

THE ART AND CRAFT OF CORNROW BY DENISE SEMPLE

Tools: Wide Teeth Comb (for combing through), Tail comb (for parting), clips or hair bands for sectioning, grease/oil/cream (for moisturising), Adornments (optional)

The art of hair plaiting can be traced to Africa, the Egyptian elite; royalty, priest and high-ranking officials, wore braided wigs as a sign of their high social standing. These traditional African hairdressing practices have been passed onto generation after generation of Africans and survived wars, enslavement, and migration this workshop will look at one of the most popular plaiting techniques from ancient times still being used in modern African hairdressing – cornrowing.

In the past wearing cornrow styles was one way in which Africans enslaved in the USA, Caribbean and Europe could identify with African culture, however adults rarely wore their cornrowed hair publicly their cornrows were often concealed under scarves or wigs. The wearing and displaying of cornrow styles was considered only acceptable for children.

It wasn't until the 1970's that adults in the USA and UK began to wear cornrows as a fashion and cultural statement. A famous African American actress called Cicely Tyson stunned African Americans when she appeared on a popular talk show of the day wearing a stunning cornrow style. Her courage startled the nation and started a cornrowing craze children, women, and men wore their hair braided in cornrows, adding beads and other adornments.

Cornrows are an excellent way to keep your child's hair neat when going to school, doing sports; more elaborate adorned styles are also beautiful for special occasions. Cornrows are also an excellent choice as regular cornrowing and moisturising may assist healthy hair growth.

THE CRAFT OF CORNROWING

This workshop will be teaching one cornrow techniques which is known as "wrongside" cornrow.

Wrongside Cornrow

Uses an underhand plaiting technique to create a raised plait, which sits closely

along the scalp.

Rightside Cornrow or African Braid (aka French Plait) Uses an overhand plaiting motion to create a flat inverted plait which sits closely along the scalp.

PARTING

Parting your child's hair into rows and plaiting each row close to the scalp creates cornrow designs. Dependent on the size of the parting cornrows can look simple or intricate.

PROCESS OF PARTING

- Choose a cornrow style, e.g., pineapple (good for school, swimming)
- Comb through hair and part into sections for your chosen style. E.g., for the pineapple
- Make a centre parting from hairline to nape of neck secure left side
- Make a centre parting from the crown of the right side to just behind the right ear, you know have two sections secure each with a hair band.
- Repeat on the left side and secure with hair band, you should now have 4 triangular sections.
- Release one section; decide how small you want your cornrows to be, then divide the large triangle into smaller triangles. *Remember that the widest part of the triangle is at the hairline, and the point at the crown.
- Oil each section then begin to plait your cornrow

PROCESS OF CORNROWING

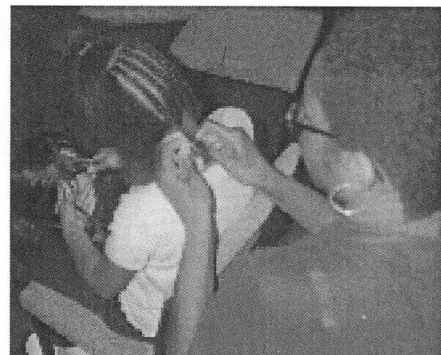
a. To cornrow parted section start from the front of the head, divided the hair into three small sections. (fig 1) the strands are numbered: Left = no.1, Middle = no.2, Right = no.3

b. Holding section 1 in the left hand between your thumb, index and middle finger, and sections 2 and 3 in the right hand between thumb index and middle finger we are ready to begin cornrow plaiting. (fig 1)

c. Using the index finger on your right hand release section 2, then pass index finger underneath the same section to 'hook' up and bring section 1 to the right hand. The left hand is now holding section 2; the right hand is holding section 1 & 3 (fig 2).

d. Release section 1 in your right hand, using your left index finger pass underneath the same section to 'hook' up and bring section 3 to the left hand, also pick up additional pieces of hair on the outside. The right hand is left holding section 1 only whilst the left hand holds sections 2 & 3 (fig 3)

e. Release section 3 in your left hand,

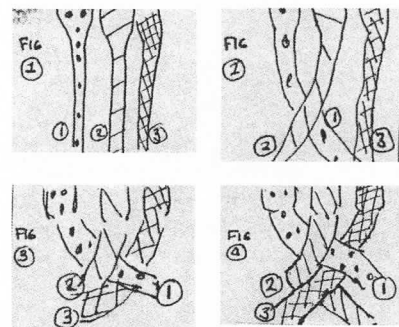


“Cornrows are an excellent way to keep your child's hair neat when going to school, doing sports;”

using your right index finger go beneath the same section using your finger as a hook take up section 2 plus some additional piece of hair to the right hand joining section 1. The left hand is left holding section 3 only (fig 4)

f. Repeat this process until you have completed the entire length of the cornrowed plait close to the scalp.

g. Plait the hair away from the scalp to the ends then roll the ends between you index finger and thumb to create a tidy finish.



LOCKS BY MONA WILLIAMS

My name is Mona and I run a natural hair care service called Crowning Glory. I've been doing this now for three years I specialise in starting locks and maintaining them.

Interviewer: Mona can you give us a brief definition of what hair locking is.

Mona: Hair locking is when the hair curls around by itself and tangles. It's permanent, it doesn't come out the only way you can change the style is just to cut the locks off.

Mona: The Jamaican Rastafarians in the last century, have been wearing, their hair locked, and thanks to them we still