



**NifNaks**

## Dread Installation Steps, Tips, & Care

### Can I install dreads myself or will I need help?

If you are experienced at braiding your own hair, you might be able to install them yourself in 4-5 hours. You will need two mirrors so that you can see the back of your head.

It is easier and more enjoyable to have a friend help—especially with a good movie or two! Any friend will do, but ideally they should know how to do a basic braid. With the help of a friend, installing a full head of dreads can take as little as three hours.

If you can't find a friend to help, some hair salons may be able to help (call first). Also, ethnic hair supply shops often carry advertisements for people who will braid from home - they often do a good job and are much cheaper than salons.

### Can I wash my hair with wool dreads in?

You can wash your hair, or not, with wool dreads—beware wool dreads are heavy when wet!

The recommended method is mild shampoo mixed in warm water poured over your scalp once a week. However, I cheat occasionally and simply do it under the shower. Avoid using too much shampoo and rinse very thoroughly to avoid leaving soap on your scalp.

If you decide not to wash your hair, I'd recommend washing your scalp every 2-3 days with a solution of water and tea tree oil (don't use too much oil, it's strong stuff and it will sting).

### Should I dye my hair to match the dreads?

You can dye your hair the same color as the extensions to make it blend in. Some folks, however, prefer the look of the criss-cross/lattice effect—the choice is yours. :)

### Preinstallation and sectioning

One of the most important things to do when putting in braids is section your hair off neatly. Not only will sectioning make your braids look better, but it will also lessen the amount of stray hair. Stray strands can get caught in braids and pull and hurt.

- Shampoo your hair before installing as this will help create secure braids.
- Use clips/barrettes to hold excess hair out of the way while sectioning/installing
- Ideally you should section off your entire head before installing your dreads; however, it is possible to piecemeal section and install.
- Start from the nape of the neck, use a comb (preferably a rat-tail comb) to make a clean row of hair. If you are installing alone, you may find starting at the front easier.
- Working along each row, section off approximately 1x1 inch chunks of hair. You can use a rubber band to hold your hair, but remove it before installing the dreads.
- You can section in a grid fashion or stagger the sections in a 'brickwork' style. If you have fine hair, the 'brickwork' style is better as less of your scalp shows through.



### 3-way plait method of installing double-ended dreads

The DIY method of dread installation is quite simple. A basic braid uses 3 strands: two of these strands are your hair and the remaining strand is one half of the double-ended dread.

1. Separate one of your sectioned off chunks of hair 2 equal pieces.
2. Place the middle of the double ended dread between the two pieces of hair and pin down the dread that will not be braided in for security (letting the other dread fall between the separated hair).
3. Take the separated pieces of hair and cross them over the dread in the middle of the section to secure the dread.
4. Begin braiding with the two hair sections, and the one end of the dread until you run out of hair.
5. Tie off with an elastic and tuck any unbraided hair into the elastic.
6. I like to add an extra rubber band to the base for an extra secure hold that will last for weeks. However, this step is completely unnecessary—especially if you are only installing for a few days.
7. One braid down! Now for to the next hair section.

### After Care Cleaning & Reinstalling

When you remove your dreads, you can wash them in tepid water with a bit of soap. You can also wash them alone in the washing machine using the hand-wash or the wool setting in cold water.

Make sure you put the dreads in a lingerie bag or in a pillowcase before starting the machine. When they are clean, hang them to dry.

After you have washed and dried them, they are ready to be used again. Even better, you can attach them to hair elastics to use as falls!

### Controlling “Fuzzies” & “Pills”

After prolonged use, re-felting may be needed to tone down the “fuzzies” on your dreads (like a new wool rug).

You can control these fuzzies, by rolling the offending dreads between the palms of your hands with a little water. Run your fingers (gently) through the dreads to keep them separated and untangled.

If your “fuzzies” mature into “pills” you easily de-pill the dreads by the following:

Wear (new) heavy-duty rubber dishwashing gloves, and run each dread through your gloved hands. The friction from the rubber is just enough not to damage the dread, but just enough to remove the wool pills and excess fuzz.

Now you have spruced-up, happy dreads! Yay!

