

# Barbering Techniques for Hairstylists



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Arden Magtiza and Gary Franceshini

BCCAMPUS  
VICTORIA, B.C.



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## Introduction

The demand for barber services is growing in the hairstylist industry. Whether you are working in a salon environment or a designated barber shop, it is becoming more and more necessary for hairstylists to have a basic knowledge of barbering services in order to meet the growing expectations of their clients.

This manual serves as a guide for apprentices who desire to grow beyond their foundational haircutting knowledge and skills, and expand their knowledge to include more advanced barbering services, such as beard and moustache design, and straight razor shaves.

Whether you have completed a Hairstylist Foundations program, apprenticeship program, or are currently enrolled in Hairstylist Level 2 or equivalent, this resource will be valuable to you.

### Learning Objectives

Topics covered in this resource include:

- How to perform a thorough design consultation, which revisits and expands on face shape considerations to include beard, moustache, and nape considerations, head shape, and skin concerns.
- How to select the appropriate tools and products to complete the desired barbering service.
- How to perform various facial and nape hair reduction and shaping services.
- How to perform a facial and nape straight razor shave.





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# Chapter 1 – Client Consultation and Analysis

## Learning Objectives

- Perform a visual analysis of the client's face shape
- Perform a visual analysis of the skin
- Determine the appropriate design shape or hair removal procedure based on the consultation



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## 1.1 The Design Consultation

A thorough design **consultation** and assessment is the basis for a successful barbering service. It is the stylist's responsibility to assess the client's individual physical and personal attributes to suggest a suitable hairstyle and facial hair design.

So what makes for a good consultation?

Your assessment should include:

- Face shape
- Head shape
- Growth patterns

### Face Shape

During the consultation phase of the barbering service, it is important for the barber/stylist to have the ability to recognize and determine the client's facial shape. Face shape is an important component of any haircut or facial hair design. This is because the shape of the final look can highlight or detract from certain facial features. Be sure to take the client's preferences into account, and use tact when suggesting a certain style.

The most common face shapes are as follows:

### Oval



The oval face is considered to have the most ideal proportions. This shape has balanced **symmetry**, and those with an oval face shape can easily wear most hair styles and beard designs. Keep in mind, however, that an overgrown beard that is either very wide or very long will detract from the oval’s natural symmetry.

### Round

The round face has a fairly equal length-to-width proportion, with a softer jawline and shorter chin.

Haircuts and styles that provide height on the top of the head, width above the temple, or angular shapes will help the lengthen the round face shape.

When shaping facial hair on a round face, the goal is to create an illusion of angles or length. Keep the sides closely cropped to avoid adding width, and instead put focus on lengthening the chin area to create a more oval appearance. Add angles by cleaning up and shaping the upper outline of the beard into a straighter line. A goatee is also a great option for the round face, as it creates the illusion of length at the chin.



## Square



Similar to the round face shape, the square shape has a fairly equal length-to-width ratio, but is discernible by its strong angles at the hairline and chin.

A more rounded haircut with soft edges towards the temples will help to soften the strong corners of the square face shape.

When suggesting a beard style, you'll want to avoid adding emphasis to the angular jaw. As with the round face, keep the sides closely cropped and add length at the chin to slim the face and create the illusion of a more oval shape. In this case, keep the silhouette of the beard more rounded. A circle beard is a good option here.

## Oblong

The oblong is the most elongated face shape, with a strong jaw and higher hairline.

Side-swept hairstyles that move over the temples soften the appearance of the hairline, and create the appearance of a shorter face.

When shaping the facial hair on an oblong face, avoid suggesting a style that will add more length. Instead, keep the beard closely cropped or opt for a moustache to break up the elongated proportions.



### Triangle/Heart Shape



The triangular face shape has prominent cheekbones with a narrow jawline and a pointed chin. The heart-shaped face carries the same features, but with a peak at the centre of the front hairline.

Haircuts that maintain length and/or add fullness at the nape as well as the jawline will create balance on the triangular face shape.

For the facial hair design, avoid adding more width at the temples, and instead opt to suggest a beard style that is fuller at the chin so as to create balance with the cheekbones and soften the sharp angles.

### Pear

The pear facial shape is recognizable by a narrow forehead with width at the jaw.

To create balance, haircuts that add fullness to the sides, temples, and the top of the head are recommended.

For this face shape, suggest facial hair designs that provide a slimming effect at the chin, such as a goatee or a closely cropped beard so as to avoid adding additional width or bulk at the jawline.





## Diamond



The diamond face shape has an elongated appearance, with high cheekbones, a narrow forehead, and a pointed chin.

Textured hairstyles that add width at the temples and chin are ideal to create a more oval appearance.

For this client, avoid adding additional length at the chin, and instead suggest a beard style that adds some fullness and width to the cheeks and chin to create balance with the prominent cheekbones.

## How Face Shape and Facial Features Influence Moustache Design

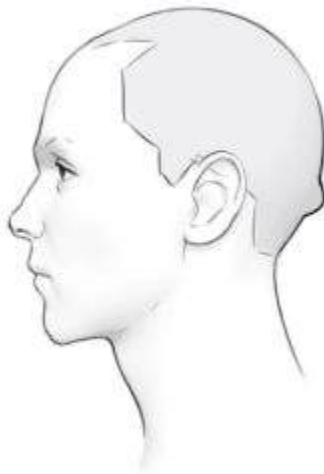
Typically, the length and width of a moustache should be designed in relation to the size of the client's facial features. For example, strong/heavy features require a larger moustache design for a balanced appearance, while fine/slight features require a smaller moustache design. Take into consideration the size of the nose, the upper lip shape, the width of the mouth, and the width of the chin, jaw, and cheeks. As a barber, you have the ability to enhance or detract from the client's prominent facial features with the chosen style of moustache. Use the same principles as you would with hair styles for facial and beard design.

## Head Shape

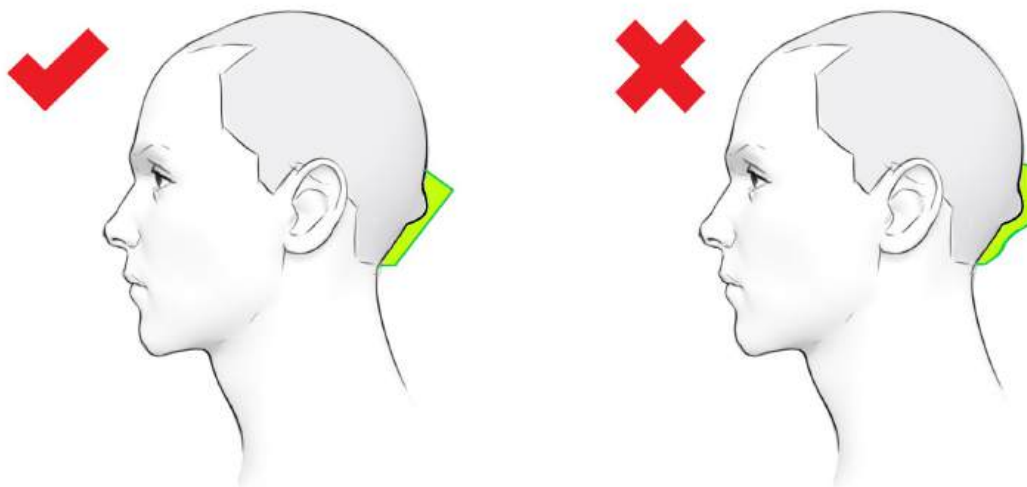
Prior to performing a haircut or facial hair design, the barber/stylist must also assess the client's head shape. Head shape will influence what length(s) and techniques will be used to create balance, proportion, and suitability for the client.

Generally, heads are comprised of rounded areas (**crown**, **parietal**, and **occipital**), concave curved areas (below the occipital towards the **nape**), and flat areas (sides and top of head). Often, when we do a visual assessment of a client's head shape, we will discover that not everyone fits the general description above. For example, a client that has a flat, and squared off head shape may benefit from a haircut that is more rounded in shape so as to soften the overall appearance. Other physical features such as ridges, a predominant occipital bone, flat or indented areas, or even a scar in the nape area require specific attention. They also provide warnings, telling you to consider all factors before tapering the cut as closely as you were initially thinking.

## Predominant Occipital Bone



A pronounced occipital bone can affect the nape trim, namely in the way in which you will blend the nape area into the rest of the haircut. If there is a ridge in the skull, it is best to leave the areas below and above slightly longer than the hair directly over the ridge so as to detract from it, and to allow for a smoother and straighter transition. If the client wants to disguise the ridge completely, suggest a slightly longer cut and avoid tightly faded styles.



*Maintain length around the occipital to create a smooth transition (left). Avoid following the ridge with your clipper, as this will highlight the pronounced occipital (right).*

## Flat or Indented Areas

Flat or indented areas can occur anywhere on the head, including the nape. If the head is asymmetrical

in shape, it is best to shorten and shape the hair on either side of the flat area first, so that you can use that hair as a guide while working over the indented area, so as to create a smooth transition and the appearance of a symmetry.

### Scalp Folds or Scars

Occasionally you will have a client that has scalp folds or scarring in the nape area. If the client wishes to hide these features, opt for a slightly longer hairstyle that allows for enough length in the nape to blend the hair seamlessly over the area.

## Additional Considerations

### Growth Patterns in the Nape and Sideburns

Why are growth patterns important to consider before starting a service?

Growth patterns play a tremendous role in how the hair will respond to being cut. They also inform the barber/stylist as to which techniques will be used to cut the hair. Prior to performing a service, pay careful attention to the direction of the hair growth and any changes in the **grain**.



The grain is established by the direction in which the hair grows out of the surface of the skin. The grain changes when hair growing in one direction meets up with hair growing in the opposite or differing direction. Whorls, double crowns, and cowlicks are all visual indicators of growth patterns and the direction of grain.

During the pre-service consultation, the stylist/barber must evaluate for growth patterns and direction of grain particularly around the client's hairline and the nape area. This is especially important when hair is to be cut or removed entirely. When shaping the nape, the general rule is to follow the client's natural hairline, rather than creating an entirely new shape. This encourages a more natural look as the hair grows back between services. While the stylist/barber is required to make recommendations regarding the client's hairline, they must also take into consideration the client's preferences.



When removing excess nape hair with a razor, it is best to follow the grain of the hair growth to minimize discomfort and ingrown hairs. In some instances, if further removal or closeness is required, a procedure may be used to shave against the grain. You will find further information on this in [Chapter 4](#).

While we see endless combinations of growth patterns on the nape and scalp, we tend to see more predictable growth patterns while performing facial hair design and shaves.

Note: In Chapter 4, you will learn about the methodical way in which a shave is performed, in terms of areas of the face and razor stroke direction. Because it is important to follow the grain while shaving, the barber/stylist may switch up the direction of the razor stroke if an atypical growth pattern is detected.

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## 1.2 Skin Analysis

In Hairstylist Level 1, you will have learned about various scalp and skin abnormalities. This chapter advances on that knowledge to cover specific skin issues of the face and nape that a barber/stylist will be required to recognize during the consultation, prior to performing a trimming or shaving service. Although many skin growths and blemishes are harmless in nature, they require special attention when performing a hair-removal service so as to avoid accidental laceration when using shears, trimmers, clippers, and razors that come into close contact with the skin.

In this chapter we will take a closer look at the following:

- Growths
- Blemishes
- Ingrown hairs
- Scars
- Skin sensitivity

### Growths

Growths on the skin are caused by an accumulation of skin cells. Typically, growths appear as flat or raised with a varying degree of pigmentation from skin tone to black.

Growths are classified as either:

- **Controlled:** A benign growth that has *not* spread to other areas of the body.
- **Uncontrolled:** A malignant growth that has spread into neighbouring tissues or other areas of the body.

Controlled growths, such as benign moles or skin tags, are caused by factors such as genetics, viruses (i.e., warts), sun exposure, and diseases that are systemic in the body.

Note: As a stylist/barber, if you detect any changes in your client's moles or other growths, advise them to see their practitioner for further examination.

## Moles



A mole is formed when the **melanocytes** produce coloured spots or marks on the skin's surface. Moles can vary in colour from skin tone to black, and can have either a flat or raised appearance. Over time, moles may change in colour and shape. Therefore, it is recommended to monitor them for abnormalities.

When trimming or removing hair around a mole, work carefully. Protect or move the mole out of the way with your finger, if possible, while cutting or shaving so as to avoid an accidental injury.

## Skin Tags



Skin tags can often be found on the neck. They are flesh-coloured flaps that are small and soft to the touch. Although harmless, care should be taken when removing hair near and around a skin tag. Use the same technique with skin tags as you did with moles.

## Blemishes



*From left to right: Whiteheads, blackheads, and pustules/pimples.*

A blemish appears as a spot, discoloration, or imperfection on the surface of the skin. The three most common blemishes that a barber/stylist will see on a client's face or neck are whiteheads, blackheads, and pustules/pimples.

Although blemishes are generally not harmful, clients may be embarrassed or distressed by them. The appearance, development, and reoccurrence of most blemishes can be controlled by a healthy diet, professional skincare, and/or over-the-counter medicated products. If a client is unable to manage their skin, you can advise them to seek the advice of a physician or a dermatologist.

Note: You should not proceed with a trimming or shaving service on an open and active growth or blemish, as this may promote the spread of bacteria to the surrounding skin.

## Ingrown Hairs



Ingrown hairs are the result of dead skin cells congesting the hair follicle. This causes the hair to grow sideways or turn back onto itself underneath the skin, rather than growing upward to the skin's surface as expected. An ingrown hair typically appears as a small raised bump which will likely resolve itself

over time. However, if an ingrown hair becomes inflamed or infected, it will bear a cyst-like appearance and may require antibiotic treatment.

Ingrown hairs can result from a shave service, if proper care is not taken. This issue will be discussed further in [Chapter 4](#).

## Scars



Scars are caused when the dermis layer of the skin is damaged. This damage can occur from an injury or from a blemish that did not heal correctly. Not all scars are cause for concern. However, if a scar is raised, the barber/stylist must take care not to apply excess pressure to the razor or trimmer as it passes over the scarred area during the service.

## Skin Sensitivities

Due to the vast array of clients that a barber/stylist will see over the course of a week, it is quite likely that they will encounter clients that have skin sensitivities.

Signs of skin sensitivities include:

- Skin that flushes easily or has visible redness
- Skin that is blotchy or itchy
- Skin that has acute reactions to touch or temperature
- Skin that has acute reactions to skin care products

What causes skin sensitivities? Skin sensitivities can be caused by a variety of external or internal factors. Some examples are listed in the chart below:



### External and Internal Causes of Skin Sensitivities

External Factors	Internal factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harsh ingredients in skin care products</li> <li>• Acne treatments (Accutane, Retin A, etc.)</li> <li>• Over-exfoliation</li> <li>• Too much caffeine or alcohol</li> <li>• A poor diet</li> <li>• UV exposure</li> <li>• Smoking or vaping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress</li> <li>• Hormones</li> <li>• Genetics</li> <li>• Underlying health conditions</li> </ul>

Considerations for treating sensitive skin during a barbering service:

- Hot towels are *not* advised if the skin is chapped, or particularly thin and sensitive.
- Take care when using astringent products, as they may be too harsh and cause discomfort to sensitive skin.

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## Chapter 2 – Barbering Tools and Products

### Learning Objectives

- Identify and describe the function of various barbering tools
- Identify and describe the benefits of various barbering products
- Select the appropriate tools and products based on the consultation and analysis



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## 2.1 Barbering Tools



In Level 1 Hairstylist, you learned about the tools that are used for haircutting, including their parts and functions. Let's explore the tools that are used for facial hair design and hair removal in both the nape and facial areas.

### Shears

Shears are used for haircuts to remove length and bulk and to create the shape of the design. A shear-over-comb technique is used for the removal of nape hair, facial hair design, and the trimming of eyebrows. In addition, shears can be used to remove hair entirely by placing the blades flat against the skin. However, when extreme closeness is desired, clippers, trimmers, or a razor are preferable to shears because they create a closer result.

[Video: Using Shears to Trim the Side of a Beard](#)

Note: Video has no sound.



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## Clippers

Clippers are used for various techniques when performing a hair reduction service, such as length removal and blending, or to remove the majority of the hair prior to a shaving service. There are many styles of clippers available. Some features to consider when purchasing a clipper are size, weight, performance, and power supply (corded or cordless).

Many clippers come with a standard set of blades attached and rely on additional guard attachments to determine the length the hair will be cut. Alternatively, some brands of clippers have detachable blades in various sizes that are designed to cut the hair to different lengths without the need for a guard attachment.



Why use a clipper and not a trimmer? Clippers are useful for working on larger areas or where a large amount of hair needs to be reduced or removed.

Note: A clipper without a guard may cause discomfort, irritation, or abrasions on the skin if used with excess pressure. Always be cautious and be sure to check-in with the client to ensure their comfort.

## Trimmers

The trimmer is a smaller, more compact version of the clipper. This makes the trimmer ideal for detailing, refining, and outlining a haircut or facial design, and trimming eyebrows. The trimmer is also referred to as an outliner or edger.

Trimmers come in a variety of blade widths and designs (i.e., straight or T-shaped blade). Their use depends on the barber/stylist's preference, or on specific design techniques used in particular areas of the face and nape.



Trimmers have a much finer cutting blade than that of clippers, so when used with light pressure on the skin they can effectively remove the hair without discomfort. Keep in mind that using too much pressure with a trimmer/outliner runs the same risk of causing abrasions or irritation as the larger clipper.

## Guards

Guards are attachments that are made to fit clippers and trimmers. They enable the hair to be cut to an even, predetermined length. Guards are most often made of hard plastic. However, there are rubber and steel varieties available as well.



Due to the rigidity of the guards, there may be a loss of tension throughout the cutting process. This loss of tension can result in lines, ridges, or uneven results in the final design. To avoid imperfections



when using a guarded clipper, use multiple passes from multiple directions to ensure an even and blended outcome.

## Combs

While combs are available in various styles or sizes, there are two styles used primarily in facial hair and nape services. The all-purpose cutting comb is useful for scissor-over-comb and clipper-over-comb techniques, when removing length through the beard or nape areas. The tapered cutting comb is ideal for moustache trims and blending in tight areas such as around the ears.



*All-purpose cutting comb.*



*Tapered cutting comb.*

## Straight Razors

Shaving services that demand a close, clean cut require the use of a razor. These services include facial, nape, and neck shaving. The outlining of a haircut can also be achieved using a razor as an alternative to shears.



A razor is the sharpest cutting tool available to the barber/stylist, and is available in two styles:

- Single-use/changeable blade

- Conventional blade

### Single-Use Blade Razor

The single-use razor is a lighter-weight option that uses disposable blades. The blades are slid into the head of the razor and can be used with or without a guard. These razors are favorable as they do not require the need to hone or strop the blade, and they are easier to keep clean and sanitary due to their disposable nature.

A single-use blade razor is used in two ways:

1. Without a guard to shave the skin
2. With a guard to razor cut the hair

### Conventional Blade Straight Razor

The conventional straight blade razor is a steel implement that has been balanced and tempered for optimal use. These razors must be thoroughly cleaned after each client, and require constant maintenance by honing and stropping the razor to maintain a sharp cutting edge.

Honing is the process of sharpening the razor by methodically stroking the blade edge along a hone, which is a block of abrasive material.

Stropping is the process of smoothing and shaping the honed razor into a precise cutting implement by methodically passing the blade edge along a durable canvas or leather strap.

A good quality conventional straight razor can last a barber/stylist many years if it is consistently sharpened and maintained.



*Strop*

### Lather Receptacles

The lather receptacle is used to hold and dispense the soap lather during the shave. The most common

receptacles typically used in barber shops today are the electric lather receptacle and the lather mug, which is also known as a barber scuttle.



## Lather Brush

The lather brush is used to apply soap lather to soften the beard during the shaving process.



## Towel Warmer

The towel warmer is an efficient way to simultaneously store and heat the damp towels needed for the shaving service. Towels are wetted, rung out, and placed within the towel warmer to prepare them for the client.

## Neck Strips

Neck strips are used to protect the client’s skin from coming into contact with the cape for sanitation and hygiene purposes. They are also useful in providing a barrier to prevent hair from falling below the cape’s edge and causing itchiness and discomfort. Apply a fresh neck strip for each client, and at any time during the service if the strip becomes wet or covered in hair.

## Cutting Cape

The cutting cape is used to protect the client’s clothing and skin from falling hair and lather.



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## 2.2 Products

When performing a beard reshaping or a straight razor shave, there is an extensive range of products on the market that can be used to enhance the service. However, selecting the correct product can be challenging, especially with so many brands available, as each have differing claims as to the benefits and features of their products.

This chapter will serve as a guide to break down the basic functions of such products, making it simpler for you to choose the ideal product, regardless of brand.

Products covered in this section are:

- Pre-shave products
- Shaving products
- Post-shave products
- Grooming products

### Pre-Shave Products



Pre-shave products typically come in an oil or gel form. These products are not used by every barber/stylist, or on every client, but may be used for a few primary reasons:

1. To soften very coarse facial hair to prevent hair pull and subsequent irritation
2. To lubricate the skin for a smoother glide of the razor

3. To create a thin barrier to protect the skin against the blade of the razor

When choosing between an oil or a gel, keep in mind that a client with oily skin will likely benefit from a gel-based product over an oil-based one. Using a gel-based product will prevent excess oil and reduce the chance of creating blocked pores. Alternatively, a client with dry skin will benefit from an oil-based product, because it provides additional moisture and slickness prior to the shave.

The pre-shave product is applied onto clean skin, prior to the shaving lather. In some cases, these oil- or gel-based lubricators can be used as the primary shaving product, as outlined below.

## Shaving Products



The purpose of a shaving product is to create a thin layer of protection and lubrication, which reduces risk of redness, irritation, **ingrown hairs** and potential cuts.

Shaving products come in many forms, namely gel, oil, cream, and soap. Some factors to consider when choosing which type to use are: skin type, skin sensitivities, and scent.

### Gels

Gels have excellent lubricating properties and are a great choice for oily skin with sensitivities.

### Oils

Oils are a great choice for dry, sensitive skin. They are more lubricating than a cream or soap lather. As stated, these are not ideal for clients with oily or acne-prone skin.

Note: A gel or oil shave product is also a great option when outlining with a razor, as it allows the barber/stylist to clearly visualize the hair that needs to be removed outside of the desired outline, whereas a lather product may conceal it.

## Creams and Soaps

Shave creams generally come in a tube or pot. They create a thick, rich lather when mixed with a small amount of water and emulsified (mixed) with a lather brush using a mug/scuttle.

Shave soaps typically come in a solid puck form. The barber/stylist works the soap into a rich lather by wetting a shave brush, brushing it over the soap bar, then applying to the face using a circular motion so as to encourage the lather to form. Shave soaps typically have a thinner lather in comparison to a cream.

The primary advantage of using using a cream or soap product in addition to, or instead of, a gel or oil product is all due to the application. When cream or soap is applied to the skin using the lather brush and a circular motion, the facial hair is lifted into a more upright position, and it becomes fully saturated with product on all sides. This allows for a closer and smoother shave.

## Post-Shave Products

There are numerous post-shave products on the market today. The most commonly used are after-shave tonics, gels, and creams.

After-shave is an **astringent** product used for three reasons:

1. To calm irritation
2. To disinfect any small nicks in the skin
3. To close the pores to prevent bacteria.

The most common forms of aftershave products are:

- **Alcohol-based:** Excellent astringent and **anti-bacterial** properties, but most likely to dry out the skin.
- **Witch hazel:** Contains tannins, a natural compound with gentle astringent properties ideal for sensitive skin.
- **Tea-tree:** Contains naturally occurring **anti-inflammatory** and **antiseptic** properties. Also a great choice for sensitive skin.

Gel and cream-based post-shave products are beneficial for replenishing moisture to the freshly shaved skin. It is essential to recommend a good moisturizer for at-home care, to keep the skin healthy and supple in between shaves.

## Grooming Products



Following a beard trim or reshaping service, nothing finishes off and maintains a client’s new look like the right grooming product!

While there is an endless list of brands and products on the market today, they generally fit into the following categories:

- **Beard oils:** Used to soften and strengthen the beard hair, while conditioning the skin.
- **Balms/cream:** Apply moisture to the beard and moustache while providing a light hold to control frizz and keep unruly stray hairs in check.
- **Waxes:** Provide a pliable, strong hold, used especially for moustache grooming.



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## Chapter 3 – Reduce or Reshape Facial and Nape Hair

### Learning Objectives

- Implement principles involved in trimming and removing facial hair and nape hair
- Perform procedures to outline the perimeter of the facial hair and nape hair



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## 3.1 Facial Hair Reduction Methods

A facial hair reduction is suited for the client who wants to maintain their current facial hair style, whereas a reshaping service is for the client that desires a new style altogether.

Reshaping and reduction services can be achieved by performing one, or a combination of, the following methods:

- Clipper-over-comb
- Shear-over-comb
- Clipper/trimmer with guard attachment.
- Free-hand shaping with clippers, trimmer, or scissors

Depending on the length and density of the hair to be removed, it is not uncommon to use all of these bulk removal techniques within your design process.

### Methods of Facial Hair Reduction

#### Clipper-Over-Comb

The clipper/trimmer-over-comb technique is ideal when working on a client who's beard has equal **texture** and **density** throughout. Whereas, in a circumstances where the texture and density of the beard vary throughout, scissor-over-comb may be a better option.

In general, the clipper is used throughout the fuller areas of the beard, and the smaller trimmer/outliner is used in combination with a comb for shaping the moustache and around the ears.

To perform clipper-over-comb:

- Use a cutting comb to elevate the hair to the desired projection angle.
  - Comb elevation will determine the finished result. For example, a 90-degree projection angle will produce equal lengths throughout the section, whereas a 45-degree angle will produce a length increase for a graduated result.
- Move the clipper/trimmer across the surface of the comb to remove the excess length.
  - It is important to keep both the comb and clipper moving simultaneously in harmony with each other so as to avoid creating lines and imperfections in the final design.



Note: The clipper-over-comb technique is more precise when performed on dry hair, as wet hair is more likely to bend away from the comb.

## Shear-Over-Comb



The shear-over-comb requires more practice and skill than clipper-over-comb. Yet it is a necessary skill for the barber/stylist to perfect in order to provide a full range of services. Keep in mind, the client is sure to appreciate the craftsmanship that goes into performing this technique.

To perform shear-over-comb:

- Use a cutting comb to elevate the hair to the desired projection angle.
  - Comb elevation will determine the finished result. For example, a 90-degree projection angle will produce equal lengths throughout the section, whereas a 45-degree angle will produce a length increase for a graduated result.

Note: When blending the sideburn area into the beard, the 45-degree angle will be reversed compared to when cutting the **nape**.

- Open and close the scissor blades swiftly to cut the hair on top of the comb, while simultaneously moving the comb upwards throughout the section.
- It is important to keep both the comb and shears moving in a consistent, fluid fashion to avoid creating lines and imperfections in the final design. Use the first  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the blade surface to cut the hair. Work on a small panel of hair at a time, using the previous panel as your guideline. Maintaining slow movement of the comb ensures that the segments of hair being cut remain small and manageable.

Cutting nape and/or beard hair while the client is seated upright requires the barber/stylist to maintain an upright posture while leaning slightly away from their scissor/shear hand. The elbow of the barber/stylist should be tilted slightly upright, with the shears extended in front of the stylist. This position enables the barber/stylist to open and close the shears rhythmically with the thumb.

Note: This technique is more precise when performed on dry hair, as wet hair is more likely to bend away from the comb.

In the video below, you will see the shear-over-comb technique being used to trim the sideburn area. In smaller sections, such as the sideburns or eyebrows, the comb remains stationary and is used to simply project the hair away from the face so that the excess hair can be cut using shears.

### [Video: Sheer-Over-Comb Method](#)

Note: This video has no sound.



A BCcampus element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/barberingtechniquesforhairstylists/?p=68>

## Clipper/Trimmer with Guard Attachment



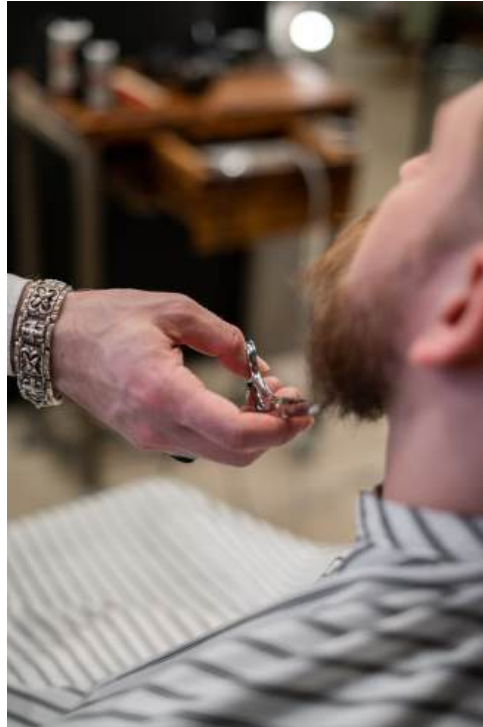
Of all the barber/stylist techniques, the use of a clipper with guard attachment is perhaps the easiest, and often the first technique barber/stylists learn. This is because the guard attachment ensures all hair is cut consistently to the same length throughout, making it an ideal first step when eliminating unwanted hair quickly. To guarantee an all-over even result, the clipper must be carefully guided across the skin as it is moved around the curves and contours of the face.

Note: When using a guarded clipper to remove length, work against the grain while continuously using a comb to push the hair back into natural fall. This will prevent missed hairs.

Because the clipper/trimmer with guard attachment method produces a **uniform** length throughout, it is recommended that you complete the service by using one of the over-comb techniques so as to customize the nape and facial hair design.



## Free-Hand Shaping



Free-hand shaping, with clippers, trimmers, or shears, is used to trim away strays and fly-aways, and to refine the overall shape. The beard must first be brushed or combed into natural fall, before the excess hair is removed to fit the visual guideline of the overall form.

Note: Free-hand shaping is not ideal in situations where a lot of length is to be removed.

In this video you will see:

- Length removal of beard and moustache using a guarded clipper
- Use of trimmer-over-comb to blend sideburns
- Use of free-hand trimmer to remove strays and refine the final shape

[Video: How to Trim a Beard](#)



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## 3.2 Outlining and Detailing Techniques



Outlining techniques are commonly referred to as detailing, or finishing techniques. They are the final step of any haircut or facial hair design service.

Detailing techniques are centred on the removal of stray hairs that do not fit into the desired outline of the design. While the primary purpose of detailing is to outline and refine the haircut, including facial and nape hair, remember to also pay attention to the eyebrows and ear hair.

Shears, trimmers, and razors can all be used at various stages of the outlining service. In this chapter we will focus on the use of shears and trimmers. More detail on the straight razor technique can be found in [Chapter 4](#).

### Outlining

Prior to the outlining service, carefully check the nape area, sides of neck, and behind the ears for skin abnormalities such as blemishes, moles, and other growths of the skin. Providing there is no communicable skin diseases, open wounds, and/or skin irritation, it is safe to perform the outlining service. Once you determine that the service is safe to perform, remember to use caution when working around moles and any other raised lesions of the skin.

### Outlining with Shears

To detail the finished design with shears, comb the hair past the desired outline, then use the shears to

remove any hair which falls outside of the desired outline. The shear-over-comb technique may be used to blend the newly established outline into the beard or haircut if necessary.

### [Video: Outlining with Shears](#)

Note: This video has no sound.



A BCcampus element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/barberingtechniquesforhairstylists/?p=78>

Follow these guidelines when detailing with shears for a safe and comfortable experience for the client:

- Position the shears to move against the natural fall of the hair
- When working around the ears, the non-cutting hand should be used to push the ear forward or down in a gentle manner to create more room to safely trim around the area.
- Be aware of folds or wrinkles in the skin to avoid nicking/cutting the client



### **Outlining with Trimmers**

Outlining the nape or facial hair with a trimmer/outliner requires the use of a trimmer in good working order, which means trimmer blades must be sufficiently sharp, free from debris, and sanitized according to local standards.

The trimmer will typically be used without a guard attachment when outlining. In addition to the trimmers, a cutting or barbering comb can be used to aid with the creation of straight lines and/or angles in the outline. Alternatively, curved lines, such as around the ears, are generally performed with a free-hand technique. Once an outline is established, the clipper/trimmer-over-comb technique is often used to blend the newly established outline into the beard or haircut.

Follow these guidelines when detailing with trimmers for a safe and comfortable experience for the client:

- To establish the initial outline of your design, turn the trimmer so that the teeth are positioned towards the skin. Gently cut along the desired outline to create the guideline.



- Once the guideline is established, turn the trimmer over so that the stationary blade is resting on the skin. With gentle pressure, move the trimmer upwards towards the guideline.



- When working around the ears, position the trimmer so that the outside edge is used to cut against the natural fall of the hair. The non-cutting hand should be used to push the ear forward or down in a gentle manner to create more room to safely trim around the area.



- When outlining the nape, remember to work with the shape of the natural hairline whenever possible in order to encourage a more natural appearance during the grow-out period.



## Additional Considerations: Eyebrows and Ears

### Eyebrows

In addition to outlining, your client may require eyebrow trimming or shaping, and/or removal of stray hairs on the ears. Cleaning these areas up for the client will leave them with a much more polished final look.

The three most common methods to trim the eyebrows are:

- Trimmer-over-comb
- Shear-over-comb
- Free-hand trimming with shears

Consult with the client to determine whether you will need to eliminate length, density, or both.



To perform an eyebrow shaping service:

- Project the eyebrow hair with a comb, and trim the excess length with a trimmer or shears.
- Shape the upper brow line by combing the brow hair upwards, then using shears to trim the excess hair just above the brow and create the desired shape.

Practice extreme caution when trimming eyebrows by using a slow, steady hand when working in this area. Always instruct the client to close their eyes during the service to prevent the trimmed hairs from falling into their eyes.

## Ears

The trimmer/outliner is used to gently remove stray and unwanted hair from the top, sides, and lobes of the ears. The hair on the inner ear should be removed using a delicate touch so no harm is caused to the inner ear. The use of a t-bladed trimmer is preferable when working in confined spaces.



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## 3.3 The Facial Hair Design Service

Throughout history beards have been popular for many reasons such as protection from extreme elements, to intimidate one's enemies, and even as a status symbol. Today, however, the popularity of facial hair is more about allowing people to express their personality and sense of style.

Besides making a fashion statement, facial hair can be used to accentuate or camouflage facial features and to create a balance of proportions. When shaping a client's beard or moustache, hair density and growth patterns must be taken into account before the design is executed.

The techniques commonly used during facial design services are:

- Shear-over-comb
- Clipper-over-comb
- Clipper/trimmer with a guard attachment
- Free-hand shaping with shears or clippers
- Outlining with trimmers
- Outlining or shaving with a razor

Note: Beard and/or moustache trims, cuts, and shapings must be performed prior to a shaving procedure. The shave procedure will be discussed in more detail in [Chapter 4.2](#).

In this chapter, we focus on techniques and procedures for *shaping* beards and moustaches. Although such techniques and procedures tend vary significantly from client to client (due to hair density, length, and desired outcome), it is the responsibility of the barber to determine which approach is appropriate throughout the consultation process.

In the following section, we provide a general overview of the techniques and procedures that can be used.

## Beard and Moustache Design



### Tools and Equipment

- Hair/barber chair with headrest and cover
- Barber paper towels
- Neck strips
- Cutting cape
- Combs
- Brushes
- Shears/scissors
- Trimmer/outliner
- Clipper
- Guards
- Receptacle or container with a cover to store soiled towels
- Garbage can with a cover
- Straight razor handle and blades
- Sharps container for razors that have been used
- Shaving lather (cream or gel)
- Lather dispenser
- Towels (terry cloth)
- Antiseptic or witch hazel

Note: This list covers the tools required for all facial hair design techniques. Your list may vary depending on the techniques you perform.

## Beard Design Procedure



1. Gather the tools and equipment required for the service.
2. Wash your hands well.
3. Seat the client in the chair in an upright position, and drape your client using a neck strip and cutting cape.
4. Perform a consultation to determine the client's needs and desired beard design. Specifically, pinpoint the shape, density, and length of the final design. Take note of any skin issues or sensitivities. Repeat the client's specifications and gain approval before commencing with the service.
5. If the procedure to be used requires the client to be reclined, gently lean the client's head back onto the headrest to support their neck while they remain in this position. The barber chair can be reclined partially or completely, depending on your requirements for accessing the areas under the chin.
6. Reduce excess hair using the methods outlined in [Chapter 3.2](#):
  - Clipper/trimmer-over-comb
  - Shear-over-comb
  - Clipper/trimmer with guard
  - Free-hand with clipper, trimmer, or shears

Note: Using just one, or a combination, of these length removal techniques is dependent on the barber's preference and what is needed to achieve the desired result. Be sure to leave enough length/**density** in this hair reduction step to allow the design to be blended into the desired outcome.

7. Step back to visually check for **symmetry** in density and overall length.
8. Create the lower outline of the beard (under the chin, along or below the jawline) with a trimmer or shears according to the predetermined beard design. To ensure symmetry, start in the centre of the chin and work your way to the left, then right. For added comfort for the client, a towel can be placed underneath the area where the outline is to be created in order to prevent hair clippings from falling on the client's neck.
9. Create the upper outline of the beard by working from the mouth, upwards along the cheek.
10. Blend the outline into the sideburn area using an over-comb technique.
11. Taper and blend the beard by using clipper-over-comb or shear-over-comb to connect the outline to the overall length/density of the beard.
12. Apply a hot towel. The steam will relax the skin, soften the cuticle layer of the hair, and stimulate the sebaceous glands. Prepare shave product and razor.
13. Remove towel and apply the shave product to the area that is to be shaved with the razor.
14. Shave the underside of the beard from the outline, down. On the cheeks, shave down to the outline.
15. Remove excess shave product and hair.

Note: Steps 12 to 15 are optional and are described in greater detail in [Chapter 4](#).

16. Place the client back in the upright sitting position, then step back to assess the outline, overall shape, and balance of the beard proportions. Make further adjustments to the beard design if required.
17. Trim and blend the moustache into the beard (see Moustache Design Procedure, in the next section of this chapter, for further detail).
18. Trim and shape the eyebrows and ear hair if needed.
19. Check that all lather and stray hairs have been removed and, if a razor was used, apply an antiseptic or witch hazel to the freshly shaved areas.
20. Check the final overall design, and verify it is to the client's satisfaction.
21. Apply a grooming product if desired. Recommend any at-home care products that are appropriate for the client's beard texture and desired look.
22. Remove drapings (cape, neck strip, towels).

Please consider that every beard trim will be different and will be dependent on many aspects of the client in the chair. The following video is a visual resource to supplement the guidelines above.

Techniques observed in this video are:

- Design consultation
- Length removal with guarded clipper
- Free-hand length removal with clipper and trimmer

- Product application and styling
- Outlining with a trimmer and razor

### [Video: Master Barber Shows How to Shape Up Your Beard](#)



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/barberingtechniquesforhairstylists/?p=83>

## Moustache Design Procedure

Note: If you are performing the moustache trim as a continuation of the beard design, skip to step 5.

1. Gather the supplies and tool required for the service.
2. Wash your hands.
3. Seat client in the chair in the upright position.
4. Drape the client following appropriate draping procedures.
5. Throughout the consultation, determine the client's desired moustache design, specifically the shape, density, and length of the final design. In addition to the client's design requirements, take note of any skin issues or sensitivities. Always remember to repeat the client's specifications and gain approval before starting the service.
6. Create the desired length of the moustache by removing length with the trimmer/outliner and/or shears, starting in the centre of the mouth working out to the left, then the right.
7. At the corners of the mouth, assess the length for balance and evenness.



8. Reduce excess bulk using the trimmer-over-comb method, the shear-over-comb method, or a guarded trimmer.
9. With a trimmer or shears, detail the moustache design into its finished shape.
10. Check the final overall design and verify it is to the client's satisfaction. If further adjustments are needed, do so at this time.
11. Remove all loose hairs from the client's face, using a clean towel or duster brush.
12. Apply a moustache wax, oil, or grooming product if desired.
13. Remove drapings (cape, neck strip, towels).

## **Cleaning and Disinfection Practices**

Upon completion of all services, the following cleaning and disinfection practices must be completed. Check with local authorities to ensure that these practices are in alignment with the requirements of your area.

1. Clean and disinfect all tools and equipment following manufacturer recommendations and contact time.
2. Thoroughly clean and disinfect your work area.
3. Sweep and deposit hair into the covered garbage or recycling container.
4. Carefully remove used blades and discard them in the sharps container.
5. Deposit all single-use items in the covered garbage or recycling container.
6. Deposit towels, capes, and linens into the laundry.
7. Thoroughly wash your hands.

## **Additional Beard Design Video Resources**

As stated above, every beard trim will be different, just as every client that sits in your chair will be different. The following videos are a visual resource to supplement the guidelines above.

### **Video 1: Reshaping a Short Beard**

Techniques observed in this video are:

- Free-hand length removal with clipper
- Trimmer-over-comb
- Outlining with a razor
- Product application
- Zero-fade textured haircut

**[Video: Beard Trim and Haircut](#)**



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/barberingtechniquesforhairstylists/?p=83>

**Video 2: Reshaping a Long Beard**

Techniques observed in this video are:

- Design consultation
- Free-hand length removal with clipper
- Clipper-over-comb
- Moustache trim with shears
- Product application
- Outlining with a razor and trimmer

**[Video: Massive, Thick Beard gets Trimmed at the Barbershop](#)**



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/barberingtechniquesforhairstylists/?p=83>

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## Chapter 4 – Remove Facial and Nape Hair

### Learning Objectives

- Identify the procedures involved in a straight razor shave
- Perform procedure to remove facial hair with a straight razor
- Implement appropriate skin preparation and aftercare procedures, as per the consultation



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## 4.1 Introduction to the Straight Razor Shave

The straight razor provides the closest, smoothest shave possible. It is a sharp tool that should be used with caution, as it requires skill and a steady hand.

Before we get started with the straight razor shave service, let's first review the following topics:

- The pre-shave consultation
- Razor handling
- Razor strokes and corresponding shaving areas
- Types of shaves
- How to hone and strop the razor

### The Pre-Shave Consultation

During the pre-shave consultation, the barber/stylist will assess:

1. The skin
2. Growth patterns
3. Medical issues/concerns
4. Skin sensitivities

Keep in mind that face shape and head shape need to be considered if a partial shave is to be performed, such as a beard shave with a moustache shaping.

Note: Please refer back to [Chapter 1.1](#) for a more in-depth explanation about the components of the consultation.

Before assessing the client's skin and growth patterns, it is a good idea to inquire about their use of facial products and/or medications. Some medications and skin care products, such as Accutane and Retinol, can cause the skin to be more sensitive and easily irritated by the shave process. This is also the time to find out if the client has had other sensitivities in the past, such as a reaction to shaving products, an acne breakout after shaving, or whether they have an aversion to the application of hot or cold towels.

Now it's time to assess the skin prior to the straight shave service. Carefully check the area that is to be shaved for blemishes, moles, or any lesions of the skin. Additionally, if you plan to perform an outline and nape shave, be sure to check the nape area, sides of neck, and behind the ears. Provided there is no

communicable skin diseases, open wounds, or skin irritation, it is safe to perform the shave service. Always use caution when working around moles and any other raised areas of the skin.

## Razor Handling

### Razor Components

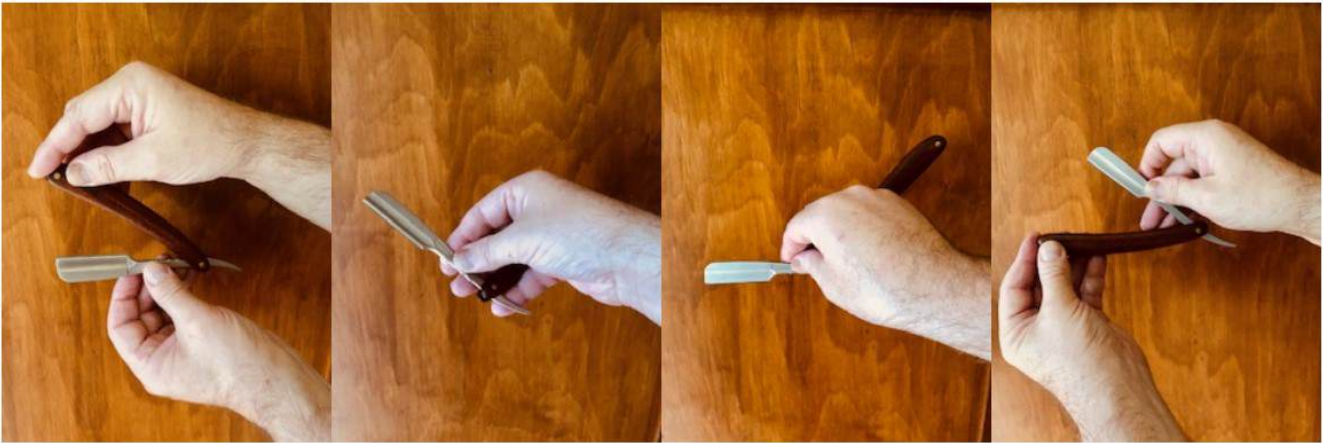
Before moving on to the razor handling procedure, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the components that make up the standard straight razor. If you have your own razor, lay it open on the table in front of you and identify its parts using the diagram below:



### Razor Handling Procedure

Once you have familiarized yourself with the components of the razor, have a look at the images and instructions below. We suggest that you follow along to practice the procedures to open, hold, and close the razor.

Once you have familiarized yourself with the components of the razor, have a look at the images and instructions below. We suggest that you follow along to practice the procedures to open, hold, and close the razor.



1. Open the razor using the thumb and index finger from your dominant hand to grip the back of the blade. Thumb on one side, index finger on the other side.
2. The pivot allows for the blade and handle to separate. At this time, shift the little finger of your dominant hand to place it on the tang while the handle is poised into an upward position.
3. The razor must be held by the shank near the shoulder of the blade with the thumb on one side and the index finger on the other side, with the blade shoulder between them. Place the second and third fingers to rest along with the little finger being used to brace the razor.
4. When you wish to close the razor, simply allow your little finger to release, then bring the handle back up to the blade. Be sure that the handle is not struck by the cutting edge while closing.

## Razor Strokes and Positions

The term razor stroke is used to describe the razor while it is in motion and shaving the skin's surface.

The way in which the barber/stylist holds the razor in their hand to perform a stroke is called the *position*. The position will determine the angle of the blade and the direction in which the strokes will be performed. The optimal angle for the blade while shaving the skin is 30 degrees, with the point of the razor leading the stroke.

It is not recommended to shave against the **grain** of the hair growth pattern, therefore the razor should be positioned to shave with the grain.

There are four razor positions that barbers use to perform shaving services:

- Freehand
- Backhand
- Reverse freehand
- Reverse backhand

Note: The reverse backhand position is not used to shave the face. Rather, it is used to perform shaving on the sides of the neck.

Let's review each of the four razor strokes in further detail, followed by the areas of the face in which each stroke is utilized.

### Freehand Stroke

1. Use your dominant hand to hold the razor. Rest the handle between the third and fourth fingers, while resting the little finger on the end of the tang. The thumb should rest firmly on the side of the shank close to the shoulder of the blade.
2. The hand should be turned somewhat outward from the wrist with the elbow at a level that is comfortable.
3. Be sure the fingers of your other hand are clean and dry, so as to allow you to hold or stretch the skin without slipping.



### Backhand Stroke

1. At the pivot, hold the shank of the razor securely between your thumb and first two fingers while holding the razor in a reasonably straight position.
2. Rest your third and fourth fingers on the backside of the handle.
3. Position the back of your hand away from you while bending the wrist slightly downward. Your elbow should be raised in order for your arm to be able to have the freedom of movement.



Additional approach: With a slightly bent handle, rest the third finger on the end of the tang, while the fourth finger is bent into the palm. This position is used when the barber/stylist favours performing the backhand stroke with movement of the arm versus the movement of the wrist. If wrist movement is preferable simply do not hold the arm as high.

4. Be sure the fingers of your other hand are clean and dry, so as to allow you to hold or stretch the skin taut without slipping. The skin under the razor should be stretched opposite the direction of the stroke.
5. Strokes are to be lead by the point of the razor as you are performing short, gliding strokes

away from you in a forward movement.

### Reverse Freehand

1. Securely hold the razor in the freehand position.
2. Turn your hand towards you so that the edge of the razor is facing upwards.
3. Be sure the fingers of your opposite hand are clean and dry, so as to allow you to hold or stretch the skin taut without slipping while the razor strokes are performed.
4. Place your fingers below or on the backside of the razor opposite to the edge of the blade, as well as the direction of the stroke.
5. Perform gliding movements towards you while using semi-curved strokes.
6. To perform this movement, use the forearm with little twist to your wrist.



### Reverse Backhand Stroke

1. Securely hold the razor in the backhand position while turning the wrist so that the palm is positioned upwards.
2. Allow the elbow to fall downwards so it is positioned to the side.
3. Your opposite hand should be positioned comfortably so as to pull the skin taut when the razor strokes pass over the skin.
4. With your hand positioned on top of the razor, you will perform fluid gliding movements.
5. You will perform downward strokes down the sides of the neck.



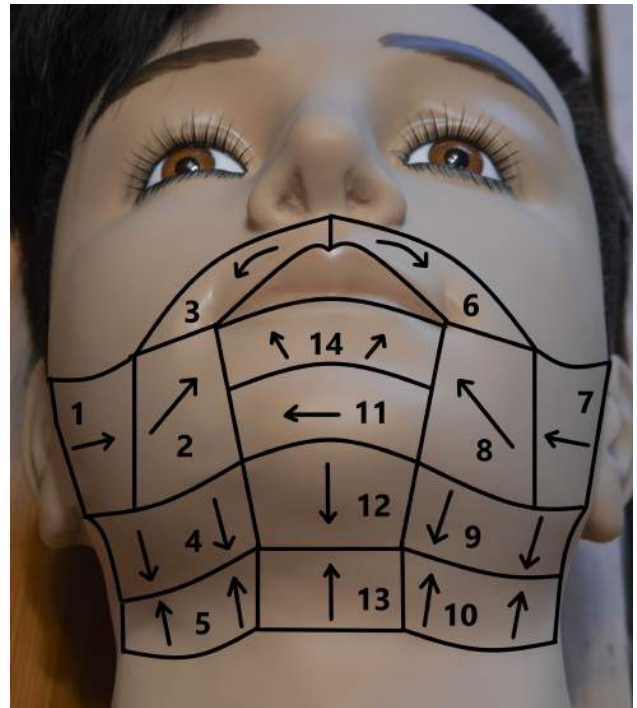
Note: The right handed barber performs this stroke on the left side, from behind the ear and down the side of the neck. Whereas the left handed barber performs it on the right side, from behind the ear, and down the side of the neck.

### Shaving Areas

In order to perform a facial shave in a systematic way, the shave zones are divided into fourteen specific areas. It is important to learn the order and direction in which each of these fourteen areas are to be shaved, as well as knowing which razor stroke is to be used in each area.

The diagram photo below outlines the fourteen areas of the facial shave and shows which stroke is used in each. A left handed barber will invert the diagram, beginning on the left side.

1. Free-hand
2. Back-hand
3. Free-hand
4. Free-hand
5. Reverse free-hand
6. Back-hand
7. Back-hand
8. Free hand
9. Back-hand
10. Reverse free-hand
11. Free-hand
12. Free-hand
13. Reverse free-hand
14. Reverse free-hand



### Exercise

Sketch and label the diagram above on a head sheet or a mannequin to familiarize yourself with the fourteen shaving areas.

The table below has been created as a quick reference guide to assist the student stylist/barber in learning the strokes and directions that are to be used in each of the fourteen areas. The left of this chart informs the right handed barber of the appropriate stroke and direction; whereas the right side of the chart informs the left handed barber.



### Shaving Area Stroke and Direction Chart

Shaving Area	Position and Stroke	Stroke Direction	Right-Handed Barber: Area of Face	Left-Handed Barber: Area of Face
1	Freehand	Down	Start at RIGHT sideburn move towards the jawbone and angle of mouth.	Start at LEFT sideburn move towards the jawbone and angle of mouth.
2	Backhand	Down	From the angle of the mouth move towards the chin.	From the angle of the mouth move towards the chin.
3	Freehand	Down	From the centre of the upper lip towards the RIGHT corner of the mouth.	From the centre of the upper lip towards the LEFT corner of the mouth.
4	Freehand	Down	RIGHT jawbone to grain change.	LEFT jawbone to grain change.
5	Reverse Freehand	Up	RIGHT side of neck up towards the grain change.	LEFT side of neck up towards the grain change.
6	Backhand	Down	From the centre of the lip to the LEFT side of the mouth.	From the centre of the lip to the RIGHT side of the mouth.
7	Backhand	Down	From the LEFT sideburn towards the jawbone and angle of the mouth.	From the RIGHT sideburn towards the jawbone and angle of the mouth.
8	Freehand	Down	From angle of the mouth towards the point of the chin.	From angle of the mouth towards the point of the chin.
9	Backhand	Down	From the LEFT jawbone to the grain change.	From the RIGHT jawbone to the grain change.
10	Reverse Backhand	Up	LEFT side of the neck to the grain change.	RIGHT side of the neck to the grain change.
11	Freehand	Across	Across the chin from LEFT to the RIGHT.	Across the chin from RIGHT to the LEFT.
12	Freehand or Backhand	Down	Under the chin to the grain change.	Under the chin to the grain change.
13	Reverse Freehand	Up	Centre of the neck to the grain change.	Centre of the neck to the grain change.
14	Reverse Freehand	Up	Under the lower lip.	Under the lower lip.

## Types of Shaves

There are three main types of shaves traditionally practiced in barbershops:

- **The first time over:** The standard shave service performed in barbershops today. It is

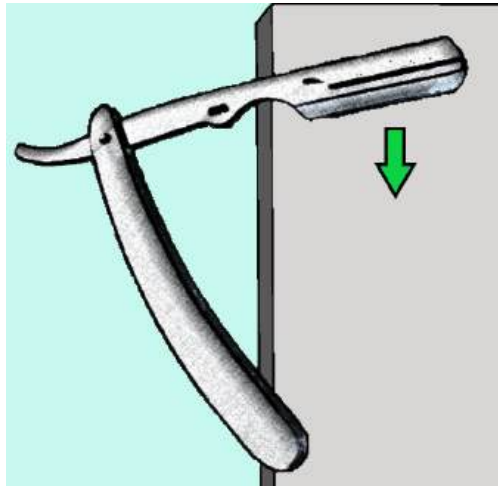
performed using a lather on the beard and by shaving in the direction of the grain. This shave removes all visible hair growth and leaves the skin smooth and without irritation.

- **The second time over:** This shave is performed immediately after the first time over to create a closer shave by removing any remaining hair. The second time over shave is generally performed on dampened skin with no lather, while working *with* or *across* the grain.
- **The close shave:** A shave that is typically not practiced, unless the client has a particularly challenging beard or growth pattern, in which the first time over and second time over shaves were not enough to adequately remove all of the hair. This shave is performed *against* the grain, therefore it is not commonly performed as it is more likely to cause irritation, **ingrown hairs**, and the possibility of infection.

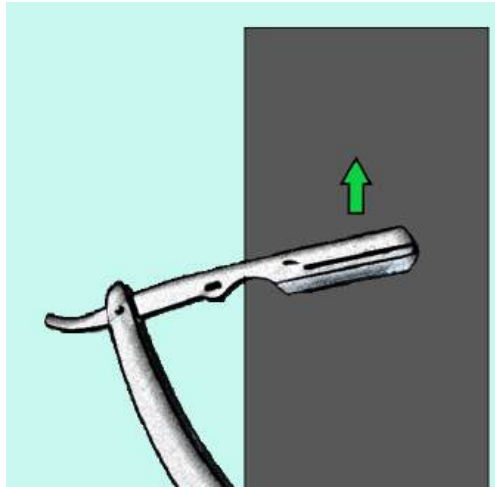
## How to Hone and Strop the Razor

Honing and stropping the razor is what maintains its sharp edge. If the razor begins to pull while shaving, and the resulting shave is not smooth, then it is time to hone and strop your blade.

Honing is the first step to sharpening the blade and consists of lightly passing the razor, *leading with the edge*, over a gritted stone. Hones come in various grits ranging from coarse to fine. Generally, a razor will be passed over a larger grit first, then a smaller grit, in order to gradually work down the delicate edge.



Stropping is the second and final step to sharpening the blade. To strop the razor, the blade is passed, *leading with the back*, along a canvas or leather strap. This action refines and smooths the honed blade into a precise cutting implement.



In the video below, you will see the honing and stropping procedure:

**[Video: Honing and Stropping with Straight Razor](#)**

Note: This video has no dialogue.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/barberingtechniquesforhairstylists/?p=95>

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## 4.2 The Straight Razor Shave Service



The wet shave has been a practical, everyday ritual for people with facial hair dating back thousands of years. Today, the straight razor shave is seen as a relaxing, almost spa-like experience, complete with warm towels and curated skin care products. Nothing compares to the straight razor in its ability to create a smooth, close shave.

The wet shave procedures covered in this chapter include:

- Pre-shave preparation of the client and skin
- The facial shave
- The neck/nape shave
- After-care of the skin

### Tools and Equipment

- Hair/barber chair with headrest and cover
- Barber paper towels
- Neck strips
- Cutting cape
- Comb
- Brush
- Tissues or cotton/gauze pads
- Moisturizer
- Receptacle or container with a cover to store soiled towels
- Garbage can with a cover
- Straight razor handle and blades
- Sharps container for razors that have been used
- Shaving lather (cream or gel)
- Lather dispenser (electric)

- Sink
- Towels (terry cloth)
- Hot-towel warmer
- Antiseptic or witch hazel

## Pre-Shave Preparation of the Client

1. Seat your client in the barber chair and ensure that they are comfortable.
2. Perform a thorough consultation to assess any skin issues, look for irregular growth patterns, and inquire about medications and allergies.
3. Place a towel from the back of the neck over each shoulder to the front.  
If the client is wearing a button-up collared shirt, be sure to ask them to unfasten the top two buttons and roll the collar under for them so it is inside the shirt before placing the towels.
4. From the front of the client, loosely drape the cape over the client's shoulders
5. Apply a fresh headrest cover and adjust the headrest to a comfortable height so as to ensure that the client's head is supported.
6. Establish a comfortable working angle by reclining the chair into an appropriate position. Ensure that the client can lay comfortably with a slight upward tilt of the head for ease of access to the chin and neck.
7. Establish a comfortable height for the chair and lock it.
8. Wash your hands thoroughly and be sure they are completely dry.
9. Lay a freshly laundered, unfolded towel across the client's chest diagonally.
10. Use a finger to securely tuck one end of the towel into the inside of the client's neck band on one side.
11. Take the other end of the towel and cross it over to the other side of the client, again using a finger to securely tuck the end of the towel into the inside of the other side of the client's neck band.
12. Tuck a towel/barbering paper towel under the collar of the cutting cape, draping around the neck and over the shoulders so it can be used for wiping the razor of excess lather or hair shavings.



## Pre-Shave Preparation of the Client's Skin

1. Remove a pre-heated towel from the hot-towel warmer.
2. Use your wrist to determine if the towel is a comfortable temperature to be applied to the client's face. If too hot, carefully sway the towel backwards and forwards while holding the top of the towel, then once again test the towel on your wrist to determine whether it is an acceptable temperature.
3. Position yourself directly at the back of the chair, behind your client's head. Place the hot towel under and over the client's chin and fold upwards to client's mouth and upper lip, leaving the towel to rest just under the nose.
4. Place the right-hand side of the towel upwards across the temple and rest it across the forehead. Repeat the same towel placement with the left side. Leave a space for the nose, so that the client can breathe comfortably.
5. With a gentle pressing motion, mold the towel to the client's face, smoothing out the folds in the towel. The heat from the towel will open up the facial pores and begin the hair softening process.
6. While the client is relaxing under the hot towel, take this time to prepare your lather product.
7. Remove hot towel from your client's face and apply a pre-shave lotion or gel. *This step is optional and based on the barber's preference.*
8. Apply and equally distribute the lather product throughout the face and neck areas that are to be shaved.
9. Work the shaving cream into a lather using swift circular movements as you work upwards from the right side of the neck towards the face. The exact same movements should be repeated on the left side, starting at the neck and up into the face. Clients have varying degrees of beard density and coarseness of hair, therefore, the time required for this step can vary from 1-2 minutes.
10. Remove a second towel from the towel warmer, and again use your wrist to determine if the towel is an acceptable temperature before applying it to the client. With the lather left intact on the beard, apply the towel with gentle pressing motions to mold the towel to the client's face. Allow the hot towel to remain while you prepare the razor for the shave.
11. If using a single-use razor, disinfect the straight razor and insert a new blade. If using a conventional (reusable) straight razor, strop the razor if required.
12. Simultaneously remove the towel while using it to remove the lather from the face in one fluid movement.
13. Now that the first lather has been removed, apply a second application of lather to the areas



to be shaved.

### [Video: Pre-Shave Preparation](#)



A BCcampus element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/barberingtechniquesforhairstylists/?p=101>

## The Facial Shave Procedure

A straight razor shave requires shaving of all fourteen shaving areas of the face in a systematic and sequential order, so as to provide a thorough shave service and to achieve the smoothest possible result.

Shaving in a sequence is important because it creates a pattern where dry skin will always be above the area you are shaving, which allows your off-hand to apply the appropriate tension and stretch the skin for each stroke.



The strokes utilized in the shave are:

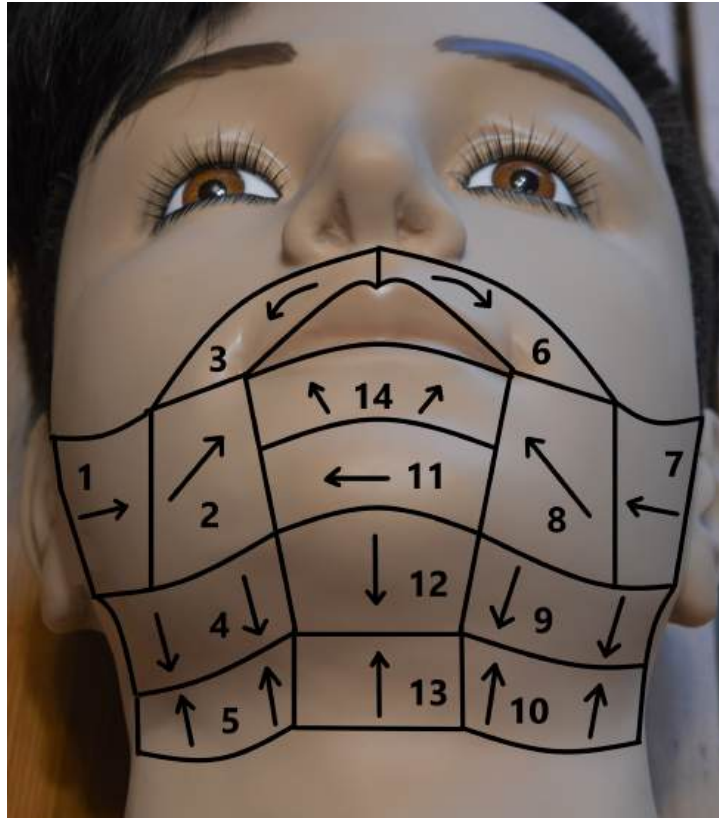
- The freehand stroke
- The backhand stroke
- The reverse freehand stroke
- The reverse backhand stroke.

Note: The reverse backhand stroke is typically only used for the neck.

A right-handed barber will start the shave at the client's right side. The left-handed barber will begin at the left side and progress through the steps from that side.



The strokes are performed in the order shown in the diagram below:



Throughout the following procedure, ensure that you stretch the skin with your opposite hand, while maintaining a gentle, consistent pressure on the blade. The blade should be held consistently at a 30-degree angle.

### The First Time Over Shave

1. Begin in area 1, using the freehand stroke to move from the sideburn towards the jawbone and angle of the mouth.
2. Follow with the backhand stroke in area 2. It is essential that your strokes are kept short; use your fine motor skills rather than your gross motor skills.
3. From the upper lip, area 3, move towards the jawline with the freehand stroke.
4. As you move toward the neck, area 4, use the reverse freehand technique.

NOTE: Pay attention to the hair growth pattern in the neck area; some clients may have swirls or irregular growth patterns. It is essential to ensure that you are shaving with the grain.

5. Move to the opposite side of the client. Starting in the sideburn, use the backhand stroke, moving towards the jawbone and angle of the mouth.
6. Make your way across the face areas while following the growth pattern; if the grain deviates, you may have to adjust the stroke direction.

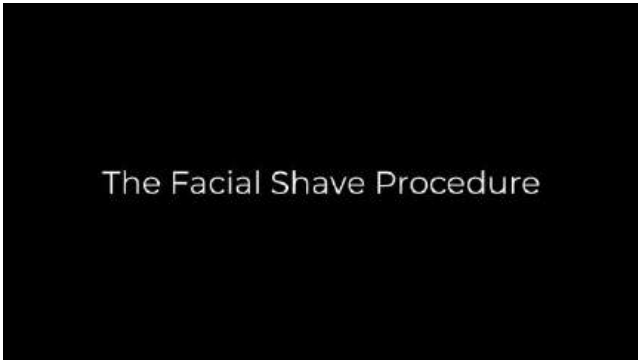
7. As you work across the chin, in area 11, it is crucial to stretch the skin using your opposite hand's thumb and forefinger, as the skin in this area is typically thicker and tougher to shave.
8. Move down the neck, areas 12 and 13, and continue to shave downwards and remain conscious of growth patterns. As you reach the Adam's apple, you want to avoid shaving directly over top of it; stretch the skin to either side of the Adam's apple before shaving the area.
9. Move up to area 14, under the bottom lip. this area will be shaved entirely against the grain; the razor strokes move upwards towards the lip, to prevent the lip getting caught by the razor.

### The Second Time Over

1. Now that the first time over shave is complete, apply a warm (not hot) towel to the face to keep the skin warm.
2. Remove the warm towel so the skin can be checked for rough spots or imperfections in the shave, use the towel to remove loose hairs or residual shaving lather.
3. Apply a pre-shave oil or gel to the skin, continuing to check for spots that will require further shaving. Perform a second shave only in the areas that require it.
4. Following the second time over shave, apply a cold towel to the face to soothe the skin, close the pores, and reduce irritation.
5. Remove the towel, and use it to remove any loose hairs or excess pre-shave product that remains on the skin.
6. Apply a small amount of aftershave to the freshly shaved skin. An aftershave with alcohol as an ingredient will act as an antiseptic and provide further encouragement for the pores to close.

When the service is complete, the client's skin should feel smooth, tacky, and free of any redness or bumps. A skin moisturizer can be applied for extra soothing of the skin and added hydration.

### [Video: The Facial Shave Procedure](#)



The Facial Shave Procedure

A BCcampus element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/barberingtechniquesforhairstylists/?p=101>

## The Nape Shave

If the client is getting a haircut as well as a facial shave, they may require a nape shave to clean up their neckline for a complete finished look. This service can be performed alone as maintenance between haircuts, as part of an outline shave, or combined with the facial shave service.

1. Prior to the neck/nape shave, ensure that all loose hairs from the haircut are removed. Perform a visual inspection of the area to check for any skin abnormalities or issues such as blemishes, moles or lesions of the skin.
2. Replace the neck strip to ensure that the neck area is clean and free of loose hairs.
3. With clean hands, apply shave product to the sides of the neck and across the nape just below the established outline.
4. Use a downward razor stroke to remove any hair below the outline and down the sides of the neck.
5. Remove the lather and gently cleanse the area. Follow with an antiseptic or witch hazel.
6. To complete the service, style the client's hair and/or beard/moustache to suit the client's preference.

## Cleaning and Disinfection Practices

Upon completion of all services, the following cleaning and disinfection practices must be completed. Always check with local authorities to make sure that these practices are in alignment with the requirements in your area.

1. Clean and disinfect all tools and equipment following manufacturer recommendations and contact time.
2. Thoroughly clean and disinfect your work area.
3. Sweep and deposit hair into the covered garbage or recycling container.
4. Carefully remove used blades and discard them in the sharps container.
5. Deposit all single-use items in the covered garbage or recycling container.
6. Deposit towels, capes, and linens into the laundry.
7. Thoroughly wash your hands.

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# Glossary

## **anti-bacterial**

Restricting bacterial growth.

## **anti-inflammatory**

Prevention of redness and irritation of the skin.

## **antiseptic**

Prevent the growth of disease causing micro-organisms.

## **astringent**

A product applied to the skin which contracts the skin cells and closes the pores.

## **consultation**

Process in which the barber/stylist assesses the client and determines their wishes

## **crown**

The area of the head that sits between the apex (highest point of the head) and the occipital bone.

## **density**

The amount of hair. Density is described as thin, average, or thick.

## **grain**

When referring to hair, the grain is the direction in which the hair grows from the follicle.

## **ingrown hairs**

Ingrown hairs are the result of dead skin cells congesting the hair follicle. This causes the hair to grow sideways or turn back onto itself underneath the skin, rather than growing upward to the skin's surface as expected.

## **melanocytes**

Skin cells responsible for giving the skin its colour pigment.

**nape**

The nape area sits at the back of the head, between the occipital bone and the hairline.

**occipital**

The occipital bone sits at the back of the skull, directly above the nape.

**parietal**

The parietal ridge refers to the widest point of the head, also known as the crest.

**symmetry**

The balance on either side of a central axis.

**texture**

Refers to the width of the hair strand. Facial hair tends to be of medium to coarse texture.

**uniform**

Equal.

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## Versioning History

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1.00	March 30, 2021	Added to the B.C. Open Textbook Collection.	