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How to Trim Your Own Hair at Home in 2022 Without Messing It Up

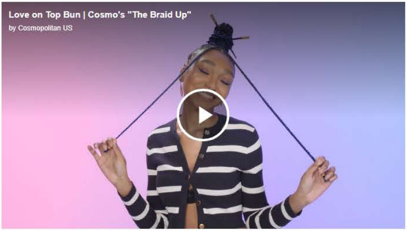
Proceed with caution, k?

by SAMI ROBERTS and RUBY BUDDEMEYER MAR 17, 2022

STOCKSY

I am someone who likes to DIY almost everything, whether that's experimenting with at-home waxing or dyeing my hair bright red with at-home hair dye or trimming my own hair against all sound logic. And you know what I learned? There's a reason we go to professionals for these treatments—*especially* when it comes to hairstylists. Because as my butchered at-home haircut can attest, that sh*t is hard and requires training, skills, and geometric vision that we mortal beings simply don't have. So even though I know you're here right now because you want to trim your own hair immediately, I (and all the experts I spoke with) **strongly recommend seeing a stylist instead, because your DIY trim can go very wrong *very* quickly.**

But if you're already about to scroll past my warnings and disclaimers and just do the dang thing yourself, then fine, I get it, and I've been there. But please don't just take a blunt pair of kitchen scissors to your hair—pause, take a deep breath, and keep scrolling because I broke down all the info you need from actual stylists, so you can trim your own hair without accidentally ruining your (hair) life.


Love on Top Bun | Cosmo's "The Braid Up"
by Cosmopolitan US

Meet the experts

- **Meri Kate O'Connor** is a hairstylist and colorist at Cooper Weho salon in Los Angeles.
- **Kamara Brown Lewis** is a hairstylist at Raw Intuition salon in Los Angeles who specializes in protective hairstyles, faux locs, and curl cuts. Brown also has her own wig line that offers wigs, bundles, and clip-ins, from yaki textures to 3b/4c textures.
- **Stephen Thevenot** is a hairstylist at David Mallett salon in New York City.

Be honest: Have you ever cut your own hair?

YES! I DO IT ALL THE TIME!

OMG, NO! SHOULD I?!

Is it okay to cut your own hair?

Okay, this is when you're going to hate me a little, but I gotta emphasize it once more: There's a *reason* hairstylists are professionals—a lot of skill and technique goes into a haircut, so if you *can* hold off, please consider waiting to see a stylist IRL. "**Hair cutting is an art form, but it also requires a lot of geometry**," says Stephen Thevenot, senior stylist at David Mallet in NYC. "The most important thing is knowing what to cut and what to leave, and that comes with training and experience."

And FWIW, I'm not just trying to be a bummer or crush your impulsive 11 p.m. I-want-new-hair-right-now dreams—I just want you to do what's best for your hair, k? "A trim is definitely better if you go with a pro," says hairstylist Kamara Brown Lewis. Plus, "if you mess up, you'll end up needing a professional—and more than likely, you'll have to go shorter than you initially wanted," Thevenot says. Which, uh, not fun.

It's worth noting that if split ends are the reason you're looking to trim your own hair, a less risky option is a DIY hair dusting, where **you trim the split ends from your hair strand by strand without needing to worry about losing length.** Brown also suggests skipping the scissors until your next hair appointment and loading up on hair serums, hair oils, and deep conditioners to leave your hair looking shiner and healthier and minimize the appearance of split ends while you're riding out your haircut between salon visits.

Smooth Your Split Ends With These Treatments

THIS REPARATIVE MASK

Olaplex No. 3 Hair Perfector

sephora.com

$28.00

SHOP NOW

HAITIAN BLACK CASTOR OIL

Kreyòl Essence Travel-Size Haitian Black Castor Oil

ulta.com

$18.00

SHOP NOW

Bread Beauty Supply Hair Oil Everyday Gloss

sephora.com

$24.00

SHOP NOW

IGK
Good Behavior

THIS PROTEIN SPRAY

IGK Good Behavior Spirulina Protein Smoothing Spray

ulta.com

$32.00

SHOP NOW

Make sure you have the right hair-cutting tools

Most importantly, if you've ignored my advice (rude) and decided to cut your own hair, make sure you have proper hair-cutting shears. Not your kitchen scissors, not your craft scissors, sharp hair shears only. "**Hair shears are much sharper and can give you a precise and accurate cut**," says Brown. "When people don't use proper shears, they tend to go over the same spot over and over again because it's not a clean cut—and then they're just cutting unevenly and losing length." Sound like your worst nightmare? Good. Get some shears. Here's what else you'll need:

- Double-edged comb: Look for something with wide and fine teeth, which will help you section off your hair.
- No-slip hair clips: These bbs will make it super easy to slowly work in sections.
- Flat iron: Optional (but encouraged) for getting a smooth finish before you cut.
- A spray bottle: To keep your hair damp if you choose to cut your hair wet.

Stock up before you trim your hair:

Javenproliu Professional Hair Cutting Shears

amazon.com

~~$15.98~~

$7.88 (51% off)

SHOP NOW

Nylea Empty Glass Spray Bottle

amazon.com

$9.99

SHOP NOW

Glamfields12 pcs Alligator Hair Clips

amazon.com

~~$11.99~~

$7.59 (37% off)

SHOP NOW

Grace Eleyae All Purpose Curved Comb

sephora.com

$9.00

SHOP NOW

Is it better to trim hair wet or dry?

There's technically no right answer here, since cutting your hair wet or dry is all about personal preference. Brown says that **since wet hair appears longer than dry hair, she recommends cutting your hair dry**, so you can get a more accurate idea of how much length you're trimming—especially for curly hair types, which will shrink and look shorter when they dry.

But if you're going for a blunt bob hairstyle, some pros recommend cutting your hair wet (or damp) to get the cleanest edge possible. Be cautious about how much you cut the first time though. "When hair is wet, it stretches, so **you always want to take less off than you think to avoid cutting too much**," says hairstylist Meri Kate O'Connor.

How can I trim my hair at home?

Find a tutorial

Before you start trimming your hair at home, **find a tutorial that most closely matches your own hair length and hair type**, so you can get the most accurate guide. And to make sure you're getting expert information, Brown says to choose one created by an actual hair expert or stylist. So if you want to skip these steps (since they're going to be different for every hair type), keep scrolling for the best tutorials on trimming your own hair. But if you want expert advice (and you do!), keep reading first.

Section your hair

To trim your hair at home, start by **sectioning your hair into at least four sections**. Divide your hair in half from ear to ear, tie or pin the top half up, and then section the top half and the bottom half into their own sections with a hair tie, scrunchie, or clip. "It helps you focus and will help you trim to the same length in each section," says Brown. And if you have really long or thick hair, Brown says you can take it a step forward and divide each of those four sections in half too.

Related Stories

Wait, Is Castor Oil the Key to Long-as-Hell Hair?

The 7 Haircuts All Over Your TikTok FYP

Help—Will Rice Water Actually Grow My Hair Longer?

Trim one section at a time

Untie one section and comb or brush it thoroughly to make sure it's fully detangled and at its full length. **Hold the section tightly between two fingers toward the bottom of the section**, leaving just the hair you want to cut sticking out between your fingers. Hold your shears up against your fingers to make sure your fingers are straight, Brown says, and then trim the section in a straight line. "I always suggest to just start very, very small—the shorter the better," Brown says. "If you think you want to take off more than you should, you can't go back."

If you're working with curly hair (think: types 3a to 4c), **make sure to release some of the tension once you've got the section between your fingers** at your desired length, so your curls take their natural shape. "It helps to see the natural length a little more," says Brown, and it will help you get an idea of how your hair will look once it's trimmed. Leave the freshly trimmed section down so you can use it as a guide for the next section.

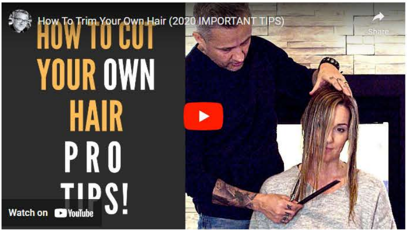
Now that you know what tools you need and the basics of trimming, here are a few tutorials that will give you a visual and step-by-step breakdown of exactly how to trim every hair type.

How to trim your natural hair without heat

DETAILED | How To Trim Your Own Hair | Natural Hair - Naptural85
Share
TRIM
YOUR OWN
HAIR
Watch on YouTube

This DIY haircut tutorial is perfect for trimming natural hair and curls without hair (like flat-ironing or blow-drying it straight). In addition to shears and separating clips, you'll need three tools to detangle and smooth your hair before you cut: a wide-tooth comb, a detangling brush, and a fine-tooth comb.

How to trim your hair wet


How To Trim Your Own Hair (2020 IMPORTANT TIPS)
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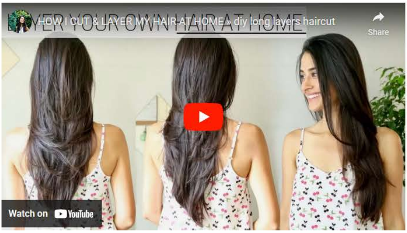
HOW TO CUT YOUR OWN HAIR PRO TIPS!
Watch on YouTube

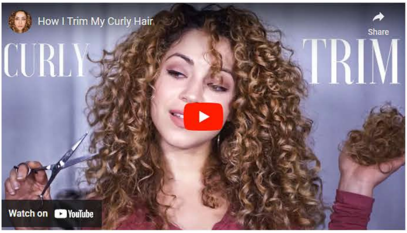
If you think trimming your hair wet will be easier for you, this tutorial by Justin Hickox, a hairstylist at Hickox Studio, will walk you through the whole process, including how to trim for the shape of the hair you want (whether it's a blunt trim or layered at the back).

How to trim long layers


HOW I CUT & LAYER MY HAIR AT HOME » diy long layers haircut
YER YOUR OWN HAIR AT HOME
Share
Watch on YouTube

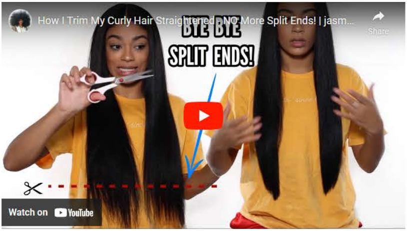
For the record, pros recommend seeing a stylist for a layered haircut. But if you simply cannot be stopped, this easy-to-follow tutorial will help you add long layers at home. Pay special attention to YouTuber Pick Up Limes's technique for point-cutting (aka cutting into the hair with the tips of your shears parallel to your hair in order to give your layers more texture).

How to trim your curls



Want to touch up your hair between salon appointments? Follow the lead of beauty vlogger Joy Before Her for a super-easy approach to trimming curly hair. Keep your hair completely dry and **snip your ends curl by curl** to avoid any f*ckups. Know that holding your shears at an angle will give your ends a pointier edge, which is super ideal for volume.

How to trim your split ends on dry hair


How I Trim My Curly Hair Straightened | NO More Split Ends! | jasm...
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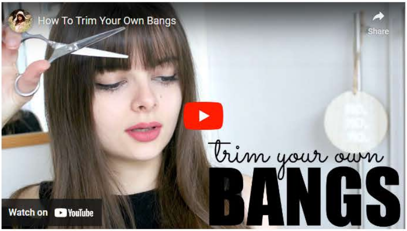
BYE BYE
SPLIT ENDS!
Watch on YouTube

As your hair gets longer, it's pretty common for your ends to get skinnier from breakage and damage. Even it all out by giving yourself a quick trim to get rid of any split ends or stragglers. YouTuber Jasmine Brown prefers **dry, straightened hair to get the cleanest edge possible.** BTW: A split-end serum is a great way to keep your hair looking fresh between trims.

How to trim straight bangs



It's no secret that bangs are kiiinda high maintenance—even though they might skim your brows perfectly post-haircut, there's a good chance they'll be hitting your eyelids in a month or two. The solution? Committing to DIY bang trims—and this **tutorial for straight hair** is a great place to start.

How to trim curly bangs

How to cut & style curly bangs | Vivi König
Share
CURLY BANGS
Watch on YouTube

Got curly bangs? This haircut tutorial was pretty much made for you. Follow along as YouTuber Vivi König very carefully gives her bangs some TLC. She recommends **styling your hair prior to your trim**—that way you have a better idea of the true length you're working with.

Final notes

While a salon appointment with a trained hairstylist is the safest way to go for any kind of haircut, sometimes you gotta do it yourself—and that's okay. Just make sure you have sharp hair shears, a thorough tutorial featuring your own hair type, and expert advice (like…everything above), and when in doubt, cut less, not more.

And if you think you can get by with some alternatives to a DIY trim (yay!), see: a tutorial on hair dusting, a deep conditioner for moisture, a hair serum for shine, and a hair oil to lock in moisture and reduce the appearance of split ends.