# Affordable Ways to Stretch and Soften Natural Hair

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Sometimes your curls, coils and waves seem to have a mind of their own—a mind that directs tresses to shrink up. If this is your issue,don't pull out your hair in frustration. You've worked hard to get your desiredlength, and you don't want to lose it! Instead, address your issues with thesetips from CurlyNikki.com.

## Banding

This simple, safe and easy way to straighten your hair requires no heat. (That's right! Say good-bye to the flatiron.) To work it, get a batch of small, seamless hair bands. Start by sectioning off about a 3-inch chunk of hair, then secure the section with a band at its base. Next, add bands around the same section of hair about an inch apart. Continue until all your locks are banded. The closer together the bands, the more stretched out your hair will be.

## Plaiting

Start by separating a small section of hair and tying off the rest. Next, loosely braid this section and leave about 2 inches of hair at the end to preserve curl pattern. (The looser the braid, the better your hair maintains its curl pattern.) This method works if you are trying to stretch a wash-and-go or braid/twist-out. Try this method on an old wash-and-go that has already lost most of its definition; that's because plaiting tends to distort curl patterns and to change wash-and-go coils into waves.

## Caramel Treatment

As an occasional special treat, try a treatment packed with humectants (these draw moisture from the atmosphere into your hair) to make your hair softer and more manageable. First, check your pantry for the following ingredients that you'll need to mix together: 1/4 cup of honey, 3 jars of banana baby food, 1/4 cup of molasses, 1/4 cup of olive oil (or any other oil of your choice) and 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar.

Next, use an applicator brush to apply the mixture to section of damp hair. Cover hair with a shower cap and leave the mixture in for at least 30 minutes, or overnight. Rinse thoroughly with warm water then shampoo and condition.

## Coconut Milk Treatment

For this treatment, you'll need a can of coconut milk, 2 tablespoons of honey, 2 tablespoons of coconut oil (or another oil of your choice), 4 tablespoons of plain organic yogurt, the juice of one lime, and cornstarch. Mix all the ingredients—except the cornstarch—in a bowl. Then, slowly add cornstarch to the bowl a half teaspoon at a time until the mixture thickens. Apply to clean hair and leave in for 30 minutes, then rinse.

Want additional info about natural hair helpers? Click here to learn more.

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