Work It Out: Exercise Your Hairstyle Options With These No-Excuses Gym ’Do’s

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What’s more important: your hair or your health? One third of black women surveyed said they would forego exercise because of hair care problems. But don’t let your hair care fears weigh you down! Read on for tips from AOL’s Black Voices on how to take care of your hair while taking care of yourself.

Opt for a sew-in weave. This styling option is one of the most convenient ways to do your hair and work out, especially for those with relaxed hair. Weaved-hair styles last longer because there’s no daily upkeep forcing flatiron or curling iron usage. And that means no hair breakage from excessive heat appliance use. (Tip: Simply shampoo hair biweekly and avoid oil sheens or sprays.) A sew-in weave lasts about 90 days.

Try roller sets. These versatile hairstylers work well for both relaxed and natural hair. Roller sets also minimize the use of heated styling tools each day. The big bonus from roller sets is that they hold a tight curl so you don’t have to worry about a collapsed ’do. What’s more, roller sets also work to camouflage any new growth and reduce hair reversion. (Tip: Use the same size rods as your stylist so you can reset hair at home if the curls start to collapse.) Roller-set styles last up to two weeks.

Wear an updo. This low-maintenance hairstyle keeps tresses off your face as you pump iron. To ensure hair’s health, use styling combs, coated-tipped bobby pins or hair claws (instead of elastic bands). (Tip: Style hair loosely to avoid breakage-causing tension from a pull-back, and take your updo down before you go to sleep.) Only wear this style for 24 hours.

Bust out some braids. Neatly plaited hair stays out of your face so braids are a great way to prep your tresses before working out. Just make sure your strands aren’t pulled so tight that you suffer hair loss. (Tip: Easily remove buildup by cleansing your scalp weekly with witch hazel on a cotton ball and then moisturizing your scalp and hair with natural oils.) This style lasts from four to six weeks.

Why not wig it? Hmmm, well…OK, but while wigs can be convenient, they’re not healthy for everyday use. And even if you’re a lace-front wig wearer, realize that the netted material around

the hairpiece’s front can cause hair loss. (Tip: Lace-front wigs aren’t recommended for workout wear. But if you choose to wear a wig, make sure your hair underneath is braided and covered by a wig cap made of strand-friendly material. Also, drizzle hair with a leave-in conditioner, and remove wig before going to bed.) Don’t wear wigs longer than a week.

Rock a natural. Hair in this state can make your workouts worry-free. How so? Because hair is already in its natural state, so you can relax and not worry about texture reversion. (Tip: Wear a bandanna on your head so the cotton will mop up sweat and keep your style in place. Use a natural moisturizer such as unrefined coconut oil or extra virgin olive oil to hydrate hair in between workouts.)

Click here for post-exercise hair care tips.

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