

Haircuts - Female

Square bob



Square bob

Its versatility has made the square bob a classic cut. The length and shape can be varied in many ways. It can be cut long, above the shoulder or short, and with or without layers.

Whichever of these finished results you achieve, the haircut is still a square bob.

Because it is so versatile, this haircut has also been able to move with the times and it provides a good example of how texture can be used to give a contemporary look to a classic cut.

The styles of square bob you see today are much more textured and choppy-looking than they were five or ten years ago.

You can introduce texture on straight or curly hair and you can enhance the look further with styling and finishing lotion.

As you work through the steps to create a square bob, you will see how the style uses simple lines to achieve its flexibility.

Haircut guide

Preparation

Before starting your haircut:

- complete your client and hair analysis;
- with your client, decide how long the cut should be; and
- make sure your client is wearing a protective gown and is sitting comfortably.

A square bob is divided into four areas:

- Back
- Side
- Front area, including the fringe
- Internal layers



Cutting a square bob

Start your cut at the back of the head. Using maximum tension and minimum graduation, create a square baseline. This will give you your guideline for the side areas.

Your client's head should be in a slightly downward position to allow you to achieve a clean cutting line.

Bring the hair down between your fingers, keeping your fingers close to the nape. For this haircut, you must create a clean, square line.

As always, remember to check your balance as you cut.

Blend in the side areas. It is important to establish the natural parting so you know where to finish your sectioning pattern.

Take back a horizontal section from the temple area to just behind the ear. This will give you guideline to blend in the side areas.

Remember to maintain your square baseline. Hold the hair straight down between your fingers and close to the skin to maintain minimum tension.

Repeat on the opposite side, remembering to check balance as you go.

At the front area, take diagonal sections from the temple area into the side, combing the hair downwards and slightly forward. Hold the hair between your fingers to cut.

As you start to work your diagonal sections back, elevate each section to an equal level to create graduation.

Continue working up the head with your diagonal sections until you

reach the natural parting. You can then incorporate the fringe area.

Layering

You will use square layering for this hairstyle to keep the perimeter length equal all the way round.

Create a sectioning pattern across the head from ear to ear, dividing the front area from the back.

Take your guideline from one side. Lift the hair straight up from the headshape and keep your fingers square to maintain your square layers. Continue to work towards the front.

The hair that is not incorporated into the square layer is what gives this haircut its weight.

Blending in the back area

Create fan-like sections and, taking your guideline from the top of the crown, pull the hair straight up. Keep your fingers square to the headshape.

Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation of this haircut is available by clicking the link below. Please note that the file will open into a new browser window. To save the file to your local machine, please right-click on the link and select 'Save as...'



Step 1 of 28 - Before you cut

As always, before you cut, there are number of client characteristics you need to look at, including: facial features and face shape; hairlines, hair-growth patterns; hair quantity, quality and texture. For this haircut, you need to pay particular attention to the fringe area because you will be creating a fringe for the finished look.

Facial features and face shape

The shape of your client's face and head are unique. Use your observation skills to identify their individual features.

Your haircut should enhance their good features, eg their eyes and cheek bones, and disguise their less attractive features, eg a heavy jaw or big nose.

The different face shapes are:

- Oval, round and heart-shaped – these faces have curved contours ranging from gentle to extreme. A softer hairstyle is more compatible with these face shapes.
- Square, rectangle and triangle – these face shapes are angular and solid and have a chiselled look. Sharp, blunt cuts suit these faces much better than soft styles.

Hair-growth patterns

You need to take your client's hair growth pattern into consideration when you are cutting their hair because some patterns influence how a cut is carried out. The most common ones are:



- Double crown
- Nape whorls
- Calf licks
- Widow's peak

If your client has any of these growth patterns, you should cut without using pressure to allow for the natural movement of the hair.

You may need to cut the sections of hair within the growth patterns longer than the rest of the hair. This allows for the movement of the hair as it springs back to how it falls naturally. The hair looks level even though it has not been cut level.

Quality of hair

The quality of hair means the condition. Good quality hair is easy to style. Hair that is thin and brittle is more difficult so you will need to use styling agents such as mousse or gel.

Quantity

Quantity refers to the density of hair – how much hair is on the head and how thick or fine the hair shape is.

These factors are important when you are thinking about the balance and control of a hair style. For example, it is easy to show volume on thick hair. On thin hair it is more difficult so you need to use styling gels and mousses.

When you are applying chemical treatments, the thickness of your client's hair will dictate how much product and what techniques you use. For example, fine hair can be more resistant to colour and perm treatments.

Texture

There are three types of hair texture:

- Fine
- Medium/normal
- Thick/coarse

The texture of your client's hair affects the size of the sections you take. For thicker hair, you need finer sections to make sure the guideline is visible. You need to see the guideline to know exactly where to cut each section of hair.

Step 2 of 28 - Hairlines

As part of your client consultation, and before you start your haircut, it is also important to check your client's hairlines.

You should do this when the hair is dry and again when the hair is wet after shampooing. Your client may have used mousse or gel on their hair, which may disguise the real hairline.

Not everyone has a perfect hairline so make sure you check for uneven growth and awkward, moving shapes.

There are four areas to look at:

- Side temple
- Front
- Crown
- Nape

Take out a fine section of hair and, using the wide part of your cutting comb, gently comb the hair. You will be able to see clearly the hairlines and growth patterns of the hair.



Step 3 of 28 - Side temple area

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Step 4 of 28 - Front hairline

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Step 5 of 28 - Crown area

Take a small section of hair at the crown. Lift it away from the head and let it fall. You will be able to see if your client has a double or uneven crown.

The nature of your client's crown will affect the way you cut and your finished haircut.

Our model's crown area is even so it will not influence the way our stylist cuts or affect the finished haircut.



Step 6 of 28 - Nape area

Make a centre parting from the top of the crown down to the centre point at the nape.

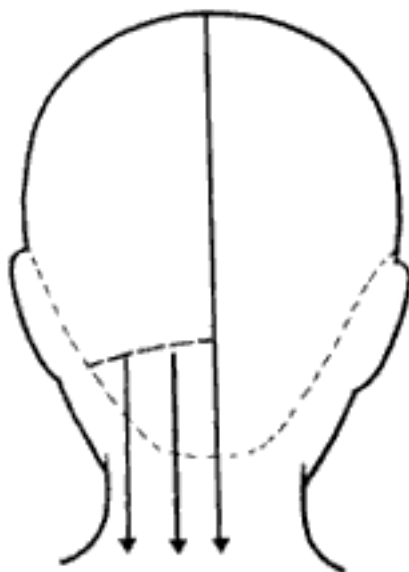
This section must be in central or you will end up with an unbalanced haircut.

Take out a diagonal section from the centre to just behind the back of the ear, remembering that clean, even sections produce clean cutting lines.

Using even tension, comb the hair straight down with the small teeth of your cutting comb.

Tip:

For a 100 per cent accurate check that your parting is central, place the back edge of your cutting comb on the top vertebra (the bone at the top of the spine), hold it upwards and lie it against the head.



Take a diagonal section from the central parting and comb the hair straight down

Step 7 of 28 - Graduation

Your client's head should be in a slightly downward position to allow you to achieve a clean cutting line.

Bring the hair down between your fingers and hold it with maximum tension. Keep your fingers close to the nape. This will help you achieve minimum graduation.

For this haircut, you must create a clean, square baseline so you need to maintain minimum graduation.

Cut the hair straight across.

Tip:

Graduation is a technique that allows the hair to move forwards and backwards. For minimum graduation, hold the hair between your fingers and close to the headshape when you cut.

For maximum graduation, hold the hair between your fingers and elevate the section. The higher you lift the hair when you cut, the more acute your graduation will be. This will give you a soft outline shape. Remember, you can use graduation only on outline shapes.



Step 8 of 28 - Balancing your cut

Repeat the same procedure on the opposite side of the head.

Make your sections on both sides of the head the same size so you can clearly see your haircut progressing. And, as you work, make sure that your client's head is in the same position as when you cut your first section.

Keep the hair wet at all times. This will help you to maintain an even tension throughout your cut.

Hold the hair between your fingers and keep your fingers close to the headshape to create minimum graduation.

As you should with any haircut, check the balance frequently. There are two ways you can do this:

- Technically - Stand central to your client and on the other side to the section you are working on, place your fingers at the top of your two, opposite cutting sections. Run your fingers down the two sections of hair at the same, working towards your cutting line (in this case, at the nape). You will be able to see and feel the balance of your haircut.



- Visually - Stand away from your client and position yourself centrally to the haircut. You will be able to see whether you have achieved a balanced shape. If you are standing off-centre to the haircut, it will look unbalanced even if it isn't. It may take a while to train your eye but, with practice, this is an effective and quick way to check balance.

Step 9 of 28 - Working side to side

Our stylist is working up the headshape.

With this technique, the order you progress through the cut is a matter of personal preference. You could choose to work your sections from side to side.

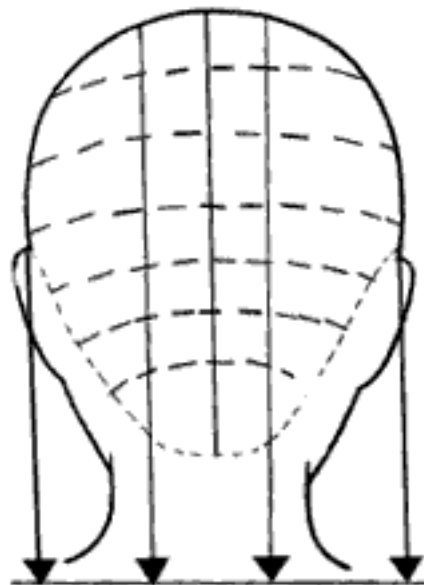
The advantage of working from side to side – cutting one section then cutting a matching section on the other side - is that you can check your haircut as you go.

When you are learning this technique, it is probably better to work your sections from side to side. This allows you to see clearly how the balance and shape of your haircut are developing.

Keep your sections clean and the hair wet.

As you work up towards the crown, you will be able to see your cutting line and graduation more clearly if you tilt the head into an upright position.

Take your final section from the top of the crown to the back of the ear.



The sectioning pattern is working up the head shape

Step 10 of 28 - The finished back area

Here you can see the wet finished result.

It is important that you check your balance at this stage.



Step 11 of 28 - Joining in from the back area to the sides

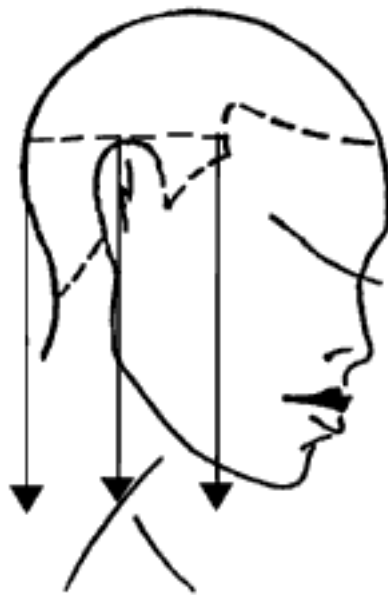
You should already have established where the natural parting is so you know where your section pattern should finish.

Take a horizontal section from the temple area to the back of the ear. Blend in the side areas to the back, maintaining your square baseline.

Hold the hair between your fingers and, keeping the section close to the skin, cut straight across.

This haircut requires you to layer the hair. Other cuts require a one-length look, for example the classic bob, and you would complete this part of the cut in three stages. For more on this, see the pages on cutting a classic bob.

Keep the client's head in an upright position and make sure the hair stays wet at all times.



A horizontal section is taken from the temple area to just behind the ear

Step 12 of 28 - Balancing the side area

Take an identical horizontal section on the other side of the head from the temple area to the back of the ear.

Check your haircut for balance. And check it again. You can do this visually, technically or both. How you check for balance doesn't matter as long as you check frequently and carefully.

You can work this stage of the haircut from side to side. You may find this a useful technique for maintaining balance and shape.



Step 13 of 28 - Parting area, finished look

It is vital you know where your client's natural parting is. Our model's parting is in the centre.

Work up the headshape, taking horizontal sections. Bring all the hair down onto your guideline and hold it between your fingers as you cut. Continue working in this way until you reach the natural parting.



Step 14 of 28 - Front area

At this stage of your haircut, you need to create a diagonal cutting line at the sides.

Take a diagonal section from the temple area into the side area. Comb the hair down and slightly forward. Hold the hair between your fingers as you cut.

Remember the rule: clean sections give you clean cutting lines.

Our stylist has chosen to create a diagonal cutting line to give the haircut more length at the sides.



Tip:
Your sections should correspond to your cutting line. If you want a diagonal cutting line, you must create a diagonal section. If you want a horizontal cutting line, you must create a horizontal section.



A diagonal cutting line is taken. The hair is combed down and slightly forward

Step 15 of 28 - Achieving balance

Balance your haircut by creating an identical diagonal section on the other side of the head. Use the same angle for your section and your cutting line.

Before you cut, check that your client's head is still in an upright position. If the client's changes position much, you will not be able to achieve a balanced haircut.

Remember that you can work this stage of your haircut side to side.



Step 16 of 28 - Working in the side areas

Work backwards with your diagonal sections.

You need to create graduation and give the shape a soft outline. You can achieve this by holding the hair between your fingers and elevating each section.

Make sure that you use the same elevation angle on both sides of the head.



Working backwards with the diagonal sections

Step 17 of 28 - Blending in the fringe area

Continue working up the head with your diagonal sections until you reach the natural parting. You will then be able to incorporate the fringe into your haircut.



Step 18 of 28 - Check the balance

Check the balance of the front area. Take out an identical section from both sides, comb the hair forwards and check the balance of:

- the front area;
- the temple area; and
- the length of your front area.



Step 19 of 28 - Diagonal sections

Our stylist is working towards the back area with diagonal sections.

A stylist does not cut out the outline shape of a haircut. As you work back and elevate your sections, the outline shape will drop out naturally.

Tip:
In most classic haircuts, the outline shape is created first.
This gives you your guide for layering.



Working the sections back
As you work back and elevate your sections,
the outline shape will drop out

Step 20 of 28 - Square layering

You will now start to layer the hair using square layering.

This technique allows you to maintain length and weight at the sides of a haircut.

Create a sectioning pattern across the head from ear to ear, dividing the front from the back. This stage of the cut focuses on the front part of the hair.

Take your guideline from one side area. Lift the hair straight up from the head. You are creating square layers so your fingers should be kept square to the headshape. As you lift the hair up, some of the side area hair will drop down. This will give you your guideline.

Working with your guideline, continue across to the other side of the head.



Holding the hair straight up,
keeping your fingers square
to the headshape

Step 21 of 28 - Square layering

Note the position of our stylist's fingers. To create square layering, you must keep your fingers square to the headshape at all times.

Tip:
Square layering allows you to maintain weight and length in your haircut. It can be used on long or short hair. As you become more confident, you will be able to use this technique in many different haircuts (see square layering techniques).



Step 22 of 28 - Top box section

You can now start to work forwards, towards the front hairline.

Here, our stylist is creating square layers in the top box section. This is the easiest place to start. As you grow more confident using the square layering technique, you can develop a method that is most comfortable for you.

Once you have layered your top box section, work it into the side areas.



The hair at the sides is drawn up to meet the guideline

Step 23 of 28 - Front layering

How you cut the fringe area will depend on the look your client wants to achieve and the finishing touches you may want to add to personalise the haircut.

Work with your client during the consultation process to establish both these factors. As you do this, remember to take into account the nature of your client's hairline and their hair-growth patterns, as well as the finished look they are hoping for.

Our stylist has chosen to create length and weight at the front of the haircut.

To achieve this look, direct the hair backwards as you start to work forwards towards the front hairline.

Using the same technique as before and keeping your fingers square to the headshape, work in the fringe area to the sides of your haircut.

To maintain length and weight, start to pull the hair back when you reach the front hairline.

Repeat on the opposite side.



The hair is drawn back to meet the guideline, in order to maintain length in the front area

Step 24 of 28 - Square layering, blending in to the back area

You will now start to blend in the crown area to the finished back area.

Take your guideline from the top of the crown and create a fan-like pattern of sections.

Always create fine sections. This will make it easier for you to follow your guidelines.

This haircut is achieved in stages. If you ever lose your guideline, you can simply go back to the beginning of the stage you are working on.

As you work through this stage of the haircut, hold your sections square to the headshape.



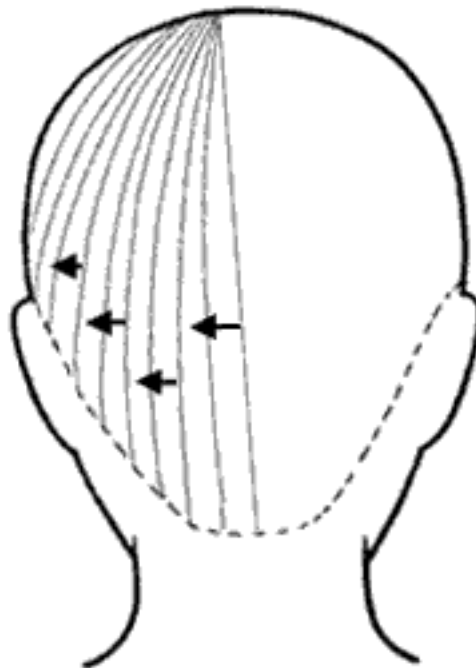
Step 25 of 28 - Blending in to the back area

Work outwards from the centre point of the crown area towards the back of the ear.

Our stylist is holding the hair up and square to the headshape. Use this technique as you blend in the crown area to the back area.

Repeat the same procedure on the opposite side of the head, working outwards towards the back of the ear.

Square layering is a way of building length and weight into your haircuts. Work with a fan-like pattern of sections and do not over-direct the hair or your haircut will be heavier on one side than the other.



Creating fan-like sections as you work into the back area

Step 26 of 28 - Cross-checking front and back

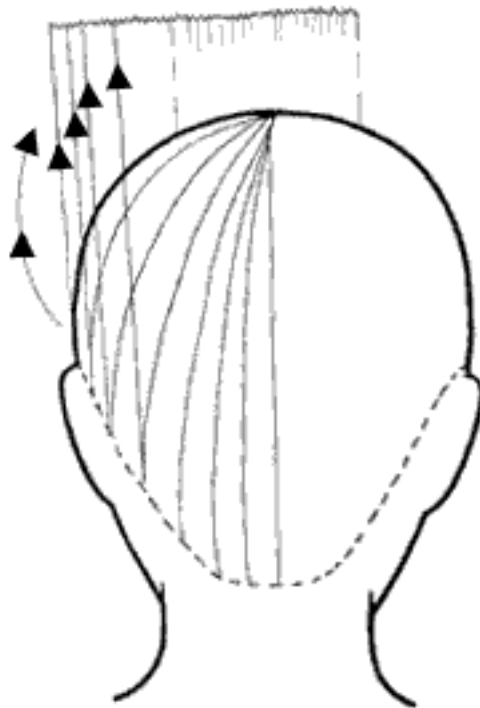
When you have finished layering, you must cross-check all the areas of your haircut.

You should not have to remove much hair when you are cross-checking. If you find you are cutting off a lot of hair from one area, go back and check that area against your original guideline.

Remember to cross-check the hair in the opposite direction to your cutting angle:

- if you cut the hair horizontally, cross-check vertically; or
- if you cut the hair vertically, cross-check horizontally.

Whatever haircut you are creating, you should always keep a mental note of the techniques and cutting angles you are using. This will get easier with practice.



The hair is held straight up and square to the headshape

Step 27 of 28 - Finished result, before blow-drying

This is the finished result before the Blowdry.

It is important that you have checked the balance, before you blowdry.



Step 28 of 28 - Finished result

Here we can see the finished result.

The hair was blowdried using a medium round brush, then finish off with some serum through the ends.

