

The Ultimate Guide To

# MEN'S HAIR

Presented by **Real Men Real Style**



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So have fun and learn to dress sharp!

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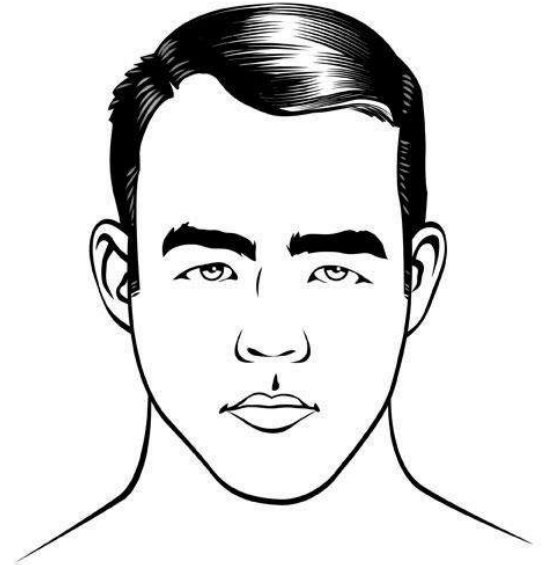
## Chapter 1: The Basic Elements

When a person looks at you, what do they see?  
Your clothes, your face -- and your hair.

The "appearance" of your hair breaks down into a couple of different components.

You've got more control over some of them than others. The part can be changed in seconds, the length in minutes, and the color in hours (changing the length in seconds is also possible, but not recommended unless you've just enlisted and are off to see the highly-efficient Army barbers).

Put together, these five elements make up the total "look" of your hair that an outside observer sees:



### Color

The color of your hair is one of the two most immediately obvious elements (length is the other).

Anyone who glances at you can make the color out.

### How Is Hair Color Created?

Not all heads of hair achieve their color the same way. The same pale blond, for example, could be achieved by

- a) thick strands of hair with a naturally light pigment
  - b) much finer strands of hair with a darker or more reddish pigment
  - c) naturally darker hair sun-bleached to a lighter blond
- or, of course,
- d) artificial dyes

All four of those are four different colors of actual hairs, but at a distance they all have the same pale yellow color.

So what color is your actual hair? To find that out you'll have to get up close and personal with a mirror and spend some time checking out the individual hairs.

They may not even be uniform -- most people are darker near the roots, and some people's hair can vary dramatically from root to tip.

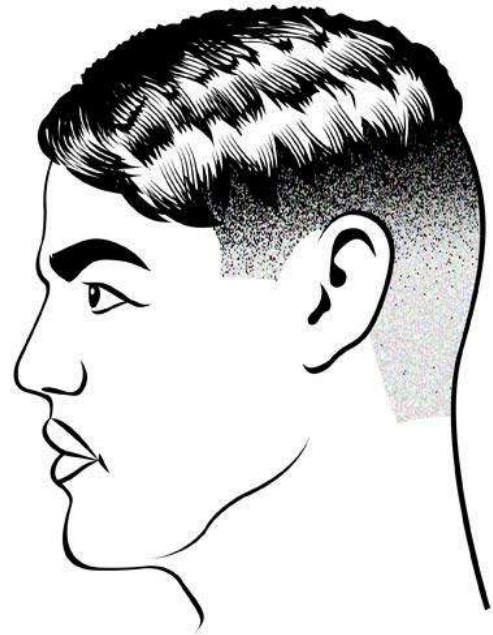
You may also have a head of mixed hairs, particularly in the case of men who are starting to gray.

That means that most people's hair is a blending effect. That's useful for discerning dressers to know, since very starkly contrasted clothes look better with single-shade hair colors, while a more blended outfit that transitions smoothly from one color to the next goes better with hair made from blended colors.

## But What Color Is Best?

The one that goes best with your complexion.

It sounds like a cop-out answer, but it's true. Your hair should complement your skin and eyes. A lot of the time this happens naturally.



Guys are fortunately more resistant than girls, in general, to the temptation to dye their hair blond no matter what they actually look like, but you still see some horror shows out there from time to time.

Contrast matters. If the rest of your complexion (eyes, skin, body hair, etc.) is high contrast -- like a pale-skinned man with dark eyes and hairs -- you don't want to throw that off by dyeing the top of your head pale.

Similarly, low-contrast men -- think dark-skinned men with black hairs -- look jarring with hair that doesn't come close to matching the rest of their complexion.

## Should Men Ever Dye?

A few generations ago the answer would have largely been "no." Hair dye was seen as purely a cosmetic change for women. These days, everything from bright green mohawks to lightly-dyed tips are common on men, especially younger men.

Men who work in any kind of office job should obviously be cautious with non-natural colors like red or green. Those are unlikely to go over well in the boardroom.

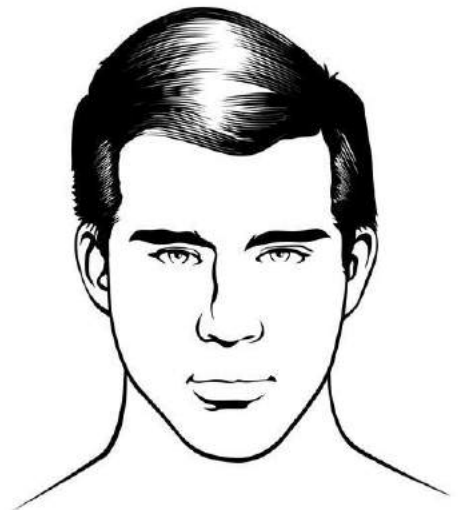
But a bit of artistic streaking or dying at the tips? Those things are largely acceptable these days. Men should keep contrast in mind, as always; light tips on dark hair will look much better on a high-contrast man than a low-contrast man.

Some very conservative settings may still view it as unnecessary or frivolous, so be cautious of wearing the look in financial, legal, and other very traditional circles.

Cosmetic hair dyes will mostly fall into two categories: at-home applications, which generally (but not always) dye the whole head the same shade, and professional salon dyes, which can achieve any number of varied effects like dyed tips, two-tone splits, layered colors, and more.

If your goal is to make a bold statement, or to blanket gray hairs out of existence, home dyes can work. There are hundreds of brands available, of varying quality. For a neater, more professional-looking result, however, a man should usually visit a salon -- one that caters specifically to men, if possible. You don't want a hair stylist who's only done dyes for women doing your colors.

As to the dying of gray hairs, it's an individual choice. Some men swear by it. But the single-color blanket dyes used to hide them are often painfully obvious -- the sort of thing where anyone can look at you and say "yeah, okay, he's dying his hair to hide the gray." It's not a very dignified look.



It puts people in mind of television broadcasters from the early 1980s.

If you're naturally ungraying, fantastic, but if not, put some thought into wearing your well-earned silver with pride, rather than blanketing it in dye.

This is especially true for men whose hair is also thinning -- nothing is more painfully obvious than thinning hair with a bald spot that's been dyed a bright, youthful color.

## Length

Apart from color, the most obvious trait of any haircut is its length. It's also the one that comes with the most social expectations and judgments attached.

## The Basic Lengths

You can break hair down into three basic style families: short cuts, medium cuts, and long cuts.

- Short hair can stand up on its own. Buzzcuts are short, as, obviously, are shaved heads. Slightly longer hairs worn spiked with product still look to observers like short cuts, though they may appear more like medium haircuts when they lie flat.
- Medium cuts encompass most traditional side-parts and other business styles. The hair is out of the eyes and mostly off the back of the neck, but it might be long enough to lie across the top of the head or tuck behind the ear.
- Long cuts fall into the eyes, over the ears, or past the back of the neck. This could include anything from an unkempt mullet to a neat ponytail to a massively spiked mohawk that falls to the sides of the face when it's let down.

## Long Hair on Men: Yes or No?

The meaning of long hair can vary dramatically from culture to culture. White, middle- and upper-class urban Americans usually consider it a gesture of mild rebellion against social norms.

That said, it's worth remembering that white, middle- and upper-class Americans are a minority of the population. If you're looking to advance in conservative businesses like corporate law and finance, you probably need to avoid long hairstyles.



But a man in a more counter-culture industry like software engineering might not find a well-kept ponytail disadvantageous at all.

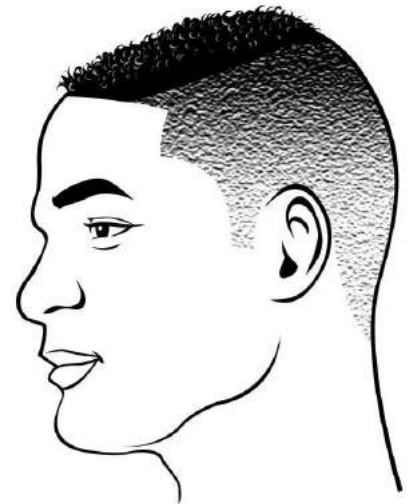
And a punk rocker may actually have more trouble landing gigs with a traditional business haircut.

So there is no firm yes or no for most men. But the majority of men in America will have an easier time in most mainstream interactions with a shorter haircut. Hair past the top of the neck might generate negative reactions from some people, while hair that stops at the neck is never going to offend anyone.

## The "Safety Zone"

Conventional hair length for men is easy to define. A safe default for any barber, from a \$5 student cut to a salon, is to ask for a cut within the following boundaries:

1. Off the back of the neck
2. Above the point where the ear separates from the side of the head
3. Above the eyebrows when brushed straight down in front



That range encompasses most "traditional" hair styles for men who want to keep it within the safety zone.

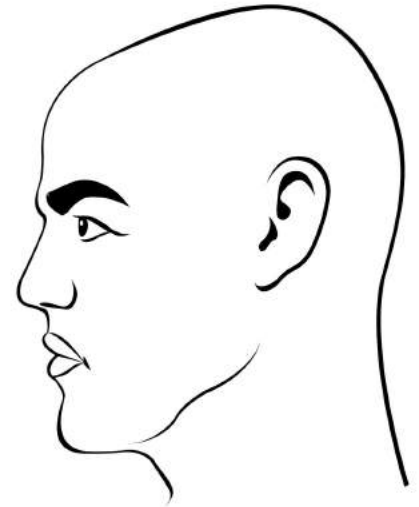


## Going Bald and Hair Length

"Male-pattern baldness" gets its name for a reason: there's a pattern. Hair loss starts at the top and front of the scalp and spreads from there.

That means it's possible to have quite long hair while still going bald. This is pretty much always a bad idea.

Long hair let straight down with a bald spot in the center gets into the "crypt keeper" look. Long hair on the sides combed over the bald spot isn't fooling anyone (and makes you look desperate). Keep it short when it starts to bald, or just get a jump on the game by shaving the head entirely. Cue Balls have been sexy for years now.



## Thickness

How thick your hair is depends on three factors: the thickness of the individual hairs, how many hairs there are per square millimeter of scalp, and how clean the hairs are. Thick hair isn't inherently good or bad, but it does affect both the appearance and the maintenance needs of your hair.

## Thickness and Appearance

How thick your hair is primarily affects how it moves. Someone with very thick hair is less likely to have their look stirred up and tousled by the wind than someone with light, fine hairs.

This makes men with fine hairs good candidates for "layered" cuts that can stand up to a bit of tousling.

These cuts need at least a little bit of length to work, but done well they end up looking very styled and deliberate even when they're mussed.

Fine-haired men may want to avoid long hairstyles, however -- once it gets down past the back of the neck, it's going to do a lot of blowing around, even indoors.

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Men with thicker hair, on the other hand, can wear their hair longer if they want to, but also have to do a lot more maintenance to keep the hair looking "lively." Thick hair can clump and hang limp, which doesn't look good on anyone.

Men with particularly thick hair will need either a short cut like a buzz where there's no chance of tangling or a more extensive shampooing and conditioning regimen.



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The advertisement features three jars of Vitaman hair products stacked on a rocky surface. The jars are dark with gold and white text. The background is a blurred landscape with a blue sky and a body of water. A green button with white text and a black box with white text are overlaid on the image.

## Cleanliness and Thickness

All our healthy hairs produce a natural coating of oil. Over time the coating thickens and traps particles of dirt, so hair that hasn't been washed in a while is thickened artificially with a coat of oil and microscopic detritus.

Men with thick hair need to keep themselves regularly shampooed. This keeps the hair from turning limp and clumping, as well as avoiding an unsightly sheen.

Fine-haired men, on the other hand, produce less oil overall, and may need to alternate shampooing every other day or even less to avoid drying the hair out and looking straw-like.



## Straightness

Hair ranges from long, smooth strands that look like unspooled thread to coils as tight as metal springs.

The thicker your hair is, the quicker its silhouette grows. A man with very straight hair can grow his out without adding much bulk to his head, while a man with curly hair starts working toward a fro very quickly.

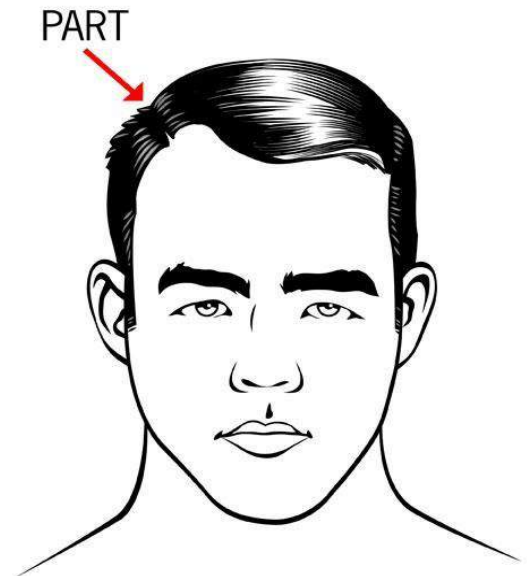
This is worth keeping in mind because you want your hairstyle to be proportional with the rest of your body. A short, slender man looks unbalanced with a thick head of hair poofing out in all directions. A big, athletic man might be able to wear the same hair without concern.

## Part

The part is the point at which your hair splits to lie in one direction or the other. Not all hair styles have a part -- whether there is one visible or not is part of the style.

Hair parts are a powerful visual tool. At their most basic they give a subtle visual cue to your handedness -- right-handed men tend to part their hair with the longer half pointed toward their right hand, and vice-versa for left-handed men. A central part adds symmetry to the face below it.

Styles without parts can be neat, messy, or somewhere in between. It's not a vital part of a hairstyle, just a visual aspect that you have easy control of at any given moment.



[Curious about side-parting?](#) Here's a video showing a classic men's hairstyle.

## Chapter 2: The Attitude

The five elements we discussed above combine to make a single image of what we call your "hairstyle."

That image presents a personality, a culture, and an attitude. It can say everything from "surfer dude" to "military man" to as restrained and neutral a non-statement as possible.

The following choices are some of the biggest ways to shape the attitude your hair presents:

### Consistent Vs. Varied

A consistent hairstyle is basically the same length and shape all the way throughout. It demonstrates restraint, control, and order.

A varied hairstyle, in contrast, has multiple lengths, thicknesses, colors, or other elements that don't match all the way throughout. It asserts more individuality, uniqueness, and in many cases rebellion or non-conformity.

### Examples of Consistent Haircuts

Buzz cuts, shaved heads, and unstyled ponytails (where the bangs are grown out and pulled back along with the rest of the hair) are all consistent cuts when they are a single, solid color.

### Examples of Varied Haircuts

Styles where half the head is cut close and the other half is grown out are varied, as are mullets (short in the front and long in the back).

Dye can also be used to make a consistent haircut more varied, such as a short spiked top cut with bleached or darkened tips.

### The In-Between Styles

A lot of men's haircuts try for a healthy medium. The traditional business side-part has a consistent vertical length (it all stops at about the same height on the face/neck), but the asymmetrical part makes one side longer than the other.

"Layered" cuts also tend to be roughly the same vertical length but made up of different-length hairs. The effect is neat but more complicated than a simple buzz cut.

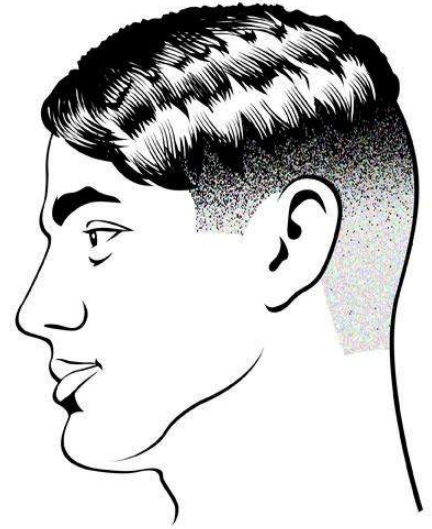
### Neat Vs. Messy

Stylists sometimes talk about haircuts as having "lines." Think of it in exactly those terms -- if someone were drawing your hair, what would the outline look like?

A very neat haircut has clean, smooth lines. You can trace a distinct outline without any trouble (speed-caricature artists love neat haircuts).

Messier styles aren't necessarily unkempt, but they do have more uneven outlines. Looking good with a "messy" style can actually take more work than looking good with a neat one, but the finished effect will be more relaxed.

It's a popular way to look carefree and easy-going. Of course, a sloppy haircut that hasn't been properly combed or styled will also have a messy outline, and the effect will be much less flattering.



### Sculpted Vs. Natural

Depending on the texture of your hair, it may take product to achieve a neat style. How much product you use, and what type, will affect how "sculpted" the hair looks.

A sculpted hairdo doesn't move. Product fixes it in place so that the lines don't change. A natural haircut is free to move as breezes or touches affect it, and has less fixed lines around the outside.



### Advantages And Disadvantages

The advantage of a sculpted look is that it maintains itself throughout the day. The disadvantage is that its immediately noticeable when the product starts to fail -- it doesn't take a lot of hairs out of place to ruin a sculpted look.

A slicked-back pomade is great right up until the bangs start flopping forward, and then you've got a haircut that needs serious repair ASAP.

Un-sculpted 'dos are nice because they don't have a time limit. Apart from maybe a light grooming cream they're kept in place by the natural shape of the haircut and the weight of the hair rather than product. The downside is that they're more prone to mussing -- a stiff breeze can turn a nice-looking side-part into a tangled haystack if there's no product to hold it in place.

## What It Says

A guy with a clearly sculpted look is a guy who cares about his appearance and wants other people to know it. It's like wearing expensive Italian loafers with silver buckles or a designer suit with a visible trademark -- the point is to be noticed.

Natural hairdos are supposed to look effortless. They aren't necessarily, but the goal is to say "laid-back" to observers, whether it's true or not. If you're trying to look like an effortless kind of guy for whom things come naturally, an un-sculpted 'do is the one for you.

## Hair And Clothing

What you wear your hair with affects the attitude it projects. A guy in a buzz cut wearing a T-shirt and shorts is a jock; a guy in a buzz cut and a three-piece suit is probably a businessman to be reckoned with.

The important thing is not to create accidental contradictions. That means avoiding things like loose, shoulder-length rock-star hair paired with a business suit. The neater your hair is, the neater your clothing should be too, and vice-versa -- slicking your hair back with pomade is overkill if you're just going to the store in sweats and flip-flops.

[Click here](#) to watch a quick tutorial on hairstyles.



## Chapter 3: Maintenance Needs

Hair needs proper treatment to stay healthy. Most guys' routines consist of shampooing, toweling off, and combing, full stop (or less). For some haircuts that's enough. For others, it's not.

### Shampoo

Shampoo actually has a pretty complex job. It needs to remove the dirt-encrusted oil that covers your hairs without also stripping the hair of fresh oils.

Daily shampooing is not necessary for most men. Unless you have exceptionally oily hair or are exposed to a large amount of dusty particles, daily shampooing will end up stripping off healthy oils and forcing your hair to overproduce its natural oil. The result is increasingly oily hair that looks greasy long before it's actually dirty.

Men with oily hair should rinse regularly but shampoo infrequently. Over time the hair will adjust and begin to produce less oil.



## Conditioner

Hair conditioner is a product specifically designed to thicken individual hairs. It usually contains both moisturizing agents and oils. The combination softens and thickens the hair, making it feel smoother and helping it flow naturally when brushed in the same direction.

Marketers will try to sell conditioners "for" every type of hair. This is largely misleading -- conditioner is useful for men whose hairs are naturally light, dry, or otherwise prone to scattering. Thick-haired men with naturally oily hair don't have much use for conditioner.

Conditioner may be more necessary in dry climates. In humid climates, it can make hair feel limp and damp all day long.



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## Hair Wax

Wax is one of the oldest products for men's hair. It has been around since before the Roman empire, and hasn't actually changed much in composition since then.



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Waxes are useful in that they both stiffen and moisturize the hair. This is easier on the hair than sprays which harden and dry it, which can result in more long-term damage to the hair.

The disadvantage of styling waxes is that they resist washing -- it can take several rinses and stiff scrubbing to get wax out of styled hair.

## Pomade

Pomade is a synthetic grease used to make hair slicker, smoother, and shinier. The look is distinctive and clearly artificial. In America it's often associated with the 1940s and 1950s, when stiffly-pomaded side parts became the iconic businessman's hairstyle.

Pomade is usually a combination of a wax and a fatty oil. The wax provides the stiffness while the oil moisturizes the hair and holds it together, as well as lending a glossy sheen to the surface.

The disadvantage of pomade is that the two substances evaporate and absorb at different rates. The oils tend to soak into the hair or evaporate into the atmosphere faster than the wax, resulting in hair that starts to clump together in long, stiff sheets rather than smooth curves.

Re-applying pomade before this drying happens can help, but once it takes place the only effective solution is to wash the pomade out thoroughly (often a process of multiple rinses) and then apply a new dab to the cleaned hair.

## Hair Spray

Canned hair spray is one of the stiffest "fixers" for a hairdo. It coats the outside of the hair with a fast-drying polymer that binds to itself, resulting in hardened "bundles" of hair. This creates a very fixed and sculpted look that resists tousling, but may feel stiff or "crunchy" to the touch.

For men, hair spray works best on short, spiky looks. Longer hairstyles are better-served by pomades or waxes, which will give less of a "helmet-head" feel.

Some hair sprays need specific solvents to wash out, but most will come out in warm water. Wash hairspray out with plain water before shampooing so that the shampoo can take care of the dirt trapped on the actual hairs under the spray.

## Hair Clay

A relatively recent arrival on the hair product scene is hair clays, which use powdered mineral products to provide stiffness instead of fats or waxes.

They tend to be on the more expensive side, but provide a stiff hold like a pomade without the visible glossiness of one. This makes them extremely useful for men who like an artfully tousled look that appears unplanned and natural.

A little hair clay goes a long way. Overusing it can create visible streaking and make the hair harden. It rinses out easily in warm water.

## Combing

Last but not least, combing is a healthy process as well as a grooming one. Combs help clear away dead hairs to let new ones grow in, as well as brushing off the largest detritus from your hair.

Even if you prefer not to wear a visible part, keep a comb in your pocket or at least in your bathroom. Men with longer hair may need to upgrade to a hairbrush, but for most middle- and short-length haircuts a simple pocket comb is usually enough.

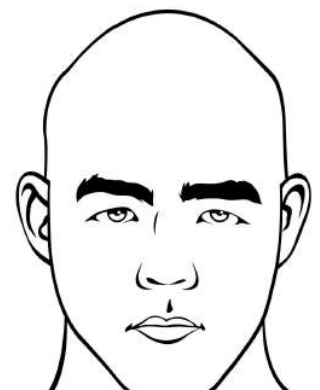
## Chapter 4: Specific Hairstyles

Want to know how to put all of that together?

Remember, each hairstyle is basically a combination of three factors:

- The kind of hair you have naturally
- The way your stylist has shaped it (the "attitude")
- The products and processes you use to take care of it at home

To see how those all come together, here's a list of some of the more common hairstyles. Most of these have more than one name, so you may have heard them called different things depending on where you live and how your stylist was trained.



## Short Cuts

### Shaved Head

Self-explanatory, really -- everything is shaved clean, leaving a bare scalp.

It's simple, but requires regular upkeep if you haven't gone completely bald naturally.

These days a shaved head is considered a reasonable option for men who are beginning to bald in places and want to even it all out, but it still has a youth and rebellion association for many people.

Combined with any visible tattoos it's definitely an aggressive style.

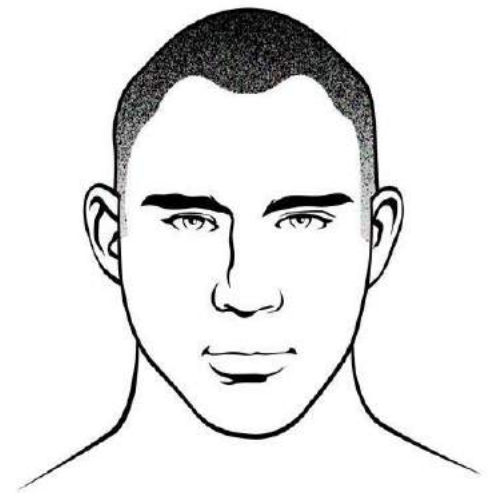
### Buzz

An even-length cut buzzed down to about 1/8" or less.

Most barbers will bring the back of the neckline up pretty high when they do a burr cut, so that there's not a lot of stubble reaching down the back of the neck.

A common cut for military men, athletes, and other guys who don't want to deal with styling or with sweaty tangles.

It's socially very neutral -- you can wear it with just about any style in just about any situation, though it's less common among the suit-and-tie crowd.

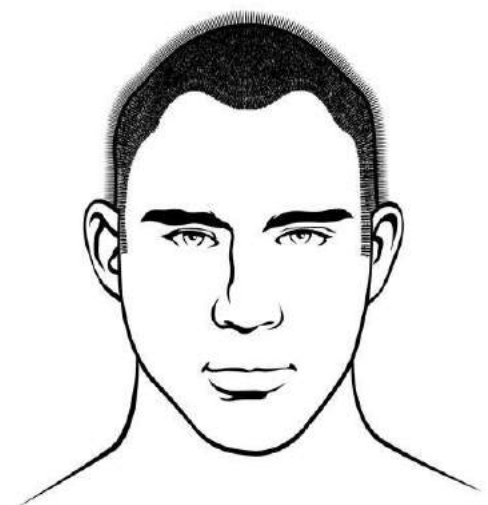


### Butch

Another buzz cut (where the hair is trimmed down to an even length all over with electric clippers), but longer than the burr.

Generally about an even 1/4" length. Sometimes the sides are tapered or faded out around the ears, but if the effect becomes dramatic it's more of a "fade" or a "high and tight" style (see below).

Like the burr, this is a low-maintenance default for men that don't like to think about their hair.



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It's a little less aggressively macho/sporting than the short burr.



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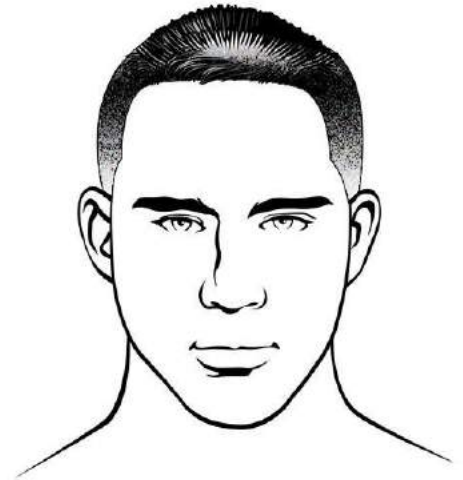


## Crew Cut

A buzz cut with some sculpting to it: the sides are usually tapered, and the top is tapered so that it's longer in front and shorter in back. The edges are usually rounded, giving it a little less boxy of a look than a butch or burr.

Crew cuts are a popular youth and college style, typical on frat boys and student athletes.

Older men with receding hairlines may also wear them, using the curve of the haircut to even out things around their bald spot.



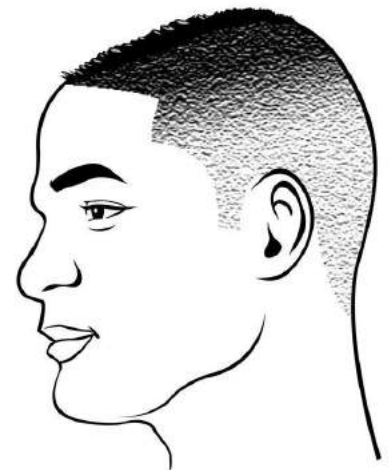
## Fade

A broad term, but generally refers to longer hair on top of the head buzzed gradually shorter as it comes down the side of the head. The taper usually starts around the ears and fades down to bare skin around the neckline.

Fades have been popular styles for men with curly hair for decades, with different lengths up top coming in and out of fashion. At the longest, the front can be curled up into a small pompadour (see below).

Fades give the low-maintenance of a basic buzz cut but look a little more deliberate. They're good for men who don't want to think about their hair much but who want a bit of style to their cut beyond the most basic, utilitarian shape.

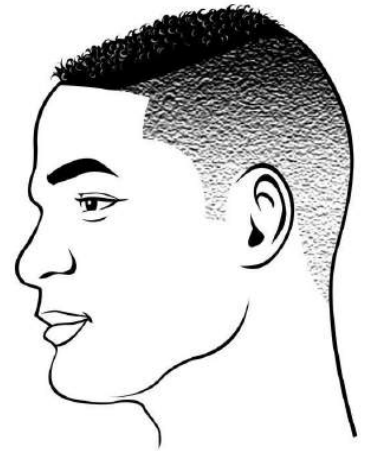
Different barbers probably have different ideas of where to start the fade and how long to leave it up top, so be sure to be specific in your request.



## High And Tight

A traditional military style, a "high and tight" is basically an extreme fade. The sides are shaved close all the way up the side of the head, leaving the hair a little longer for just the inch or two across the top of the skull. The top is usually between 1/8" and 1/4" long, with the rest of the head shaved closer than 1/8".

If the sides are shaved off entirely, leaving just a strip up top like a very short mohawk, it's sometimes called a "high and tight recon" or just a "recon."

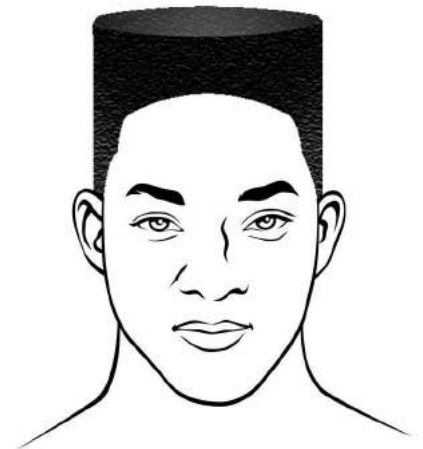


Outside of the military, it's sometimes worn as a low-maintenance look with a little style to it, especially by young men. High-and-tight cuts are uncommon in more formal business settings.

## Flat Top

A flat top is an aggressive buzz that trims the hair to an even height rather than an even length. That means it's a little longer on the sides than the very top of the head, with everything combed straight up (and usually stiffened with product).

The result is, as the name implies, a flat horizontal plane all the way across the top of the head. Some styles will round it out a bit around the edges, while others go for as sharp and boxy a shape as possible.



Flat tops are a fairly casual style. You'll see them on entertainers and celebrities from time to time, as well as athletes.

## Medium-Length Cuts

### Bowl Cut

An even-length style where the hair is left long on the top of the head, and then cut off at the same height all the way around the head, generally at about eye-level. The result is a "bowl" of hair on top of the head, falling to the same height all the way around.

Because the style is so easy to do (simply cut at the same height all the way around the head), it's associated with home haircuts, and often with small children who got their bowl cuts from their mothers.

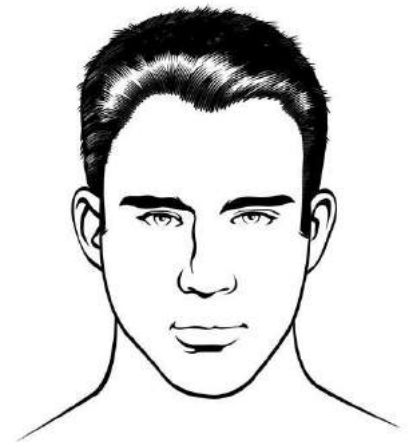
It does appear on adults (Moe from the Three Stooges is an obvious example), but is generally considered unstylish.



### Brush Cut

Another descriptively-named style: the hair on top of the head is cut short and kept standing straight up like the bristles on a brush. It generally involves product, although men with tightly curled hairs can create a bumpy brush cut that stands on its own. The sides are generally faded out down around the ears.

Brush cuts are popular with young men, and can range from fairly natural-looking to quite stiffly artificial. Dyed tips have come in and out of fashion with the brush cut and other upward-pointing styles like it.

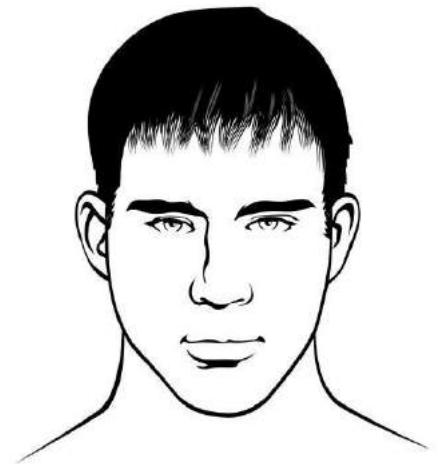


## Caesar Cut

A variation on the bowl cut with shorter bangs, worn straight forward and brushed down onto the forehead, but cut short enough that they do not fall into the eyes. Modeled on depictions of Julius Caesar, who wore his bangs pointed downward on his forehead.

Men with straight hair can wear this style easily, but wavy-haired men will need product to hold the bangs flat on the forehead.

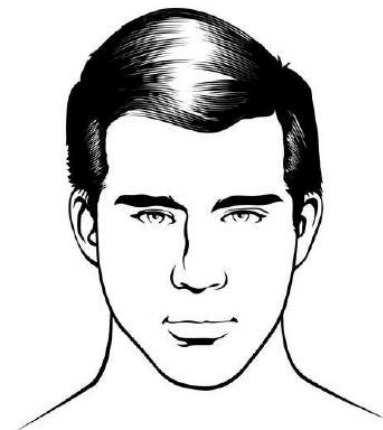
It's a convenient style that's easy to neaten with just your fingers -- comb the bangs forward and let everything else fall into an even bowl cut and you're done.



## Business Cut

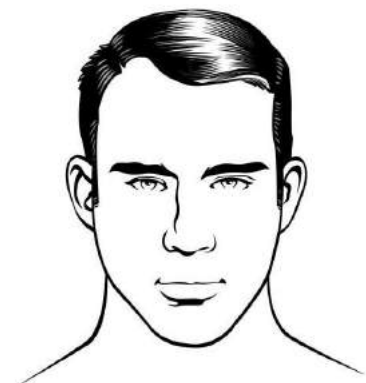
A "business cut" is a pretty broad term, but generally implies hair that is long enough to lay flat (or as flat as it naturally can) and is parted to one side or the other. It is usually tapered or curved at the back, and trimmed out of the eyes, off the back of the neck, and above the ears.

The business cut is the go-to for a lot of professional men. How it looks can depend a lot on the shape of your head, the body of your hair, and what product you use in it. As long as you keep it neat it's acceptable pretty much anywhere -- the biggest risk with it is looking generic, not looking inappropriate.



## Ivy League

A shorter variation of the business cut, parted to one side or the other and generally worn with gel or a similar fixative. It's meant to stay neat and flat. The classic companion to a "prep" look.

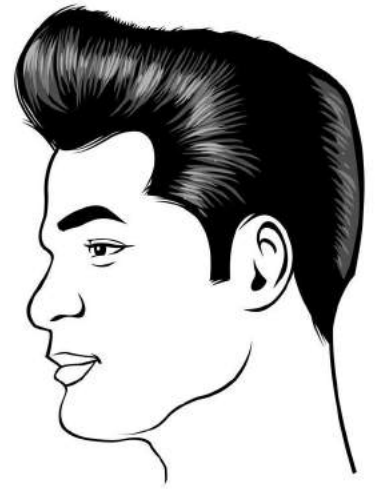




## Pompadour

Any style with the bangs brushed up and back and held in place with product. Low-key versions can be a basic "duck bill" or brushed-up tips, while extreme versions of the style look more like an Elvis 'do.

The more elaborate the curl in the front, the more it becomes a fashion statement. If you're just putting a little prow on your butch cut your pompadour is probably all right for most jobs as well as the club scene, but if you've got a full wave curling back from your forehead it's not going to look good with business dress.



Here's a video on choosing your hairstyle. [Click here to watch.](#)

## Taper Cut

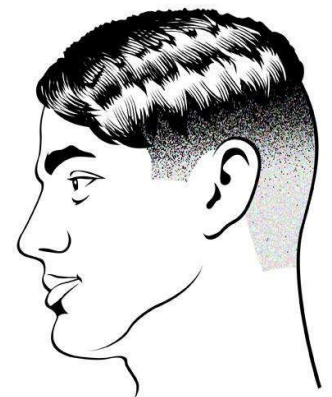
Essentially a fade cut with longer hair all around: the hair on top of the head is long enough to lie flat under its own weight, and gets trimmed gradually thinner as you move down the sides of the head. It's like a business or Ivy League cut without the sharp cutoff -- the hair goes on down below the ears and onto the nape of the neck, buzzed short rather than shaved off entirely.



## Layered Cut

A more styled way to wear your hair, and one that generally requires product: the hair is cut at varying lengths as it comes down the side of the head, creating an asymmetrical "mussed" look.

The advantage of a good layered cut is that you can do a lot with it.



Combing it into a neat part and holding it in place with product gives you a neaten-up appearance, and then when

you want to unwind you can just mess the whole thing up with your fingers and suddenly have a brand-new look.

Layered cuts can come in a variety of lengths and parts. As a general class, they're popular and practical for men who want to look like they've spent a little money on their appearance.

## Fauxhawk

There are a variety of spellings for "fauxhawk," which is a portmanteau of "faux" (meaning "fake") and "mohawk" -- a "fake mohawk," in other words.

In a fauxhawk (as in a mohawk; see below), the sides of the head are shaved clean, leaving only a strip an inch or two wide on top of the head. The hairs are brushed upward and angled inward so that they make a peaked ridge along the top of the scalp.



Fauxhawks are shorter than full mohawks, though there is no exact delineation between the two. In general, a fauxhawk will be an inch or two high at the most, and usually has a more rounded shape. Some have a little pompadour curl at the front as well, combining the two styles.

They are social styles, and not likely to be looked kindly upon in conservative workplaces.

## Long Cuts

### Beach Cut

The original surfer-dude look: grown long in both the front and the back, all pushed straight back so that the hair crests up from the forehead and then falls away toward the back of the head.

Most guys require product (or regular dips in the ocean) to keep the long bangs from falling forward over the face.



Length can vary. Beach cuts usually reach at least to the back of the neck, and can go all the way down the back.

It's an informal style, but done with the right product and good clothes accompanying it you can look stylishly windswept. Get lazy and let it start falling down around your face and you'll just look like a high school stoner, though, so exercise caution.

## Wave Cut

Also sometimes called a curl cut, this is a common choice for men with wavy hair who want to wear theirs long and still look a little dressy. The back and sides are grown long (usually just above shoulder length) and the bangs parted to fall on one side of the head or the other.

The result is a wavy front and side, with curls at the back of the neck.



Whenever long hair on men comes into fashion (it constantly see-saws back and forth), you see this on the cover of a lot of celebrity and Hollywood magazines. A little product and good hygiene keep it looking like a deliberate style, and not like you were too lazy to get a haircut.



Click the image to discover 100% natural men's hair care products - VITAMAN

## Ponytail

The no-thought default for long hair: both the front and back are long, and everything is gathered at the back of the head by an elastic band or other fastener. The "tail" then falls straight back.

The ponytail requires good dress sense if you want it to look like anything other than a lazy man's path of least resistance. You can't wear it with blue jeans and a T-shirt and expect to be taken very seriously, unless you're in a country-rock band.

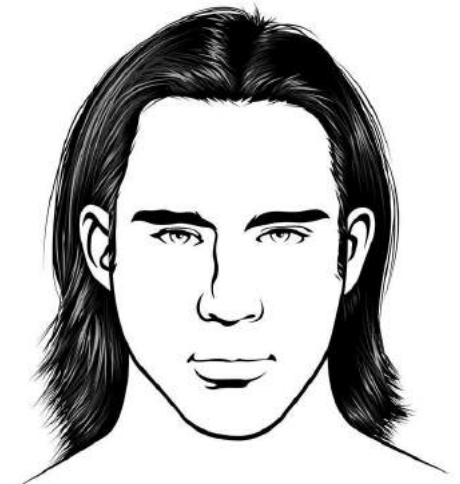


## Straight And Long

Also called a "shower cut" and a variety of regional terms, this is the beach cut without the backwards sweep, and with very straight hair. It doesn't work well for men with any natural wave or curl, unless they're willing to straighten their hair every day.

In this style, the long hair simply falls around the face in an even length. It falls both in front of and behind the shoulders. Wear it when you want to look like the cover of a romance novel -- but probably not to work.

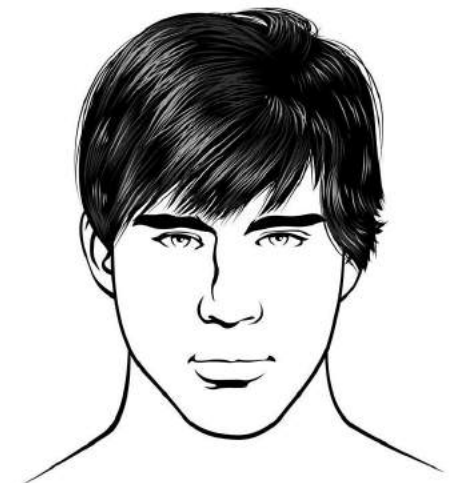
Straight and long is usually center-parted or not parted at all, but it can be swept to one side or the other for a slightly more stylized, asymmetrical look.



## Front Bangs

The bangs are grown out and brushed downward, falling in front of the eyes. This can be paired with any number of lengths and parts, but the effect is always a little sheltering.

Lately it's had an association with emo music, goth culture, and other moody youth fashions.



## Dreadlocks

Traditionally an African-American hairstyle, dreadlocks can actually be grown by most people -- it just takes more or less effort depending on your hair.

The long, matted coils are generally assumed to be a casual style, but several high-profile black celebrities have been wearing dreads with top-end business wear, bringing them more into the mainstream.

Keeping dreads healthy is a fairly involved process. Be prepared to do some careful maintenance if you decide to go for this style.



## Bon Jovi

Named for the rock star, this is the "Big Hair" look of the 1980s: long, unparted, and teased into piles of curls with product. It's an over-the-top look (literally) that only goes well with elaborate fashion or with counter-culture trappings.

Tease your hair into a Bon Jovi for a rock concert if you want to, but you'll look pretty silly running errands or going to work with one.



## Mohawk

Another one that's better at concerts than worn day-to-day: the sides of the head are shaved and the hair in the middle is greased straight up, either into a single pointed ridge or into a series of spikes.

Long mohawks are often dyed for extra effect.



## Chapter 5: How To Tell Your Barber What You Want

"GIGO" is ancient slang as far as computer culture goes. It's been around since the days of punchcard-fed equations. But it's still relevant: "Garbage In, Garbage Out."

In other words, you get what you ask for. Exactly what you ask for. Ask for the wrong thing, and you don't get what you wanted.

It works with barbers just like it does with computers. The poor guy (or girl) can only base your haircut off of what you tell him (or her).

Here's what you need to do to make your desires clear:

### Give An Example

Does it feel a little embarrassing to pull a magazine clipping of a celebrity out and say "can you do my hair like his?"

Yeah, probably. That feels a little too teenage-girly for most of us. But you know what? It works.

If you're dying to have your hair look just like Don Draper's on Mad Men, take a deep breath and tell your barber so. If you can, have a picture on hand, just in case he hasn't seen the show (or so that you know you're both thinking of the same season's look).

Smartphones have made it even easier -- download a couple shots of the look you want, and let your barber flip through them.



Of course, it may not be possible. If you have tightly-curved red hair, no amount of trimming and product is going to make you look like Don Draper. And your barber will tell you that.

But giving a concrete example is probably the single best thing you can do to make sure you and your barber are on the same page. Do it, if you possibly can, and try to do it with a visual aid as well as a verbal description.

## Clearly Define The Outline

Lay the haircut you want out clearly. If you want the hair all the way up off your ears, the phrase "above the ears, please" needs to leave your mouth at some point. Ditto "out of the eyes," "off the neck," and so on.

That defines where you actually want the hair to stop -- where you want the cut to stop and bare skin to begin. If you want a fade instead, that's another word that needs to leave your mouth. "Fading out below the ears," etc., tell the barber where you want the cut to end and the graduated buzz to begin.

You need to do this even if you've given the barber a specific style. Tell one barber that you want a "crew cut," with no other details, and you'll get a different shape than you will with another barber.

## Describe The Texture

One thing that the name of a style doesn't tell the barber is how you want the surface of your hair shaped. This is especially important for longer styles.

A barber can use different tools for different looks -- if he goes at your hair with the electric trimmers, it's going to be shorter, spikier, and more uniform than if he works entirely with scissors, and a straight razor will give you a choppy, more layered look that thins the hair out overall.

Key things to describe how even you want the hair and how thick you want it. Tell the barber if you want to lose some volume, and tell him if you want a choppy, layered look versus a smooth, even look.

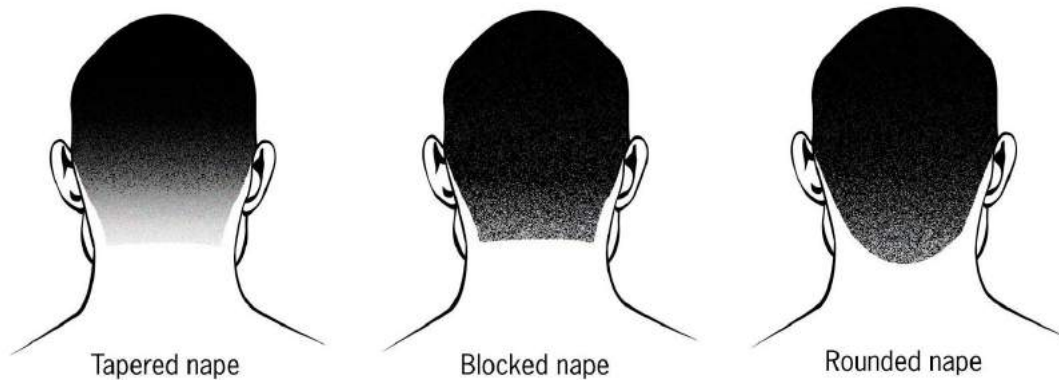
## Get Specific

The last step is one you don't have to do. But if you like being in control of your look, and you've gone some research, there are a couple of specific points where you can tell your barber or stylist what options you prefer.

### Neckline

Neckline is the shape of the bottom edge of the haircut in back. It's also sometimes called the nape, although that's more properly a term for the back of the neck itself.

- A blocked neckline squares off solidly across the bottom. It's usually done with scissors followed up with trimmers. It's easy, but starts to look raggedy fast, so be prepared to do some trimming at home or to make some follow-up visits to keep it neat.



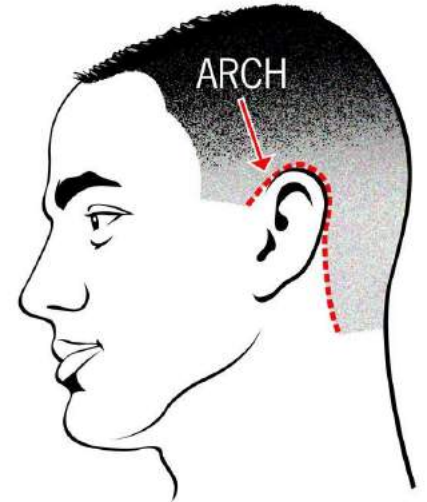
- A rounded neckline has a gentle arch shape at the bottom. It's longest right in the middle of the neck, and sweeps up a bit to the sides. It's a little less chunky-looking than the blocked style, but otherwise about the same.
- A tapered neckline uses the trimmers to fade the neckline out gradually. Instead of a clear line, either straight or bowed, you get a gradient. It's a little more time-consuming to do in the first place (and takes more skill), but it grows out more evenly than the other styles. It's a good option for shorter cuts that are already ending high on the neck.



## Arches

The arches are the spaces between your haircut and your ears. In any style that falls below the ear, they're by necessity an arch shape, hooking over the ear -- hence the name.

- High arches is a specific request that leaves a little more bare skin between your hairline and your ear. It makes your ears stand out a bit more -- useful if you feel that you have small ears, or that you need your head to look wider in general.
- Natural arches hug the ears. How much hair there is down around the ear will depend on the style of haircut you're getting. Unless your ears are getting completely swallowed by your hair, this is probably the best way to go.
- Tapered arches fade out around the ear, just like a tapered neckline fades out on the back of the neck. It's the appropriate choice for cuts that have a taper on the sides elsewhere as well -- a tapering cut coming down the side of your head looks strange if it hits the arch and suddenly turns into a clean line.



An advertisement for Vitaman hair products. The background is a photograph of three jars of hair product stacked on a rocky surface. The text "HIGH PERFORMANCE HAIR PRODUCTS FOR MEN" is written in large, bold, white letters on a dark background. Below this, a green button contains the text "Click Here To Discover" and a black button contains the text "VITAMAN".

## Sideburns

The sideburns are the tufts of hair that come down from behind your ears to join your facial hair (if you have any). Most cuts look better with the burns kept short, but if you have a beard that comes all the way up your cheeks it may look more natural to grow the sideburns out until they join it.

If you don't want your barber to thin your sideburns down fairly short, you should tell him -- the default is usually to trim them down.



Here's a classic hairstyle with sideburns. [Click here to watch the video.](#)

## Chapter 6: Facial Hair

A full guide to facial hair could be its own standalone work (and you can download it [right here](#))



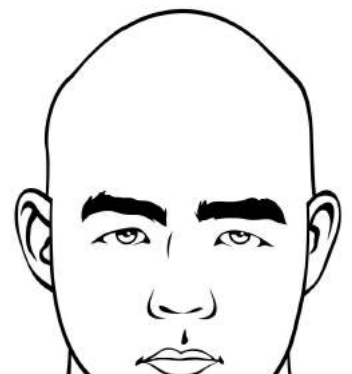
But to touch briefly on its relation to hair styles: much like your outfits, you want your facial hair to at least loosely reflect the same level of formality as your hairstyle.

A huge bushy beard flying out in every direction is going to look silly with a business suit. For that matter, so will long, spiraling forks in a double goatee -- even though it requires lots of product, care, and styling, the look still isn't a business one.

Men who want to grow elaborate and unique facial hair styles will already probably have a good idea of what they're going for. For the rest of us, here are some of the most common facial hair styles, and a few short suggestions on how to wear them:

### Clean Shaven

This is the default for a lot of men in the business world.



## REAL MEN REAL STYLE THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MEN'S HAIR

Although it requires daily maintenance (for most of us), going clean-shaven is overall a fairly low-effort beard option. As long as you have five minutes to run a razor over your face, you can achieve a uniform look day in and day out.

Some conservative workplaces may require clean shaves. Others may not explicitly ban facial hair, but will still have a mostly-shaven culture.

If this is your facial hair style of choice, invest in a simple razor that can stand up to lots of use. A basic metal safety razor is often a good option -- the blades are much cheaper than cartridges for plastic razors, and give just as good of a shave if you change them regularly.

Clean shaves go well with just about any hairstyle, including the longer ones. It's a neutral template. The only thing that might potentially look a little odd would be an extremely bushy and unkempt hairstyle falling all around your face with a smooth, well-kept shave. At that point you might as well let the beard go fuzzy too.

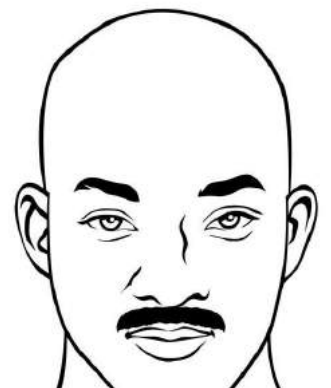
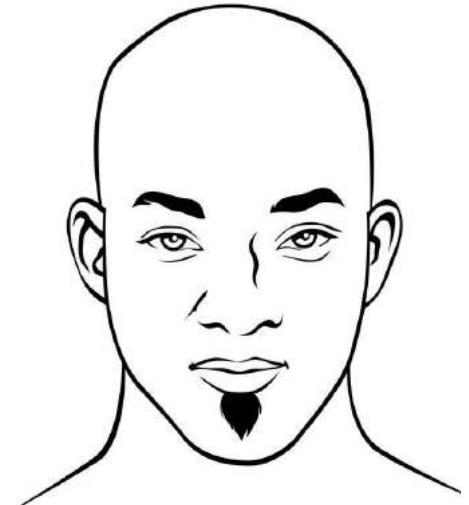
### Soul Patch

A soul patch is the next-closest thing to a clean shave: just a small patch of hair centered under the lower lip.

Lengths can vary slightly, but for the most part soul patches are kept as a dot or teardrop shape, stopping well above the point of the chin.

This is a sporty, young man's style. It's been popular among a wide range of cultures, from California surfers to professional athletes. Because of its leisurely associations, it's not the best style for a business setting.

A soul patch is pretty easy to keep in shape with just a basic safety razor, but some men prefer a small-tipped electric for the added control. The bushier the patch, the less defined its edges will become, meaning that a very close-trimmed soul patch needs more careful outlining than a thick one.



## Mustaches

It's a broad term, but for practical purposes we'll lump in any style that has hair only on the upper lip as a "mustache."

Different thicknesses and lengths of mustache come into and out of style all the time. Right now there's a bit of a craze among younger men for "vintage" styles that require careful trimming and waxing; no doubt in another few years that will morph into a return to bushy, 1970s-style 'staches or something else entirely.

Feel free to chase fashions or follow your own preference as much as you like here. Particularly elaborate styles that require delicate waxing are too fancy to be business-appropriate in conservative settings, while thicker styles need to be trimmed fairly close for conventional workplaces.

Most mustaches will have something of an aging effect. They're widely seen as an older man's style, apart from very experimental (or scruffy) ones, so you can expect to add a few years with a conventional mustache.

## Chin Beards

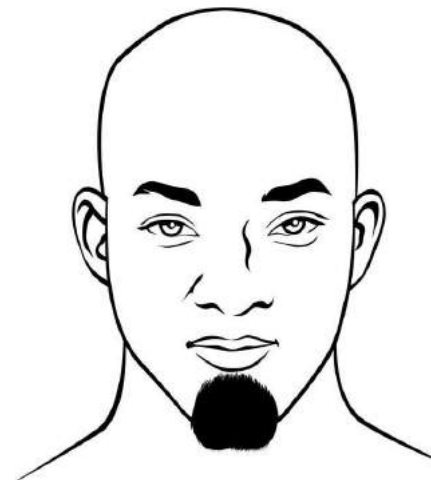
Not to be confused with a chin strap, which runs all the way around the face, a basic chin beard is exactly that: hair that covers the curve of the chin, but stops before it comes up the cheekbones.

Like mustaches, this can come in a lot of different lengths and flavors. A thin goatee is a chin beard; so is a thick spade beard trimmed square at the end.

Many chin beard styles include hair grown upward on either side of the mouth, framing the lower lip (some will also include a soul patch or stripe in the center, coming down from the lower lip).

This is often a good family of styles for men who want to wear facial hair but also need to keep it professional. Leaving the upper lip and cheeks bare and keeping the hair on the chin under control gives a conservative, refined look to the face that can pair well with business attire and settings.

An electric razor may help keep a chin beard at an even length, especially if you want it trimmed very close. At slightly



longer lengths you can usually achieve the needed evening with careful passes of a safety or straight razor.

## Chin And Lip Beards

Combine a mustache and a chin beard and you've got, well, a chin and lip beard. It makes a full circle around the lips, enclosing them in hair.

Some styles will curl the mustache upward, so that it doesn't fully join with the rest of the beard (like a "van Dyke" beard), but most are a simple horseshoe shape around the lips that joins with a curve of hair along the chin.

The overall look when worn naturally (without wax or other products) is rugged, simple, and timelessly manly. You might not be able to get away with it in very conservative business settings, but most places will accept it so long as it's neatly trimmed.

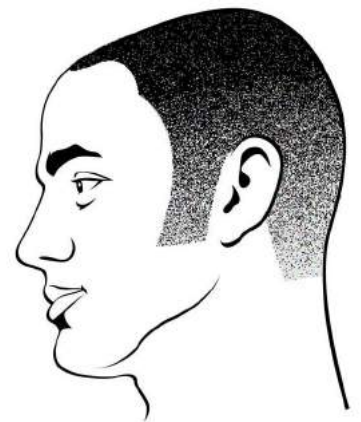
It is, however, easy for a beard of this size to start getting out of hand, and you can move into lumberjack territory very quickly if you're not careful. Keep it trimmed, either with an electric razor or small scissors, or by passing a safety razor a few inches from the skin.

## Sideburns

For most men, sideburns are part of a haircut. But they can be grown out to the point that they become facial hair in their own right.

Long sideburns are a casual look, and something of a dated one (although you never know what's going to come back into style unexpectedly). They're fine for leisure activities and young men who aren't in conservative jobs, but pairing them with a suit or even a good blazer will definitely seem odd.

The length of your sideburns can vary from something that's trimmed quite close to the haircut (more conservative) to most of the way down the planes of the cheeks (less conservative). They can also be trimmed to a small, narrow line or allowed to grow until they make a wide strip, generally an inch or two wide on most men's cheeks.





Are You Ready to Take Action?

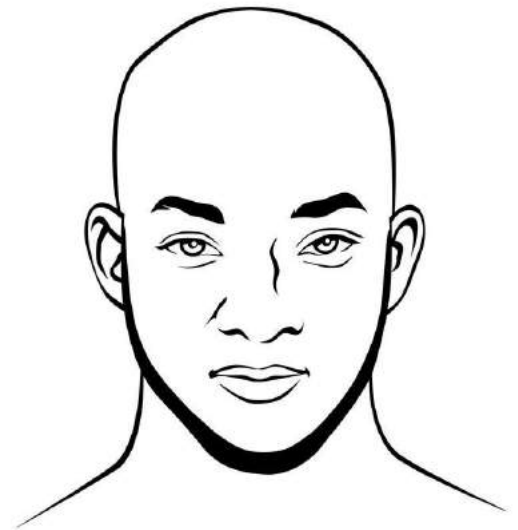
[Click here](#) to get your Free **Style Consultation** with me!

## Chinstraps

Wrap a set of sideburns all the way around, so that there's a continuous line of beard from one side of the haircut under the chin and up to the other side of the haircut, and you've got a chinstrap.

Like sideburns without the chin beard, it's more of a youth and casual style than anything an older man or a businessman might wear.

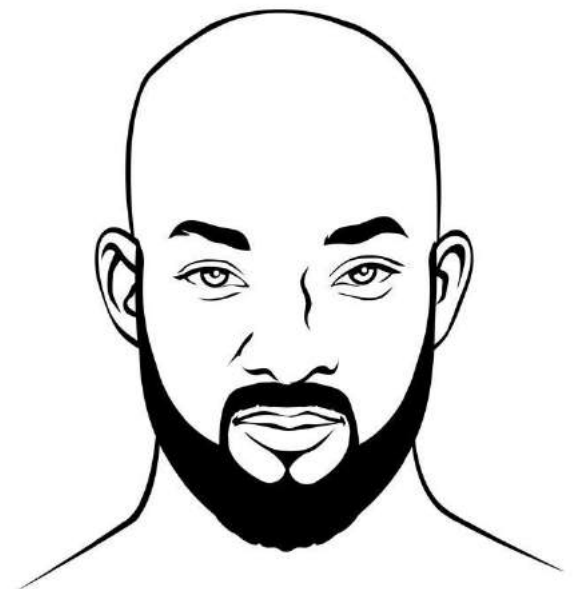
Keeping a chinstrap an even thickness all the way around can be a pain. It may be worth investing in a specialized razor with a smaller head, whether electric or manual, so that you can work in more detail.



## Full Beard

Put all your options together -- sideburns, chin beards, and mustaches -- and you get the full beard. This has hair on the cheeks, the chin, and the lips.

A full beard needs to be trimmed short and kept very neat around the edges if it's to be presentable with anything besides a lumberjack's plaid flannel shirt. At this point you'll almost certainly need an electric razor to keep the length even, with no stray curls popping out.



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The length of a full beard can vary, but to keep it neat you're best off shaving everything underneath the point of the chin, avoiding any "neckbeard" growth. If you start letting that grow out, you'll need the tip of the beard to come down quite a ways to hide it (or blend into it).

Expect to spend some time every morning with a full beard, if you want to keep it from looking like facial hair that you've just let grow wild.

## Conclusion

And that's all there is to it. Know your hair -- its texture, color, and thickness -- and know what you want your haircut to say about you. Then pick a style that suits your taste and your maintenance needs.

It doesn't get any easier than that!

When a person looks at you, what do they see? Your clothes, your face -- and your hair.

The "appearance" of your hair breaks down into a couple of different components.

You've got more control over some of them than others. The part can be changed in seconds, the length in minutes, and the color in hours (changing the length in seconds is also possible, but not recommended unless you've just enlisted and are off to see the highly-efficient Army barbers).

Put together, these five elements make up the total "look" of your hair that an outside observer sees:

- The End -

...or is it just the **beginning of your style journey?**

[Click here to check out my other free eBooks.](#)

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See you on the other side!