GENERAL

how to make dreads grow faster

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How to Make Dreads Grow Faster: A Complete Guide

When you first start a dreadlock journey, the excitement of watching your hair transform into a unique, textured statement can be overwhelming. However, the path to fully formed, healthy dreads often feels like a slow crawl, especially when you're eager to see results. If you're looking for proven ways to accelerate dread growth, you've come to the right place. This guide dives deep into the science, habits, and products that can help you nurture your locks faster while keeping them healthy, strong, and beautiful.

Why Dread Growth Can Be Slow

Dreadlocks form when hair is intentionally tangled, allowing strands to mat together over time. Unlike natural hair growth, which averages about half an inch per month, dreadlocks rely on a combination of:

- Hair length before locking – The longer the hair you start with, the quicker you'll see visible dreads.
- Locking method – Techniques like backcombing, twist and lock, or crochet can influence how quickly hair matts.
- Hair type – Curly, coily, and kinky hair lock faster than straight hair.
- Maintenance routine – Proper washing, moisturizing, and protection prevent frizz and breakage.

Understanding these factors helps you adjust your routine for maximum speed and minimal damage.

Step 1: Start With Healthy, Long Hair

The foundation of fast dread growth is healthy hair that's already grown to a decent length. Here's how to prepare:

Trim the Ends

Before locking, trim split ends. This reduces breakage during the locking process, allowing hair to stay intact and mat more quickly.

Deep Conditioning

Use a protein rich deep conditioner once a week to strengthen the cortex and cuticle. Look for ingredients like keratin, argan oil, and shea butter.

Hydration Is Key

Keep your hair hydrated with a leave in spray or a lightweight oil. Dehydrated strands frizz, making them harder to lock.

Choose the Right Hair Length

For beginners, aim for hair that's at least 6–8 inches long before locking. Shorter hair takes longer to form solid dreads, while longer hair matts faster and gives you more flexibility in styling.

Step 2: Select an Efficient Locking Technique

The method you use to initiate the dreadlocks plays a crucial role in how quickly they form. Below are three popular techniques, each with pros and cons.

Backcombing (Teasing)

Backcombing is the most common method. It involves pulling hair into a small section, teasing it backward, and repeating until the entire section is dense.

- Pros: Quick, creates dense dreads.
- Cons: Can cause scalp tension and breakage if done aggressively.

Twist and Lock

This method twists two strands together, then twists again in the opposite direction, creating a lock that's less prone to frizz.

- Pros: Gentle on the scalp, reduces breakage.
- Cons: Takes longer to form fully dense dreads.

Crochet Locking

Using a crochet needle, you pull a small amount of hair through a section and secure it with a thread. It's labor intensive but produces very neat dreads.

- Pros: Precise, minimal frizz.
- Cons: Time-consuming, requires skill.

Step 3: Maintain a Scalp Friendly Routine

Healthy scalp health is the secret to rapid dread growth. A clean, moisturized scalp encourages hair to grow without breakage.

Washing Frequency

Wash your scalp 2–3 times per week using a residue free shampoo. Over washing can strip natural oils, causing dryness and breakage.

Drying Properly

After washing, pat your hair gently with a microfiber towel. Avoid vigorous rubbing, which can create frizz and breakage.

Moisturizing the Scalp

Apply a light, non greasy oil or a scalp serum containing tea tree oil or peppermint. These ingredients reduce itching and maintain a balanced pH.

Protective Styling

When you sleep, use a satin or silk scarf or pillowcase. This reduces friction and keeps your dreads from unraveling overnight.

Step 4: Optimize Nutrition and Hydration

Your diet directly influences hair health. Here are essential nutrients and hydration tips.

Protein

Hair is made of keratin, a protein. Include lean meats, eggs, beans, and quinoa in your meals.

Omega 3 Fatty Acids

Omega 3s improve scalp circulation. Consume salmon, chia seeds, walnuts, or flaxseed oil.

Biotin

Biotin supports hair strength. Foods like almonds, sweet potatoes, and spinach are excellent sources.

Vitamin C & E

These antioxidants protect hair from oxidative stress. Citrus fruits, berries, nuts, and seeds are rich in these vitamins.

Stay Hydrated

Drink at least eight glasses of water daily. Hydration keeps your scalp and hair moisturized from within.

Step 5: Use the Right Products for Faster Locking

Choosing the right products can reduce frizz, protect your scalp, and speed up the locking process.

Residue Free Shampoo

Opt for sulfate free, silicone free shampoos. Residue builds up on hair, preventing proper locking.

Leave In Conditioner

Apply a lightweight leave in conditioner after washing. It helps detangle and keeps hair soft.

Natural Oils

Jojoba oil, argan oil, and grapeseed oil are excellent for sealing moisture without weighing hair down.

Scalp Treatments

Tea tree oil, peppermint, and rosemary oils help maintain a healthy scalp, reducing itching and flakiness.

Anti Frizz Spray

Use a spray with glycerin or aloe vera to keep strands from frizzing, which can slow the locking process.

Step 6: Daily Habits That Accelerate Locking

Consistency is key. Adopt these daily practices to keep your dreads moving forward.

Gentle Detangling

Use a wide tooth comb or your fingers to detangle while the hair is damp. Avoid harsh brushing that can cause breakage.

Lock Maintenance

Every few days, twist or re lock small sections to keep them tight. This prevents loose strands from separating.

Moisturize Your Locks

Apply a light oil or leave in spray to the outer hair to maintain softness and prevent dryness.

Protective Sleep Routine

Wrap your hair in a satin scarf or sleep on a silk pillowcase. This reduces friction and keeps dreads intact.

Step 7: Address Common Issues That Slow Growth

Even with the best routine, you might face challenges. Here's how to tackle them.

Breakage

Breakage slows growth because lost hair never regrows in the same place. Use gentle detangling, avoid tight braids, and keep hair moisturized.

Scalp Irritation

Itching or flakiness can indicate a dry scalp. Use tea tree oil or a mild scalp scrub to soothe irritation.

Loose or Unformed Dreads

Use a crochet needle or backcombing to tighten loose sections. Regular maintenance keeps them from unraveling.

Slow Growth Due to Genetics

Genetics play a role, but proper care can still maximize potential. Keep your hair healthy and avoid harsh chemicals.

Step 8: Myths vs. Facts About Dread Growth

There are many misconceptions about dreadlocks. Let's set the record straight.

- Myth: Dreadlocks grow faster than regular hair.
- Fact: Dreadlocks don't "grow" in the traditional sense; they mat together as hair continues to grow from the roots.

- Myth: You can force dreads to grow by pulling them.
- Fact: Pulling can cause breakage. Instead, focus on gentle maintenance.

- Myth: You need to use heavy oils for fast growth.
- Fact: Heavy oils can weigh hair down and cause buildup. Light, natural oils are better.

Step 9: Tracking Progress and Adjusting the Routine

Monitoring your growth helps you refine your routine. Keep a journal:

- Log: Date, washing frequency, products used, and any changes in hair condition.
- Measure: Take photos every month to visually track dread formation.
- Adjust: If you notice breakage, reduce washing frequency or switch to a gentler shampoo.

Conclusion

Growing dreads faster isn't a magic trick—it's a combination of healthy hair practices, proper maintenance, and consistent care. By starting with healthy, adequately long hair, selecting the right locking technique, caring for your scalp, fueling your body with essential nutrients, and using the correct products, you'll create an environment that encourages quick, strong dread formation. Remember, patience and consistency are your best allies. Keep your routine steady, stay hydrated, protect your scalp, and watch your dreads evolve into the beautiful, unique statement you've envisioned.

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