

# THE HAIRDO/AFRO

**M**uhammad Ali had one. Aretha Franklin wore one, too. And it was the trademark of The Jackson Five. The Afro was the most iconic hairdo of the '70s. It was a symbol of naturalness, disco culture and racial pride. In the '70s, a great debate among African-Americans broke loose about whether to abandon their heritage and straighten their hair or wear it as natural and kinky as possible. At that time a lot of African-Americans used hair products to get their hair to fit the "white" beauty standard—long, shiny and straight. But the civil rights movement brought a renewed sense of identity to African-American culture and saw musicians such as Nina Simone speaking up about this issue in songs, declaring that she was more than her hair. People's perception of the Afro took a turn when Barbra Streisand and Bo Derek made the "white Afro" popular. And around that time, when hip hop culture and rap artists wearing an Afro gained popularity, the fashion world discovered the huge potential of the globe-like hairdo. Today, with the growing influence of African-inspired fashion and rediscovery of the Seventies, the Afro has made its way back on the runway and into the fashion world. And with Solange Knowles, Janelle Monáe and Questlove donning one, this hairstyle has once again become one to wear.

[Photo: Gobinder Jhutta for Hype x The Simpsons x Topman]

