

BRADELOCZ™

The Permanent Braids



A Guide to Growing a Beautiful, Healthy Head of Locs from Simple Braids

Featuring the Author's Personal 12-Month Locking Journal

Cherie King

BradeLocz

A Guide to Growing a Beautiful, Healthy Head of Permanent Braids

Featuring the Author's Personal 12-Month Locking Journal

By Cherie King - Bradelocz.com

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Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to start Bradelocz!

I'd like to start out by saying something very important...

Your Bradelocz will NOT look identical to mine.

In fact, your Bradelocz will not look identical to *anyone's* - they are going to look like **YOURS**.

Oftentimes, we tend to see someone else's hair and say to ourselves, *"I want my hair to look just-like-that!"*

But our hair patterns and textures are uniquely our own and, although we may see similarities between our hair and someone else's, it will not be an exact replica.

I'm stating all of this as sort of a disclaimer, so that you won't come to me later saying, *"Hey! I thought my Bradelocz were gonna turn out like yours!"*

Someone once asked how I made my locs "fro up", after seeing them around the third month or so. But there was absolutely **NOTHING** I did to create that effect; it was just what my hair did.

Yours may lie flat or it may stand up in a sort of "loc fro" as mine did... it's all in your hair type, amongst other things.

And I've found over the years that there is no one, sure-fire rule to locking.

I've received some very good advice on locking my hair, but I didn't follow any one person's total regimen. I took bits and pieces from different resources, and put together what works for my hair, and most of all, my lifestyle. You must do the same!

Sure, you can glean things from others, but ultimately... you have to find your own way and your own process to make this journey truly your own. Having said that...

This Bradelocz Guide is just that... **a guide**, NOT a hair locking "bible".

Some of the material I've read about locking tends to come off in a "*this is the one and only way to do it*" type of tone.

There are some things that are important to do (or not do), but some things are simply a matter of individuality.

Brace Yourself and Hold on For the Ride

As you read this guide and begin your Bradelocz journey, please keep in mind that locking is going to cause you to learn things about yourself and your hair you never knew existed.

It's going to be a lesson in patience, diligence, commitment, and learning to take a good look at yourself in the mirror and say,

"This is ME... I like LOVE me!"

It won't always be, what our Westernized culture considers, pretty, but you *will* be beautiful if you can just see what lies beneath the surface of what we've kept hidden for so long... the beauty of our natural hair.

Commonly Asked Questions

Here are as some commonly asked questions about starting locs with braids.

1. Will the starter braids always have an appearance of braids?

Did my own locs keep the appearance of braids? No.



Have I ever seen anyone's Bradelocz that kept the braid appearance for a long time? Yes.

For the 4 1/2 years she was locked, my oldest daughter's Bradelocz still looked like braids on the ends. However, the portions that had grown out and been tightened did not.

I believe her ends looked like braids for so long because:

- 1) Her hair was about 8 inches in length when we started them
- 2) Her hair texture is "wiry"

But when I started my own, my hair was relatively short - probably about 2-3 inches – and my texture was different from hers. The more my own locs matured, the less they looked like braids.

So, it is my belief that hair texture, length, and the size of the Bradelocz are determining factors. But either way, don't let it bother you. Remember, these are Bradelocz: The Permanent BRAIDS! ;-)

2. Are locs started with braids usually flat?

I've heard people insinuate that all locs started with braids are flat, as opposed to cylindrical, like palm-rolled locs.

One or two of my locs *did* feel flat to the touch, but the majority of them are indeed cylindrical.

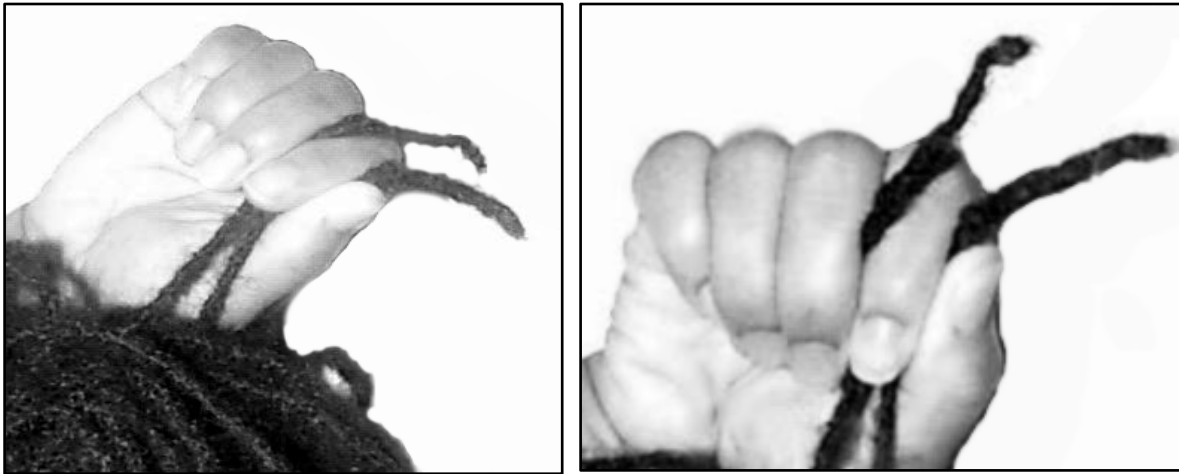


I believe this is due, in part, to the fact that I finger rolled (twirl with my fingers) down the length of my locs after I shampoo them to help smooth them a little.

So, if flat vs. round matters to you, finger-roll them gently while still damp after shampooing and applying a small amount of oil.

3. Do the ends eventually lock up?

This often depends on hair texture. Some people are fully locked and the very ends are loose and curly. Then, there are others whose ends are very tight and firm. There are also those who have some of both! Currently, I have both. Some of my locs are still curly on the ends and some of them are solidly locked up.



Notice how one of the ends is solid, while the other is loose and curly.

4. Can Bradelocz be started on relaxed hair?

The scope of my experience is with starting locs on all natural hair. I have, however, *come in contact with* a few women who started their locs with relaxed ends. My concern would be the stringy look of the permed ends, as well as unraveling.

Some of them used rubber bands on the ends, while others just braided the hair up and dealt with any unraveling as it came.

You can also consider starting your locs with a tool ([latch hook](#), [interlocking tool](#), etc), if braids don't work out well for you.

5. Can Bradelocz be started using extensions?

Personally, I've never done them on anyone using extensions. But that doesn't mean it's not possible. I've read about people using extensions to begin locking their hair with methods *other* than Bradelocz.

My biggest concern would be making sure there is even tension on each braid and that not too much hair is used on too small sections of your own hair.

You don't want the root beds to become weak and break off due to the braid/lock being too heavy from too much weight.

But if you decide on using extensions, I recommend using yarn (yes, the yarn used for knitting and crocheting), as it is very lightweight and most close to our natural, kinky hair texture. Also, the yarn can be neatly knotted on the ends and quite remarkably resemble the tight, locked ends of actual locs!

From there, the new growth can be tightened using the Latchin' technique and once your own hair has reached an acceptable length, clip off the extended ends so you're left with only your hair.

Just be sure to use caution and discretion if you choose to go this route.

Preparation & Planning

Now that you've gotten all the background info, you're ready to begin!

When you first start, it's good to have at least 3 inches of natural hair because the shorter your hair is, the greater the possibility of unraveling, especially on softer textures of hair.

A few things you'll need:

- ✓ Shampoo to wash your hair & scalp before getting started
- ✓ Wide-toothed comb for combing/detangling the hair
- ✓ A spray bottle filled with water (and if desired, add one or more of the following: olive or jojoba oil, essential oil of choice, aloe vera gel or juice). This is to be used to keep the hair damp/moist as you braid it up.
- ✓ Rattail comb (use only the tail end for sectioning/parting the hair)
- ✓ Clips to clip excess hair out of the way
- ✓ A light oil to apply to hair after your braiding session
- ✓ A large mirror such as the bathroom mirror to see what you're doing in the front, as well as a hand-held mirror to see the back of your head
- ✓ Leave-in conditioner to apply afterward

DIY or nah?

Can or should you DIY - do it yourself?

Well, this guide was initially created to be a DIY guide, as I did mine myself, and many others who have purchased this ebook did as well.

But I also realize that not everyone can do it themselves for various reasons.

For example: you may want SUPER-meticulous parts, but feel you can't do them yourself (mainly in the back) or, maybe you can't braid at all or, perhaps you can't keep your arms up that long. Or maybe you simply don't WANT to do them yourself.

In any of those instances, you'll probably need to enlist the aid of a friend, family member, or professional braider.

If you decide to get assistance:

Be sure to let him/her know not to braid your hair too tightly and that you will NOT be using any extension hair – unless it is your intention to start them that way.

Also, let them know that you want your parts to be as straight and neat as possible and to allow for a middle part, and side parts on each side of your head in the front.

Be aware of the fact that some locticians, braiders, etc. will NOT assist you with starting your Bradelocz. For some reason, people feel it is not a good idea to begin locking with braids and will either try to convince you to start with twists or coils, or they may not service you at all.

This is why, when seeking assistance by a professional braider; my advice is to not even mention locking. Just tell them you want your own hair braided without adding any extension hair. You'll also want to indicate that you want just basic box braids, and indicate the size you want the sections based upon the sizing chart (below).

If you're doing them yourself:

The first thing you'll want to do is plan your "strategy" by determining what size you want your locs to **ultimately** be; decide if you will have smaller in the front and slightly larger towards the back, etc., then view the sizing chart (below) to find the right size you will make your sections.

Next, you'll want to decide if you want meticulous partings or if you would prefer more random, "imperfect" partings.

To help you decide, here are some brief pros and cons of each:

Neat, meticulous, "perfect" box partings

Pros: "Neater" in appearance and allows you to make "perfect" parts when doing certain styles (example: corn rows, flat twists, side parts, etc.)

Cons: May cause a "scalpy" look in hair with less density (thin hair)

Random, not-so-meticulous, "imperfect" partings

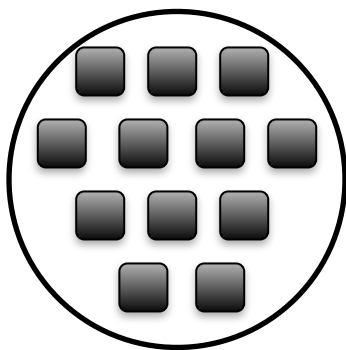
Pros: Produces an illusion of fullness and shows less scalp in thin/fine hair

Cons: When doing styles such as flat twists, corn rows, side parts, etc., not as "neat" in appearance

Another thing you could do... make the sections in areas that are more visible (the edges around the front, side and back) "neater", and then do more random, less boxed sections in the crown and back.

And when you really stop to think about it, most times when micro braids are done the partings aren't always precise boxes, and when doing

slightly larger individual braids, they may be precise boxes, but they're "brick-layered", as shown below:



Choosing Your Size

When deciding on the size you want your Bradelocz to be, focus on the **size of the SECTIONS**, not the braids.

Most people erroneously focus on the size of the initial braids, not knowing that in the beginning, the braids will be skinny even if the sections are wide. They'll want "pencil-sized" locs, so they make their *initial* braids the size of a pencil then, later on, end up with locs that are actually **bigger** than a pencil.

As a general rule, make the SECTIONS just slightly bigger than your loc size goal and don't be alarmed if the braids appear skinnier than your desired size locs... **they WILL thicken up.**

For example: if you want your locs to end up being the size of a pencil, then make your sections just a little bit bigger than a pencil's diameter. The braids will not be anywhere near the size of a pencil *at first*, but once they're mature, they will be pencil-width or very close to it!

Below is a sizing chart that I created for my personal clients to use as a guide when deciding what size they'd like their sections to be.

When choosing your size, please keep in mind your hair texture/type.

If your hair is thin, you may want to choose Size A to give more fullness and not allow for too much weight and tension on your roots. If, later on down the road, you find them to be too small; you can always combine them and make them bigger.

If you have very thick, strong strands of hair, then you can choose pretty much any size you want.

If your hair is REALLY thick in density and you don't want a lot of volume, then a Size B or C may be the best choice, as larger locs serve as a de-volumizer.

BRADELOCZ SIZING CHART

(If someone else is braiding your hair, print this chart and give it to them as a reference)

Please keep in mind that these sizes are based on **sections**,
NOT the actual braids!

Size A

Making sections this size will produce approximately spaghetti-sized* locs



Size B

Making sections this size will produce approximately charger cord-sized* locs



Size C

Making sections this size will produce approximately (skinny) straw-sized* locs



Size D

Making sections this size will produce approximately pencil-sized* locs



**The sizes above are ESTIMATES. Loc sizes will vary depending on hair types and textures.*



These braids were sectioned with a "Size B"

Okay, Let's Start Braiding!

Now I must forewarn you: this process can be tiring for your arms and fingers. So, if you're doing this yourself, make sure you set aside a day or two where you don't have to go anywhere. And if you end up needing to leave the house, have a nice head wrap, scarf or hat to put on until your hair is completed.

NOTE: *The following images from my second set of Bradelocz, not the first initial set, which were much shorter in length.*

1. Shampoo your hair either the day before starting the Bradelocz or the same day you start. **NO conditioner**, especially if your hair is already soft or loosely textured. You can apply a leave-in afterward, but don't use regular conditioner.

I recommend braiding the hair when it's semi-damp (not sopping wet) because our natural hair is more pliable and less prone to break when manipulated while wet or damp.

In fact, because your hair may start drying as you're going along, it's a good idea to have a spray bottle filled with water.

2. Divide the hair into four sections with a part down the middle from front to back and then across the top from ear to ear, trying to go with the natural curvature of your head.



3. Plait, clip or otherwise secure the two back sections and one of the front sections out of your way and begin making your rows at the front hairline of the loose section.

My advice is to **start in the front of your head** as opposed to the back because the front is the area seen first and you want to make it as neat as possible.

Take it from me! This will take some time, you *will* get tired, and you'll probably start making sections bigger and less neat if you're tired. So, start at the point where neatness counts the most... the front!

You may also want to consider doing the perimeter — the front, back and side edge — so that if your hair is long enough to do so and you need to “buy more time” before finishing; you can pull your hair up or back into a puff or ponytail. That way, your braided edges will inconspicuously conceal your unbraided crown area!

4. When creating back sections, LOOSELY secure larger back section upwards with a ponytail holder as shown...



5. Use the "tail" end of a rattail comb to slice off a row from the hair that was loosely pulled up — use your hand-held mirror to see where to start off the row.



6. Put the mirror down and use your fingers to assist with pulling the row of hair down.



7. Use your hand-held mirror to check for straightness and even out the part where necessary





8. Once you have your row the size you want it, you can now begin creating the sections for each braid and braiding!



NOTE: When initially braiding, use a relatively loose amount of tension so that the hair is allowed to do what it needs to do to start the locking process.

Here are a few photos where I am attempting to show the loose tension of a fairly new braid:



This is the braid in its "rested" position to show the looseness.



And here is the exact same braid stretched out.

This is to give you an idea of how loose the braids should be. After the first week or two, you may notice that your braids are springy and bouncy, and not very tight or stiff.

9. Work your way up to the crown of your head, making the braids as uniform as possible.

Once your braiding session is over...

Apply a small amount of oil to your braids, paying special attention to the ends.

You can spritz and wear them just as they are, or you can roll them up on rollers or perm rods if you choose! If your hair is long enough, you can also do a braid-out or twist-out! Either way, they will look beautiful.

Now, make sure you take a picture! You may even want to document your journey and the changes your hair goes through as it begins to transform from braids into beautiful Bradelocz!



Caring for Your Bradelocz

Now that your new Bradelocz are in, you'll need to know what to do to care for them. The information I'm providing was compiled and put together after much trial and error throughout my own journey, as well as the experiences of my former clients.

Shampooing/Conditioning

I recommend shampooing once per week BUT... if you need to do it more or less frequently, you can. Just be aware that sometimes the braids (or just the ends) may unravel, but you can just braid them back up.

Don't use shampoos that will make the hair too soft or detangle it.

Also, in the beginning months when the braids are still in the "baby" stage, you may want to do what is called a "Braid-N-Band" where you gather small sections of your braids, plait (or twist) the section together and then fold the end up and secure with a small rubber band.

Shampoo lightly, focusing on the scalp (don't scrub too vigorously), and gently squeeze the lather through the plaits/twists.

Rinse thoroughly, being sure to remove all traces of shampoo. Towel dry, then remove the bands and plaits.

If you want to do a braid or twist out style, leave the plaits or twists in until your hair is thoroughly dry, then take them down.

Once per month or so, you may want to use a clarifying shampoo to remove any product buildup from the hair.

For the first 6 to 8 months, try to refrain from using crème-based conditioners because they can make the hair too soft, hinder the locking process, and possibly make your hair unravel completely. Conditioning with crème conditioners should be postponed until your locs are locked (or almost locked) and can handle it.

Instead, apply a small amount of light oil (olive oil is great) to the hair while still damp and again after it dries.

When you do begin using a crème -based conditioner, don't use a detangling conditioner; use one that will MOISTURIZE the locs.

Go through the locs, near the scalp, and check for "joins". Joins (or marrying/ hugging locs) occur when loose hairs from one loc attach to another loc and try to stick together... kind of like velcro. You DON'T want that unless you are actually *trying* to join two or more locs together - usually for thickness or a stronger base for a weak, thinning loc base.

Just gently tug or work them apart with your fingers. It's best and less painful when done while the locs are still damp.

Product Usage

Because you have Bradelocz and your hair is not twisted to maintain the new growth, you will NOT need excessive products to hold them together.

Now, for moisture retention and sheen, you can use a light product such as olive oil or other natural oil blends, but nothing too heavy, sticky or gummy.

Personally, I've never been a huge proponent of commercial products, so most of my suggestions will be basic, natural items as opposed to "*Big Mama's Hair Puddin'*" or whatever.

Aloe vera juice (the pure 100% kind) is a good natural moisturizer and hair food. Just put some into a spray bottle and mist the locs every day or every other day. **Be sure to keep refrigerated.**

Chamomile tea is an excellent natural, herbal conditioner for the hair. It is steeped in hot water, cooled off and used as a rinse (immediately after rinsing out shampoo or conditioner) and it is NOT rinsed out. You can also put in a spray bottle and use as a spritz. **Keep refrigerated.**

Light Natural Oils such as olive, jojoba, sweet almond, coconut, etc. help to seal moisture into your hair. It's best to apply to damp hair after shampooing/conditioning or spritzing with water.

Essential Oils mixed into a carrier oil such as olive, jojoba, shea nut, etc.

CAUTION: Before using ANY essential oil (EO), please research to find out what, if any, potential hazards they may pose for you.

For example: Rosemary EO is excellent for stimulating blood flow to the scalp, which promotes healthy hair growth; but **pregnant women should NOT use it as it may cause premature labor and those with high blood pressure should not use it as it could cause the blood pressure to rise.** Check into websites and books on essential oils to learn more!

Daily Loc Spritz. I love to spritz my locs with water daily! I mix water, drops of my favorite essential oils (typically lavender, Rosemary, or clary sage) about 1 tsp. of oil (olive, jojoba, sweet almond, etc.) and sometimes a ¼-1/2 tsp. of castor oil or Jamaican black castor oil.

The water moisturizes your hair, the EO's may provide benefits depending on what type is used, and glycerin and castor oil serve as a humectant to seal in moisture.

Things to AVOID using on your Bradelocz:

Products like petroleum, mineral oil, beeswax (even shea butter when overused) can cause build up in your locs.

Sure they may make your hair soft and shiny in the beginning, but after prolonged use you may notice a gray, ashen appearance to your locs and it will take a lot of effort to remove the build up.

Also, the petroleum and mineral oil just sit on the hair and are not absorbed. They can cause scalp problems because they sit right on the scalp and interfere with the natural flow of the scalp's natural oil, sebum.

Now should you decide to use products containing any of these ingredients or the ingredients themselves, do so sparingly... don't get too heavy-handed with them!

Alcohol, Sodium Laureth, and Lauryl Sulfate is drying to the hair and scalp. You will find them in many shampoos, but not all shampoos have these ingredients. Try to find shampoos that don't so that your hair will not be stripped of all of its natural oils.

If you don't want to use an all-natural shampoo, find one that contains Ammonium Laureth or Lauryl Sulfate because it tends to be a less harsh form than SLS's.

As for alcohol, just make sure that the product you're using doesn't contain SD 40 Alcohol, as that is the harshest and most drying form.

Again, even if you find yourself desiring or needing to use any of these “no-no” ingredients, try to use minimal amounts and not very frequently.

Lint in Your Locs

At some point, it may begin to seem as though your locs are a MAGNET for lint. So check your locs daily (or at least a few times a week) for lint. An even better solution is to try and avoid it altogether.

How can you prevent or at least minimize lint?

Sleeping with your locs covered with a satin/silky scarf or bonnet (or using a satin pillow case) will help keep the lint from bed linen out.

Cotton t-shirts can also be a culprit, so when pulling them over your head, be sure to check your locs for lint right afterward.

When you check your locs daily and remove any pieces of lint while they are still *on the surface*, you can avoid having lint trapped *IN* your locs.

If you get lint trapped in your locs, shampoo with a clarifying shampoo and gently manipulate them with your fingertips to try and work the lint out.

After shampooing and rinsing, use an apple cider vinegar rinse to remove debris and build-up.

Once you're done, you may notice the lint on the outside of the locs. If you do, remove it from the surface of the locs with your fingernails, tweezers, or a dull-point needle.

It may take 2 to 3 times (or more) of doing this over the course of a few days to a week in order to completely remove all traces of lint and debris from inside the locs, depending on how bad it is.

But, if you can't get all of the embedded lint from your locs, please don't despair. It doesn't mean your locs are dirty or unclean and it's nothing to panic about. But if it gets EXTREMELY bad and unsightly, you can apply a hair color rinse to disguise it.

I've even heard of some people using a marker (the color of their hair) to color in the white spots in their locs. That will be totally up to you and your discretion.

Stages Locs Go Through

There are phases and processes that your hair will go through as it begins locking. Some of these phases you may not like, but will have to learn to accept because it's all part of the process you committed to.

Shrinkage

You may notice that you once had about 7 inches of hair and now that you've started your Bradelocz you only have like 4-5 inches. This is due to a little something we call shrinkage. If you've been relaxer-free for any given period of time, you're probably quite familiar with that term and what it means.

Our natural (coily) hair shrinks up and only shows "true length" once it's been stretched out some kind of way. That's why you may see little girls with hair that comes to the top of their necks while in it's natural state and then when Mama presses it, it comes down to the middle of their backs!



Tonya is stretching one of her locs to demonstrate shrinkage in her locs.

When locking, not only does the braiding take away some of the length, but the whole process of locking in and of itself takes away more. But not to worry... length will be evident before you know it!

So relax, enjoy the journey, and one day you'll look up and your hair will be longer than it's EVER been!

Unraveling Ends

You may notice that your ends are unraveling, and it may frustrate you to no end. Don't be frustrated, though - it's normal and expected to happen.

As long as not more than 1/4 inch of the ends are loose, you can just twirl with your fingers to form curly-q's and eventually the ends will seal up (depending on your hair texture, that is). If it's *more* than 1/4 inch, then you may want to braid it back up or even interlock it.

Itchy Scalp

You may or may not notice an increase of itching after starting your locs. This is very common and can be a real headache. But don't despair; there are things you can do:

✓ **ACV Rinse** – After shampooing and rinsing, pour a mixture of 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar (not white); 1/4 tsp. of essential oil (optional, to cut the smell of the vinegar, although the smell wears off as your hair dries); and 1 to 2 quarts of water.

Let it sit for at least 30 minutes, then rinse and follow with conditioner.

✓ **ACV Spritz** – put 1 part apple cider vinegar, 2 parts witch hazel, to 2 parts water in a spray bottle. Mist scalp as needed or clean in between parts using cotton swabs dabbed in the mixture.

You can also add a few drops of essential oil such as Rosemary, tea tree, lavender, etc.

✓ **Tea Tree Shampoo** or a few drops of tea tree oil added in your favorite shampoo can help soothe itching.

✓ **Conditioner**, especially a moisturizing one, can be applied to the scalp if there are just a few dry, itchy spots.

If neither of these remedies work for you, you may possibly have a scalp condition that warrants the attention of a Dermatologist.

Dryness

It's important to keep your locs well moisturized (not greased) to prevent dryness. Water is nature's moisturizer and works from the inside out. But the problem usually is **retaining** that moisture. One of the things I do is apply olive or coconut oil to my locs when they're damp from shampooing or spritzing.

You can also make and use daily spritz: water, drops of your favorite essential oils, and 1 tsp. of light oil. Spraying your locs with this daily or every other day will keep them soft, moisturized and pliable!

One thing I want to point out is, just like our natural loose hair, **locked hair does NOT shine**. Our hair will have more of a matte sheen that looks healthy and not artificial. The locs should feel soft, but more like a cottony soft. If the locs are crunchy and brittle, like hay or straw, then you know they need moisture.

It's also a good idea to eat right, drink plenty of water and take supplements high in omega 3 fatty acids such as: cod liver oil, fish oil, walnut oil, or flaxseed oil to help the scalp produce more of its own natural sebum.

Fuzziness

Locs tend to get very fuzzy during the first 6 to 9 months (baby stage). This stage is part of the process. Personally, I like the fuzziness because to me, it gives the hair a soft, fluffy look and feel. Also, since having gone natural, I've learned to accept my hair for what it is and ALL of its attributes, including fuzziness.



But not everyone likes the fuzzies. If you haven't fully learned to accept that characteristic of your hair, you CAN somewhat make the fuzzies look a little neater.

One thing you can do is spritz with water or brewed, cool herbal tea, apply a little oil, and then smooth/twirl each loc with your fingers (like twirling hair as to play with it). I also like to twirl my loose ends to make them "curly-q" up!

Styling your locs can also help with fuzziness. Setting them on perm rods or rollers, or doing braid-outs will greatly minimize the appearance of fuzziness. Just be sure not to OVER-style your hair (doing it too frequently as in more than once a week).

Cover them at night with a satin bonnet and if you find the locs sticking up in the morning, mist them lightly and smooth/finger style them down into place.

If a fuzzy *hairline* is what's got you down, tying a scarf around your head for about 15 minutes or so will make your hairline more "polished", smoother and neater.

Will the fuzzies last forever?

It really depends on your hair texture. Very soft hair-types or looser curl patterns tend to fuzz more. But once your locs reach full maturity, they will condense, firm up, and those fuzzies will be greatly minimized, if not totally eliminated, especially in comparison to the "baby loc" stage.

So, don't sweat the fuzzies. Try not to fight them too much... you'll have a much better loc journey once you learn to just accept them as a (necessary) part of the process!

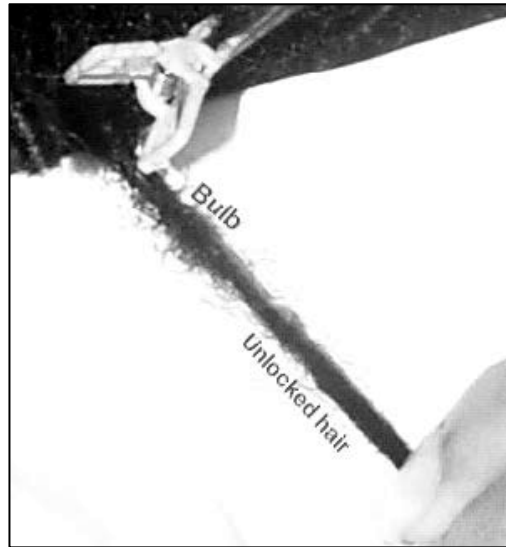
Budding

The "budding" process is one of the most exciting things to see your hair go through when you first start locking!

This is when a little bud (or bulb) forms on your locs. The best way to describe them is, little "balls" of matted hair around your loc. This is the beginning of the locking process!

The buds start at one of two places on the loc: the mid area, or the ends, and they work their way up (or down) the rest of the loc. Mine started midway, between the root and the tip. But some people notice their buds starting on the ends.

Here is a photo of one of my buds:



Bunching

You may or may not get “bunching” on the ends, or midway up your locs.

Unfortunately, I don’t have a photo to show you, but you’ll recognize bunching if you see the loc sort of fold/bunch up onto itself and want to STAY that way.

The gentle rolling (on damp locs) with the fingers I mentioned above can help if you catch it soon enough. Just gently roll and pull to try and smooth it out.

If rolling doesn’t get all the way smooth, you can repair it by taking the tail end of a rattail comb or similar object, loosening it by gently pulling downward, and then either re-braiding or interlocking it.

If you don’t feel comfortable or confident doing it yourself, have a local Loctician repair it for you.

Hugging, Marrying, Joining Locs

When your locs get wet from washing, swimming, spritzing or being in the rain; you will soon discover locs that want to “fall in love with each” other and hug - also called “joining” or “marrying”.

Two or more locs will stick together due to the loose, fuzzy hairs of one loc attracting the loose hairs of other locs. Almost like Velcro!



When that happens, gently pull or pry them apart. You may hear a ripping noise – don’t be alarmed, as this is normal and is sometimes referred to as “popping”.

It’s best to check your locs thoroughly after shampooing & conditioning, or when they’ve been dampened. If you have any “joins”, separate while wet.

If you wait TOO long, you may have a battle on your hands and will either have to snip the hairs loose or just leave them to form one larger-sized loc!

A word of caution about “popping” locs: When hairs are joining one loc to another, remember that those hairs start and end *somewhere*, and you have to figure out where so you are not pulling hairs from your scalp.

When feeling for joining locs, feel and lightly tug at the hairs that are joining the locs to see which loc contains the *base* of those hairs (at the scalp) and which loc has the **ends** of the hairs stuck in the loc.

Once you discover which side has the *ends* of the conjoining hairs, gently pull from *that* loc.

If you pull from the loc that contains the base of those hairs, you will know it because it will HURT and you will literally feel the hairs being pulled out of your head!

But if you pull from the loc that contains the ends of those hairs, there should be little or no discomfort felt.

So, take your time when separating your married locs.

Hair Balls on the Ends

It is said that the human head sheds, on an average, up to 120 hairs per day. When your hair was loose, those shed hairs would come out by combing, brushing or other means of manipulation.

But, now that you're locked, those hairs don't come out as readily. The bulk of it is "trapped" inside of your loc - which is what claim to be the reason locs get as long as they do - I don't know if I believe that, though.

Personally, I think locs grow so long because you're not manipulating them as much as loose hair, so your hair is ALLOWED to grow, rather than being broken off from combing, styling, heat, and chemicals,

But, I digress.

Anyway, some of the hairs will work their way down the shaft of your locs and eventually, you'll begin to see them in the form of little balls of hair, dangling from the ends.



This can be very annoying at times, but try and refrain from removing them, as they are part of the process of your ends sealing and locking up.

I know from experience that it's hard to fight the urge to pull or cut them off; but as much as you can help it, leave them be.

Retightening Your Bradelocz

As your new growth grows in, you will need to retighten it so that it will continue to look neat and be uniform with the rest of your locs.

A few things you'll need:

- [Latch hook](#)
- Rattail comb
- Hair clips or ties (for holding hair out of the way)
- [Daily Loc Spritz](#) (optional, but a light misting is recommended to make your hair more pliable)
- Natural oil (coconut, olive, etc. to apply to hair and scalp afterward)

How This Technique Came About

I hope you don't mind me interrupting you with a little backstory, but here it comes anyway! 😊

When I first started my locs in April of 2001, I had NO idea how I was going to maintain them.

I was new to locking, but had done a lot of research prior. I discovered that there were a few ways to maintain locs and that I'd have to find the one that best suited me.

I'd read that over-twisting the roots wasn't good and could lead to weakening and breakage. I also saw a lot about product build-up from applying too much beeswax, gel or whatever other locking products to the hair.

I didn't want either of those things to happen to my locs... I wanted mine to be light, bouncy and gunk-free. I also wanted to ensure the health and longevity of my locs by not twisting them. Besides, I tried the product, twist, clip, dry method and it was NOT my cup of tea.

So began my search for a way to tighten my locs without twisting.

I'd heard mention of a "crochet method" of maintaining locs and that the basic concept was to take an object (crochet hook, a pencil, or even one's fingers) and make a hole in the base of the lock; pull the loc through; then make another hole in a different area of the same base and pull the loc through *that* hole.

Well, first I tried the crochet needle. It would've been fine if only the lock wouldn't have kept slipping off and the crochet hook didn't snag my doggone hair!

Next, I tried it using my fingers and while it was *okay*, it seemed as if there were still "bugs" in that system. I was always left with a little gap or hole at the base of my tightened loc due to not being able to get my fingers in once it was tight. But, it was working and I didn't have to twist, so I kept at it.

I later read that one could do a similar method of tightening, but using a *latch hook* instead. Sadly, I never found any information on how to incorporate a latch hook into the crochet method. So, I went out, purchased a latch hook, and played around with it until I found a comfortable and easy way to use it.

I actually stumbled upon several ways to do it, but will only discuss one of them here because I don't want to confuse or overwhelm you.

I tested it on my three locked children, myself, and a few others - some had even started their locs with twists or coils.

The latchin' technique was born!

Although the basic *concept* behind latchin' isn't new, you're about to learn the method that I (through much trial and error) stumbled upon to tighten locs with a simple latch hook.

In fact, if you've ever heard of this technique, it wouldn't surprise me if the person you got it from had been directly or indirectly instructed by yours truly.

What Are the Pros and Cons of Latchin'?

Based on my own personal experience, plus feedback from others; I've compiled a list of pros and cons to this method of tightening locs:

PROS:

- ✓ It doesn't have to be done all in the same day, in one sitting. You can tighten your hair when and where you want to.
- ✓ The end result is a tighter base that stays even when wet. No more avoiding water right after a retightening, as this method will hold up better and longer than twisting.
- ✓ There is no need for a locking agent and therefore, you eliminate the risk of product build up due to heavy creams, waxes and gels used to hold locs together.
- ✓ It is excellent for those with softer textures of hair who have problems getting twists to hold up in their hair.
- ✓ For some, it's stimulating to the scalp

CONS:

- After tightening, you may experience some mild tenderness of the scalp due to the manipulation. You must take care not to do it TOO tightly to avoid pain, but slight tenderness is common and usually disappears after a day or two.
- There is sometimes the risk of accidentally grabbing hair from another loc or another loc itself when tightening. This can be avoided, but it does happen from time to time if you're not careful.
- Unlike palm rolling, this method doesn't smooth loose hairs into the loc. BUT...you can use this method to tighten and STILL lightly finger-roll dampened locs to smooth if you desire.

How to Do the Latchin' Technique

Now we get to the nitty-gritty...how this procedure is actually done! I will illustrate this method with photos and written instructions.

If you aren't sure what a latch hook is, immediately below you will find a picture of a standard one along with the three major parts of the latch hook:



You can usually find latch hooks at craft stores and in some local beauty supply stores (typically the ones that cater mostly to African Americans) but in the event that you cannot, you can go to: bradelocz.com/blog/latchhooks.

The color of the handle and even the style may vary from what you see above, but as long as it has the 3 basic parts named above in the photo, it should work fine.

I will attempt to make this as easy to understand as possible, so please bear with me and if I leave you with any questions on anything, let me know.

If you already have a latch hook, I'd like you to do the steps with me, as you read them, for better understanding.

If you do NOT have a hook, then motion with your hands as if you're actually doing it!

Oh! One other thing... please be aware that the tightened areas MAY (or may not) look different and possibly smaller and/or tighter in diameter than the rest of your locs.

Okay, here we go....

The Instructions:

Although you can tighten the locs dry, if possible, start out with hair that is slightly damp. This can be after you've shampooed or you can have a spray bottle filled with water (and a little oil if you desire it) on hand to spritz your locs as you tighten.

I've found that manipulating the locs (or natural hair, period) when wet or at least damp is better than doing so when it's dry, as it's more pliable when wet.

1. Grab one of your locs. Since this is like "practice" grab one that's in the top of your head. Hold it up in the air with the hand you DON'T use regularly. For

example, if you're right-handed, grab the loc with your left hand and vice-versa.



NOTE: I inserted my thumb into the new growth just to illustrate that this is loose hair that needs tightening.

This is the portion that I will be retightening. Also, see the point where my thumb is...at the point where the loc begins?

THAT is where you want to insert the hook to begin tightening...NOT at the scalp!

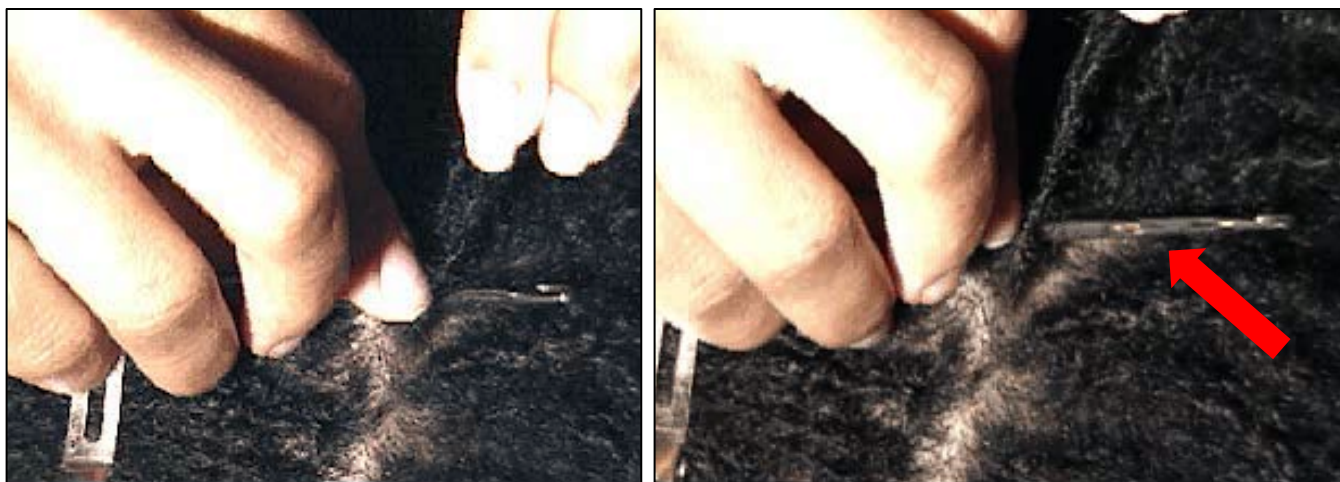
2. Take the latch hook into your dominant hand and insert the hook sideways through your new growth (horizontally from left to right or right to left, either is fine).

Be sure to insert it in an area that is close to where the locked hair starts and **not closest to the scalp** because you will work your way UP towards the scalp as you tighten. If need be, insert the hook at the base and then gently slide it downward towards your locked hair. THAT is where you want to begin, not at the scalp! (See image and caption above)

Doing this also prevents gaps in your locs. You don't want gaps because they can eventually cause weak spots and breaking points within your locs. So, be sure to make the "stitches" as tight as possible, working your way from the starting point of the loc towards the scalp.

3. As you insert the hook into the new growth, make sure that you push the hook in until the little latch is out past the OTHER side of your hair. In other

words, you want the hook AND the latch to be all the way through the new growth until you can see the latch on the topside of the new growth.



Notice that the hook has been inserted through the new growth to the point where the little "latch" is out past the hair. The arrow is pointing to the latch.

4. Now, take your loc and lay it right across the top of the latch hook near the "hooked" end.



As you see here, the loc has been pulled up and laid over the hook.

5. Flip the little latch up into "closed" position. The little latch should be on top of the loc and touching the hook.



Here, the little “latch” has been flipped upward, closing the loc in place so it can be easily pulled through the opening you made when you inserted the latch hook.

6. Gently pull the hook along with the loc back through the way you inserted it. In other words, pull it back out.



If you find that you cannot pull the loc all the way out using the hook, don't force it; simply remove the hook and pull out the rest of the way with your fingers.



7. Now you'll want to insert the hook **from back to front** (vertically). The reason is because, if you insert the hook in the same direction over and over, without alternating the direction, you'll end up with a gap in your locs, and you don't want that.



Insert the hook from the back of the new growth to the front.



Again, note that the hook is inserted all the way until the latch is out past the new growth.

8. After inserting it in from front to back, follow steps 3-6.

As mentioned before, you'll want to try and begin each tightening session by entering the hook on a horizontal and END on a vertical, meaning; the last time you go through the steps on one loc, you want it to be in the vertical direction, not the horizontal.

This is considering you want the locs going back. When doing the ones on the side of your head, you will be doing the opposite, ending on a horizontal.

Now stay with me here...

If your locs are going down towards your ears on each side, then you want the last round of tightening to go down in that direction, towards your ears, not going towards the back of your head.

You may find yourself able to do about three or more "runs" of the above steps, being sure to keep alternating, before you have completely tightened a loc.

The amount of times you have to do this will depend on how much new growth you have accumulated between retightening.

So, if you go through the steps (horizontal insertion followed by vertical insertion) one time and you still have new growth left over; repeat the steps until the loc is completely tightened.

IMPORTANT: You don't want to tighten your locs TOO tightly where it's hurting, although there may be some scalp tenderness after a tightening. But don't cause a lot of strain and pulling on the hair near the scalp by doing it too tightly.

In Simpler Terms...

If you find yourself still a little confused with the side-to-side, front-to-back - I want you to picture a clock. Now, imagine that the base of your loc is that clock.

The first round, enter the latch hook from either 3:00 to 9:00 or vice versa. The second round, enter the hook from 6:00 to 12:00.

Hopefully that little analogy will aid you in better understanding!

Practice makes perfect and once you get the "feel" of it, you'll be able to do this with your eyes closed or while watching a movie... or two.

And here is the loc after it's been tightened to the scalp:



A brief recap...

- ✓ Insert the latch hook into your new growth, closest to where the locked portion starts.
- ✓ Lay the loc across the hook
- ✓ Close latch over the loc
- ✓ Pull the loc through the opening you made with the hook
- ✓ Use your fingers to pull the loc the rest of the way out

There shouldn't be any knots or anything unusual when you retighten a lock. If there is, you may have done something wrong. I've included some trouble shooting tips that you may want to check out, further down. It may be a little daunting at first, but don't give up! Keep practicing until you get the feel for it.

If you continue to maintain your locs in this manner, you will notice that you have more freedom without worrying about your freshly retightened locs coming undone at the base.

Using Your Fingers Instead of the Latch Hook

Now, if you can't grasp how to maneuver the latch hook, this method CAN be done with just your fingers. My eldest son, who's left-handed, did it this way for the longest time, until he was finally able to grasp using the latch hook.

Everything is the same – the only difference is, you're just making a hole in the new growth with your index finger and thumb of *one* hand, and inserting the end of the loc through that hole and pulling it through with the other hand.

You may not be able to get it as close to the scalp as you would with the latch hook, but that's not necessarily a bad thing, as you'll avoid over tightening. In fact, if your locs are large in size, you may find using your fingers is even better!

How Often Should You Retighten?

You'll want to retighten your hair no MORE than once per month. You could even go every couple of months. Over tightening will somewhat hinder the hair from locking up in its normal process and may cause undo stress on the scalp hair. Please refrain from tightening more than once a month. Don't allow a "need" for tight; meticulously neat locs cause you to experience problems later on.

How Close to the Scalp Should I Get?

Don't tighten too tightly to the scalp. Try to leave about at least good 1/16th – 1/8th of an inch at the root if you can, ESPECIALLY around the edges (front

hairline, nape and around the ears) since those are the most delicate areas and most prone to breakage.

Accidentally Combining Locs

Be careful not to "join two locs together"... unless you WANT to join them together!

Sometimes you may pick up other loose hairs or another lock with the hook by accident. If you do, just gently try to take it out by locating the hole and working the loc that doesn't belong back out of the hole going in the opposite direction that you entered through. Take your time and be gentle! I've done it before and you can too!

The best thing is to prevent this from happening altogether by clipping the other neighboring locs out of your way.

Intentionally Combining Locs

If you *want* to join locs together to make them larger or stronger, you can do so by taking two neighboring locs and holding them together at the same time.

Then, insert the latch hook through the base of **both** locs, and pull both locs through. The steps are the same as when tightening a singular loc... you're just doing two locs at one time.

You then have the option of either leaving the locs loose at the ends or double-strand twisting them together to form one loc. Either way, as it grows out, the combined loc will become one.

If you end up with the "Y" shaped lock because the two did not completely become one, then once the top portion of the combined locs grows down a

ways from the scalp (at least 2 to 3 inches away) and they have fused at that portion, you can clip one of the locs off so only one loc remains.

Is it Really New Growth, Or Just “The Loosies”?

I’m sure you must be asking, “What are “loosies”? Loosies, as I’ve termed them, are when your locs come out of the retightening “pattern” prematurely.

Although locs tightened with the latchin’ method don’t come undone at the base to the extent that they do with twisting/palm-rolling, sometimes they do come out of the pattern due to extreme manipulation (see below for things that cause ‘loosies’).

So, how can you tell whether you have new growth or whether it’s just ‘loosies’?

Well, for one, new growth will **feel** differently. It will be more crinkly (or wavy or whatever your hair texture is) and it will be no more than about 1/4” to 1/2” if you retighten once per month.

However, if you retighten your hair and then a few days or even a week later you discover looseness at the base, that’s more than likely where the tightening has loosened up, not new growth.

Some things that bring about ‘loosies’:

1. **Styling**, when done too tightly or too often, can cause loosening, especially around the nape, ears and hairline.
2. **Rigorous shampooing** can sometimes loosen things up at the roots.
3. **Hats, tams, headbands** being constantly pulled on and off can cause “loosies” around the edges.

When you get 'loosies', leave them alone. Don't allow yourself to become obsessed with tightening too frequently! But if there is significant loosening (more than 1/4") then you may want to give some attention to those.

Gaps Near the Scalp After Tightening

If you feel or see a little gap or hole at the base after you've tightened, simply do the steps one more time and it should close up provided it's not already too tight.

If it's too tight and you can't go any further without over tightening, then just wait about a week or two and touch up those that had the hole. You can actually just let it be until the next retightening session. Just be sure to start at THAT point when you begin tightening. Don't be alarmed, it will close up!

Gaps Midway Down Shaft of Locs

If you'll recall, I previously mentioned that it's very important to remember inserting the latch hook right at the point where the locked (twisted, braided, etc.) portion begins as opposed to starting close to the scalp. The reason for this is to avoid gaps within your locs that can eventually lead to weak spots and breakage.



If you DO end up with a gap as shown in the photo, don't get upset; there is a remedy in most cases. All you have to do is take your latch hook (the smaller in size the better) and insert the hook into the sides of the gap.

In other words, don't insert the hook into the hole, but rather the sides of the hole as to close it up.

Once you've inserted the latch hook, grab the end of the lock and pull it through with the latch hook in the exact same manner as if you were tightening. Doing that should close gap up.

Now, there may be times when even the smallest latch hook won't fit into the sides because they're too tight. In this case, get a hair weaving needle and thread, in a color closest to your hair color.

Thread the needle, insert the needle into the **sides** of the gap, and stitch it closed. After knotting off the thread, carefully snip off any loose thread.

Getting Knots When Tightening

I've only had a couple of people email me about having a knot or lump at the base when they retighten.

This is most commonly due to not pulling the lock all the way through; so be sure to completely pull it all the way through.

If you ever happen to feel a lump, gently roll it between your thumb and forefinger to smooth it out.

Handle with Care! Broken Bradelocz

No one likes the idea of losing hair be it locked, relaxed or natural. But, it's something that can potentially happen, no matter what method is used to start locs.

The loc pictured isn't mine; it's my youngest daughter's. When she was younger, she had a skin/scalp condition that made her hair follicles very fragile.

The pictured loc came off because her hair got stuck in the Velcro of her winter coat, and when we tried to get it out, that loc remained stuck in the Velcro.



Another way people lose them is getting trapped under bag/purse straps. Thankfully, I've never had that happen BUT... I've definitely gotten my locs YANKED because from getting caught under my purse/bag strap!

Just keep this in mind...

When loose hair strands (whether relaxed, permed, or natural), are weakened due to ANY reason (diet, chemicals, too much stress on it, etc.) they *will* break off; and the same goes for locs. Usually, if a loc is broken, the hairs that hold that loc together have gotten weak for one reason or another.

So, be careful with your locs! Handle them as gently as you can, eat healthy, drink plenty of water, keep your hair well moisturized and clean, try not to OVER manipulate them by constantly styling them, and be aware of those hidden dangers such as purse straps or Velcro coats!

Styling Your Bradelocz

After a while, you'll notice your hair gets REALLY fuzzy after you shampoo it. This fuzziness is unavoidable and necessary, but if it becomes too much for you to bear, there are a few tricks that will help minimize the appearance – one being, styling them!

Anytime you set your Bradelocz be it on rollers or rods; with a twist/braid-out, the appearance of fuzzies is minimized, though it's not advisable to do this too often... no more than once a week.

Also, you twirl the length of (dampened) locs OR gently roll the lock back and forth between your fingers. Not only does this help with fuzzies a little, but it also helps "train" the locs to take on a more cylindrical shape, as braidlocs sometimes tend to have a flat appearance.

Throughout my journey pages, you will see various styles I tried, during various stages of locking. But I decided to highlight some of them in a separate section for you to easily reference.

Rod Set on Short Hair



A few things you'll need:

- ✓ Small to large sized perm rods (smaller rods give a tighter curl and are great for those very short areas while larger rods are great for the crown area where you may want more body and less tight curl)
- ✓ [Daily Loc Spritz](#)
- ✓ Setting lotion (optional, but recommended if you want a firmer hold)
- ✓ End papers to hold the Bradelocz in place while rolling

Lightly spritz with your daily loc spritz. If using it, apply a little setting lotion.

Secure the ends with an end paper (end papers don't necessarily HAVE to be used, but you can try with or without!).

Roll the locs onto a rod and secure into place. You choose what direction you want the curls to go (to the back, down the sides, towards the front of your face in the front, etc.) and roll the hair in the direction.

As you can see in the photo, I didn't bother to roll the very short sides and nape areas. I could have, but chose not to, most likely out of laziness!

But it turned out just fine because the locs were so short and my hair sort of curled up anyway. So, that's an option you have, to leave those areas and just curl the top and sides.



Once you've finished rolling, you can either allow the hair to air dry/set or you can sit under a hooded or bonnet dryer. Since the hair was not saturated, it shouldn't take very long to set; about an hour at the most, but the longer you leave them in, the better the set will hold.

Keep in mind that this set doesn't HAVE to use perm rods. It can just as easily and successfully be done with small to medium-sized rollers.

Flat Twist Ponytail



This was one of my go-to styles when my locs weren't long enough to do a ponytail or a loc puff. Flat twists are also a great choice if you want a "flat-to-the-head" style, but you can't French braid.

Don't forget, when you take these down in a week or so, you'll have another style... the **flat twist-out**!

A few things you'll need:

- ✓ [Daily Loc Spritz](#)
- ✓ Small rubber bands
- ✓ Ponytail holder

Lightly spritz your hair.

Section off rows of your locs from front to back; flat-twisted each row and once you get to the ends, secure with a rubber band.

Once you've completed the whole head, take each rubber band down, hold the bunch of hair at that back, then secure with a ponytail holder.

Cornrows



A few things you'll need:

- ✓ [Daily Loc Spritz](#)
- ✓ Small rubber bands
- ✓ Bobby pins or hair pins

Lightly spritz your hair.

Make rows, similar to the rows for flat twists, and cornrow each row back to the very ends.

Once completed, take all of the ends and flat twist them across the base going in an upward direction (overhand) to form sort of a "bun", and secure with bobby/hairpins; leaving a few locs to cascade down at the nape.

With this or any style where your locs are pulled back off of your face, if you want to combat the fuzzy edges, simply tie a scarf around the front and sides of the head.

The Flat Twist Upsweep



Now you can do an updo style, even if your hair isn't long!

*(*locs should be at least 4-5 inches)*

A few things you'll need:

- ✓ [Daily Loc Spritz](#)
- ✓ Small, black rubber bands
- ✓ Hair or bobby pins

Lightly spritz your hair.

The front area is divided into small (or medium) rows and each row is to be flat twisted (or cornrowed) to the scalp. When you get to the crown of your head, don't twist all the way to the ends but rather stop twisting and secure with a rubber band, leaving the ends loose.

Once you've completed the front/side flat twists, now move on to the back. The back is flat twisted (or cornrowed) going upward to the top of the head. These rows can be larger than the front, if you choose.

Again, do not twist all the way to the ends, but secure with rubber bands and leave the ends loose. Try to go as far up into the crown as you can.

Once you've completed the back, fluff the loose locs in the top to give fullness and volume.

If you need to, arrange the crown as you desire and pin any locs up and in place on the sides or in the back with the hair or bobby pins.

The Basic Roller Set



A few things you'll need:

- ✓ Small to large rollers (any type will do i.e. sponge, magnetic, etc.)
- ✓ [Daily Loc Spritz](#)
- ✓ Setting lotion (optional, but recommended if you want a firmer hold)
- ✓ End papers (optional)

Just as I mentioned with rod sets, you choose the direction you want your curls to flow and roll accordingly.

My standard, basic roller set is usually front-sides rolled down toward each side, crown area with larger rollers to give lift and height, and back/top rolled down toward the back.

And for a slight variation on the above roller set, you can tuck the hair on the sides back behind your ears.

The Flip



A few things you'll need:

- ✓ Small to large rollers (any type will do i.e. sponge, magnetic, etc.)
- ✓ [Daily Loc Spritz](#)
- ✓ Setting lotion (optional, but recommended if you want a firmer hold)
- ✓ End papers (optional)

Roll the back sections going upward rather than downward for the flip effect. The top front and sides are still rolled going downwards (or back).

The Twist-Out



The twist-out is one of many styles worn by natural-haired women who are not locked. But, those of us with locs can sport them too!

Depending on how small you make your twists will determine how tight the set will be and how long it will last.

One thing to remember about, "out" styles (twist or braid out) is, you have two choices.

1. You can make your twists or plaits really neat so you can sport them in and of themselves as a style for a couple of days before taking them down or...
2. You can use the twists or plaits as a "roller" set where it's okay if they're "messy" or lookin' crazy because no one outside of your home is gonna see them anyway... it's just an overnight set. Now, if you're going this route, make sure your hair isn't super-wet because you want to make sure it's dry by the next day. Plus, you don't want to go to bed with wet locs anyway.

A few things you'll need:

- ✓ [Daily Loc Spritz](#)
- ✓ Small, black rubber bands for securing the ends
- ✓ Setting lotion (optional, but recommended if you want a firmer hold)

Take sections of locs, lightly spritz, and divide the section into two smaller sections. Double-strand twist those sections together. If the twists are small, you may be able to go all the way to the ends but if need be, secure the ends with rubber bands.

Once the twists have set (anywhere from a few hours to overnight – maybe longer depending on the length, thickness, and density of your hair) gently and carefully take them apart, separate the locs with your fingers, and fluff!

The Braid-Out



Like the twist-out, the braid-out is a style of choice commonly worn by natural-haired women who are not locked. And again, those of us with locs can sport this cute style as well!

A few things you'll need:

- ✓ [Daily Loc Spritz](#)
- ✓ Small, black rubber bands for securing the ends
- ✓ Setting lotion (optional, but recommended if you want a firmer hold)

With braid-outs, you will do sections of braids (plaits) rather than double-strand twists.

The main difference between is that, braid-outs produce more of a crinkly, crimped effect and twist-outs create more of a wave.

You can also do a braid-out from *cornrows*, which is what I did in the above photo. Again, the smaller the sections (or rows if doing cornrows) are, the tighter the set.

Bradelocz Fever

After much of the focus being on *my* Bradelocz, I'd wanted to show *other* people who are Bradelocked and lovin' it!





More photos & update pics of my Bradelocz can be found at: <https://bradelocz.com/blog/photos>

Kids & Bradelocz

If you have a child (especially a daughter) who wears locs or wants them after seeing YOURS... tell Mama, Grandma and all the other “well-meaning” family members who oppose your daughter(s) being locked that little girls can still be little girls and wear their barrettes and bows while wearing beautiful locs!

Here are a few pics of my kids when they were younger and Bradelocked...





Cherie's 1st Year Journal

Locking was so new and exciting to me that I documented each month for a whole year!

By following my 1-year journal, you will learn the story of how and why I started this Bradelocz journey, and you get to see all the changes my hair and I went through... all the trials and errors... all the good, bad, and ugly.

Do you remember the very first piece of advice I gave you in this book?

Keep that in mind as you read and follow along – some things you will glean from my experiences that you can apply to your own, but again... make your journey yours!

I hope my story inspires, encourages and assists you in YOUR journey!

Oh! And since the following IS me journaling, I'm not editing it. So please forgive any typographical or grammatical errors... it is what it is.



The Beginning – April 2001

I must be totally honest here; when I first decided I wanted to lock my hair, my first and foremost choice was to have Sisterlocks.

These locks can even be done on hair that still has relaxed ends and as the hair grows and locks, the processed ends can be later trimmed or cut completely off.

The process takes about as long as getting Micro or Tyzillion Braids done and the particular type of locs I had in mind would have cost as much if not more as those braids.

But I also could not afford the cost of getting those particular locs at that time either. So, I opted to wait on locking my hair until I could afford the cost.

Well, one night, I was online and just started seeking out pictures of locks. Not just SL, but locs in general. I looked at locs that were started by the organic method (doing absolutely NOTHING to the hair except washing it); the free-form method (similar to organic but the roots are separated once the initial “budding” takes place); the twisted method where the locks are done with 2-strand twists; the comb-coil method where the locks are started with comb or finger coils (one- strand twists); and finally, the braid method where the locks are started with braids.

Most of the pictures I looked at were very appealing and attractive but a few of them where not.

I also went to quite a few natural hair and hair locking discussion groups on the Internet and I read posts on the subject of starting locks with braids. Small, fairly thin braids to be exact. As I read, I got more and more excited because I

found out that I could have the look and the flexibility I desired and still be able to start the locks myself which made my pocketbook happy.

A young lady who had previously started locs with braids was nice enough to share her experiences of how versatile her locs were.

We corresponded back and forth that night as I asked questions and she gave answers. With each email, I grew more and more excited and anxious. It was late that night, about 1:00 a.m. I sat up on the computer for about an hour and when 2:00 a.m. hit, I decided to finally lie down and go to bed. I lay there unable to sleep until around 2:30 and I realized that I was not going to get any sleep because I was just too excited. I kept thinking about the journey I was about to embark upon.

Yes, I had made up my mind that I did NOT want to wait until I could afford Those "other" locs; I did NOT want to wait until my short, newly natural hair was longer; I did NOT want to wait until I had worn a big afro or longer versions of twists, twist-outs and other natural styles. I wanted my locks right then and now!

So, I climbed out of bed and eagerly went upstairs into the bathroom. I gathered my comb and got to work braiding my hair. I must have been in there for all of 2 hours and got almost half of my head done. I started getting tired and so were my arms. So, I decided I would go to bed and finish my hair the next morning; and I did just that! The next day, I finished my new starter locks/ braids.

I would say combined, it took me about a good 8 hours to do my whole head in braids that varied in size. I started out making nice, neat little partings but after a while, I just did the best that I could to make sure they were at least decent, but not necessarily perfect. To some, that is important, but at that time,

to me it was not. Most of the braids were pretty uniform in size and the size of the base of the braids was about the size of a pencil if not a wee bit smaller. Some of them were a little larger than that and those I ended up taking down and making them smaller later on.

After I was done braiding my whole head, I shampooed it very lightly just to see what would happen. The braids stayed intact. After that, I rolled my hair up on perm rods and when they dried and I removed them, I had the cutest little curly braids! I received a lot of compliments when people saw it.



As you can see from the back view, I had parts and spaces that showed. It didn't bother me, though because I knew that they would fill in over time, as the Bradelocz got old.

Many people are very shocked and stunned when I tell them I took the time to braid my hair myself into such small, thin braids. But, if you don't think you would be up to that or if you're not a braider, you can always go to a good braider and just tell them you want your hair braided.

Now, some people start using extension hair and then once the locks grow out more, they eventually cut off the braid extensions. I don't know much about that route so I won't spend a lot of time talking about it. But if you want to use only your own natural hair, then just have the braider section your hair in nice, neat sections and braid it up. That's it! You won't have to go back to her/him ever again!

One of the benefits of "tool" locs is that they can be as small as you can imagine a lock being without the risk of breaking off IF properly taken care of.

That is one of the things that scared me about starting my locks with such small braids. The thought of my locks thinning, weakening and breaking had me thinking that I needed to take them all down and re-braid them bigger. But I realized that it's not necessarily the size ONLY that plays a factor in locks thinning at the base, but a small size incorporated with improper handling, too much twisting and too much heavy build up of product.

Due to the way that I tighten and maintain my locks, I don't foresee a problem but it is still only the first month. I'll keep you posted later in this book if I experience any problems with thin, weak, hanging-by-a-strand locks!

The norm and what most people recommend is that locs are started the size of a pencil. Now, I question whether they mean the actual lock or the base of the lock. I think it's the latter. It's the base that has the potential to get weak due to the weight of the longer, mature lock.

But, I've also read about locks that get weak and break midway. I will assume this is also due to improper handling and too much manipulation and/or product build-up.

Some of the sections of my hair are the size of pencils and some are smaller. I will watch and see if they weaken over time and if so, I may have to "marry" them with a neighboring lock for stability. But, I don't think it will be a problem.

The fact that we have to handle our locks with tender, loving care is nothing new if you stop to think about it. I mean, during relaxed days, if we were not careful with our hair it would break off like crazy. We would walk around with broken hairs on our shoulder and back and see much of it on the bathroom sink and floor.

But now, with locks, the breakage would be just that much more noticeable. The bottom line is that you treat your locks with loving care and they will love you back!



The First Month Locked – May 2001

WHEW! I made it through my first month. I don't say that because it's been rough or anything. I say this because I am SO anxious to get to the point of being locked for months or even better yet...YEARS. I know I have a long way to go and I must have patience...but waiting is the hardest part!

So, here are some photos of my hair after one month has passed. You will notice that my hair has fuzzed up, thickened up; the parts don't show nearly as much.

Even though it's fuzzy, I am amazed that I get compliments. A relaxed lady stopped me in the market to ask who did my hair and to tell me how much she liked it, how cute it was, etc.

I was torn between what I wanted to do the maintenance them. Did I want them to look very groomed or did I mind the wild, fuzzy look? Those were questions I had to ask myself. What did I decide? Well, at first, I was doing the re-twisting of the roots and using gel and loc products. Then, I found out that using all that product could cause build-up and gunk in the locs. So, I'm not going that route.

Also, all that twisting is not good because it will cause the locs to weaken and more than likely break off later. Plus, I am not up for re-twisting and clipping and drying. That's just too much maintenance for me.

The good thing about the braids is that there isn't much unraveling. I mean, sometimes the ends will slightly unravel a bit and curl up, but sometimes I leave them or if it bothers me too much, I'll just braid the ends back up. I've also heard some folks say that when they started with braids, after the hair locked, they cut the braided ends off because it looked like a loc with a braid

on the ends. But the lady that I conversed with told me that her braids blended right in with the rest of the locked hair, so I guess I'll see what happens as my locks grow and mature!

I shampoo my hair 2 to 3 times a week with Dr. Bronner's but at the advice of a fellow locker, I'm going to try using African Black Soap. Everyday, I lightly mist the locs with water from my water purification system (she recommended bottled water, but I think this is just as good) and I added a little bit of olive oil to the water bottle as well.

Sometimes I will roll the locs up on rods to make them curly, but I don't do this too often. I sleep with a satin bonnet on every night to keep lint out. I've gotten used to the fuzzy look and have begun to feel the little "buds" forming on some of the locs.

I can't wait until they are fully locked! Till next time...



The back last month vs. after month one

But you can already see from the time I first started to the next month how it filled in and the parts don't show anymore. Now, please be aware that whether or not parts will show depends on one's hair texture and density. You may not even have parts showing at all. This is just part of the process for many and they don't look bad so don't stress over them!



The Second Month Locked – June 2001

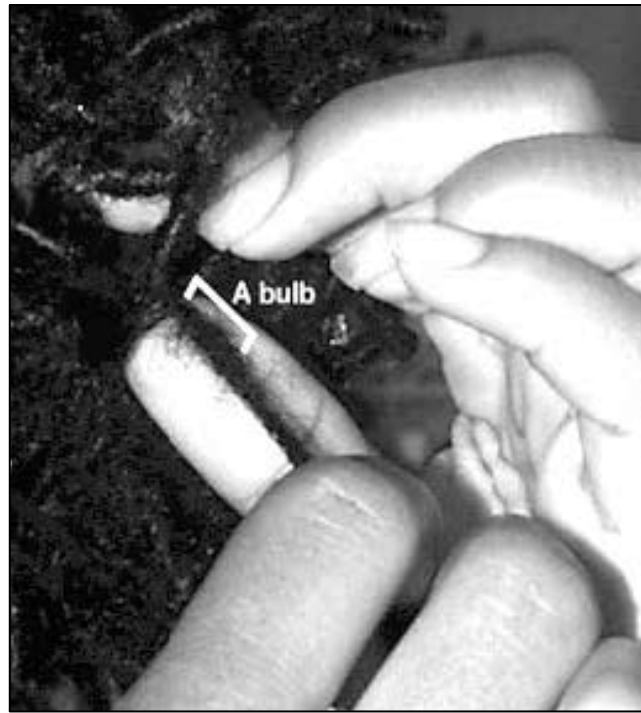
Okay, so here I am in my second month of being locked. I am finding that each day, I grow to love and adore my locks more and more. At this point I am still feeling my way as far as what I will and won't do to maintain my locks.

I *thought* that I would give up doing anything to them besides shampooing and moisturizing them and let them just totally free form. I mean I do like the idea behind letting them just do their thing with no guidance from me except for separating the roots. But, I put my hands in my hair a lot to feel and check for any that may have began locking and it sometimes bothers me to feel loose hairs or extremely loose roots.

I had started twirling the entire braid around my finger in an attempt to smooth them and wind the loose hairs around the braid/lock. But, I keep reading about how too much twisting and over manipulating the locks is not good and can result in weakening and thinning of the lock and eventually, breakage of the lock.

That would not be good and with my locks being as small and thin as they are, I definitely don't need to add any unnecessary stress to them. So, I don't do that twirling thing anymore. Well, at least not the *entire* braid/lock (more on that later).

I am now shampooing my hair twice a week. I was doing it 3 times a week, but I decided that once at the beginning of the week and once again at the end of the week would be sufficient and allow the hair to begin to firm up and start locking or at least budding. Oh, what is budding? Well, a bud is where the intertwining hairs begin to fold over and grab the lock and they look like little, fuzzy bulbs.

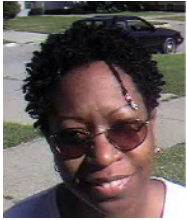


I have seen a couple of these and on me; they start maybe 1/4 of an inch away from the scalp. But guess what? On my right side a little ways above my ear, about 3 of the braid/locks have begun to lock!

I notice that when I shampoo my hair the ends of my hair tend to slightly unravel. I usually just grab the braidloc in the middle or at the base (to avoid twisting the roots) and twirl the ends with my fingers. I have been told that the ends don't really lock all the way. We'll see as time goes on. But as I mentioned before, my hands always find their way into my hair and sometimes the loose ends bothers me a bit. So, at times, I will braid them back up. But for the most part, I just twirl them and let that be it.



The back at month vs. the back now at month 2



The Third Month Locked – July 2001

This is now month three of my lock journey and it's going good. I am experiencing some very fuzzy days meaning, my hair has been looking a lot fuzzier than previously. I know that this is normal and I don't mind it one bit. I mean, sometimes it bothers me a little and then I end up grabbing some kind of oil or sometimes just plain ole water and I start twirling my locks from midway to the ends.

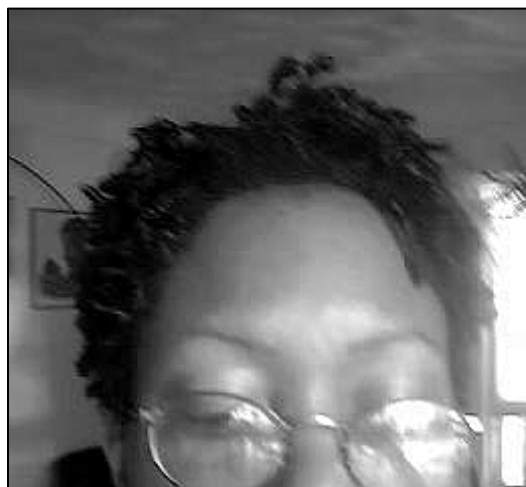
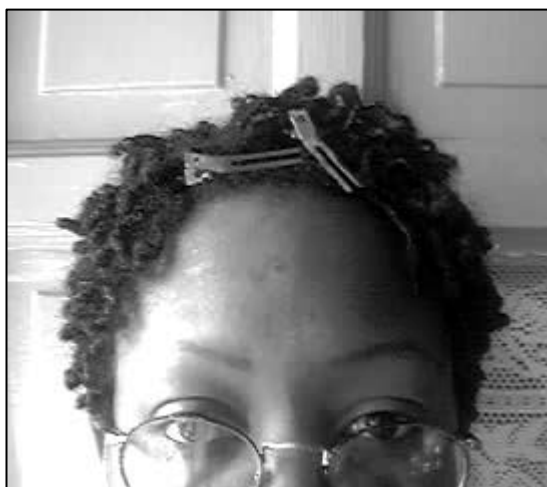
But, this doesn't occur very often as I have found out that no matter how much twirling, twisting, or adding of product to the hair, there is still going to be some fuzziness. It's just a part of the process so I've learned to accept it and go on.



Here is a close-up of my "fuzzies". This is right after shampooing and doing nothing to them.

My hair has grown a little. I can tell by the fullness and a little bit by length when I compare it to how it was during the past months. I've also noticed that the braids are no longer looking or feeling much like braids. They are now puffier which I understand is normal. They swell (or get puffy) and then later they will condense and become tighter.

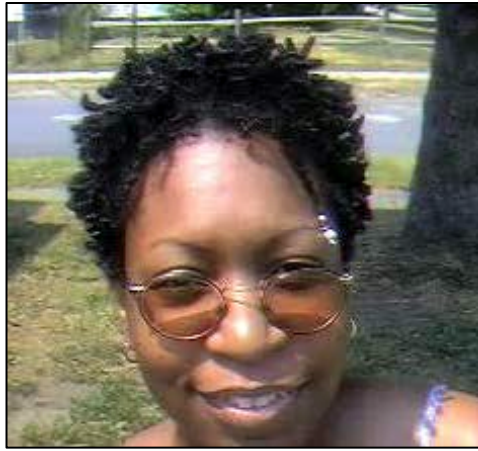
More of them have started to lock and it's starting at the base. I've heard some people say that the hair starts locking from the ends and go up and I've heard others say that it starts from near the base. I think it depends on your hair. I now have 3 on my right side that have started locking, 2 on the left side and 3 in the top/back of my head that have started the matting process.



These pictures were taken after shampooing and then grooming by distributing a small amount of Mimosa Hair Honey throughout and the twirling the braidlocs with my finger. I don't bother to do this too often; but when I do, it gives a neater, more polished look.



Sorry for the "mug shot look". These were taken indoors and my camera needs good lighting, which is why I take most shots outdoors.



The back at month 2, vs. the back now at month 3

Most times, I don't bother to style my locks much. I don't like to over manipulate them and I didn't want to get into the mentality that they had to be styled in order for me to like or accept them or in an attempt to have others to accept them. I like to wear my locks somewhat wild and free!

But, sometimes, I do like to roll them up on rods for a stylish, curly look. In the following photos, I set them by spritzing with just plain water and rolling with large perm rods. You'll notice how skinny the front ones are and that is because I took some of them down and re-braided them because I didn't like the partings. I don't care if the ones in the top and back are not neatly parted, but in the front, if I want to ever wear a side or middle part, I need the partings to be better than they were. So, it's like starting over in the very front, but it's okay.



I just finger-styled the locks into place, as I wanted them. Oh, the in front were rolled coming towards my face, the ones on the side going down and the ones in the top going back. I did not roll all of the locks, just the ones in the immediate front/top area.

As my hair grows and the locks mature, I will do sets with Bantu knots, twists and braids to get different looks without rollers and rods.



The Fourth Month Locked – August 2001

Wow! Month four already! Time is passing by more quickly now. In the beginning, it seemed like a year had passed as I went from the beginning of one month to the end. But, now I am not watching my hair as much...I've lightened up a bit!

My hair is still growing. At first, I wanted to leave it alone, let it do it's own thing. But now, I want them to look neat. I don't mean it has to be set on rollers and all that, but I do like to keep the fuzzies tamed as much as it's possible. So, here lately after each shampoo I DO twirl them with my fingers from near the scalp all the way to the tips. I only use water for the most part or either aloe vera juice or gel.

The fuzzies don't go away, but they do sort of calm down and the end result is a neater-looking lock. Once they lock all the way, I'm sure I'll stop twirling and just retighten my new growth as described earlier on.

My shampoo routine has also changed. Instead of shampooing my hair 2 to 3 times per week, I now only shampoo once per week. I noticed that when I shampooed more frequently, it did sort of move things along a little as far as the initial budding process, but I also noticed that I was getting more and more fuzz and unraveling. I had been reading in various places that the hair needs to be able to "settle" and I wasn't allowing that to happen. So, now I am.

But, monitor your hair and what happens with frequent shampooing as opposed to once per week (or every other week if you can stand it) and see what works for YOU!



This is a close-up shot of my locs at 4 months. It has grown much since last month. I wonder if it has anything to do with that aloe vera juice I spray in it.



Comparison shots of last month and this month back views. Looks like I'm having a serious growth spurt here!



The Fifth Month Locked – September 2001

Month five is here and my hair is locking up! Yes, I have more of the braids that are now locked with the exception of about an inch or inch and a half of the tips and about half of an inch of the roots.

How do I know that they're locked? Well, one way is because they feel very tight and when I try to pull on each side of the lock, it's not budging. But when I take one of the ones that aren't locked and pull on each side, they pull apart letting me know that if I were to try and take it down, it would come down with ease.



I'm still only shampooing once per week and sometimes I go a few days past my usual Wednesday shampoo day. Still not putting a lot of product on them. A little dab here and there every now and then is sufficient.

I won't say or post too much this month seeing that NEXT month is month 6, which means I'll be half way to my one-year mark!

So, here are a few pictures of what my hair looks like this month. Not too much different in appearance, but I can tell it's changing and has grown a little bit.



Comparison shots of last month and this month back views.



Freshly shampooed, towel-dried, slightly damp, and lightly finger-fluffed locs. And later that day dry, lightly twisted, slightly tamer locs.

The Sixth Month Locked – October 2001

Oh my, I just cannot believe that month six is here already! I mean, I NEVER thought I'd reach this point but I am here! I am half way to being locked for one year! It's a good feeling and you'll be able to totally relate once you reach this mark.

Well, I'm consistently still washing once a week. After shampooing, I rinse my hair with chamomile tea. What I do is boil a pot of water, steep 2 teabags and allow it to cool. Then, after I shampoo and rinse the shampoo out I pour the tea over my hair.

Now to make the tea rinse last, I will place a large bowl in the sink and allow the rinse to run into the bowl. Then I pour the remains of the tea into a spray bottle and use as a spritz for my locs. You must keep this refrigerated, though, because it will spoil if left out too long.







The Seventh Month Locked – November 2001

Although I like my locs freestyle I have found satisfaction with having them curly at this stage. So, since I shampoo only once per week, I also only set them once per week and if the curls last all week fine, if they don't, too bad. I use Lottabody setting lotion to set the locs on rods and it leaves my locs SO soft.

I am noticing incredible growth since last month. About a good 15-20 of my locs are now completely locked where they cannot be taken apart (at least not easily) and they're starting to really tighten up.



Comparison shots of the back last month and a curly back view of this month.



The Eighth Month Locked – December 2001

This month has been the month of trying new things with my hair. I have been experimenting like crazy with different styles now that my hair is getting some length to it.

I've tried an updo, twist-out, pin curls, braid-outs and flat-twists. I am noticing more and more of my locs are now locked with the exception of about 1/2 of the ends and 1/4 inch from the scalp.

I also used conditioner on my locs this month and none of them came a loose. I didn't leave it on long or anything, just put it on and rubbed it in and rinsed it right out.

There was a noticeable change (softer hair) but I'm sure when I try actually leaving the conditioner on for 30 minutes (probably in the next couple of months) there will be even MORE of a difference. I used Organic Root Stimulator (ORS) Hair Mayonnaise. I hear this stuff is great but should only be used once a month.





A curly (rod set) view of the back last month and a twist-out view of the back this month.



The Ninth Month Locked – January 2002

This month is a little more laid back for me in terms of styling.

However, I have been doing braid-outs and twist-outs. I'm really feeling the crinkly and wavy locs this month. But I'm not like styling them up; just wild and free wavy or crinkly locs!



Comparison of last month's back view and this month's back view.



The Tenth Month Locked – February 2002

This month I did only two sets and the rest of the time I wanted to allow my locs to “do their thing” by mostly wearing them freestyle.



Comparison of last month's back view and this month's back view.



The Eleventh Month Locked – March 2002

Well, it's winding down to that time...the one-year mark! To me my hair doesn't look THAT much different than last month, but perhaps you may notice a difference.

This month, I decided to take some matters into my own hands. I decided that rather than paying someone else for hair oils and herbal rinses, I would make my own. I simply ordered different essential oils and herbs to mix up my own batches of oils and herbal rinses.

So far, so good!

I managed to mix up some oil that smells just like one of my favorites, Carol's Daughter Khoret Amen Oil. The EO's (essential oils) I used were: sage oil, clary sage, patchouli, ylang ylang, atlas cedar wood, and rosemary mixed in a base of olive, jojoba and castor oils. Oh, I purchased empty glass bottles to store my concoctions.

If you ever decide to make your own oils, please remember that some (most) essential oils can burn the skin if applied neat - straight from the bottle, and should be mixed with distilled/purified water or a base of olive oil or jojoba oil or other base oil.

To be on the safe side, purchase or check out at the library a book on essential oils and herbs.



Comparison shots of last month and this month back views. The pic from this month is right after having shampooed because, otherwise, you would not see ANY growth as my hair shrinks up as soon as it dries.



The Twelfth Month Locked – April 2002

Yea!!! I finally reached the ONE-YEAR MARK!

Boy oh boy! The time has passed and already it's been one year since I first locked. I wanted to show the progression of my locs over the months all in one place rather than you having to scroll back and forth to see it. You will also see other pictures taken this month as well.



So, what changes has my hair undergone? Well, much of my hair is now locked to where if I tried, I couldn't pull them apart. Some of them are still not locked, though. Those are mainly ones in the softer areas of my hair (nape, around the ear and around the hairline). I have noticed that some of my ends are no longer

curly-q'd, but are now starting to tighten and lock up. I am also noticing a lot of my locs forming the little balls of hair dangling.

Those are normal and part of the locking process. They shouldn't be pulled off. I know, they're not the most attractive things in the world and yes, I've been guilty of pulling them off as well but they really shouldn't be pulled off if you can help it. That's mainly the hair that normally sheds when hair is loose. That shed hair has worked it's way down the locs to the ends but if you leave them alone, they take part in the forming of the locs ends.

My locs are still a little fuzzy and probably won't start to condense and tighten up into their somewhat "final" position for another year or so. But that's fine...I'm just glad to have made it thus far through this journey! So, here are more pictures for your viewing pleasure. I'm sure that in another year my locs will look totally different than they do now, but this book was only meant to cover the first year.



These photos were taken during the last bit of a braid-out I had done almost a week prior. That is why you can see actual length. But if I were to show you a photo of my hair immediately after having washed and dried it with no styling, you would see that it still shrinks.



Look at the difference in length of freshly shampooed locks at 6 months and at year one.



Back view last month (month 11) and at month 12.

Year Two

Although this was mainly focused on my first year of locking; I wanted to give you a quick glimpse into “the future” of my journey by sharing a couple of pics taken at the 2-year mark!



In Closing...

You have now reached the end of this e-book, but this is FAR from the end of our locking journeys! You will have much to look forward to but the best part is the FREEDOM! Enjoy it, embrace it, and LOVE it!

I hope that this guide has been a great and valuable source of information to you and that it will help you throughout your journey of locking via the Bradelocz method!

If this guide has been helpful to you and once you begin your journey, I'd love to see your pictures and receive your testimonials be it in writing or in video format! Send them to: Cherie@Bradelocz.com, thanks.
Lock on!

Cherie King

About the Author

Cherie King practiced in field of Cosmetology for seven years. She later began her own quest for the ultimate healthy head of hair and decided to no longer chemically (nor thermally) straighten her hair.

Research and personal experience led her to feel very strongly about African American women, and their daughters, learning to embrace and appreciate their hair in its natural state.

She expresses a sincere desire to help women become self-sufficient when it comes to hair care for themselves and their daughters and that is what her book is all about!



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