

Chapter 16: Haircutting

Cosmetologists should have a thorough understanding of haircutting because **haircutting is a basic, foundational skill; it will build trust and loyalty between a stylist and her clients; it allows you to duplicate an existing cut; and a good haircut will make clients happy.**

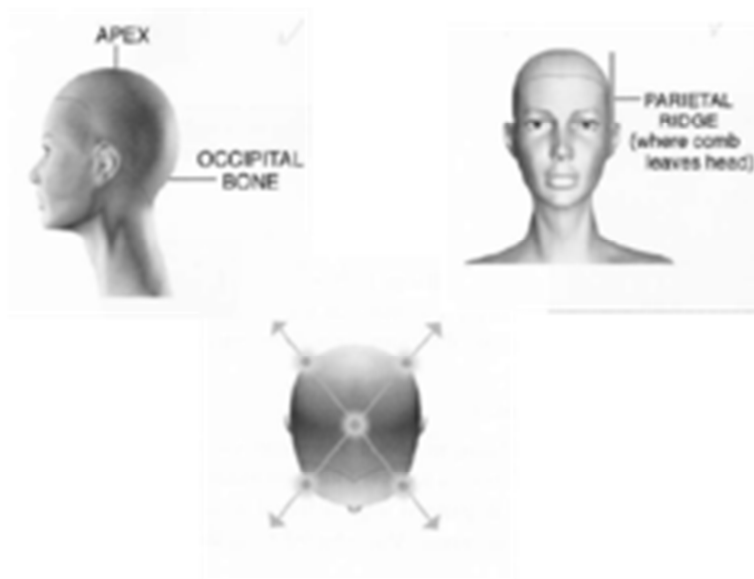
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF HAIRCUTTING

Reference Points

Reference points-points on the head where the surface of the head changes, such as the ears, jawline, occipital bone, or apex; helps you find the balance within a design so that both sides of the haircut turn out the same; used to establish design lines

The reference points are:

- **Parietal ridge**- widest area of the head; starts at the temples and ends at the bottom of the crown; also referred to as crest area; found by placing the comb flat on the side of the head
- **Occipital bone**- bone that protrudes at the base of the skull
- **Apex**- highest point on the top of the head
- **Four corners**- draw two diagonal lines (or cross two combs) across the apex of the head-where they touch are the four corners; signals change in head shape; for example, two front corners represent widest points in the bang area



Areas of the Head (p. 345-346)

- **Top**-locate the parietal bone; the hair that grows on the top of the head lies on the head shape
- **Front**- make a part or draw a line from the apex to the back of the ear; everything that falls in front of the ear is the front
- **Sides**- includes all of the hair from the back of the ear forward, below the parietal ridge
- **Crown**- the area between the apex and the back of the parietal ridge; on many people this is the site of whorls or cowlicks; pay close attention to the crown when haircutting
- **Nape**- back part of the neck; hair below the occipital bone; can be found by making a horizontal line across the occipital bone
- **Back**-make a line from the apex to the back of the ear; the back is all the hair that falls behind the ear
- **Bang area**- also known as fringe area; the triangular area that begins at the apex and ends at the front corners

Lines and Angles (p. 346-347)

- **Line**- a thin continuous mark used as a guide
- **Angle**- space between two lines or surfaces that intersect at a given point; important element in creating a strong foundation and consistency in haircutting

The two basic lines used in haircutting are straight and curved.

There are three types of straight lines:

- **Horizontal lines**- parallel to the horizon or floor; direct the eye from one side the other; used to create one-length and low elevation haircuts and to add weight
- **Vertical lines**- up and down lines; perpendicular to the floor; remove weight to create graduated or layered haircuts; used with higher elevations
- **Diagonal lines**- slanting or sloping direction; between horizontal and vertical; used to create fullness in a haircut and to blend longer layers into shorter layers
 - **Beveling and stacking**- used with diagonal lines to create angles by cutting the ends of the hair with a slight increase or decrease in length

Elevation (p. 347)

- **Elevation**- also known as **projection** or **lifting**; the angle or degree at which a subsection of hair is held or elevated from the head when cutting
- **Sections**- to divide the hair by parting into uniform working areas for control
- **Subsections**- smaller sections within a larger section of hair; used to maintain control of the hair when cutting
- **Part or parting**- the line dividing the hair at the scalp; separating one section of hair from another; creating subsections

Elevation creates graduations and layers and is usually described in degrees. In a blunt or one-length cut there is no elevation (0 degrees). Elevations below 90 degrees build weight; elevations of 90 degrees or higher remove weight or layer hair.

Cutting Line (p. 347-348)

- **Cutting line**- the angle at which the fingers are held when cutting the line that creates the end shape; also known as **cutting position, cutting angle, finger angle, and finger position**. The cutting line can be described as horizontal, vertical, diagonal or by degrees.

Guidelines (p. 348-349)

- **Guideline**- also known as a guide; a section of hair that determines the length the hair will be cut; located either at the perimeter (outer line) or the interior (inner line); usually the first section cut when creating a shape
- **Two types of Guidelines**
 - **Stationary guideline**- does not move; all sections are combed to the stationary guideline and cut at the same angle and length; used in blunt cuts or haircuts that use overdirection (p. 349) to create length or increase weight
 - **Traveling guideline**-also known as movable guideline; moves as the haircut progresses; used when creating layers or graduated cuts

Overdirection (p. 349-350)

- **Overdirection**- combing a section away from its natural falling position (rather than straight out from the head), toward a guideline; used mostly in graduated and layered cuts to increase length in the design; for example, if you want hair to be longer toward the front on a layered cut, overdirect to a stationary guide at the back of the ear

CLIENT CONSULTATION

A consultation is a conversation between the stylist and the client where the stylist finds out what the client wants and then is able to offer suggestions and professional advice about the most suitable haircut.

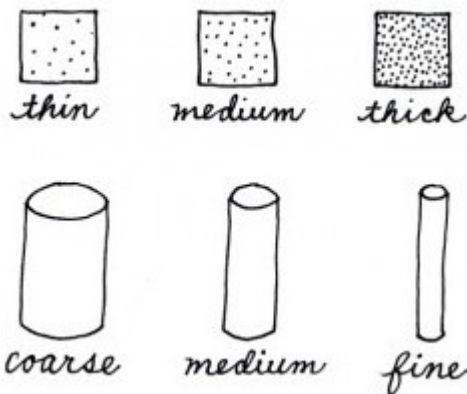
Face Shape (p. 351-352)

- To analyze the shape of the face, pull all the hair away from the face with a clip or wrap the hair in a towel; look for the widest areas, the narrowest areas, and the balance of the features *Remember that hair shrinks. Always cut wet hair $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " longer than the desired length; curly hair shrinks $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 2".

Hair Analysis (p. 352)

There are four characteristics that determine the behavior of hair. They are: hairlines and growth patterns, density, texture, and elasticity.

- **Hairline**- hair that grows at the outermost perimeter along the face, around the ears, and on the neck
- **Growth pattern**- direction in which hair grows from the scalp; also referred to as **natural fall** or **natural falling position**
- **Wave pattern**- amount of movement in a hair strand
- **Hair density**- number of individual hair strands on one square inch of scalp; usually described as thin, medium, or thick.
- **Hair texture**- diameter of each hair strand; described as coarse, medium, or fine



see chart p. 353 for density/texture comparison

HAIRCUTTING TOOLS

- **Haircutting shears**- also known as **scissors**; mainly used to cut blunt or straight lines in the hair; may be used to slide cut, point cut or implement other texturizing techniques
- **Texturizing shears**- mainly used to remove bulk from the hair; sometimes referred to as **thinning shears, tapering shears, or notching shears**; generally the more teeth in a shear, the less hair is removed
- **Razors**- straight razors or feather blades are mainly used when a softer effect on the ends of the hair is desired; comes in different sizes and shapes and with or without guards



- **Clippers**- mainly used when creating short haircuts, short tapers, fades and flat tops; may be used with or without guards; use for the clipper-over-comb technique
- **Trimmers**- smaller version of clippers; also known as **edgers**; mainly used to remove excess or unwanted hair at the neckline and around the ears and to create crisp outlines
- **Sectioning clips**- variety of shapes, styles and sizes; made of metal or plastic; usually use butterfly clips or duckbill clips
- **Wide-tooth comb**- mainly used to detangle hair
- **Tail comb**- mainly used to section and subsection hair
- **Barber comb**- mainly used for close tapers on the nape and sides when using the scissor-over-comb technique
- **Styling or Cutting Comb**- referred to as **all-purpose comb**; used for most haircutting procedures; can be 6 to 8 inches long; has fine teeth at one end and wider teeth at the other

All About Shears (p. 354- 364)

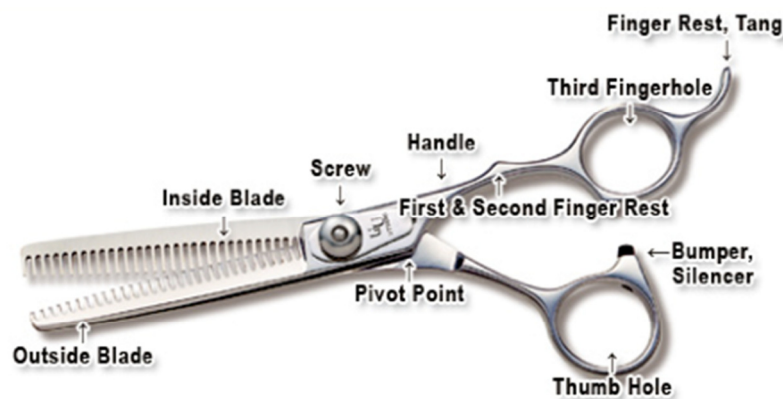
Steel (p. 355)

- All professional haircutting shears are made of steel
- Primarily manufactured in Japan, Germany, and United States
- **Rockwell hardness**- the gauge that determines hardness of the metal a shear is made from
 - Ideal number is 56 or 57
 - Higher than 63 is too hard or brittle to work with

Forged versus Cast Shears (p. 355)

- **Cast**- made by a process whereby molten steel is poured into a mold; less expensive than forged shears BUT can shatter if dropped and cannot be rebent because they are brittle
- **Forged**- made by a process of working metal to a finished shape by hammering or pressing; more durable than cast; can be repaired if bent or dropped

Parts of a Shear (p. 356)



- **Cutting edge**- does the actual cutting
- **Adjustment knob**- makes the shears cut; pulls the blades together so hair does not slide or fall between the blades
- **Finger tang**- gives pinky finger an additional contact point; pressure is relieved
- **Ring Finger-hole**- for ring finger **not** middle finger
- **Thumb hole**- bottom hole; when properly fitted it should only go to or slightly over the cuticle

Shear Maintenance (p. 356-357)

- **Daily Cleaning and Lubrication**-use soft cloth saturated with scissor oil to clean blades after every client; extends the life of the blade and reduces sharpening frequency
- **Daily tension adjustment and balancing**- hold shears with adjustment knob facing you and thumb handle in your left hand; with the shear perfectly straight, lift up on the ring finger to open blades halfway; let ring-finger go; blades should close to 2/3 of the way or leave a 1-2 inch gap at the tip; use the adjustment knob to tighten or loosen the tension
- **Weekly cleaning and lubrication**- open shears to 90 degree angle; push paper towel between pivot point; put in one or two drops of scissor oil; **do not put oil directly under adjustment knob**
- **Disinfecting shears**- disinfect after each client by cleaning with soap and water and then immersing in disinfectant spray; dry thoroughly; relubricate
- **Sharpening shears**- sharpen only as needed (not on a regular cycle)

Purchasing Shears (p. 358-360)

- **Know how it was manufactured**- forged is better than cast
- **Ask about the quality of the steel**- you want 440-A steel or higher
- **Decide on the right blade edge**- full convex gives smoothest cut and sharpest edge
- **Decide on the best handle design**- full-offset or crane is the most anatomically correct design; releases pressure and stress on the nerves and tendons of the hand
- **Be sure the shears fit properly**- consider purchasing shears with a finger-fitting system or custom –fitted shears
- **Hold the shears in your hands**- make sure you get a 30-day trial period so you can return them if they are not right
- **Swivel thumb shears**- provides great comfort and control
- **Ask about a service agreement**
- **Ask about a warranty**
- **Analyze the cost of the shears**
- **Determine how many pairs of shears you need**

Fitting the Shear Correctly (see p. 361-362)

Holding Your Tools

There are two important reasons to hold your tools properly:

1. A proper hold gives you the most control and the best results when cutting hair.
2. A proper hold helps you to avoid muscle strain in your hands, arms, neck, and back.

Holding Your Shears

- Open your right hand and place the ringer finger in the finger grip of the still blade and the little finger on the finger tang.
- Place the thumb in the thumb grip of the moving blade.
- Practice opening and closing the shears.

Holding the Shears and Comb

Practice the correct way to hold both tools. Putting down your comb will waste a lot of time.

- **Palming the shears**
 - Remove your thumb from the thumb grip
 - Leave your ring and little finger in the grip and finger rest
 - Curl your fingers in to palm the shears which keeps them closed while you comb (hold the comb between the thumb, index, and middle finger)
- **Transferring the Comb**
 - Comb a subsection into position
 - Once your fingers are in place at the cutting position, transfer the comb by placing it between the thumb and index of your holding hand (the hand holding the subsection)

Holding the Razor (p. 363)

➤ **METHOD A:**

- ❖ open the razor so that the handle is higher than the shank.; place the thumb on the thumb grip and the index, middle, and ring fingers on the shank
- ❖ Place the little finger in the tang, underneath the handle
- ❖ When cutting a subsection, position the razor on the top of the subsection, the part facing you, for maximum control

➤ **METHOD B:**

- ❖ Open the razor until the handle and the shank form a straight line
- ❖ Place the thumb on the grip and wrap the fingers around the handle

**Practice palming the razor. Most accidents with razors happen while palming, not while cutting. Keep a firm grip on the razor with the ring and little finger which keeps the open blade from sliding and cutting your hand.*

Holding the Comb (p. 363)

Both wide and fine teeth of a comb are regularly used when cutting hair.

- **Wide teeth-** combing and parting the hair
- **Fine teeth-** comb the section before cutting; provide more **tension**; useful for cutting around the ears, dealing with difficult hairlines, and cutting curly hair
 - **Tension-** the amount of pressure applied when combing and holding a subsection
 - ❖ Control tension with your fingers
 - ❖ Consistent tension important for an even cut
 - ❖ Use maximum tension on straight hair when you want precision lines
 - ❖ Use less tension on curly hair to control shrinkage
 - ❖ Use minimum tension around ears and on hairlines with strong growth patterns



POSTURE AND BODY POSITION (p. 364-365)

The correct body position will help you move more efficiently during the haircut and help you maintain more control over the process.

- **Position the client-** make sure your client is sitting up straight; legs should not be crossed; you can move the client by turning the chair or by raising/lowering it
- **Center your weight-** keep your body weight centered and firm; keeps knees slightly bent not locked; keep both feet flat on the floor when sitting
- **Work in front of your section-** stand or sit directly in front of the area you are cutting

Hand positions for Different Angles

- **Cutting over your fingers-** most often used when cutting uniform or increasing layers
- **Cutting below the fingers-**most often used when cutting a blunt cut or graduated haircut
- **Cutting palm-to-palm-** most often used when cutting a vertical or diagonal line; palms of both hands are facing each other; helps prevent strain on your back as you work

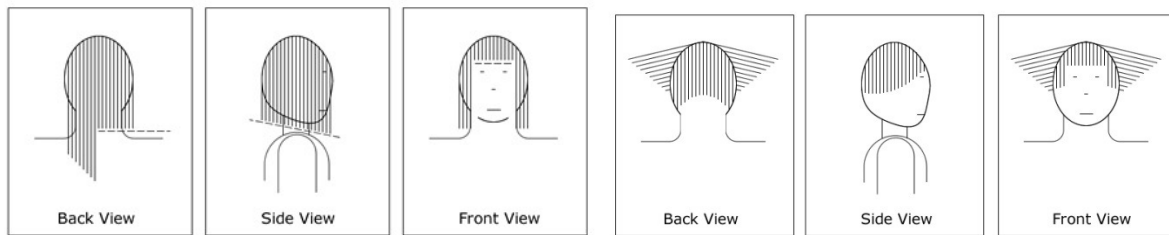
SAFETY IN HAIRCUTTING (p. 365-366)

- *Always palm the shears and razor when combing or parting the hair*
- Do not cut past the second knuckle when cutting below your fingers
- Take extra care not to cut the ears when cutting around them
- When cutting fringe, balance the shears by placing the tip of the index finger of your left hand on the pivot screw and the knuckles of your left palm against the skin
- When working with a razor, learn with a guard
- Discard razor blades in a puncture proof container

BASIC HAIRCUTS (p. 366-370)

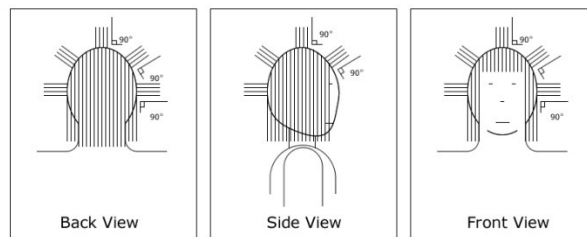
Every haircut is made up of one, two, or three of these basic techniques. Add a little texturizing, slide cutting, or scissor-over-comb, and you have advanced haircutting.

- **Blunt cut-** also known as **one-length cut**, **zero-elevation cut**, or **no-elevation cut**; all hair comes to single hanging level, forming a weight line; cutting line can be horizontal, diagonal, or rounded; cut with a stationary guide; excellent for fine or thinner hair types (appears thicker)
- **Graduated Haircut-** a **graduated shape or wedge**; caused by cutting the hair with tension, low to medium elevation, or overdirection; most common elevation is 45 degrees; there is a visual build-up of weight in a given area; the ends of the hair appear to be stacked
- **Layered haircut-** caused by cutting hair with higher elevation (usually 90 degrees and above); usually have less weight than a graduated haircut; ends of hair appear farther apart; layers create movement and volume by releasing weight; may be created with a traveling guide, a stationary guide or both
- **Long-layered haircut-** cut at 180 degree angle; gives more volume to haircuts; can be combined with other basic haircuts; shorter layers on top and increasing longer layers toward the perimeter



One Length Cut

Graduation Cut



Layer Cut

More Basic Haircut Information (p. 366-370)

- **Blunt cut**- also known as bob, one-length, pageboy, one-level, or bowl haircut; looks simple but requires precision
 - Client's head should be upright and straight
 - Performed by either holding the sections between the fingers or using the comb to hold the sections with little or no tension
 - Watch the danger zones:
 - ❖ Crown- look to see growth pattern; may want to cut last or cut slightly longer than guideline; once hair is dry, you can see where it falls and match length to the guideline
 - ❖ Ears- keep an even cutting line; use very little or no tension unless working with shorter layers
 - Can be designed with or without bangs, on straight or medium hair, and with a short, medium, or long length
- **Graduated Cut**- use a vertical cutting line and a 45 degree elevation; you can use with a center part, side part, or bang; you can use a stationary or traveling guideline
- **Uniform-Layered (90-degree) cut**- uniform layers; all hair is elevated to 90 degrees from the scalp and cut at the same length; uses an interior traveling guideline; resulting shape will appear soft and rounded

OTHER CUTTING TECHNIQUES (p. 371-380)

- **Cutting curly hair**- you can apply any cut to curly hair, but you will get very different results than you get cutting straight hair
 - Curly hair shrinks as it dries, resulting in a weight line that has graduated itself even higher
- **Cutting the bangs (fringe)**- bangs and fringe mean the same thing; the area that lies between the two front corners
 - Bangs are cut using a stationary guide at 90 degrees straight up from the head form
 - Sometimes you may only cut a few pieces in the bang area; a bang can be blended or not
- **Razor cutting**-gives a softer appearance than a shear cut; great option for medium or fine textured hair; gives a feathered effect on the ends
 - Any cut done with shears can be done with a razor

- **Two methods for razor cutting:**
 - ❖ Razor kept parallel to subsection; used to thin the ends; entire blade is used
 - ❖ Razor held at an angle (45 degrees); use 1/3 of blade to make small strokes
- **Slide cutting-** method of cutting or thinning the hair in which the fingers and shears glide along the edge of the hair to remove length; useful for removing length, blending shorter lengths to longer lengths, and texturizing; good for layering very long hair and keeping weight at the perimeter
- **Scissor-over-Comb-** also known as **shear-over-comb**; a barbering technique used by cosmetologists; hold the hair in place with the comb and use the tips of the shears to remove length
 - Best used on dry hair
- **Texturizing-** the process of removing excess bulk without shortening the length; can be used for effect within a haircut; may be used to add or reduce volume, to make hair move, to blend one area into another or to compensate for different densities on the same head of hair
 - **Texturizing with shears** (p. 376-377)
 - ❖ **Point cutting-** performed on the ends of the hair using the tips or points of the shears; may be done on wet or dry hair; the more diagonal the angle of the scissors, the more is taken away and the chunkier the effect
 - ❖ **Notching-** a version of point cutting; more aggressive and creates a chunkier effect; may be done on wet or dry hair
 - ❖ **Free-hand Notching-** uses the tip of the shears; do not slide, simply snip out pieces of hair at random intervals; works well on curly hair (releases curl and removes some density)
 - ❖ **Slithering-** also known as **effilating**; thinning hair to gradual lengths with shears; sliding movement; reduces volume and creates movement
 - ❖ **Slicing-** removes bulk and adds movement; may be performed on the surface or within a subsection; should be done on dry hair for surface slicing; may be done on wet or dry hair for subsection slicing
 - ❖ **Carving-** version of slicing that creates a visual separation in the hair

- **Texturizing with the Razor** (p. 378)
 - ❖ **Removing weight-** thins out the ends of hair; may be done on damp hair; may be used on any area of the hair where the effect is desired
 - ❖ **Free-hand Slicing-** may be used throughout the section or at the ends; done on wet hair; releases weight from the subsection allowing it to move more freely

- **Texturizing with Thinning Shears and Razor** (p. 378-379)
 - ❖ **Removing Bulk-** also known as **thinning**; follow the same sectioning as the haircut
 - ❖ **Removing bulk from the ends-** works well on many hair textures; it helps taper the perimeter of both graduated and blunt cuts
 - ❖ **Scissor-over-Comb with thinning shears-** useful for blending weight lines on fine textured hair; can be used on thick and coarse textured hair that is cut very short; helps hair lie closer to the head
 - ❖ **Other thinning shear techniques-** any texturizing technique that can be performed with regular haircutting shears may also be performed with thinning shears
 - ❖ **Free-hand slicing with razor-** use on the ends of the hair to produce a softer perimeter or create separation throughout the shape
 - ❖ **Razor-over-comb-** the comb and razor are used on the surface of the hair; softens weight lines and causes the hair to lie closer to the head; used mainly on shorter haircuts; great technique for tapering in the nape area or softening weight lines
 - ❖ **Razor rotation-** similar to razor-over-comb; the difference is you make small circular motions

CLIPPERS AND TRIMMERS (p. 380-383)

- **Clippers**- electric or battery operated tools that cut the hair by using two moving blades held in place by a metal plate with teeth; used mainly for cutting shorter haircuts or to create a taper
 - **Taper**- hair that is cut very short and close to the hairline that gradually gets longer as you move up the head
- **Clippers can be used as follows:**
 - Without length guards to remove hair completely
 - Without length guards to taper hairlines from extremely short lengths into longer lengths
 - With length guards for short, layered cuts

Tools for Clipper Cutting (p. 381)

- **Clippers**- come in different sizes; may be used with or without attachments; **trimmers** (also called **edgers**) are smaller-sized clippers
- **Length guard attachments**- allow you to cut hair evenly to an exact length
- **Haircutting shears**- used mainly for removing length and detailing the haircut
- **Thinning shears**- also called **blending** or **tapering scissors**; used to remove excess bulk and for blending one area into another
- **Combs**- wider teeth are for combing and cutting; finer teeth are for detailing and over-the-comb techniques

Basic Clipper Techniques (p. 382)

- **Clipper-over-comb**- allows you to cut hair very close to the scalp and create a flat top or square shape; more accurate when used on dry to slightly damp hair; the angle at which you hold the comb determines the amount of hair that is removed
- Clipper cut with attachments- quick and easy way to create short haircuts

Using Trimmers (p. 383)

- Use to cut a clean line around the ears and neckline
 - Maybe used to trim beards and mustaches as well