



CURLY HORSE COUNTRY

Your Curly Horse Resource

Unique Beauty, Unbeatable Trust



Curly Mane Care - My American Curly Horse

Matted curls, Rub outs and Frizzy dos: *Tips to help!*

We all agree that one of the most wonderful things about our Curlies is their low maintenance & ease in keeping. But there is one thing that isn't so easy and that is caring for a curly's spiral mane. Many find it so frustrating, they do nothing. Just as we have adapted to the peculiar appearance of their curly coats, we have also grown very accustomed to seeing curlies with manes in disarray, half shed out, matted curls and frizzy dos. It's normal, it's natural, right? Well, I used to think so until I started experimenting with my gelding's manes to find a solution! =]

STEP ONE: Eliminating the rub outs:

My first experiment began with trying to answer the question, 'why do some Curlies 'rub' their manes out? I felt something **must** be triggering that response. I took a closer look at the skin under the mane and found white, flaky gunk. Why some curlies, but not all? I believe some curlies have an oilier skin and as their mane grows thick in the winter, an underlying bacteria begins to form causing an itching response as warm weather approaches. It would also make sense that as they rubbed out the hair, the fungus/bacteria would go dormant as the skin became exposed to air & sun. I decided to take a pro-active approach to this and see if I could keep my horse's manes & tails clean all winter and just maybe prevent the loss of those curly locks come spring.

I found a product called Dermal-aid. (which is an antifungal but has since been discontinued - so other owners have told me that [Equiderma products](#) work just as well.) That I would apply periodically after a good spring bath with Alodine or another type of medicated antifungal shampoo.

By mid-summer, three of our four geldings went from 1 inch frizzy manes in October to 14 inches of gorgeous, thick spiral curls! (pictures of before and after below) Our extreme gelding, Zig also had more hair than in past years. Enough tail to swat flies and about 3 inches of curls compared to none in past years. The horses that benefit the most are the ones that literally 'rub' out their manes verses a random 'falling out' that takes place with some extreme curls. In those cases we could be dealing with a genetic component and not an environmental one.

Here is a picture of Reese before any treatments. Although he would keep a few long strands, he would rub out 85% of it.
Photo taken October 05 - [click on photo for closeup view.](#)



Reese's Gorgeous Mane AFTER surviving the normal Summer rubouts! (exactly 1 year later!)



In April 2007 I ended up trimming Reese's mane a bit...maybe 2-3 inches. The ends had frizzed quite a bit due to the long winter and inability to keep oil on those ends -- basically the oil froze on those ends. I realized that a long mane is a bit more work than a nice short one! lol. Ideally, I would say 10-12 inches is the best length for a curly mane....any longer and you risk breakage and losing the quality of the overall appearance.

Here are the DON'Ts:

1. Never comb or brush your Curlies mane! You will create frizz that will stretch the hair and damage the natural curl. It does not spring back. A Big No-No!
2. Never use show sheen or any silicone based product on your curlies mane/tail. This will dry out the hair, cause breakage, mattes and tangles.
3. Do not *over* shampoo your horse's mane. This will dry your curlies mane out quickly. If you need to bath often for a show, use a baby shampoo as a gentle cleanser mixed with a bit of hair oil. Beta iodine will also dry out your horses' manes, so I only use this once a year on my horses.

So in summary: Here are the DOs:

1. Treat your horse's mane every 3-4 weeks with an antifungal product such as Dermal Aid during the winter months to maintain healthy skin and proper hair growth. Dermal aid has an oily base to it and does not dry out your horse's mane.
2. Bathe your horse each spring using a beta iodine scrub to remove any winter scruff from body, mane & tail.
3. Weekly treatments of hair oil to the mane, such as jojoba to condition and maintain the corkscrew curls, adding soft & silky feel while preventing tangles and mattes. Just spritz it in the mane, rub it in thoroughly and let it go!
4. Trim off any matted curls at the base of the neck to encourage healthy re-growth.
5. When necessary, don't be afraid to trim your horses' **entire** mane back to 1 inch to allow a fresh new growth of even curls. I just use scissors or clippers. I know this is hard but trust me; it does grow back and even prettier than before! Long manes are pretty but if they are frizzy, dry and matted, it only takes away from the beauty of your curly horse.

Note: One of the most unique things about a curly is their mane and in the summer this is one attribute that sets them apart from other breeds. We have sort of grown accustomed to matted, tangled and rubbed out manes but non-curly people find it grubby and messy. If we are in the public eye, I think it should work a bit on the presentation of our horses. Until now, I have found this very hard to do, but hopefully through this article this may help more of us to have nicer looking manes as we proudly present them in public.

STEP TWO: Maintaining those gorgeous curls! - Very important!

Once your curly has about 5 inches of growth, you need to condition the mane to KEEP those curls healthy and prevent breakage and mattes. It's important to **condition** the mane using **natural hair oils**, such as Sweet almond oil. Never comb the curls, only use your fingers! PREVENTING mattes is the best way to keep your horse's beautiful mane. But if you do see some curls beginning to matt over time, my advice is to snip those individual dreads right off at the base of the neck to allow for healthy re-growth. (using a razor comb works best so there are no blunt edges and that section blends in with the rest of the mane.) I've noticed that some manes matt more easily than others, for instance our gelding Billy has coarse spiral curls whereas Reese's mane is softer and absorbs the oil much easier. So depending on what type of hair your curly has, you may need to oil more frequently. This sounds like a lot of work, but truly just a few minutes each week can make all the difference in maintaining those spectacular curls! No more frizzy mops and funny looks! Your Curly will be come the envy of the neighborhood!

I have focused on the Manes in this article and thought Tails should also be mentioned. I have treated my geldings tails as well as their manes with great success. Of my 3 geldings, Reese does not shed his tail at all, so he just gets his iodine bath in the spring to clean his tail and that's all I do. Chy always sheds the top of his tail and he will rub it on everything til it's a huge fluff ball and then it slowly falls out. So I treat the top of his tail and he never rubs it out anymore. This past year, I only treated him once and he kept it in all year again. Now Zig — he is our extreme curly. I treated his tail and I got rather shocking results the first year....see below: [CLICK PHOTO TO ENLARGE](#).



Note on the left is an old photo of Zig taken in January of 05. I treated him the following winter and the right photo is the results by spring of 06. What a difference, eh?

*****Here is what I think happens to the tail. If you have a curly with sparse tail hair, I think the more it is exposed to the elements the tougher the skin becomes, almost like elephant skin. As a result, the hair can not get grow. By using Dermal Aid, (or another antifungal product) this not only rids the skin of anything unhealthy, but it also softens the skin as well. I noticed when treating Zig that for about 5 days, his skin was shedding – it was flaking and gross. But after it quit shedding it was like new skin underneath. If we can get the skin healthy, I do believe the hair CAN grow. Due to expense, I didn't treat Zig the following year and although he still shed the TOP of his tail, he is keeping the rest of it!! It is still short, but healthy!!!**

I also treated an extreme curly mare, Katy - who had a bare tail with bald patches everywhere. The same thing happened....she shed her old dead skin after a week of treatments and within 2 weeks, the bald patches grew in. I don't know if she will ever have a full mane and tail, but if we can keep the tail protected so it is not bothered by flies, I am sure the horses are happier.

Here is a video demo of my process

Q & A on Curly Mane Article

Q: What antifungal treatment is best?

A: I used Dermal Aid however it is now discontinued. Try [Equiderma Products](#). Curly Owners are raving about these products.

Q: Where can I buy Hair oils?

A: I buy my oils from [Herbal Remedies](#) online. I included the direct links to the products below.

[Sweet Almond Oil](#) and [Jojoba Oil](#)

Q: What kinds of oils are best?

A: If you want to keep it as inexpensive as possible, buy the [16 oz of Jojoba](#) and [16 oz of Sweet almond oil](#), mix 1/2 and 1/2 and add a little water. Both are great hair oils and are affordable.

Q: How do you apply the oil? With a spray bottle?

A: Yes, for the oils I purchased a small [spray bottle](#) at Walmart. They are usually found back by the hair products. I found as the mane gets longer, the oil spreads nicely if the mane is just a tiny bit damp.

Q: When should I start and how often do I do treatments of the Antifungal of my choice? Year around?

A: I started in October, which is best! I treated my horses every 3 weeks during the really cold months. (I did not start the hair oil treatments until they had significant growth, like 5 inches, which wasn't until the spring. Usually by then, you can start to see the mane begin to matt or frizz and the oils help to moisturize and maintain those amazing curls.) By spring, my antifungal treatments were more often because as the weather warmed, I noticed more white flakey skin coming more frequently. The best advice I can tell you is to keep an eye on the skin of the mane and always make sure it looks healthy and prevent any bacteria or fungus from developing. This keeps the skin clean and healthy for regrowth and also prevents rubbing. I treated Prairie Espresso Dream's (AKA Reese) mane all summer.as needed with incredible results. (see photo attached, taken in Sept 06)

Q: How about the hair oil treatments? How often?

A: Once my geldings have a good mane, I started spritzing on the oil about once a week. It made a world of difference in preventing matts and the frizzies. Just remember, DO NOT apply the oil in the heat of the day. The oil will burn the hair and only make it more frizzy. I always applied oils at sunset to allow absorption during the nite.

Q: In order to start, do you suggest that we cut the mane and start fresh?

A: Yes, if your horse has matts, frizz and an overall unhealthy mane I suggest cutting it completely down. If the mane is just a bit frizzy, try applying oil and the dermal aid treatments and see if you can revitalize some curl. If not, I would cut it off to about 1 inch and start over.

Q: I am afraid to cut it! How long does it take for the mane to grow back?

A: With 3 of my geldings, their manes grew about 12 inches over the course of the year. Our extreme curly gelding Zig was more like 5 inches. In most cases, your horse's manes will come back even curlier than before. Some horses' manes will come back with magnificent curls, while others will start out wispy but with length and weight, spiral into soft curls later.

Q: Does this work on extreme or bald curlies?

A: To some degree, but not as well. Simply because what we are focusing on here is the regrowth of hair that for whatever reason our curlies have rubbed out. Not hair that falls out on it's own or on skin that won't grow hair. Often times we have found on skin that has grown like elephant skin that is super tough can grow hair if it is softened and the dead skin lofts away. The old product Dermal aid did a great job of that, but I don't know if the Equiderma products would do the same. It is worth a try. If you find something that works, please let me know. I'd love to add it to this page. See the [extreme coat care](#) page for nutrition aids to helping the bald curly grow hair. Some owners have had great success.

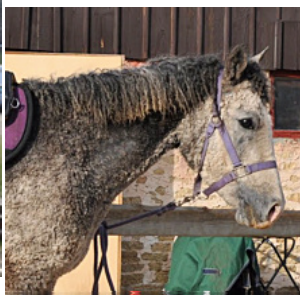
Q: Do you also treat the tails?

A: Yes, but only the top where it tends to shed. All my geldings kept hair on the top of their tails this year. Chy's and Billy's were like puff balls at the top! I don't apply oil to the tails, simply because it is just too costly, but you can if you want.

Q: My horse has very coarse curls, do you suggest more oil treatments?

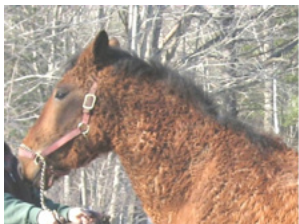
A: yes, Billy's mane is very coarse and I find it matts very easily because it dries out faster and breaks easy. So you will have to moisturize more often with oil, NEVER, ever use human hair conditioner or gels - this will only coat the hair and block the pores..making the hair heavy and prevent regrowth to the skin. Reese's mane is very fine and I find it easiest to maintain.

Your Testimonies!



by Blaine Hendrickson

I got Abby in Nov. so 4 months ago and started treating her mane right away. I decided not to trim it down cause I wanted it as long as possible before the Midwest horse fair. Well you can see from the second picture it's grown alot! I can get some of her forelock to that really grew.



We started with the antifungal and almond oil on this smooth coated gelding on the 28th of Feb. You can see a kind of "line" where the mane is dark (more dirt) and very white. This is the growth in that time period !! (about 2 inches?? maybe more?) I bought some of these 'beauty aids' for a few friends too I am so impressed with the results. I am doing ALL the horses-- on a pretty regular basis. We also own 2 very naked (from Erica Frei) and the one very naked is actually growing hair on his body where he has been totally bald for the time we have owned him. ~ Betsy, [Top O' the Hill Farm](#)

Before & after of Dream, I washed her twice since March 31 (when I adopted her) with Iodine shampoo. Then I treated both mane and tail. It took a long time for her "itchies" to go away and stay away. Her mane doesn't turn into dreadlock. So far it twirls, but doesn't mat. It is very thick, so it is splitting down the middle with some laying on each side of her neck. When I first adopted her it was as though her mane was starting to grown out from being roached, so this is about 4" of new growth! The longest piece of her tail was at her hocks, and now the rest of her tail is at her hocks. Now I am treating with the other essential oils mixed in with Sweet Almond Oil. ~ Laurie Lee

Products To Buy



[Link to buy](#)

This is a great product for your Curly's FIRST spring bath. It not only gets rid of the itches but also conditions so the skin doesn't dry out. This will rid the skin of any harboring bacteria and grime in the manes and tails.



[Equiderma Products](#)

Curly owners are highly recommended these products.



[Link to Buy](#)

Sweet almond oil is also a nice light hair oil that I have used. Be sure to mix 50% water. You just want to keep the curls from matting and keep them soft which prevents tangles.

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