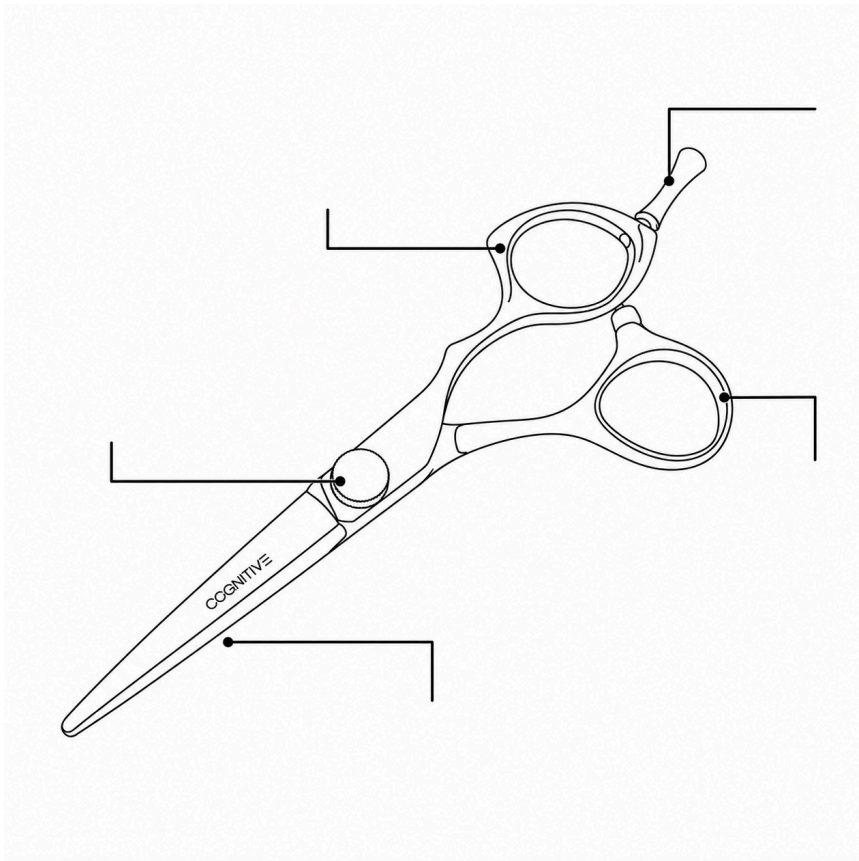




Tools Guide

A professional tool guide.

01

Your Tools Are Your Hands

Technique matters more than tools. But the right tools support good habits, and the wrong ones build bad ones.

This guide covers the tools you need, from setup to finishing, and how to maintain them.

Most early-career hair cutters under-invest in tools. Cheap equipment compromises the work and trains the wrong habits. A bent comb creates uneven sections. Dull scissors force unnecessary pressure and lead to poor technique.

If you take care of your tools, your tools will take care of you. Maintain everything. Replace what wears out. Build it once and the same kit should still cut for years.

Read it once. Return to the Quick Reference when buying, replacing, or rebuilding your kit.

KEY PRINCIPLE

Practice with the right tools or practice the wrong habits.

Mannequin and Stand

Mannequin. When you are not cutting on clients, the mannequin is your training ground. Use a 100% human hair mannequin only. Synthetic hair behaves nothing like real hair and reinforces the wrong habits. Exalto, Pivot Point, and Headgear all produce reliable mannequins. Quality varies between models. Choose mid-range or above if you are practising seriously. Push every mannequin to at least 15–20 cuts before replacement.

Stand. Use a stand that is sturdy, height adjustable, and stable enough that the head does not shift while you cut.

Mirror and clothing. Use a mirror to check your posture while you work. On dark hair, wear a light top to read shape more clearly.

WHY IT MATTERS

Synthetic hair teaches the wrong instincts. Real hair, every time.

02

Mannequin and Stand

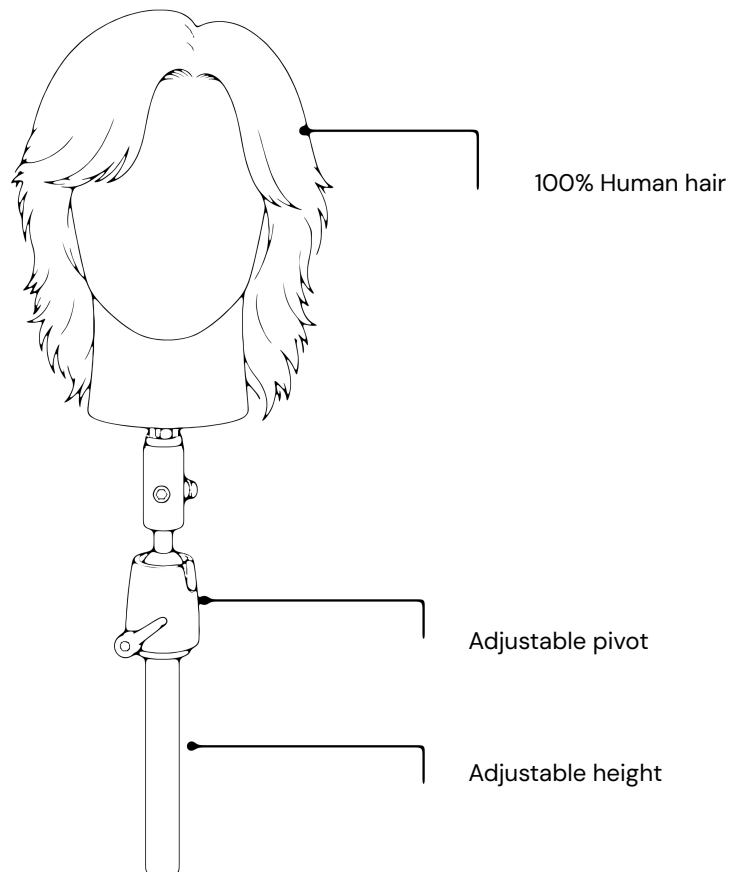


FIG. 01 — Mannequin and stand

A human hair mannequin on an adjustable stand.

03

Precision Comb

Your most-used tool. Every section, every guideline, every parting starts with the comb.

What to look for. Precision comb. Fine teeth for clean sectioning and control. Wider teeth for lower tension. A solid spine that does not flex under pressure. Recommended: Cesibon, Beuy, YS Park. Choose carbon fibre or hard plastic. Avoid soft plastics and hollow combs.

Wide-tooth comb. For preparation, detangling, styling, and scissor-over-comb work.

WHY IT MATTERS

A bad comb means bad sections.

03

Precision Comb

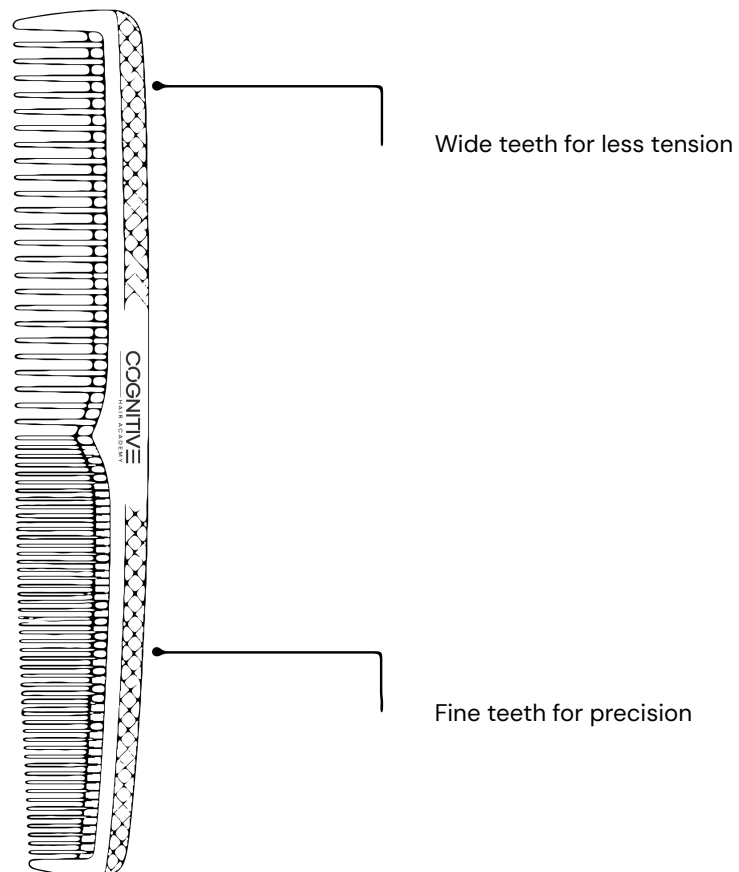


FIG. 02 — Cutting comb

Fine teeth for clean sections, a spine that holds.

04

Sectioning Clips

Clips help plan your haircutting system by holding isolated sections out of the way while you work. Small precision clips that follow the shape of the head give cleaner control than large salon-style clips.

Two types worth owning. Small precision clips. For holding sections, isolating details, or securing a working guideline. Small styling clips. For no-mark styling.

What to look for. Strong grip without marking the hair. A spring that maintains tension over years of use.

WHY IT MATTERS

Use precision clips that follow the head shape.

04

Sectioning Clips

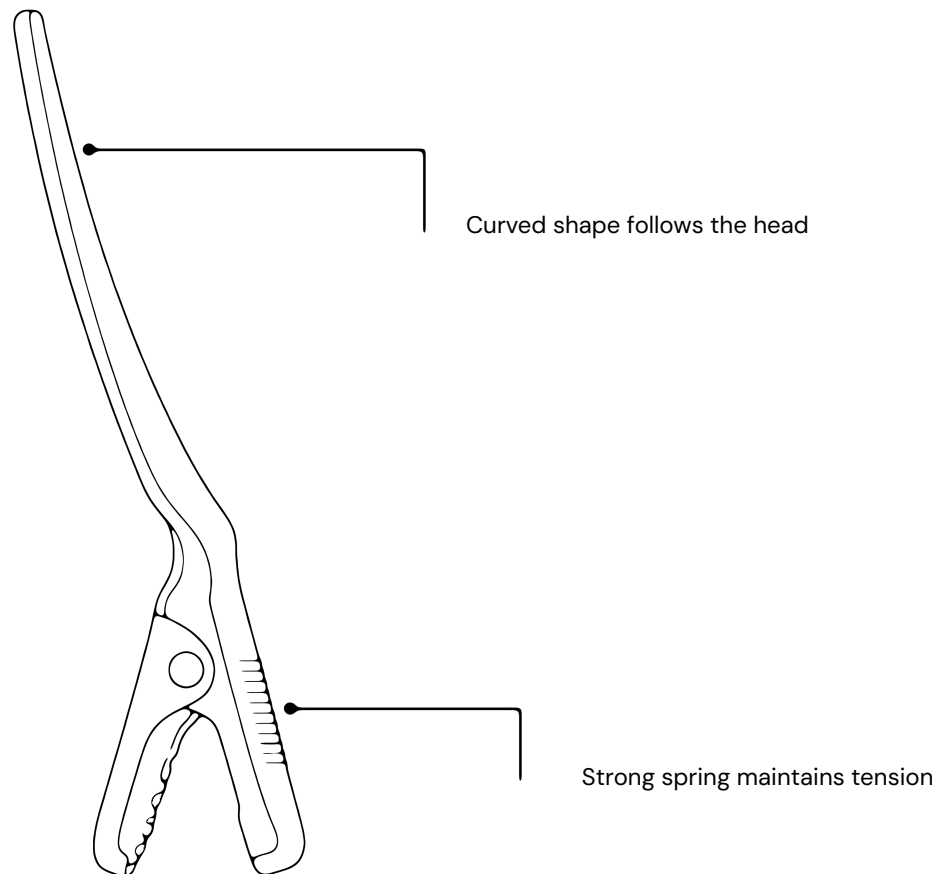


FIG. 03 — Sectioning clips

Precision clips that follow the head and grip without marking.

05

The Spray Bottle

When cutting wet, hair must stay saturated from root to tip during cutting. The water spray keeps it that way.

What to look for. A fine mist, not a stream. The spray should distribute water evenly without soaking one area and missing another. Re-spray regularly while working. Hair dries faster than you think, especially finer densities.

Why it matters. Dry hair reads differently to wet hair. A guideline established two minutes earlier becomes inaccurate once the hair dries. Wet hair reads true.

WHY IT MATTERS

Wet hair enables a methodical sectioning approach.

05

The Spray Bottle

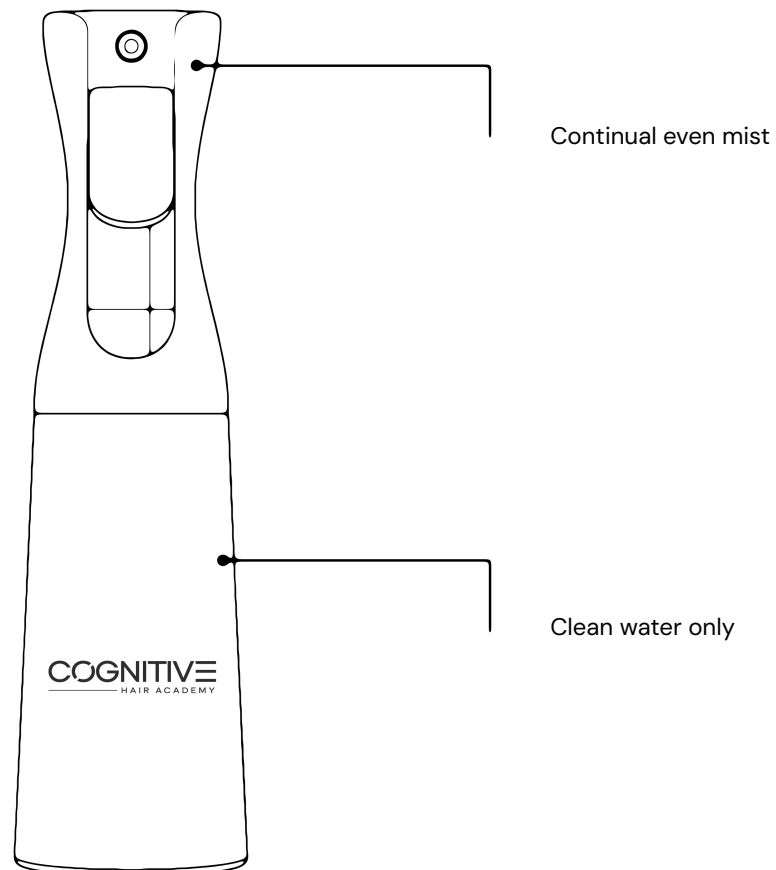


FIG. 04 — Spray bottle

A fine, even mist that keeps hair saturated.

The Precision Scissor

Your scissors are the single most important tool purchase you will make.

Length. 5-inch is the standard for precision work. 5.5" or 6" suits some specific techniques. Shorter scissors can give more control.

Steel quality. Japanese Nano Powder and VG10 steel offer some of the best edge retention, sharpness, and long-term durability.

Handle styles. Offset. Ergonomic and strain reducing. Classic. Straight and traditional. Crane. Extreme offset for advanced ergonomic support.

A serious working scissor usually starts from around £200. Buy once. Maintain properly.

WHY IT MATTERS

Buy once, maintain forever. Cheap scissors damage hair and your career.

06

The Precision Scissor

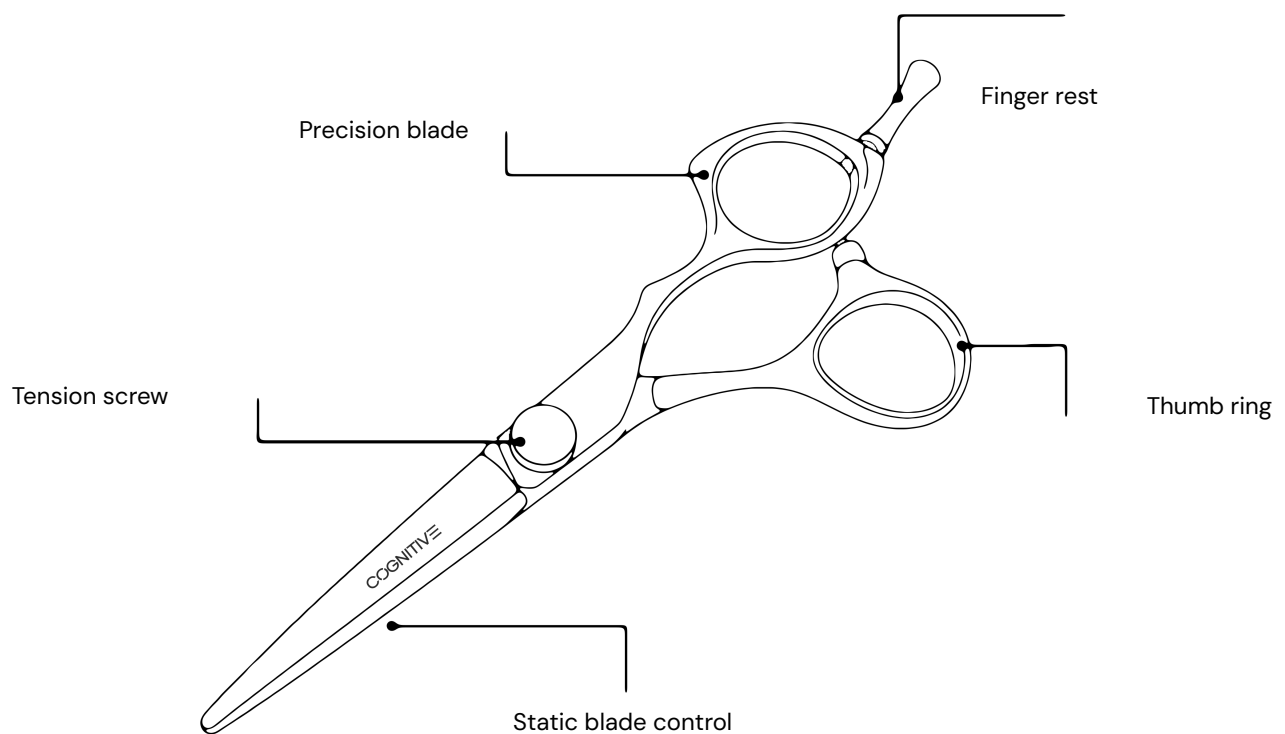


FIG. 05 — Precision scissor

Your most important tool. Bought once, maintained forever.

The Texturising Scissor

One blade with teeth, one solid. Removes some hair, leaves the rest. Used to soften cutting lines and remove bulk without taking length. Texturising shears are mostly used as a refinement tool. They soften, blend, and personalise.

20–30 teeth. Aggressive. Removes a lot of hair fast. Used for removing bulk on thick hair.
30–40 teeth. Middle ground. Most versatile. 40–50+ teeth. Subtle. For softening lines and final refinement.

Care. Clean between teeth after every use. They collect hair fragments. Oil regularly. Treat them with the same respect as your standard scissor.

WHY IT MATTERS

Texturising shears are best for refinement and maximising texture.

07

The Texturising Scissor

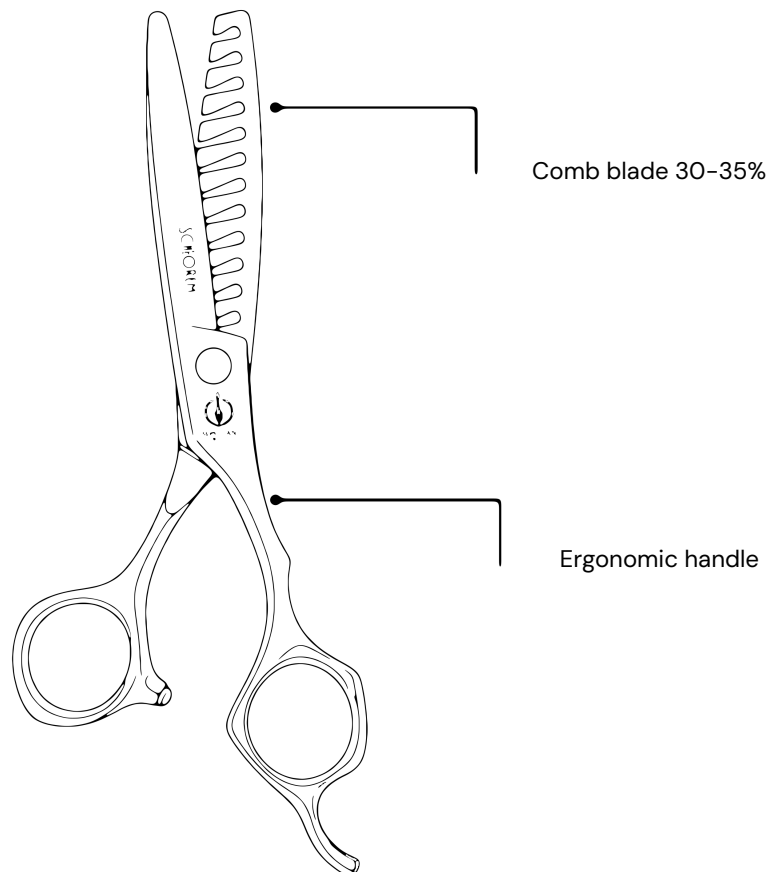


FIG. 06 — Texturising shears

Removes bulk and softens lines without losing length.

The Razor

A handheld blade used for texture, refinement, personalisation, and perimeter or internal work. The razor breaks the cutting line in a way scissors cannot.

Replaceable Feather blades. Best for creating texture. Can be used in a handheld finger razor or freehand. Replaceable razor blades. Best for detail work and line-ups. Must be used in a cut-throat holder.

Dull razors tear the hair instead of cutting it. Replace blades every 1–3 clients depending on hair type.

Hygiene. Sterilise between every client, as with all tools.

WHY IT MATTERS

Sharp blade or no blade. A dull razor tears hair.

08

The Razor

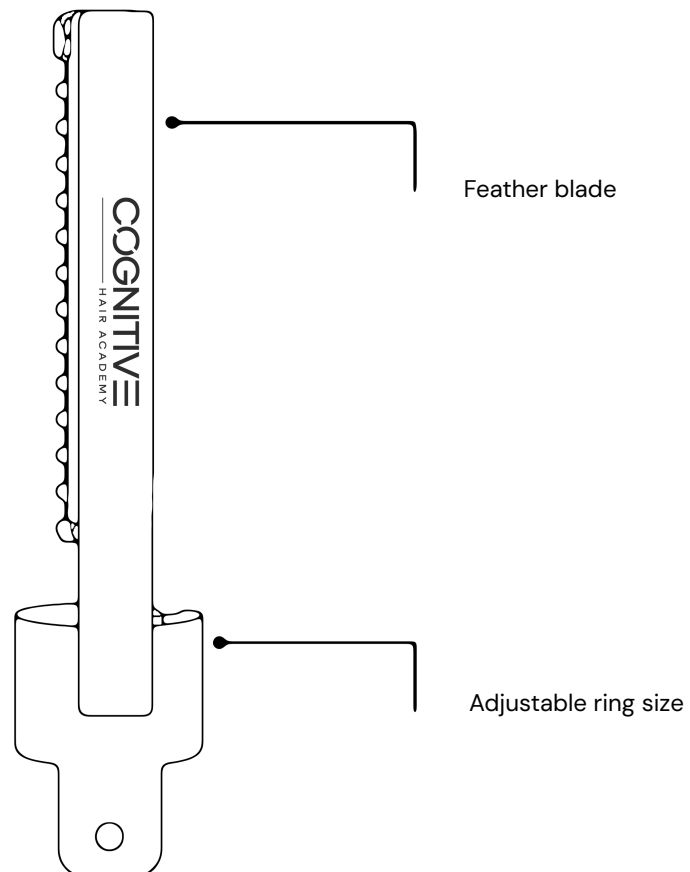


FIG. 07 — Texture razor

A handheld blade that breaks the cutting line.

Clippers and Guards

Essential for fades, taper work, short haircutting, and outline detail. A barber's primary cutting tool.

Cordless. Offers better freedom of movement and easier positioning around the chair. Industry standards: Gamma Boosted, Wahl Magic Clip.

Guards. 1, 2, 3, 4. Transition guards. 0.5, 1.5.

Standard taper blade. Used for general clipper work and fading. T-blade trimmer. Used for outlining and detail work around the hairline and ears. Foil shaver. Used for skin work and the closest possible finish.

HYGIENE

Clean blades after every client. Sanitise between clients. Sharpen or replace blades when they pull rather than cut.

09

Clippers and Guards

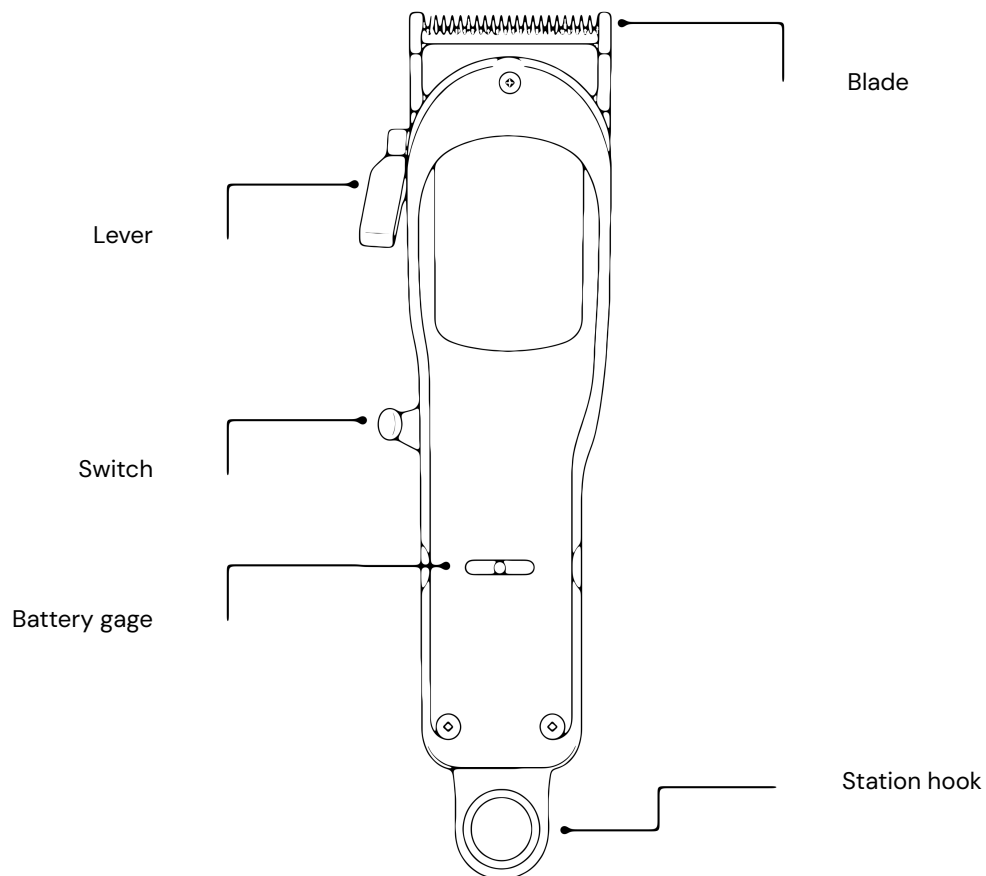


FIG. 08 — Cordless clipper

A cordless clipper and guards for fades, tapers and outlines.

Styling Brush

Vent brush. Open vents in the barrel let airflow pass straight through. Lightweight, less drag through the hair, faster drying. Good for drying and creating soft movement. The bevel-shaped vent gives a slight curve to the ends.

Vess brush. Densely packed bristles, no airflow through the barrel. Holds tension well. Better for smoothing, polishing, and pulling the cuticle flat. Slower to dry than a vent but delivers a cleaner finish.

Which one when. Vent for speed, movement and everyday styling. Vess for precision, smoothness and editorial finish.

WHY IT MATTERS

Vent for movement. Vess for finish.

10

Styling Brush

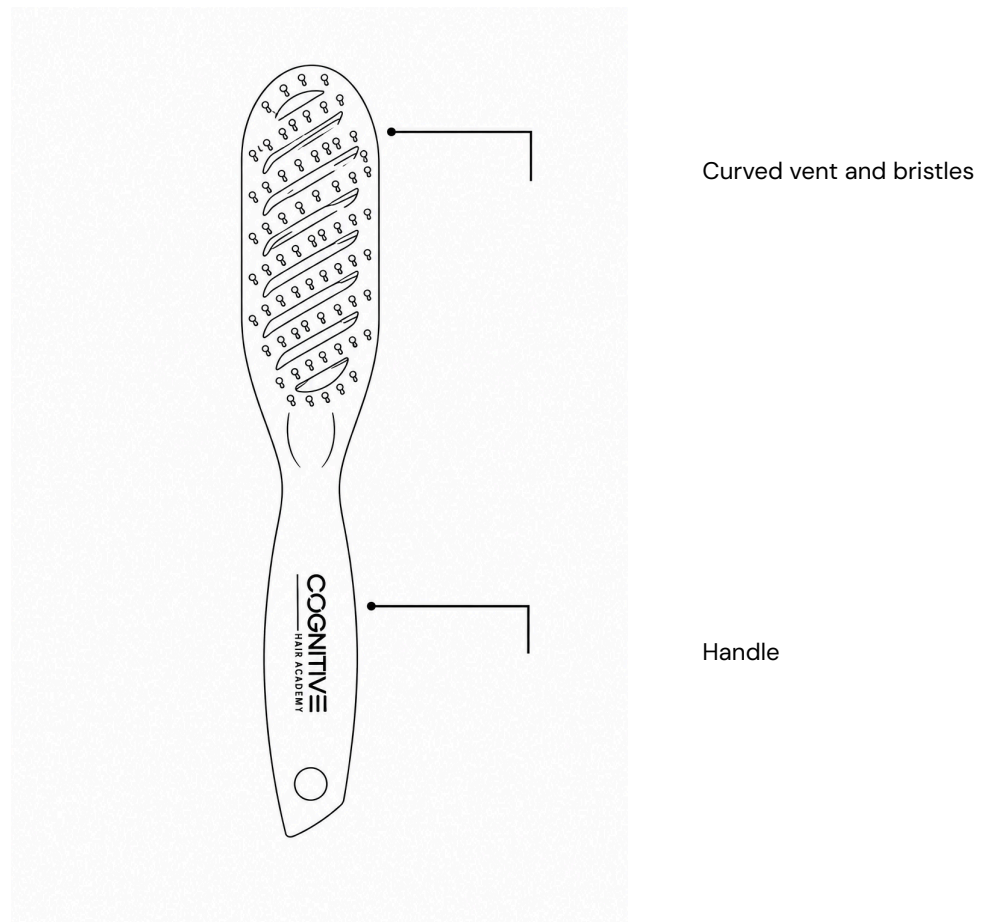


FIG. 09 — Curved vent brush

A curved vent brush for airflow and faster drying.

Hairdryer

The brand matters less than the weight in your hand and the attachments that come with it.

Brand. Dyson, Gamma, Parlux, and BaByliss all perform well. Choose what feels balanced and comfortable in the hand. The performance gap between leading brands is smaller than marketing suggests.

Weight. Lightweight matters. You hold this tool every day.

Nozzle. Concentrates airflow for direction and finishing. Diffuser. Disperses airflow for curly and wavy hair.

Clean the filter weekly. A blocked filter overheats the motor.

WHY IT MATTERS

Light in the hand, nozzle and diffuser to hand. The rest is preference.

Hairdryer

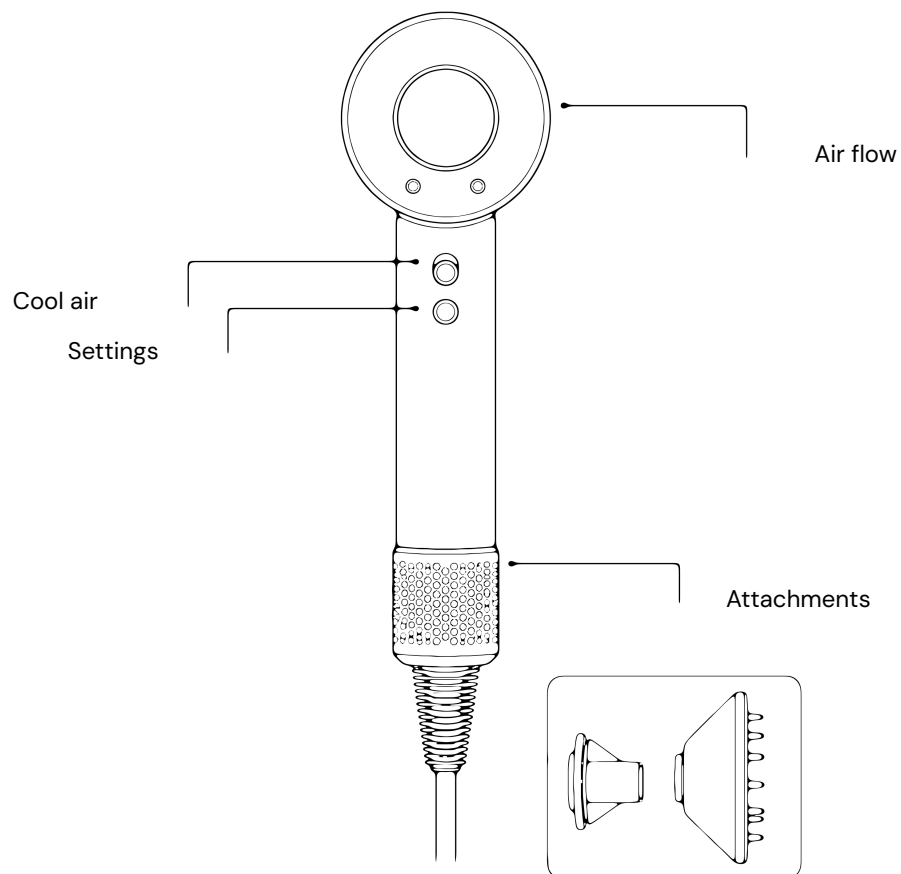


FIG. 10 — Hairdryer

Light in the hand, nozzle and diffuser to hand.

Care and Maintenance

Daily. Clean blades and combs after every client. Wipe handles. Empty the water bottle. Store everything in a dedicated case or roll.

Weekly. Oil scissors, clippers and razors. Check the screw tension on scissors. A loose pivot ruins the cut. Sanitise tools fully.

Monthly. Deep clean every tool. Inspect for damage, chips, bent teeth or loose handles. Replace consumables: clipper blades when dull, razor blades, worn combs.

Seasonally. Send scissors for professional sharpening. Every 6–12 months depending on volume. Service clippers if performance has dropped.

Never. Leave tools wet. Drop scissors. Use cutting tools on synthetic materials. Share blades between clients without sterilisation.

KEY TAKEAWAY

A working professional's kit is an asset, not a consumable. Treat it that way.

Common Tool Mistakes

Buying cheap scissors. The single biggest false economy in this profession. Cheap scissors damage hair, tire the hand, and hold back technique. Save longer and buy properly.

Practising on synthetic hair. Synthetic fibres do not behave like real hair. They tangle differently, cut differently, and reward bad habits. Real-hair mannequin every time.

Skipping the water bottle. Dry hair reads at the wrong length. The guideline you set five minutes ago is no longer accurate if the hair has dried. Re-spray every section.

Working with a bent comb. Sections are only as clean as the comb that took them. A flexed or chipped comb produces uneven sections you do not see. Until the cut is finished.

Skipping maintenance. Tools degrade. The cuts degrade with them. Oil weekly, sharpen seasonally, replace consumables on schedule. The kit you maintain lasts a career.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Most tool problems are buying problems. Buy properly the first time and the rest of the work follows.

Quick Reference

Tools

- Precision scissor
- Cutting comb
- Wide-tooth comb
- Sectioning clips
- Spray bottle
- Clippers
- T-blade trimmer
- Foil shaver
- Texturising shears
- Razor
- Hairdryer
- Vent brush
- Vess brush

Maintenance

- Daily. Clean blades. Wipe handles. Empty spray bottle.
- Weekly. Oil scissors, clippers, razors. Check tension.
- Monthly. Deep clean. Replace consumables.
- Seasonally. Sharpen scissors. Service clippers.
- Never. Leave tools wet. Cut synthetic hair. Skip sterilisation.

KEY PRINCIPLE

Take care of your tools and your tools will take care of you.

Kit Checklist

Set up

- Human-hair mannequin (100%)
- Adjustable stand
- Mirror
- Light-coloured top

Sectioning

- Precision cutting comb
- Wide-tooth comb

Control

- Sectioning clips (precision)
- Styling clips (no-mark)
- Continuous-mist spray bottle

Cutting

- Precision scissor (5" or 5.5")
- Texturising shears
- Razor with replacement blades
- Cut-throat holder

Clippers

- Cordless clipper
- Standard taper blade
- T-blade trimmer
- Foil shaver
- Guards 1, 2, 3, 4
- Transition guards 0.5, 1.5

Styling

- Hairdryer
- Nozzle attachment
- Diffuser attachment
- Vent brush
- Vess brush

Maintenance kit

- Scissor oil
- Clipper oil
- Blade cleaner / disinfectant
- Brush for blade cleaning
- Tool case

Maintenance Checklist

Daily

- ☐ Clean scissor blades
- ☐ Clean clipper blades
- ☐ Wipe comb teeth
- ☐ Wipe all handles
- ☐ Empty water bottle
- ☐ Store kit in case or roll

Weekly

- ☐ Oil scissors
- ☐ Oil clippers
- ☐ Oil razors
- ☐ Check scissor screw tension
- ☐ Sanitise all tools fully
- ☐ Clean hairdryer filter

Monthly

- ☐ Deep clean every tool
- ☐ Inspect for chips, bent teeth, loose handles
- ☐ Replace dull clipper blades
- ☐ Replace worn razor blades
- ☐ Replace worn or flexed combs

Seasonally

- ☐ Send scissors for professional sharpening
- ☐ Service clippers if performance has dropped
- ☐ Audit kit against the kit checklist
- ☐ Replace consumables stock

CHA

Take care of your tools and your tools will take care of you.

Return to the Quick Reference when buying, replacing, or rebuilding your kit.