



This isn't Nora, but a kick-ass example of curls that behave.

BEAUTY SCHOOL DROP-IN

spaz-free curls

Nora Zelevansky whips her medusa curls into shape with a little help from a hair therapist.

My hair should be heavily medicated. The naturally curly (read: frizzy) mop—which is neither tight enough to channel Shakira nor loose and flowing like Jane Austen heroines—has serious issues.

But then I hear about “psycho-hairapy” at Christo Fifth Avenue in New York. Once a month, beauty guru Christo leads frustrated curly haired women in (free!) group therapy, teaching techniques for controlling waves, as well as acceptance and curly love.

I approach the event like any first counseling session—nervous, hopeful, cynical—and leave my hair in its natural state. At the salon, the women are perched on wooden chairs, sharing sympathetic glances. Christo introduces himself and announces to me, “Your hair is challenging. You’ll be the model.”

After wetting and conditioning my hair (Christo explains that shampooing more than twice a week is drying and causes frizz), he says, “Now I’m going to teach you how to create better style for your hair.” His three-part plan calls for (1) healthy hair; (2) a correct haircut; and (3) the right styling products and tools.

To get healthy hair, Christo explains, we shouldn’t over-shampoo, and we should use a deep-conditioning mask once every two

weeks. He also advises using only a wide-toothed comb. Then he turns to me, pointing out the short strands around my face and the long hair hanging limply below. “These layers are good for straight hair,” he says before grabbing his scissors, adding that curly hair layers should graduate slowly from short to long.

Next, a senior stylist works Curlisto Protein Boost leave-in conditioner and a quarter-sized dollop of Curlisto Structura Lotion into my hair. Then he uses miniclips to pull my hair up at the root and create volume. After that he gets out the diffuser and explains that at home, I should diffuse each side separately to make sure the curls are even in volume. Finally, he removes the clips and adds Curlisto’s Bio-Gel Mousse, Finishing Pomade and Shaping Spray.

Suddenly, I’m looking in the mirror at Diana Ross. My curls are separated and big, but not in a crunchy, early-’90s way. And they’re my natural curls—no strand was enhanced by an iron or twist. The group oohs and aahs.

Christo sends us out the door with samples and “prescriptions” based on individual texture, habits, health and thickness. I grin at my reflection in the elevator, realizing that the first step to getting great curly hair is admitting you don’t have a problem.

FIX YOUR OWN DAMN HAIR

Forget patient/client confidentiality. Nora and her fellow therapy groupmates share the doctor’s orders.

NORA, 29

PROBLEM: Dry, frizzy
CHRISTO SAYS: Use a light, cleansing conditioner like Curlisto Botanical Rinse (\$13, curlisto.com) to moisturize without creating too much volume, and follow with Curlisto Deep Therapy Masque (\$32, curlisto.com) twice a week.

TAMEEKA, 25

PROBLEM: Biracial combination curls
CHRISTO SAYS: Try a shampoo like Curlisto Bio Curl Shampoo (\$18, curlisto.com) for softness and bounce, followed by a styling cream like Curlisto Repair Styling Cream (\$29, curlisto.com) to smooth and define.

ERIN, 24

PROBLEM: Desperately seeking texture
CHRISTO SAYS: Go for a structuring lotion like Curlisto Structura Lotion (\$12, curlisto.com) to seal rough cuticles, followed by a molding paste like Curlisto Unruly Paste (\$22, curlisto.com).



Christo works his magic on Nora. He isn't a real therapist, but you can still bitch to him about your Mom issues and psycho boss probs.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MODEL: IAN ALLEN SEMINAR: TOD SEELIE