

how to curl hair with ghd

how to curl hair with ghd offers a pathway to achieving salon-quality waves and curls from the comfort of your own home. This comprehensive guide delves into the intricacies of mastering this popular styling technique, ensuring you can create a variety of looks with confidence and ease. We will explore the essential preparation steps, the different curling methods using your GHD styler, techniques for achieving specific curl types, and crucial aftercare advice to ensure your style lasts. Understanding how to effectively use your GHD straighteners for curling will unlock a new level of hairstyling versatility.

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Preparing Your Hair for GHD Curls

Before you even consider reaching for your GHD styler, proper hair preparation is paramount to achieving beautiful, long-lasting curls and protecting your strands from heat damage. The foundation of a great curl lies in how well you prep your hair. This involves a multi-step process designed to create a smooth canvas, provide heat protection, and enhance the curl's longevity.

Washing and Conditioning for Curl Longevity

Start with clean hair. Washing your hair with a sulfate-free shampoo and conditioner can help prevent dryness and frizz, which are the enemies of well-defined curls. Ensure you rinse thoroughly to remove all product residue, as this can weigh down your hair and make it difficult to hold a curl. For finer hair types, a volumizing shampoo and conditioner can be beneficial.

The Importance of Heat Protectant

This is a non-negotiable step when using any heated styling tool, including your GHD styler. A good heat protectant spray or serum creates a barrier between your hair cuticle and the heat, significantly reducing the risk of breakage, split ends, and dryness. Apply it evenly throughout your damp hair before blow-drying, or to dry hair before using your straighteners if you air-dry.

Blow-Drying for a Smooth Base

While some may skip this, blow-drying your hair to about 80% dry and then finishing with a cool shot can help seal the cuticle, leading to smoother results and better curl retention. If you are blow-drying completely dry, use a brush that helps smooth the hair, such as a ceramic or boar bristle brush. Ensure your hair is completely dry before using your GHD, as damp hair can cause steam and damage.

Sectioning Your Hair for Efficient Styling

Effective sectioning is crucial for manageable and consistent curling. Divide your hair into manageable sections, typically starting with the bottom layers and working your way up. Using clips to secure the unstyled sections will prevent them from falling into your face and ensure you don't miss any strands. The size of your sections will influence the size and tightness of your curls; smaller sections create tighter curls, while larger sections result in looser waves.

The Basic GHD Curling Technique

Mastering the fundamental technique for curling hair with a GHD styler is the key to unlocking its versatility. This method, often referred to as the "wrap and glide," is straightforward but requires a bit of practice to perfect. The core principle involves wrapping the hair around the styler and allowing the heat to shape it.

Securing the Section

Take a section of hair, about an inch wide. Clamp the GHD styler near the root, but not directly on the scalp. Ensure the section of hair is lying flat between the plates. This initial grip is crucial for control throughout the curling process.

The Wrap and Glide Motion

With the styler clamped at the root, rotate the styler 180 degrees away from your face. Then, slowly glide the styler down the length of the hair shaft, maintaining that 180-degree rotation. The speed at which you glide will affect the curl's tightness; a slower glide will create a more defined curl, while a faster glide will result in a looser wave.

The Direction of the Curl

For a classic, face-framing look, it's generally recommended to curl the sections away from your face. This means rotating the styler away from your face on both sides. For a more uniform or "all over" curl, you can alternate the direction of the curl on different sections. Experimentation is key to finding the look you prefer.

Releasing the Curl

Once you have glided the styler down to the ends of the hair, release the clamp and allow the hair to gently fall. For a more defined curl, you can wrap the still-warm section of hair around your finger and hold it in place for a few seconds until it cools. This helps set the curl's shape and provides a more polished finish.

Achieving Different Curl Styles with GHD

Your GHD styler is a powerful tool for creating a wide array of curl types, from soft, beachy waves to tight, bouncy ringlets. The key to achieving these varied looks lies in manipulating the basic technique, adjusting section size, and controlling the styler's movement.

Creating Loose, Beachy Waves

For effortless, undone waves, use larger sections of hair. Instead of a full 180-degree rotation, try a half twist (90 degrees) or even less. Glide the styler down the hair shaft more quickly and pull the hair taut as you go. This creates a bend rather than a defined curl. You can also try alternating the direction of the "bend" for a more natural, windswept effect. After styling, gently run your fingers through the waves to break them up and enhance the beachy texture.

Generating Defined, Bouncy Curls

To achieve more structured, bouncy curls, work with smaller sections of hair. Perform a full 180-degree rotation of the styler away from your face and glide down slowly. Holding the curl in place as it cools (by wrapping it around your finger) will help set its shape and bounce. This method is excellent for creating a more polished and glamorous look.

Forming Spiral Curls

For a more traditional spiral curl, clamp the GHD near the root and twist the styler 360 degrees around the hair section before gliding down. This creates a more elongated, spring-like curl. The key here is to ensure the hair is fully wrapped around the styler during the glide. Again, letting these cool completely will enhance their definition.

Achieving the "S" Wave

The "S" wave is a popular technique that creates a more natural, undulating texture. This involves alternating the direction of your styler as you move down the hair shaft. Clamp the styler, twist away from your face, glide down a few inches, then twist towards your face, glide down, and repeat. This creates a beautiful, flowing wave pattern that mimics natural texture.

Using the GHD for Heatless Styling Alternatives (Brief Mention)

While this article focuses on using the GHD for heat styling, it's worth noting that the GHD can also be used to set styles created overnight with heatless methods, like braids or rollers, by gently smoothing over them for a polished finish, though this is a secondary application. The primary use is direct heat styling.

Tips for Long-Lasting GHD Curls

Creating beautiful curls is only half the battle; ensuring they stay put throughout the day or evening requires a few extra steps and considerations. From product application to cooling techniques, these tips will help you maximize the longevity of your GHD-styled hair.

The Role of Hairspray and Setting Sprays

A light mist of a flexible-hold hairspray applied after you've finished curling and allowed the hair to cool is essential. Avoid spraying too close, as this can cause stiffness. For extra hold, particularly in humid conditions, a strong-hold hairspray can be used, but always opt for a product that doesn't leave a sticky residue. Some products are specifically designed as "curl hold" sprays, which can further enhance longevity.

Cooling is Crucial for Setting Curls

Heat is what shapes the curl, but it's the cooling process that sets it. Allowing your curls to cool completely before touching them or brushing them out is vital. As mentioned, wrapping still-warm curls around your finger and holding them for a few seconds helps them set firmly. Rushing this step will cause curls to drop prematurely.

Backcombing and Texturizing for Volume and Hold

For added volume and to help your curls maintain their shape, a touch of gentle backcombing at the root can be beneficial. This is particularly helpful for finer hair types that tend to fall flat. A texturizing spray or dry shampoo can also add grip and body to the hair, giving curls something to cling to.

Sleeping on Your Curls

If you're looking to preserve your curls overnight, consider sleeping on a silk or satin pillowcase, which reduces friction and prevents frizz. You can also loosely tie your hair up in a silk scarf or a high, loose ponytail on top of your head (a "pineapple" method) to minimize flattening.

The Impact of Humidity

Humidity is a curl's nemesis. On particularly humid days, use products specifically designed to combat frizz and humidity, such as anti-humidity sprays or serums. Applying these before and after styling can make a significant difference in how long your curls last.

Troubleshooting Common GHD Curling Issues

Even with the best intentions, you might encounter a few common challenges when learning to curl your hair with a GHD styler. Understanding these issues and their solutions will help you refine your technique and achieve consistently beautiful results.

Curls Dropping Too Quickly

If your curls are falling out shortly after you create them, several factors could be at play. Firstly, ensure your hair is completely dry and you've used a good heat protectant. Secondly, you might be gliding the styler too quickly. Slow down your glide, and consider holding the curl as it cools. Using a stronger hold hairspray or a root booster can also help.

Uneven or Messy Curls

Inconsistent curls often stem from uneven sectioning or inconsistent styling technique. Make sure you're taking similar-sized sections and applying the same amount of rotation and pressure with your GHD styler for each section. Practicing the "wrap and glide" motion repeatedly will help you achieve uniformity.

Frizz or Flyaways During Styling

Frizz during the curling process usually indicates dryness or damage. Ensure you're using a quality heat protectant and not running the GHD over the same section multiple times. If your hair is naturally prone to frizz, a smoothing serum applied to damp hair before blow-drying can help. For flyaways, a light mist of hairspray on a clean mascara wand or your fingertip can tame them effectively.

Hair Getting Tangled in the Styler

This can happen if the section of hair is too large or if you're trying to clamp the styler too close to the scalp and the hair isn't lying flat. Ensure your sections are manageable and that you're holding the styler parallel to the direction of your glide. Gently pull the hair taut as you glide, but avoid yanking.

Lack of Definition in Curls

If your curls are lacking definition, try using smaller sections of hair and slowing down your glide. Ensure you're achieving a full 180-degree rotation for tighter curls or a more pronounced twist for spirals. Holding the curl as it cools is also crucial for definition.

Aftercare for Your GHD Styled Hair

Once your hair is beautifully curled with your GHD styler, the aftercare routine is just as important as the styling process itself. Proper post-styling care ensures your curls remain intact, healthy, and vibrant for as long as possible, minimizing the need for constant touch-ups and protecting your hair's integrity.

Gentle Brushing and Styling

Resist the urge to brush your curls out vigorously. If you need to loosen them, use your fingers or a wide-tooth comb very gently, starting from the ends and working your way up. This will help maintain the curl's shape and prevent frizz. For a softer look, a boar bristle brush can be used to gently blend the curls after they have fully cooled.

Using Finishing Products

A light serum or oil applied to the ends of your hair can add shine and help tame any remaining flyaways. This also helps to nourish the hair and add a polished finish. Avoid heavy products that can weigh down your curls and make them appear greasy or limp. A light-hold finishing spray can add a final touch of shine and control.

Protecting Your Curls Overnight

As mentioned earlier, preserving your curls overnight is key to extending their life. Sleeping on a silk or satin pillowcase is highly recommended. Alternatively, loosely tying your hair up in a silk scarf or a high, loose bun on top of your head can help maintain volume and shape. Avoid tight sleeping styles that can flatten or pull out the curls.

Refresh Your Curls for the Next Day

If your curls have lost some of their bounce by the second or third day, you don't necessarily need to restyle them from scratch. You can refresh them by misting with a curl-reviving spray or a little water, then gently scrunching them to reactivate the curl pattern. A quick touch-up with your GHD on any fallen sections can also help revive the look. Using dry shampoo at the roots can add volume and absorb any excess oil.

Maintaining Hair Health

Regular deep conditioning treatments are vital for keeping your hair healthy, especially when it's frequently styled with heat. This helps to replenish moisture, strengthen the hair shaft, and prevent damage. Trimming your hair regularly also removes split ends, which can travel up the hair shaft and make curls look less defined and more prone to breakage.

FAQ

Q: What is the best temperature setting on a GHD styler for curling hair?

A: GHD stylers operate at an optimal temperature of 185°C (365°F), which is considered the most effective temperature for styling hair without causing excessive heat damage. Always ensure your hair is completely dry before using this temperature.

Q: How do I prevent my GHD curls from looking too "done" or artificial?

A: To achieve a more natural look, use larger sections of hair, alternate the direction of your curls on different sections, and glide the styler more quickly down the hair shaft. After styling, gently break up the curls with your fingers or a wide-tooth comb, and consider using a texturizing spray.

Q: Can I curl my hair with a GHD if it's fine and lacks volume?

A: Yes, fine hair can be curled with a GHD, but it may require some extra effort for longevity. Ensure you use a volumizing mousse or spray before blow-drying, and work with smaller sections. Consider using a root lifting spray and backcombing gently at the roots after curling. A strong-hold hairspray is also recommended.

Q: How often should I use my GHD styler to curl my hair to keep it healthy?

A: While GHD stylers are designed to be kinder to hair, frequent heat styling can still lead to dryness or damage. It's advisable to limit heat styling to a few times a week and ensure you are using a heat protectant spray every time. Incorporate regular deep conditioning treatments into your hair care routine.

Q: My curls fall out by midday. What can I do to make them last longer with my GHD?

A: Ensure your hair is completely dry and has been prepped with a heat protectant and potentially a volumizing mousse or setting spray. Slow down your glide when curling, hold the curl as it cools, and use a flexible or strong-hold hairspray. For extra hold, consider using a texturizing spray or dry shampoo.

Q: How do I create different curl sizes using a GHD styler?

A: The size of your curls is primarily determined by the section size you take. Smaller sections of hair will result in tighter, more defined curls, while larger sections will create looser waves. Experiment with different section widths to find your desired look.

Q: Is it better to curl my hair away from or towards my face with a GHD?

A: Curling away from your face generally creates a more flattering and classic look, as it opens up your features. However, alternating the direction of the curls or curling some sections towards your face can add more volume and a modern, tousled effect.

Q: What's the best way to curl the back of my head with a GHD?

A: Curling the back of your head can be challenging. Use a good quality mirror setup, and divide your hair into manageable sections. Work from the nape of your neck upwards. Hold the GHD styler vertically, and use your wrist to control the rotation as you glide down. You might find it easier to use a second mirror to see the back.

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