



The Clipper Cut: Step-By-Step Guide

Our model has a square face shape.

He has flat, even growth patterns and a well-defined head shape.

There are a number of elements you should take into account when doing your client consultation before you start cutting the hair.

Fringe

Shaping the fringe area is a very important part of your hair cut. The wrong fringe can make or ruin your hair shape.

First, it is important to establish your client's hairline pattern at the front. In many men, the hairline recedes to some extent from baldness.

You should avoid making the fringe area too heavy but never take out too much weight either. This can make the hair look as if it is thinning.

Always try to strike a balance between all the elements of your haircuts.

Side burns

Side burns are men's side hairlines. They can be cut into various different shapes and lengths. But it is important that they fit with the rest of your hairstyle.

The shape and length of side burns change with fashion. For example, side burns were:

- long in the 1920s, 30s and 40s;
- clean and short in the 50s;
- long, thin and shaped in the 60s and 70s; and
- Gothic, angular and coloured in the 80s.

Since the 1990s, clean-cut looks have been more fashionable. And older men always tend to go for classic, short-cut side burns.

Ears

Many people's ears are not evenly balanced. They can be very large, very small or even different sizes. And some stick out at an angle from the head.

You need to watch for all these characteristics when you are cutting shorter hairstyles.

You also need to know if your client wears glasses or a hearing aid. Both these will affect the finished look of your cut, particularly if you are aiming for a short, sharp look.

Partings

Partings can be used to produce different effects in hairstyles. For example, a central parting can divide the hair evenly and help to make a heavy head or thick hair appear more balanced. Side partings can be used to draw the eye away from prominent features such as a large nose or uneven ears.

Fashion can also affect the way you use partings.

Some natural partings can be very well defined and it is often necessary to work with them rather than imposing new partings.

During your client consultation, before you start cutting, you should establish the pattern and strength of your client's natural parting. This may determine the finished look you are able to achieve.



Step By Step 2: Back Area

Set your clippers to a No. 1 blade.

Tilt your client's head downwards. Following their natural head shape, work up from the nape (the centre point) to the occipital area. Remember to keep the clippers flat against the head at the nape.

Work out from the centre towards the sides.

Choosing your clippers

There are two types of clippers you can use: electric or hand held. Most people these days use electric clippers. Clippers have two serrated blades, one of which moves across the other to give a very fast cutting action.

Small, hand-held clippers are useful for cleaning up any rough edges on a hairline or sideburns.

Generally, you will use clippers on dry hair but the effect will be no different if the hair is wet. They are ideal for shaping and designing hairlines and to cut hair very short, very quickly.

You should clean and oil your clippers and change the blades regularly.

Clipper guards

To get a good, even result, particularly when you are cutting very close to a client's head, it is important to use a guard with your clippers.

Guards come in different sizes to create different hair lengths. Once you have learned the basic art of using the clippers, you can go on to create cuts of different lengths using the various sizes.

Clipper size	Length of hair
0000	Very close to the skin, like shaving
000	0.3mm, close to the skin
00	0.4mm
0	0.8mm
OA	1.2mm
1	3.3mm

1A	4.0mm
11/2	4.8mm
2	6.4mm
3	7.9mm

Tip:

Work up from the centre, then cut towards the sides of the back area. And keep checking the balance of your cut.



Step By Step 3: Occipital area / nape

As you work up to the occipital area, start to bring your client's head upright so that they are looking forward.

Change your clipper blade to a No. 2.

Make sure that the angle of your clippers matches the contours of the nape area.

Because you are following the natural head shape, you will create a build up of length around the occipital area.



Step By Step 4: Behind The Ear

Cutting the area behind the ears can be difficult but it is important to cut this area close to the skin to achieve a clean, precise line.

To get the best results, tilt the head away. This allows you to get your clippers closer to the back of the ear.

If you think it will help, ask your client to hold their ears down.

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Step By Step 5: Finished Back Area

The nape and occipital areas

Tilt the head into an upright position.

You should start to see the build up in length around the occipital area. It is important to establish at this stage how much length you want to build up around this area as this will determine the length of the rest of your haircut.

Keep checking to make sure your cut is balanced and the weight is evenly distributed.

Don't clean up the nape area at this stage. You will get a better result if you leave this until you have completed the haircut.



Step By Step 6: Side Area

Take a diagonal section from the side hairline to the back of the ear.

This is a small area. It is difficult to get the clippers at the correct angle and can be hard to cut.

Our stylist is cutting this section using clippers and comb. To create a close, graduated effect, the clippers are being used without a blade.

For a short, sharp cut, keep your comb flat against the hairline. To make sure you don't cut too short, use your cutting comb as a blade.

Work up from the hairline at the side to the temple, taking care to blend in the guideline at the back of the ear.

Repeat on the opposite side. And remember to keep checking the balance of your cut as you go. This is very important.



Step By Step 7: Blending in the Side Area

Blend in the sides with the top section of hair, using the guide from the hairline at the side area.

Our stylist has chosen to use clippers and comb to blend the two sections, starting at the side hairline and working round to the occipital area. They are using clippers without a blade.

You can use your fingers to blend the hair. Here, the hair is too short and is blended using a comb.



Step By Step 8: Blending in the Top Area

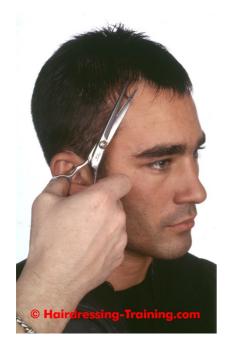
Work from the crown to the front hairline, keeping the layers parallel to the head. When working on the front hairline, pull the hair back. This will help you keep more length.

Next, work down from the top of the crown towards to occipital area, keeping your layers parallel to the head.

Using your scissors, point cut the ends of the hair to create texture and softness.

Tip:

The length of hair you leave on the top area will depend on the end result your client is looking for.



Step By Step 9: Cleaning Up

This step is dependent on personal preference.

Use the scissors to clean up the hairlines. Clean hairlines will make the haircut look stronger.

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Step By Step 10: Blow Drying

Here, our stylist is using a very hot hairdryer and their hand to create a flat top finish.



Step By Step 11: Colour Preparation

We have used Wella Blondor Coco Bleach with 9% welloxon Perfect and foil, Wella Accord mouse.

This technique works very well on short hair and is quick to apply. What type of peroxide you use will depend on the end result you are looking for.



Step By Step 12: Application of Bleach

Our stylist painted bleach onto strips of foil. The bleach was then applied to the hair by moving the foil across the hair from side to side (using a similar motion to polishing shoes).



Step By Step 13: Develop Under Heat

Once the bleach had been applied, we developed it under heat using a climazon millennium for 25 minutes to achieve a sun-lightened effect.



Step By Step 14: Two Tone Result

We used a temporary Wella accord colour mousse to get a two-tone result.



Step By Step 15: Finished!

To finish, we used Mould and Shine creme from Wella's SP range (see styling products).