

Helmet Hair Help!

Anthea Hargreaves looks at tried and tested solutions to help you tame your unruly and uncooperative cycling locks.

It's seven o'clock in the morning: you've showered, blow dried your hair and jumped on your bike for the commute to work. You look energized and glowing – until you remove your helmet. Unlike the shiny tresses that shampoo commercials have taught us to aim for, what unravels from your helmet is a flattened, kinked and tangled mop.

Whether your sartorial choice is heels and lipstick or cleats and Lycra, all female (and male) cyclists fall victim to uncontrollable and unruly helmet hair. Long or short, it's a condition that afflicts us all with loads of tried and tested solutions. So what can you do to tame those uncooperative locks?

Hairdresser Gemma Smith of Edward Beale Salon in Hawthorn, suggests a simple and classic no-fuss low ponytail or braid. If you prefer your hair down, Gemma also recommends Aveda Hair Potion to restore volume: "you don't need much and it works well to absorb oil and add a bit of volume. It's also the perfect compact-size for your bag."

For shorter hair, Jemma suggests working in a "tiny bit of wax, starting at the back of your head, working your way down to the front". This will ensure your flat hair is returned to its pre-ride glory.

While there is no exact cure for the dreaded helmet hair, here is a list of practiced tips and treatments. Try them out for your next ride and see which one best suits your hairstyle.

Tricks and Tips

- Firstly, choose the right helmet - a well designed and well ventilated helmet will ensure your head stays cool and your hair sweat free.
- For lengthy and sweaty commutes, carefully rub in some dry shampoo to clean up your roots and restore some volume. A favourite brand, distinguished by its tropical smell, is Bastiste, followed by Bumble and Bumble – which does different shades according to your hair colour; Klorane; and Label M by Toni and Guy. (Also - see the Livestrong website for your own homemade recipe of oatmeal and baking powder).
- For longer hair, also try misting your hair with hairspray or beach-hair spray, then tucking, twisting or pinning it up under your helmet, combing it out later. This technique works well to avoid unmanageable kinks and prevent knots that resemble dreadlocks.

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- Whilst considered the most practical, if you find the low pony tail too hot on the back of your neck, you can always try a messy bun, wrapped up in a stylish scarf to keep your hair under control.

- Stubborn or short hair? Try liberally wetting your hair, adding a leave in conditioner, and then drying your hair under the hand dryer at work. The leave in conditioner works to rehydrate the ends, loosen up knots and restore that silky shine and body.

With many different lengths and styles, when it comes to helmet hair, the happiest riders are those that add their own personal touch in finding out what works for them. Good Luck!

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