

RELATED ●

Yes, These Anti-Frizz Products Actually Work

Is Castor Oil the Secret to Hair Growth?



Courtesy of Cécred; Sisley Paris

[BEAUTY](#) > [HAIRSTYLES & HAIRCUTS](#)

Move Over Serums—Hair Balms Might Be the Secret to Glossy, Healthy Strands

From frizz control to nourishment, these hybrid formulas do it all.

BY [NERISHA PENROSE](#) PUBLISHED: APR 30, 2026



The hair world is teeming with new—or newly discovered—products designed to make styling, length retention, and maintenance a breeze...to the point where it can get confusing. Scroll on the internet, and you'll be even more confused: Are we supposed to be using hair serums over oils? Can these hair growth supplements

truly deliver results? What exactly is a hair balm?

Like a lip balm, hair balm offers similar benefits—sort of. “A hair balm is a moisturizing styling product with a light to medium hold that hydrates, adds shine, and helps to reduce frizz. It is best to start with a small, dime-sized amount and rub the balm between the palms to warm it up. It can be used on damp or dry hair,” explains Dr. Debbie Palmer, an author, board-certified dermatologist, and co-founder of Dermatology Associates of New York. Hair balms are typically thicker in texture than creams or lotions, so it’s important to emulsify the product in your hands first. Dr. Ryan B. Turner—a fellow New York-based board-certified dermatologist who specializes in cosmetic dermatology, general dermatology, surgical dermatology, and laser surgery—suggests using it “sparingly on dry hair to control frizz or define ends” and to “focus on the mid-length of the hair and ends to avoid weighing down roots.”

ELLE Editors’ Favorite Hair Balms of 2026

- **The ELLE Editor Favorite: Cécred Hair & Scalp Balm, \$36**
- **The Damage Savior: Redken Acidic Bonding Concentrate Hair Bandage Balm, \$46**
- **The Curly-Hair Smoother: Camille Rose Pure Batana Oil Honduran Miracle Balm, \$16**

Added benefits include nourishing ingredients such as olive oil, jojoba oil, and coconut oil, which Dr. Palmer says to look for when shopping for a hair balm. Dr. Turner agrees, adding that humectants like glycerin or emollients like mango butter help condition dry hair. However, it’s wise to “avoid overly heavy waxes if hair is fine or prone to scalp buildup,” Turner says.

If your hair feels or looks particularly dry between styles, or simply needs some extra, non-stiff smoothing, try incorporating a hair balm into your routine. This new shift doesn’t have to scare you—especially when we’ve compiled a list of the seven

best hair balms experts and customers constantly rave about. Shop our editor-approved picks below.

BEST OVERALL

Cécred Hair & Scalp Balm



\$36

ULTA BEAUTY

Understanding Cécred’s offerings comes down to color—the core gray line focuses on hydration, while the blue one expands that mission by emphasizing scalp health and hair nourishment. This hair balm was designed to fortify strands, whether in protective styles or out, using a host of strengthening ingredients, including an oil blend, honey, and Cécred’s own soothing PhytoFerment (a herb blend) complex.

Key ingredients: Honey, peppermint oil, baobab oil, moringa oil, black seed oil, PhytoFerment

Size: 4.0 fl oz

An ELLE editor says: “My problem is that I get a protective style installed and forget about nourishing my hair in the weeks my hair is hidden. When I apply this balm to my scalp and strands, it leaves my hair feeling soft and manageable and soothes any soreness from excessive itching.—Nerisha Penrose, beauty commerce editor

BEST FOR SPLIT ENDS

Redken Acidic Bonding Concentrate Hair Bandage Balm



\$46

ULTA BEAUTY

ALSO CONSIDER

\$46

AMAZON

We all love a sleek look, but sometimes, constant heat styling leads to split ends. Redken's solution is the entire Acidic Bonding line, with one of its stars being this split ends repair balm. Featuring a creamy, lightweight texture, it rubs onto the shaft without weighing it down and boosts shine in the process.

Key ingredients: Bonding Care Complex

Size: 2.5 fl oz

A reviewer says: "I've only used this product a couple of times since purchasing it but I can tell a noticeable difference each time I use it. It makes the ends of my hair look and feel healthier. You truly only need a small amount for fine hair, as it is a little thick."

BEST FOR EVERYDAY USE

Camille Rose Pure Batana Oil Honduran Miracle Balm



\$16

TARGET

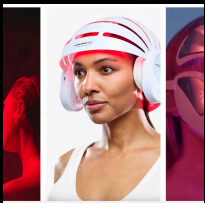
Batana oil was a craze on the interwebs for much of 2025, but its benefits far outlasted the hype once it died down. Camille Rose whipped together a smooth, buttery balm that melts with ease on your hands and hair shafts to condition and smooth frizzy, dry hair.

Key ingredients: Batana oil, shea butter, cocoa butter, sweet almond oil

Size: 4 fl oz

An ELLE editor says: “I love applying this to my damp hair post-wash because of the softness it imparts. I use this as part of my LCO method—where I use a leave-in cream and oil to lock in moisture. While not a traditional oil, this balm does melt into one that seals everything in.”—NP

What to Read Next



The Best Red Light Therapy Tools for Every Need



The Best Fig Perfumes for Fruity Scent Haters



8 Best Sunscreen Perfumes That Smell Like Summer



Parfums de Marly's New Fragrance Is a Joyride



These Grapefruit Perfumes Are Perfect for Spring



Kendall Jenner's Met Gala Lip Stain Is Only \$11

BEST FOR STYLING

The Doux Curl Defining Cream & Pomade



\$15

AMAZON

If your twist-outs could use a little more *oomph*, this balm gives your curls the juiciest texture. Creamier than most balms on this list, the formula hydrates strands with goji berry and light oils, delivering defined, soft, non-greasy curls.

Key ingredients: Goji berry, coconut oil, sweet almond oil

Size: 16 fl oz

A reviewer says: *“I love my curls and I want to do wash and go’s this summer, and this product just changed the game for me! I have 4a and 4c hair, and honey, this product gave me length, moisture, and texture to my curls. Love this product, you will not regret buying this product. Plus, you CANNOT BEAT THIS PRICE. Period.”*

BEST FOR VOLUMIZED ROOTS

Act + Acre Styling Paste

**\$38****DERMSTORE**

Here's a paste that lets you gently mold your hair in place without worrying about flaky residue or stiff, crunchy strands, while taming frizz. It dries matte, in case a super glossy finish isn't your jam.

Key ingredients: Glycerin, rosemary leaf extract

Size: 1.8 fl oz

A reviewer says: *"Holds nicely without looking unnatural and doesn't leave residue. I like this a lot. A little goes a long way!"*

BEST FOR SEALING MOISTURE

Charlotte Mensah Manketti Oil Pomade



\$60

DERMSTORE

A little goes a long way with this pomade, which is composed of conditioning agents like shea butter and manketti oil. Define your styles or smooth flyaways

with just a small amount rubbed in your hands.

Key ingredients: Manketti oil, shea butter

Size: 6.76 fl oz

An ELLE editor says: “I received this in a gift bag and used it up so much in the first few weeks, I had to re-up. As someone with thick, curly hair, I thought I needed a ton of product to feel its effects, but once massaged into my scalp and strands, it melts all over, priming my hair for whatever braids or twists are up next.”—NP

BEST FOR REPAIR

Sisley-Paris Hair Rituel Restructuring Nourishing Balm



\$150

NORDSTROM

ALSO CONSIDER

\$136

AMAZON

\$150

BLOOMINGDALE'S

The beauty of this balm lies in its versatility: The balm-to-oil texture helps restore, revive, and rebuild weakened hair shafts. Even better, it can be used however you please, whether as an overnight hair treatment, a wash-day mask, or a weekly touch-up.

Key ingredients: Ceramides, shea oil, macadamia oil, babassu oil, moringa oil

Size: 4.41 fl oz

A reviewer says: *“High-end, quality ingredients, super soft, luscious hair...well worth the investment. I used this pre-wash mask as an overnight mask, and*