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We're In Awe Of This Gorgeous Dancer's Beauty Tricks

By: Taylor Bryant



PHOTO BY STEVEN TUMON GRAY.

In our book, dancers are among the select few who somehow manage to look — how do we put this modestly — perfect. Their poise, grace, and the fact that they can leap across a stage while looking flawless speak to us.

Just like their art itself, looking dazzling takes hard work. So, we decided to pick the brain of a modern dancer from one of our favorite companies, Ailey II, to see how she does it. When it comes to the idea of what a typical performer looks like, Aubree Brown breaks the mold. She first caught our eyes with her faux-hawk, but her tips and tricks reach far beyond her natural locks. Read on for her beauty secrets.

Interested in seeing Aubree in action? You can catch her on the Ailey II world tour (check [here](#) for cities) and during the company's New York season at the Joyce Theater, from March 17 to 22.

Are you a minimalist or a makeup maven?

“As dancers, we have to wear base makeup all the time. So, in order for [my] skin to stay fresh, rejuvenated, and clean, I try to avoid wearing makeup before rehearsals unless I really, really have to, or I’m going out. I like to give my face a break, because I have really sensitive skin.”

How do you take care of your skin when you’re on tour and off?

“I try not to use a cleanser daily. Every other day, I try to use a face scrub, and once a week I’ll do a [mask from Neutrogena](#). For a moisturizer, I just started using [Ambi](#). My mom also just introduced me to [Shea-butter black soap](#), which is really good for your skin... Actually, that’s good for your whole body.

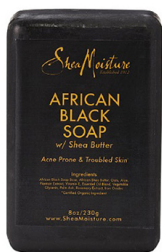
“I usually keep [my routine] the same. It’s good to be consistent with your routine, so you don’t throw your skin out of whack. I try not to [switch things up] too often, because my skin is so sensitive. I don’t want to do more damage.”

Do you have a go-to stage-makeup product?

“I can’t live without a red lipstick. I love red. My favorite is [from] [Sephora Collection](#).”

Do you have an artist who does your makeup before every show?

“Oh, no, I wish. *(laughs)* We do our own makeup. The choreographers tell us if we need to do something as far as a smoky eye or a dramatic change, but usually it stays the same. So, just the natural foundation, the neutral eyeshadow, maybe a gold or a bronze — some people use a little silver, depending on their complexion. Just keeping it natural, but still noticeable onstage. You have to make your makeup more dramatic than you would on a daily basis...sometimes we’ll add eyelashes or heavier eyeliner.”



Taking off all of that makeup must be a pain. Do you use makeup wipes or a heavy-duty remover of some kind?

“I use baby wipes, actually. I tried makeup wipes, and some of them can be really strong and have burned my face... Sometimes, I might put some [Vaseline](#) on the baby wipes, which helps a lot... I like to keep it simple — simple is always better.”

Let’s talk hair. We’re really into the faux-hawk you have going on. Do you just pin it or is it cut into that shape?

SheaMoisture African Black Soap, \$4.99, available at [Ulta](#); Sephora Collection Rouge Cream Lipstick in The Red, available at [Sephora](#).

“I style it that way. It’s become my signature hairstyle, apparently. *(laughs)* Ever since I brought it out last year, everybody wants it. I started looking on YouTube at these different videos of natural-haired girls, and I came across the faux-hawk, and I said, 'Now, that’s me. That goes with my personality and my style: edgy.' It was the best decision ever.”

Why did you decide to go natural?

“When I was in school I had relaxed hair, and that’s when I realized I had to go natural. Putting so much pressure on your hair, and pulling it into high buns or the tight, pulled-back classic hairstyles — it was literally ripping my hair out. It wasn’t healthy at all. And, putting all of these different products in it on top of the chemicals was making it a lot worse. One day, I was just like, 'I can’t do it anymore.' My natural-hair inspiration was Solange (as well as my fashion inspiration). When I saw how comfortable and great she looked with her natural hair, and embracing it, I thought, 'Well, why not do that?’”

How long have you been natural? And, what was your natural-hair journey like?

“Maybe, two-and-a-half years. I used to be very picky with my hair, and I hated how short it was. In order for me to avoid seeing it in the transitional phase, I would put in weaves and hair extensions. My hair would be braided underneath, and then when [it] grew out to a length I was comfortable with, I just chopped off the rest of the damaged ends. The transitional period is NOT a period you want to see.

“In the beginning, it’s scary because you don’t know how it’s going to turn out. You see all of these girls with curly hair, and you’re like, 'I want my hair to be like hers,' but you just have to be comfortable with it, and you’ll be fine.”

What’s your favorite part about being natural, and what’s the hardest part?

“I love the versatility of my hair now. You’d be surprised: I actually have six different curl patterns on my head. It’s just amazing how many styles you can achieve with it... I can put it in a high puff, I can pin it toward the front, or just wash it and go. I’ve tried so many things, and I could never do that with my hair being relaxed before.

“I don’t really have much of a downside. In the beginning, getting used to it, managing it, and finding the right products is extremely hard, because you want to try out all these different things you see on TV. But, once you find your products, just stick to them. Because, the amount of money you’ll end up spending at the beauty salon can get to be crazy.”

What are some of your favorite hair-care brands?

“I love the **Crème of Nature Argan Oil** products; I have [the] shampoo and conditioner. And, I just got into this thing called co-washing. With natural hair, you don’t want to shampoo too much, because, I was told, it can dry your hair out. So, instead of shampooing every time you wash your hair, you can do a co-wash. I use **As I Am CoWash**. You just put that in your hair, rinse it out, and keep it going.”

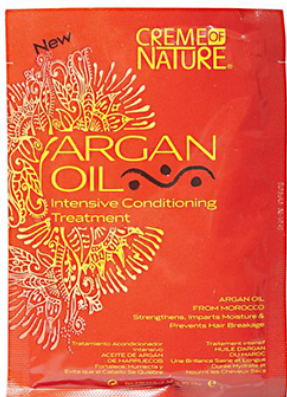
In other modern-dance companies, you usually see more sleek, pulled-back hair. Do you feel like you have more freedom at Alvin Ailey?

“That’s usually the classic look, yeah, and I definitely get more freedom. In some of the pieces, like Mr. Ailey’s masterpiece *Revelations*, we have to wear the tight, pulled-back buns — but I figured out how to do it my way with French twists. I kind of fake people out; they can never understand how I can get all of my thick hair into a tight bun.”

What's the hardest part of keeping up with your beauty look as a dancer?

“I think maintaining fresh skin is the hardest part, because we perform so much and we’re constantly packing on makeup...not even just on your face, but also your whole body. We get bruised, we get scratched, we get 'marley burns' [from the floor].”

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Crème of Nature Intensive Conditioning Treatment, \$1.59, available at [Sally Beauty](#); As I Am Coconut CoWash, \$8, available at [As I Am](#).