

Certified Specialist Programme in Afro Hair Care

Chemical Relaxers and Texturizers

Chemical Relaxers and Texturizers play a crucial role in the maintenance and styling of Afro hair. Understanding the key terms and vocabulary associated with these products is essential for hair care professionals. Let's delve into the terminology that is fundamental to the Certified Specialist Programme in Afro Hair Care.

1. **Chemical Relaxers**:

Chemical relaxers are products used to straighten tightly curled or coiled hair. These products contain chemical ingredients that break down the protein bonds in the hair, allowing it to be reshaped into a straighter form. There are different types of relaxers, including lye-based relaxers and no-lye relaxers.

2. **Texturizers**:

Texturizers are milder versions of relaxers that are used to loosen tight curls or kinks in the hair without completely straightening it. Texturizers are ideal for individuals who want to maintain some level of curl pattern while reducing the overall tightness of their curls.

3. **Curl Pattern**:

Curl pattern refers to the natural shape of the hair strands. Hair can have a variety of curl patterns, ranging from tight coils to loose waves. Understanding the client's curl pattern is essential when choosing the right relaxer or texturizer for their hair.

4. **Porosity**:

Hair porosity refers to how well the hair is able to absorb and retain moisture. There are three main categories of hair porosity: low, normal, and high. The porosity of the hair can impact how well it responds to chemical treatments like relaxers and texturizers.

5. **Hair Texture**:

Hair texture refers to the thickness or diameter of individual hair strands. Hair texture can vary from fine to medium to coarse. The texture of the hair can influence the results of chemical relaxers and texturizers.

6. **Alkaline**:

Alkaline refers to the pH level of a product. Many chemical relaxers are alkaline in nature, with a pH above 7. Alkaline relaxers work by raising the pH of the hair to break down the protein bonds and straighten the hair.

7. **Neutralizing**:

Neutralizing is a crucial step in the relaxer process that involves applying a neutralizing shampoo or conditioner to stop the chemical reaction of the relaxer. This helps to ensure that the hair is not over-processed and prevents damage.

8. **Base**:

Base refers to the protective cream or oil that is applied to the scalp and hairline before applying a relaxer or texturizer. The base helps to protect the skin from irritation and chemical burns that can occur during the relaxing process.

9. **Overlapping**:

Overlapping occurs when a relaxer or texturizer is applied to hair that has already been chemically processed. This can lead to over-processing, breakage, and damage to the hair. It is essential to avoid overlapping when applying chemical treatments.

10. **Virgin Hair**:

Virgin hair refers to hair that has not been chemically processed or colored. When working with virgin hair, it is important to assess the hair's natural characteristics and needs before applying any chemical treatments.

11. **Retouch**:

A retouch is a touch-up application of a relaxer or texturizer to the new growth of hair that has already been chemically processed. Retouches should be done carefully to avoid overlapping and damaging the previously processed hair.

12. **Protein Bonds**:

Protein bonds are the natural bonds that hold the structure of the hair together. Chemical relaxers work by breaking these bonds to reshape the hair. It is important to understand how these bonds work to achieve desired results without causing damage.

13. **Hydroxide**:

Hydroxide is a common ingredient found in alkaline relaxers. There are different types of hydroxides used in relaxers, including sodium hydroxide, calcium hydroxide, and lithium hydroxide. Each type of hydroxide has a different strength and effect on the hair.

14. **Thio**:

Thio refers to the active ingredient found in no-lye relaxers. Thio relaxers work by breaking down the protein bonds in the hair to straighten it. Thio relaxers are milder than alkaline relaxers and are often preferred for sensitive scalps.

15. **Protein Treatments**:

Protein treatments are used to strengthen and repair damaged hair. After using a chemical relaxer or texturizer, protein treatments can help restore the hair's health and prevent breakage. It is essential to follow up with protein treatments to maintain the hair's strength.

16. **Heat Damage**:

Heat damage occurs when excessive heat is applied to the hair, causing the proteins in the hair to break

down and weaken. Heat damage can result from using hot styling tools or improperly applying a relaxer or texturizer. It is crucial to use heat protectants and avoid excessive heat to prevent damage.

17. **Stretching**:

Stretching refers to the process of extending the time between relaxer applications. Stretching relaxer touch-ups can help reduce the risk of over-processing and damage to the hair. It is important to monitor the hair's growth and texture to determine the best time for a touch-up.

18. **Moisture Balance**:

Maintaining a proper moisture balance is essential for healthy hair. Chemical relaxers and texturizers can strip the hair of its natural oils, leading to dryness and breakage. It is important to use moisturizing products and treatments to keep the hair hydrated and nourished.

19. **Proper Application**:

Proper application of relaxers and texturizers is crucial to achieving desired results without causing damage. It is essential to follow the manufacturer's instructions, conduct a strand test, and protect the scalp and hairline during the application process.

20. **Patch Test**:

A patch test is a small application of a product on a small area of the skin to test for any allergic reactions or sensitivities. Before applying a relaxer or texturizer, it is important to conduct a patch test to ensure that the client does not have any adverse reactions to the product.

21. **Consultation**:

Consultation is a vital step in the hair care process. Before applying a relaxer or texturizer, it is essential to consult with the client to understand their hair history, goals, and concerns. A thorough consultation can help determine the best course of action for the client's hair.

22. **Regrowth**:

Regrowth refers to the new growth of hair that appears at the roots after a relaxer or texturizer application. It is important to monitor regrowth to determine when a touch-up is needed. Properly managing regrowth can help maintain the overall health and appearance of the hair.

23. **pH Balance**:

pH balance refers to the acidity or alkalinity of a product. The pH balance of a relaxer or texturizer can impact how well it works on the hair. It is important to use products with a balanced pH to minimize damage and achieve optimal results.

24. **Protective Styles**:

Protective styles are hairstyles that help protect the hair from damage and breakage. After applying a relaxer or texturizer, it is beneficial to wear protective styles like braids, twists, or buns to minimize manipulation and maintain the hair's health.

25. **Detangling**:

Detangling is the process of removing knots and tangles from the hair. Proper detangling techniques are essential for maintaining healthy hair, especially after applying a relaxer or texturizer. It is important to use a wide-tooth comb or fingers to gently detangle the hair to prevent breakage.

26. **Scalp Health**:

Scalp health is crucial for overall hair health. Chemical relaxers and texturizers can be harsh on the scalp, leading to dryness, irritation, and even burns. It is essential to maintain a healthy scalp by using soothing treatments and avoiding excessive scratching or rubbing.

27. **Proper Aftercare**:

Proper aftercare is essential for maintaining the results of a relaxer or texturizer. It is important to use moisturizing shampoos and conditioners, protein treatments, and heat protectants to keep the hair healthy and strong. Consistent aftercare can help prolong the effects of the chemical treatment.

28. **Hair Analysis**:

Hair analysis involves assessing the hair's condition, texture, porosity, and other characteristics to determine the best course of action for treatment. Before applying a relaxer or texturizer, it is important to conduct a thorough hair analysis to tailor the treatment to the client's specific needs.

29. **Client Education**:

Client education is a key component of the Certified Specialist Programme in Afro Hair Care. It is essential to educate clients on the effects of chemical relaxers and texturizers, proper maintenance techniques, and how to care for their hair at home. Empowering clients with knowledge can help them make informed decisions about their hair care.

30. **Challenges**:

There are several challenges associated with chemical relaxers and texturizers. These challenges include over-processing, breakage, scalp irritation, and damage to the hair. Hair care professionals must be aware of these challenges and take steps to minimize risks and protect the hair during chemical treatments.

By mastering the key terms and vocabulary related to Chemical Relaxers and Texturizers, hair care professionals can provide effective and safe treatments for Afro-textured hair. Understanding these concepts is essential for achieving optimal results and maintaining the health and beauty of the hair.