COUPONS

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Why Your Beard Hair is Different Than Your Head Hair

Hair is hair, right? Wrong. Find out why.

For decades, lazy guys everywhere have been committing the cardinal sin of men's grooming: washing their beard in the shower with shampoo.

That's a bad idea, boys. A really bad idea.

Sure, using one product for multiple body parts is cheap, easy and convenient. But it's also really counterproductive, because the hair on your face is not the same as the hair on your head. Treating them as if they were identical would be like a carpenter treating pine the same as walnut, a gardener treating tomatoes the same as cucumbers or a mechanic treating a truck the same as a motorcycle: totally and completely ineffectual.

Whether you're grooming your hair like it's your beard, or your beard like it's your hair, you're making a grave mistake. Here's how to rectify it in three simple steps.

1. Understand the difference between facial hair and head hair.

A man can't improve his hair unless he knows what it needs. And he can't know what it needs unless he understands how it grows.

That's where facial hair and head hair differ. Like the hair in your armpits and your groin, facial hair is a distinct type of hair called androgenic hair. It develops only after puberty and is reliant on testosterone in order to proliferate. The more testosterone a dude has, the more androgenic hair he grows.

No matter where it sprouts, hair develops in three stages: it grows during the anagen phase, stops growing in the transitional phase and falls out in the telogen phase. On your scalp, the process takes years. With androgenic hair, however, it takes just a few months, which is why the hair on your face grows faster than the hair on your head.

Facial hair also tends to be coarser and curlier than head hair. That's because of the follicles from which it grows. Hair follicles on the face are larger and flatter than those on the scalp, which produces hair that's thick and wiry. They also tend to be twisted in shape, which can make your facial hair curlier than your head hair.

Finally, your face has more sebaceous glands than your scalp. That means more sebum — an oily substance that typically makes your facial hair shinier and more hydrated than your head hair.

2. Nourish your head hair with shampoo and conditioner.

Although everyone's hair is different, the hair on your scalp generally is finer and drier than the hair on your face. If you want luscious locks, you should therefore be using shampoo and conditioner that are formulated to volumize your hair and hydrate it.

Billy Jealousy Fuzzy Logic Strengthening Shampoo and Billy Jealousy Cashmere Coat Strengthening Conditioner fit the bill. Because they're formulated with ingredients that block DHT — a byproduct of testosterone that can weaken hair follicles and cause hair loss — they keep your hair looking as thick and full as possible. Also, they both have panthenol, a moisturizing form of vitamin B5 that keeps your hair from drying out.

3. Beautify your beard hair with face-friendly products.

If you want to know how to take care of your beard, you need to realize: What helps your head hair can harm your beard hair. Consider your typical shampoo, for instance. Because head hair is finer, longer and denser than beard hair, it tends to look greasy when it's oily. Most shampoos are therefore formulated with strong cleansers that strip hair of its natural oils. Because beards need those oils — without them, they get dry and itchy — such cleansers typically are too harsh for your mug. Instead, you should be using beard grooming products that are formulated explicitly for your face.

Essential products for beard maintenance include a beard wash like Billy Jealousy Beard Wash, which will cleanse your beard without stripping it of its natural oils; a beard moisturizer like Billy Jealousy Beard Quencher, which will improve your beard's texture; and a beard oil like Billy Jealousy Devil's Delight Beard Oil, which will add extra moisture to your beard for good measure — just in case it doesn't produce enough oils of its own, which is often the case with longer beards, in particular, which require more oil than the sebaceous glands can make.

The Bottom Line

At the end of the day, you want hair that's clean, thick and healthy — whether it's on the crown of your head or the tip of your chin. Because head hair and facial hair have different properties, however, they require different products. So stock up, gentlemen. After all, it's not enough to have one kind of screwdriver in your toolbox; why would it suffice to have just one kind of cleanser in your shower?

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CONTACT
10903 Shady Trail, Suite 145
Dallas, TX 75220
info@BillyJealousy.com

For media inquiries please contact Erin Kelly,
erin@erinkellypr.com

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