

What Is Porosity?



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If [Prose's customized formulas](#) have taught us anything, it's that hair is a combination of art and science. We can use all the products and tools we want, but ultimately we have to understand the science behind our locks before we know what to do with it.

Today we're exploring one of the most fundamental aspects of hair: porosity. While it may sound technical, think of it like your skin's pores. As Prose Director of Education and veteran stylist [Faith Huffnagle](#) explains, "Porosity is your hair's ability to absorb moisture." And it comes in different strengths. Which level you end up with depends on a variety of factors, from [coloring](#), [highlighting](#), or relaxing/perming your hair to UV exposure, [pollution](#) and [heat styling](#). Together, these stressors can affect the hair's cuticle, which alters its porosity.

How to test your porosity

Take a strand of clean hair — any product build-up will mess with the results — into an 8-ounce glass of room temperature water. Then look to see what happens. If the hair sinks to the bottom, you have high porosity. If the hair floats, it's low porosity. But if your hair is somewhere in the middle between floating and sinking, you're rocking normal porosity.

Low porosity

Your hair struggles to hang onto moisture, so applying products can be just as much of a challenge. Gels, creams, oils, you name it — they'll typically sit on the hair without penetrating the hair shaft. The other issue? That moisture stays in the hair and doesn't dry quickly. Try applying hair products in the shower before stepping out to allow for better absorption with help from steam. Huffnagle also recommends using steam or heat for deep treatments regularly since heat allows the cuticle to

raise.

High porosity

This hair has the opposite problem — it absorbs too much moisture. But due to its notoriously raised cuticles (which also means more tangles), high porosity hair also loses moisture at a faster rate. If you're looking for the culprit, in natural unprocessed hair it usually traces back to genetics. To combat the lack of shine, Huffnagle recommends regularly using products that contain small amounts of proteins along with [oils to seal in moisture](#) and retain nourishment.

Normal porosity

Lucky you! If you're normal porosity, your hair can absorb and retain moisture well. It looks healthy and bouncy, and maintenance is fairly straightforward. Keep up the balance with regular nourishment. Your hair is already resilient — let's keep it that way.

No matter the porosity of your hair, Prose will work hard to give you good hair days only. Get started with your custom formula by taking the consultation [here](#).



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Archana Ram is an Ojai, California-based writer and editor specializing in beauty, wellness, food, and travel for outlets like *Vogue*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Afar*, and more. You can learn more about her writing, travels, and golden retriever on [Instagram](#).

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