

REDBOOK look

WHILE YOU COLOR

■ Keep your eye on the clock. Don't guesstimate—watch the time carefully. Thanks to built-in deactivators, most hair dyes stop working after 45 minutes. "But rinse it too soon, and you can underdo it," says Johns.

■ Use your hands. "Combs, especially those with tightly packed teeth, won't distribute the color right," says Patronik. With fingertips, massage the solution from roots to tips to ensure you don't miss any spots.

■ Be prepared with a backup box. "Buy two boxes if you have long, thick hair," says New York City salon owner Rita Hazan. "You don't want to run out of product while your hair is half treated," she explains.

AFTER YOU COLOR

■ Rinse and condition. Don't shampoo, but rinse well and use conditioner to help replenish moisture lost while coloring.

■ Clean up. Oops, you've stained your skin. "A cotton ball doused in astringent (such as Sea Breeze, \$4) removes excess dye pronto," says Patronik.

■ Get dirty. Skipping the shampoo for at least 48 hours gives hair cuticles (opened by the coloring process) time to lie back down. Closing the cuticle helps keep color molecules intact, so your hue lasts longer. Now there is a new technology that can create a protective film over the open cuticle, keeping even the most damaged cuticles from releasing color molecules. Find it in ColorSeal Nice 'N Easy haircolor, \$7. Or try Warren-Tricomi Pure-Strength Three-C System: Cleanser, \$22; Close, \$28; and Conditioner with SPF, \$25 (above).

■ Read labels. Avoid shampoos that contain sulfates, lathering agents that can strip color-treated hair. Try new sulfate-free formulas, like Kenra Platinum 2-Part Color Lock shampoo, \$15, and moisturizer, \$17 (above). Also be wary of certain herbs. "Natural ingredients such as peppermint and chamomile can strip color," Patronik explains. Oil is another color thief. "If it's one of the first five ingredients, don't use the product."



how to decode the box

A comprehensive guide to reading a package.

Pick a real color.

Choose color names that you can actually visualize (golden brown, deep auburn). "Not sure what 'fiery sunset' looks like? Don't try it," says Hazan.



Don't let her fool you.

The color you end up with will be a variation of this color, depending on your current color and hair type. "The chart on the side of the box is a more accurate representation for where this product will take you," says Johns.

Choose your permanence.

If you're half to completely gray, go permanent (100 percent gray coverage for four to six weeks before roots show). Otherwise, opt for more gentle semi-permanent (rinses out after five to eight washes) or demi-permanent (lasts up to 28 washes).



Look here for your color.

This chart explains which lines the shade suits and what your end result will look like. If your starting shade isn't here, put the box down.

win it!
27 to give away
(SEE PAGE 197)



STAY-PUT COLOR Maintain your at-home shade with this color for all hair types. 27 readers will each win shampoo, conditioner, treatment from Halo. Value of each, \$74. Total value, \$1,995.

