

Gelling Hair Instructions

Hair Preparation:

- 1) Completely wet the swimmer's hair. **Smooth and brush the hair into a very tight ponytail** in the middle of the back of the head, using the ears as your line at the back of the head, unless the coach has given different instructions for the bun location. Make sure that all the hair is very flat and smooth, including under the ponytail. Use a water spritzer to help manage loose ends, as this will allow for a better end result and a shinier finish.
- 2) Split the ponytail in half and make two braids, braiding tightly. If the hair is particularly long or thick, three or even four braids may be necessary. Wind the braids around the ponytail into a tight, symmetrical bun in the middle of the back of the head, securing well with bobby pins as you wind. Make sure all loose ends are pinned and tucked into the bun. Hair pins are better to use than bobby pins for securing the braids into a bun.
- 3) If the swimmer has loose hair, bangs or short pieces that do not fit into the ponytail, use a spider comb to secure these hairs before beginning the gelling process. A bottle of hairdressing spray gel may help to smooth hair and hold down the loose ends before applying gelatin.

Gel Preparation/Application:

- 1) In a mug or small container, mix 3-4 packages of food gelatin Knox with ¼ cup boiling water or 3 table spoons of unflavored from bulk food supplies and 1/3 cup boiling water. Stir gently (to avoid air bubbles), with fork or small whisk until smooth, with no lumps. If there are any lumps, strain through a small sieve. Let the strained gel sit about 20 seconds, and skim carefully, any bubbles that rise to the top. When done, the gel should be the colour, clarity and texture of honey. If it is too thick or thickens during application, add a touch of hot water as needed. Knox Gelatin is available in the baking/preserves section of most grocery stores or in the bulk food bins. It can be stored from year to year in tightly lidded dry plastic containers.
- 2) Apply gelatin to hair with a flat hair salon colouring dye brush, available at beauty supply stores or some dollar stores. Make each stroke long and consistent, starting at the top of the head from front to back, then doing one side, and then the other side, using even strokes. Avoid putting the gel on too thick, or putting on a second coat too soon after the first. This may result in bubbling or the gel turning white. Gel is difficult to get out of clothing and can be a bit messy to work with, so please make sure to have a towel on the swimmer's shoulders, and a warm wet facecloth on hand to catch any drips.
- 3) Although one coat of gelatin if applied well will hold up through warm-up and the routine, the ideal, if time permits is to have two coats applied, with the first coat being blown dry with a hair dryer for about 10 minutes before applying the second coat. Make sure that headpieces are carefully applied before the first coat is completely dry, to ensure that the bobby pins can get through the gel. Touch ups may be required after the headpieces are on. Gelatin needs time to completely dry before entering the water. Approximately ½ hour. You can use a hair dryer on cool to speed the drying process.
- 4) To get the gel out of your hair – in a shower use hot water and shampoo, until all lumps are gone. Loose hair comes out easily when removing gel from your hair. Do not panic if you

feel like there is a lot of hair coming out when washing out the gel. This is not uncommon. Use conditioner as normal. Your hair will feel extra smooth after the gel is washed out.