

Uh, your anti-breakage hair products *might* be making damage worse



Buckle up, buttercup—this is gonna melt your brain.

By CHLOE METZGER



The hair of someone who's read this PSA.

Once upon a time, I completely and utterly fucked up my hair. In an innocent attempt to fix my curls after some intense heat styling, I began slathering them in every anti-breakage treatment I could find. Cut to me two months later, dealing with hair so crispy that I had to enlist the help of experts (while crying, ofc), who informed me that the very products I'd been pouring my hopes/dreams/money into

were actually adding fuel to my damage fire.

Yes, thank you, it was a lot. But now that I'm safely on the other side—curls a-bouncin' again—I'm here to help you avoid making the same mistake.

What "anti-breakage" really means

If a hair product touts any tough-stuff lingo ("Fixes!" "Restores!" "Repairs!"), it's likely packed with proteins, which help strengthen damaged hair by filling in holes along the cuticle. Sounds great—and it is great!—unless you're unaware that...

Protein overload = more breakage

When you use these products 24/7, the protein quickly builds up and dries out your hair. "If you stretch a strand of dry hair and it snaps immediately, you've got too much protein," says

BosleyMD trichologist Gretchen Friese. That's exactly what happened to me—I'd unknowingly turned my hair (and soul) into a fragile shell instead of reaching for the real key: hydration. "People think they need protein to fix their issues, when they usually need more moisture," explains trichologist Audrey Sivasothy. (Think: you chugging a third iced coffee when your body is really begging for water.)

The easy-ish fix

Rinse with a clarifying shampoo twice a month to strip the protein buildup, swap your products for moisture-rich formulas, and limit your protein treatments to just twice monthly. It'll take time to restore ~the balance~, but after a month or two, your hair will return to its soft and shiny state—and, like me, you'll be off spreading the good-hair gospel to all your friends.



Your only protein!

A HEALTHY-HAIR STARTER PACK

CLARIFIER: Anomaly Clarifying Shampoo, \$6, target.com. **CONDITIONER:** Pantene Miracle Rescue Deep Conditioning Treatment, \$7, drugstores. **MASK:** DevaCurl Melt Into Moisture Mask, \$36, devacurl.com. **PROTEIN TREATMENT:** SheaMoisture Manuka Honey & Yogurt Hydrate + Repair Protein Power Treatment, \$12, target.com.

