat, move up the shaft as you trim, making sure that you avoid cutting into the braid.



7 On the second revolution, the right strand 3 crosses under strand 1, which is now in the center. Pick up a small portion of natural hair and add it to the outer strand during the revolution.









8 After several revolutions and pick-ups of the natural hair, you can introduce small amounts of extension fiber, perhaps 10 to 20 fibers. To avoid bulk or knots, the amount of extension should be proportionately less than the size of the base. Fold the fibers in the middle and tuck the point in between two adjoining strands of natural hair. The folded fibers will form two portions, which are added to the center and outer strands before the next pick-up and revolution. Do not forget to continue picking up natural hair with each revolution in order to execute the cornrow. Work to the end.

9 Repeat the procedure in the same manner until all the hair is braided.



10 Finished look.

Post-Service

- Complete PROCEDURE 15-2 Post-Service Procedure SEE PAGE 326

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Review Questions

1. What is the most effective way to prepare hair for braiding?
2. What are the steps in creating basic cornrows?

Chapter Glossary

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.
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.
invisible braid	Also known as *inverted braid* or *French braid*; a three-strand braid that is produced with an overhand technique.
locks	Also known as *dreadlocks*; separate networks of curly, textured hair that have been intertwined and meshed together.
natural hairstyling	Hairstyling that uses no chemicals or dyes and does not alter the natural curl or coil pattern of the hair.
overhand technique	A technique in which the first side section goes over the middle one, then the other side section goes over the middle strand.
rope braid	Braid created with two strands that are twisted around each other.
single braids	Also known as *box braids* or *individual braids*; free-hanging braids, with or without extensions, that can be executed using either an underhand or an overhand technique.
twisting	Overlapping two strands to form a candy cane effect.
underhand technique	Also known as *plaiting*; a technique in which the left section goes under the middle strand, then the right section goes under the middle strand.
visible braid	Three-strand braid that is created using an underhand technique.
weaving	Interweaving a weft or faux hair with natural hair.

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