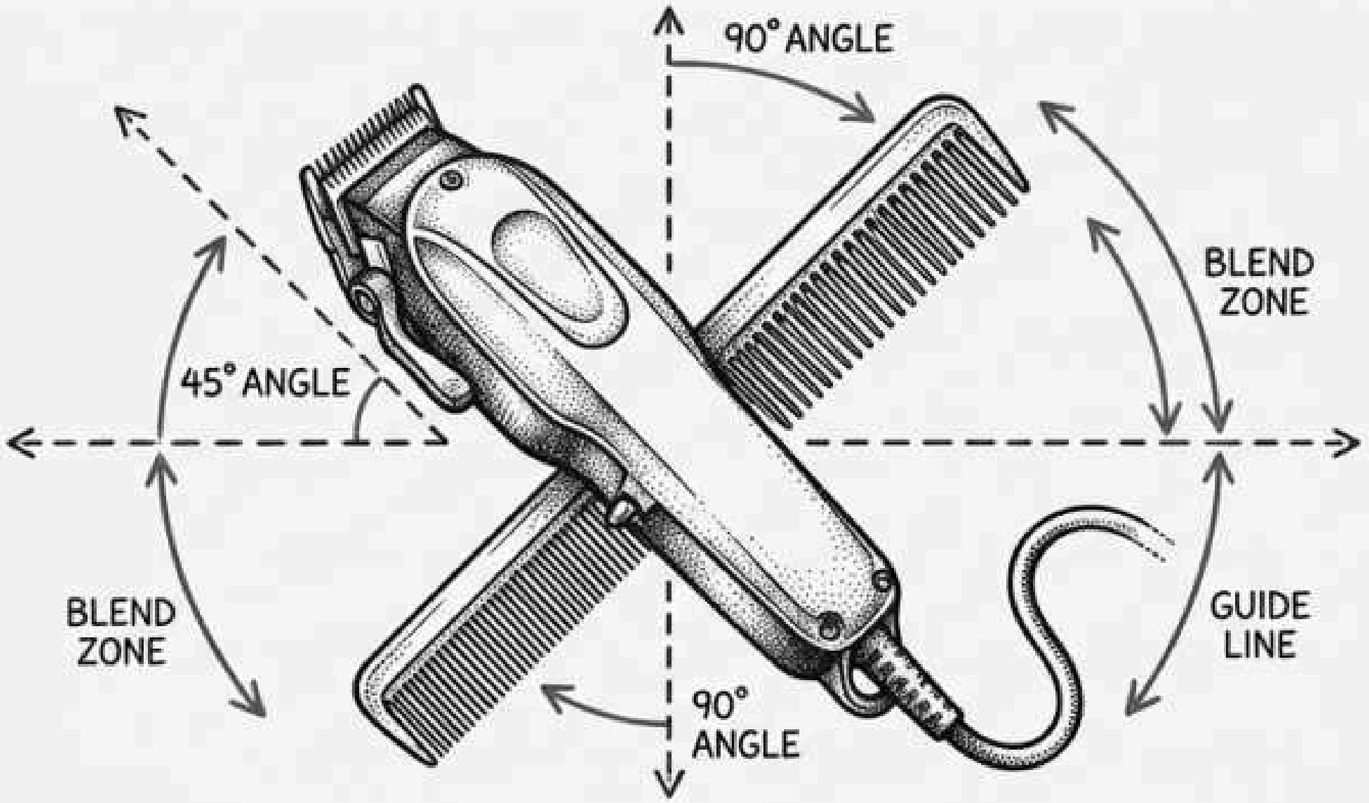


Lecture 3: Fades and Tapers

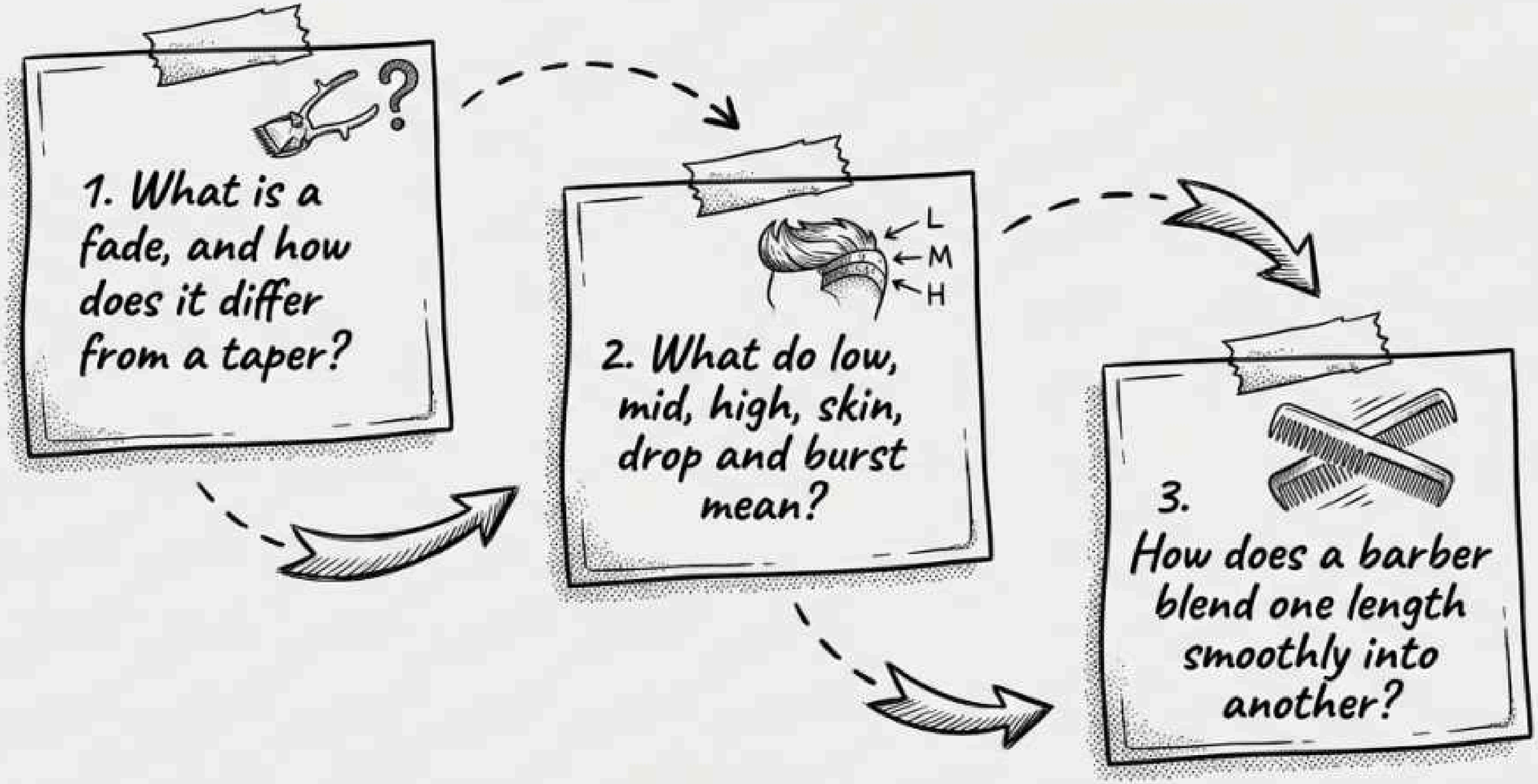
• Low • Mid • High • Skin • Drop • Burst

[Adult Haircuts: How to Describe the Haircut You Want]

[Extracurricular: Life Skills]

Anderson Academy

Paragraph 3.1: The Curriculum

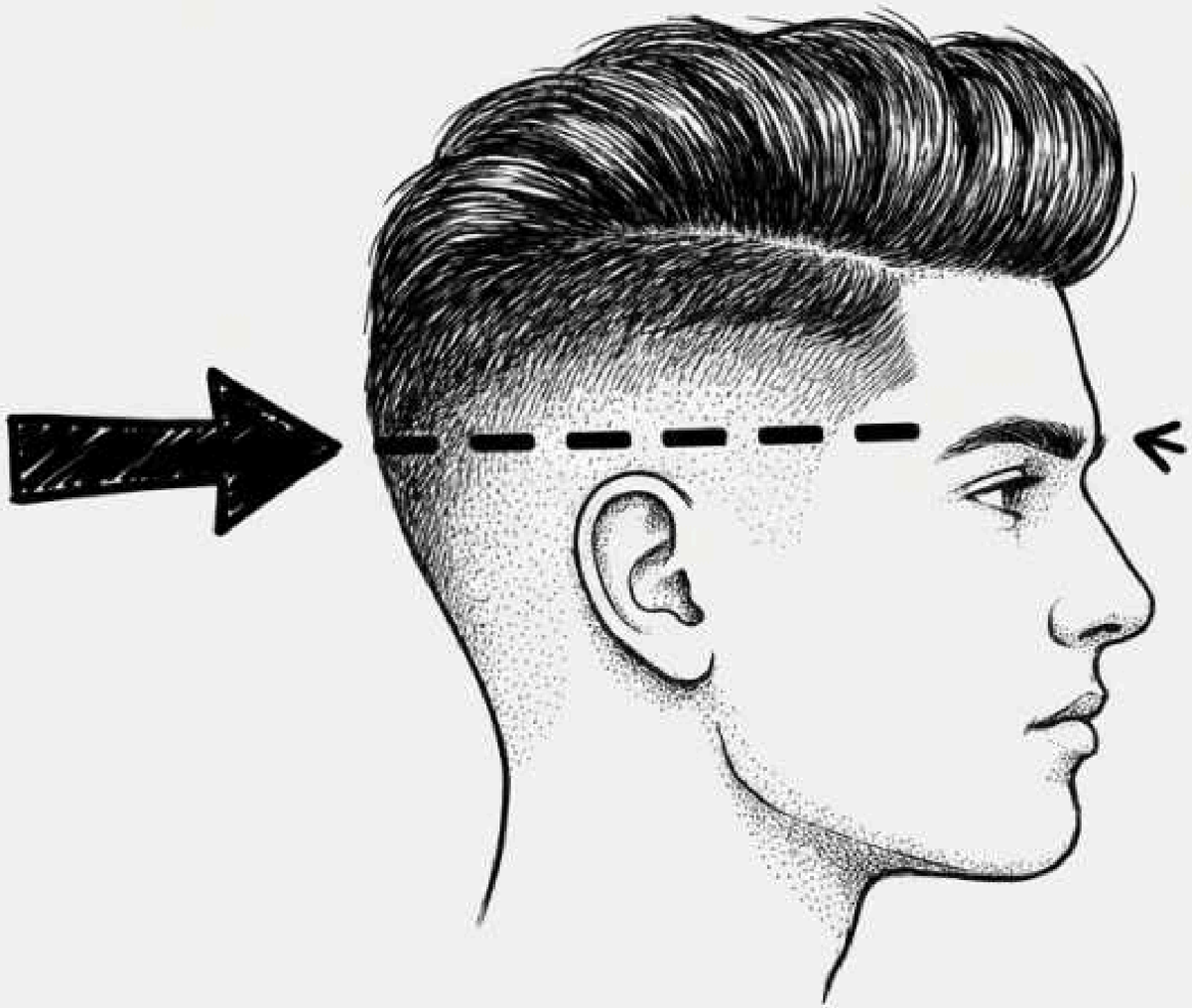


Paragraph 3.2: The Fade Concept



- The Fade: Hair gets gradually shorter toward the bottom.
- Fades into skin or very short stubble.
- Cut with clippers, guard numbers, and the lever.
- Goal: Smooth change, no visible lines.

Paragraph 3.3: The Fade Line

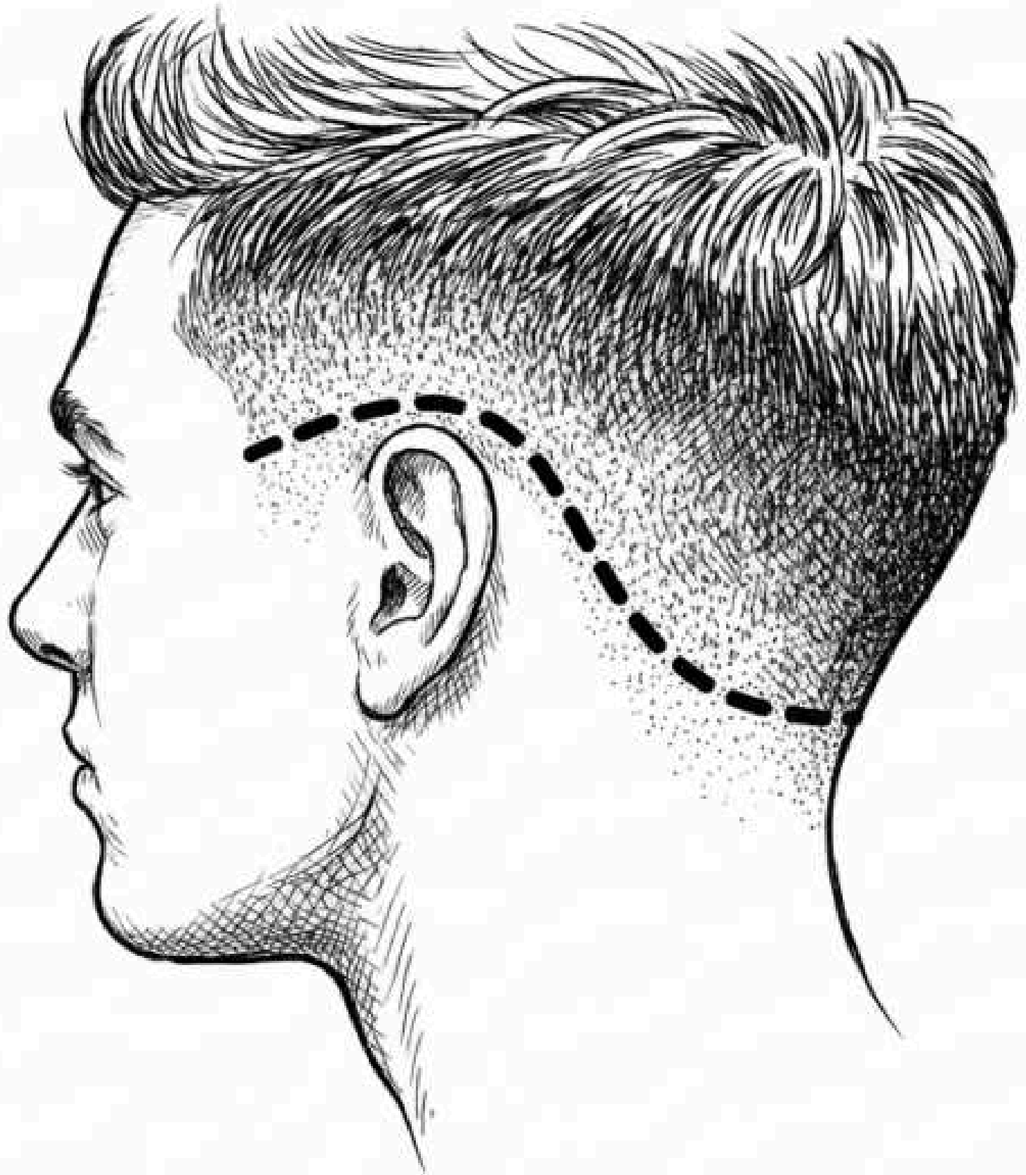


The key word is **WHERE**.

Height defines the fade (Low, Mid, High).

Fade Line: The exact height where the short, faded hair has blended back into the full length of the sides.

Paragraph 3.4: Low Fade



Low Fade:

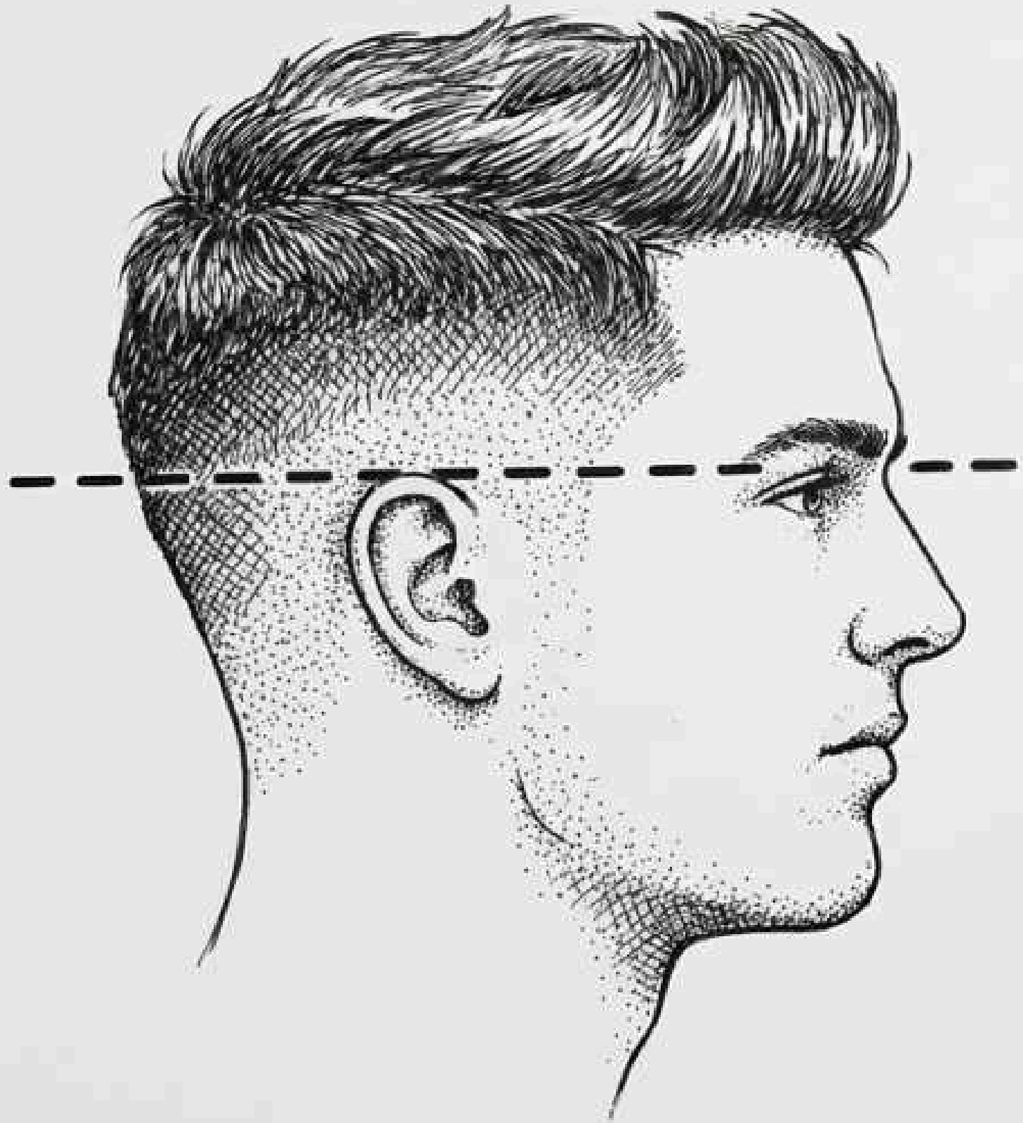
Finishes just above the top of the ear.

Follows the hairline round to the nape at the back.

Least dramatic; tidy at work, grows out gently.

A sensible first fade for anyone unsure.

Paragraph 3.5: Mid Fade



Mid Fade:

Finishes halfway up the side.

Roughly level with the temples.

More contrast, but keeps plenty of length on the upper sides.

The common middle ground between subtle and bold.

Paragraph 3.6: High Fade

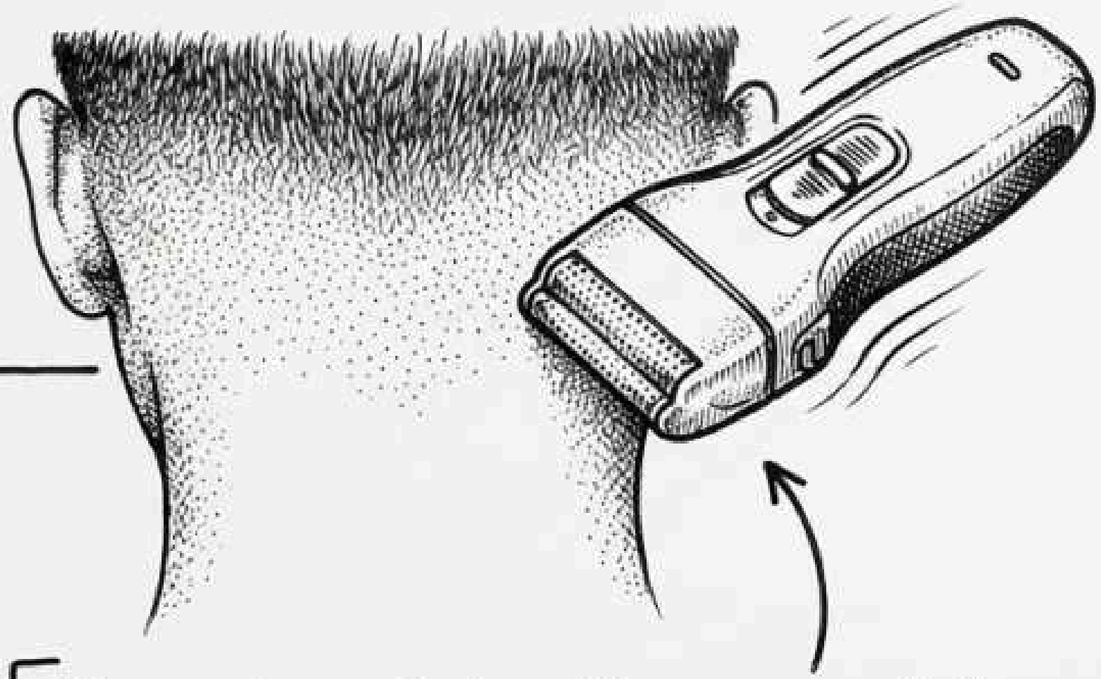


High Fade:

- Finishes near the parietal ridge.
- Most of the sides left very short.
- Puts all attention on the hair on top.
- Forms the military-style high and tight.

Paragraph 3.7: How short at the bottom?

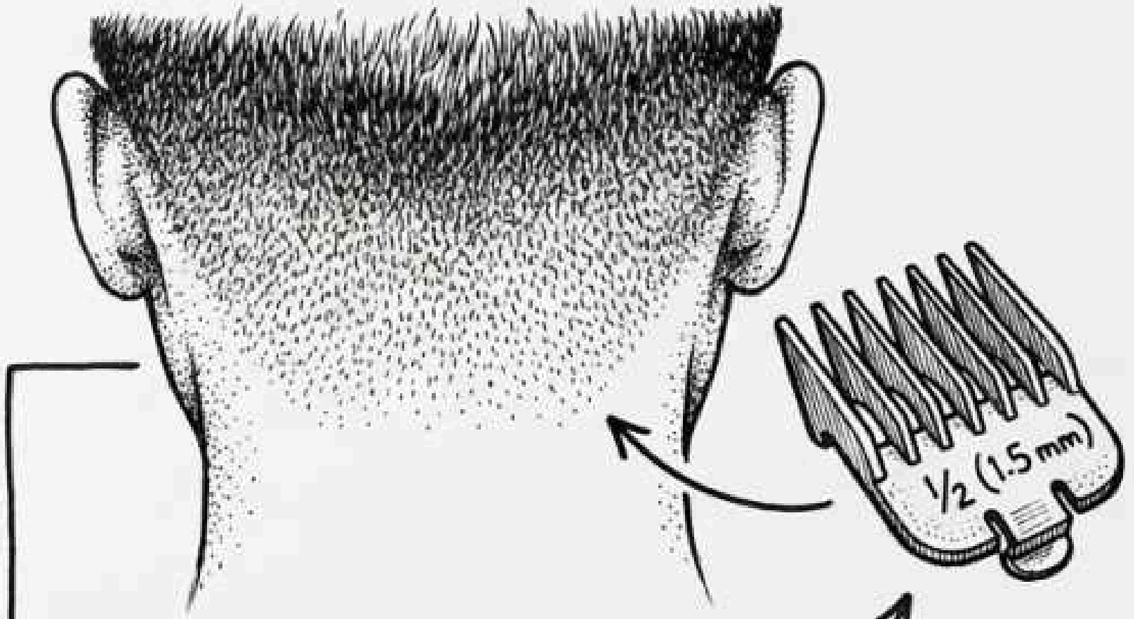
Skin (Bald) Fade:



Bare skin. Cut with no guard, lever closed, finished with foil shaver.

Any height can be a skin fade.

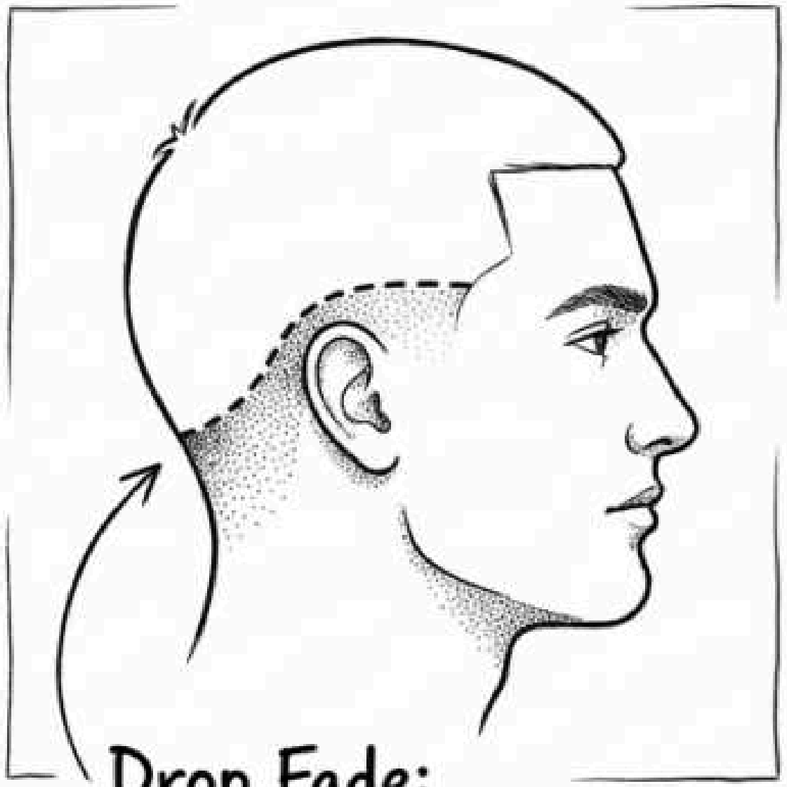
Shadow Fade:



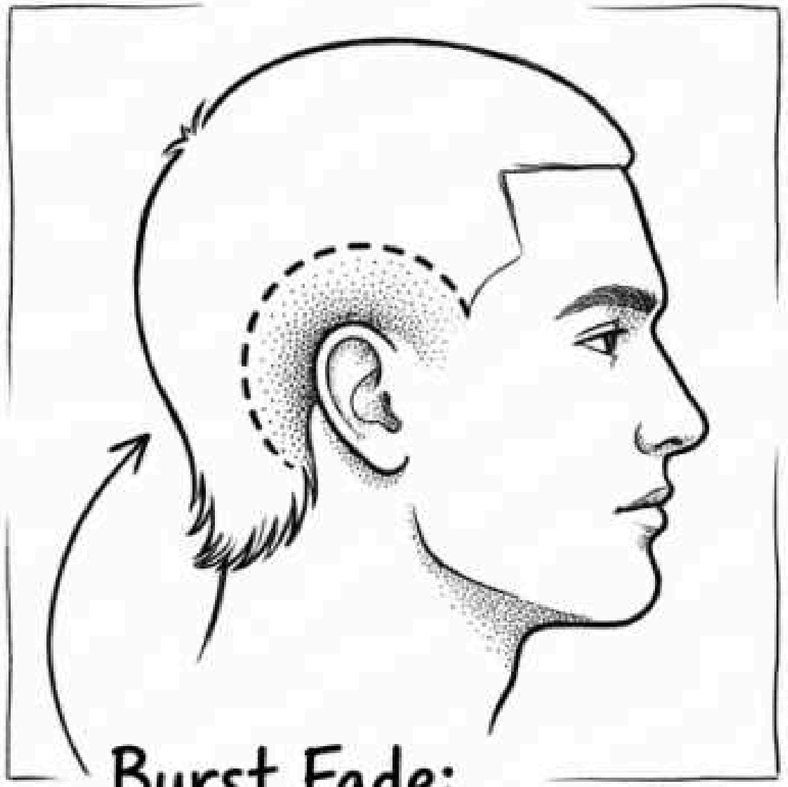
Keeps a light shadow.

Name the shortest guard instead (e.g., start at a half guard).

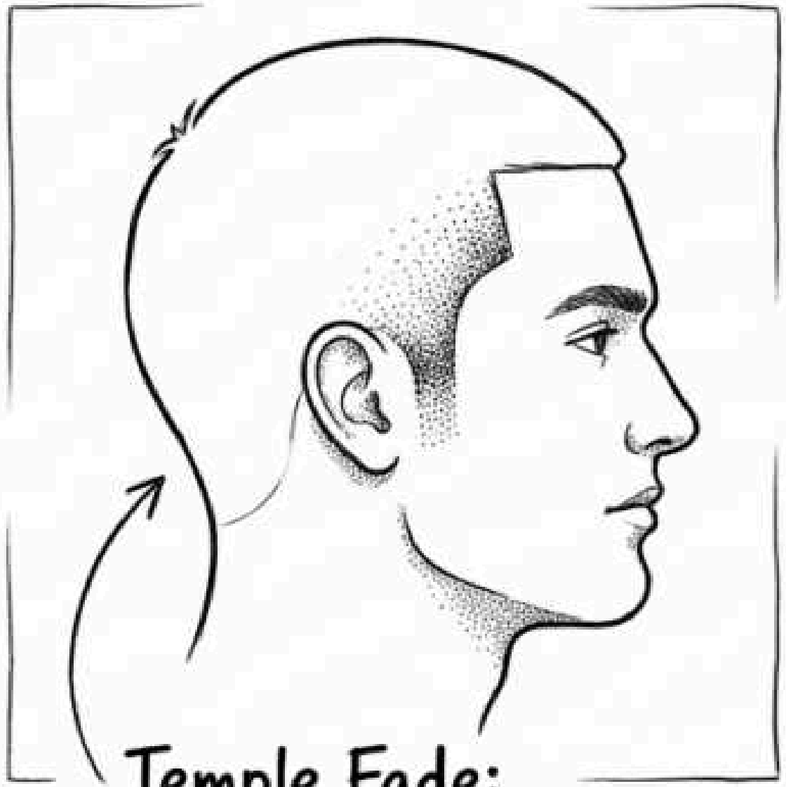
Paragraph 3.8: Drop, Burst, and Temple Fades



Drop Fade:
Curves downward behind the ear; follows head shape.

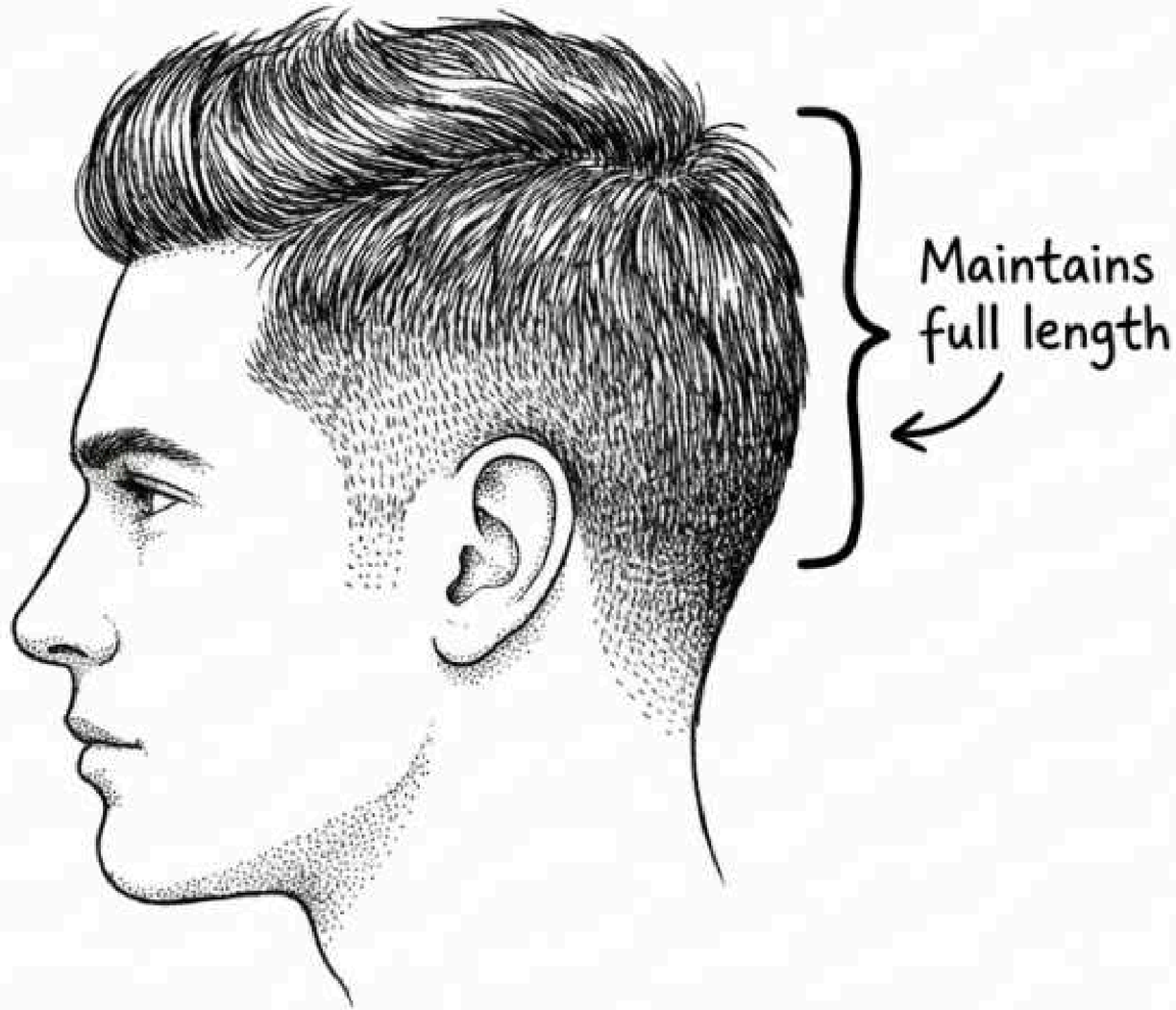


Burst Fade:
Semicircle around the ear (back of neck stays longer).



Temple Fade:
Fades only at the temples and sideburns.

Paragraph 3.9: Taper vs. Fade



Taper vs. Fade

- Hair gets shorter only at the very edges (sideburns and nape).
- Most of the sides and back keep their length.
- Rule of thumb: A taper is a fade that stays at the hairline.

Paragraph 3.10: Loose Words



Words are used loosely.

One shop's taper is another's taper fade or graduated cut.

When in doubt, describe the result:

- How high does the short part go?
- Does it end in bare skin?

A photo settles the question quickly.

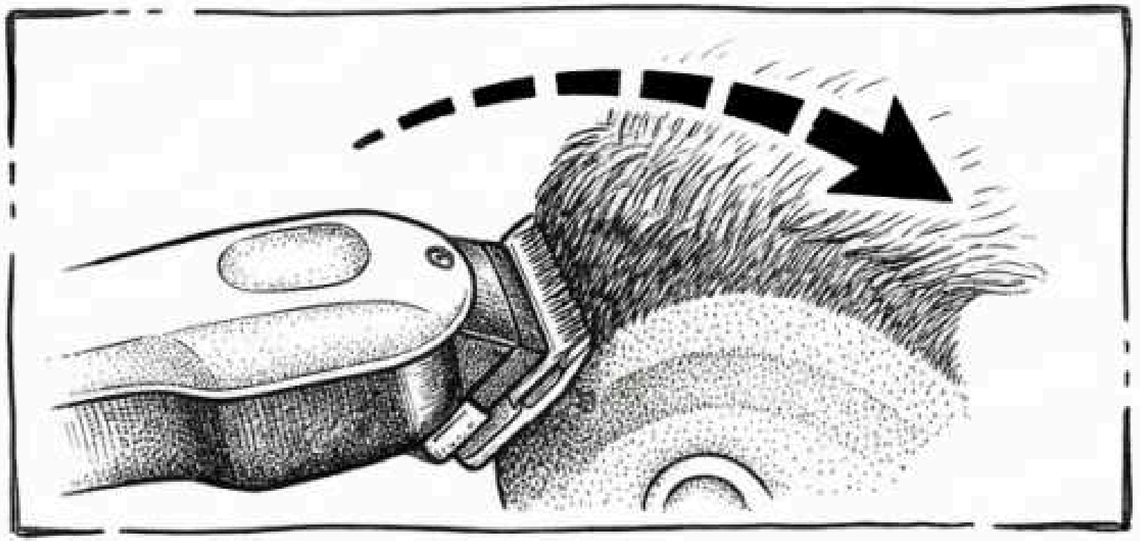
Paragraph 3.11: The Guard Ladder

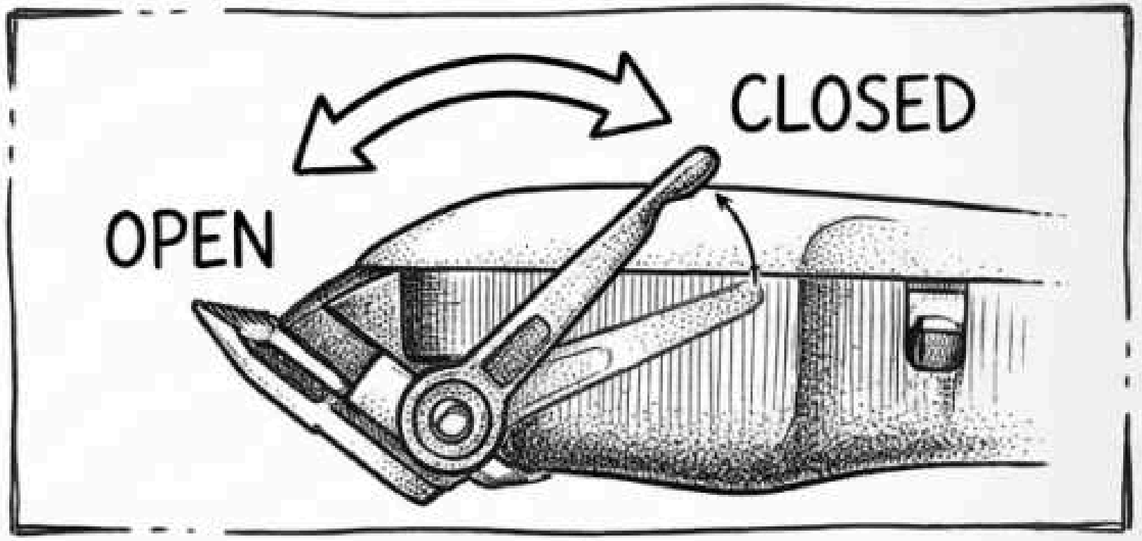


The Guard Ladder (Blending)

1. Cut sides and back to the longest side length first (e.g., #3).
2. Work downward with shorter guards in bands.
3. Stop at the exact same point each time for each band.

Paragraph 3.12: Removing the Lines





Removing the lines:

- **Rocking Motion:** Rock or flick the clipper away from the head at the top of each band so it tapers off softly.
- **The Lever:** Open or close the lever to re-cut the harsh line between two bands at an exact in-between length.

Paragraph 3.13: The Perfect Request

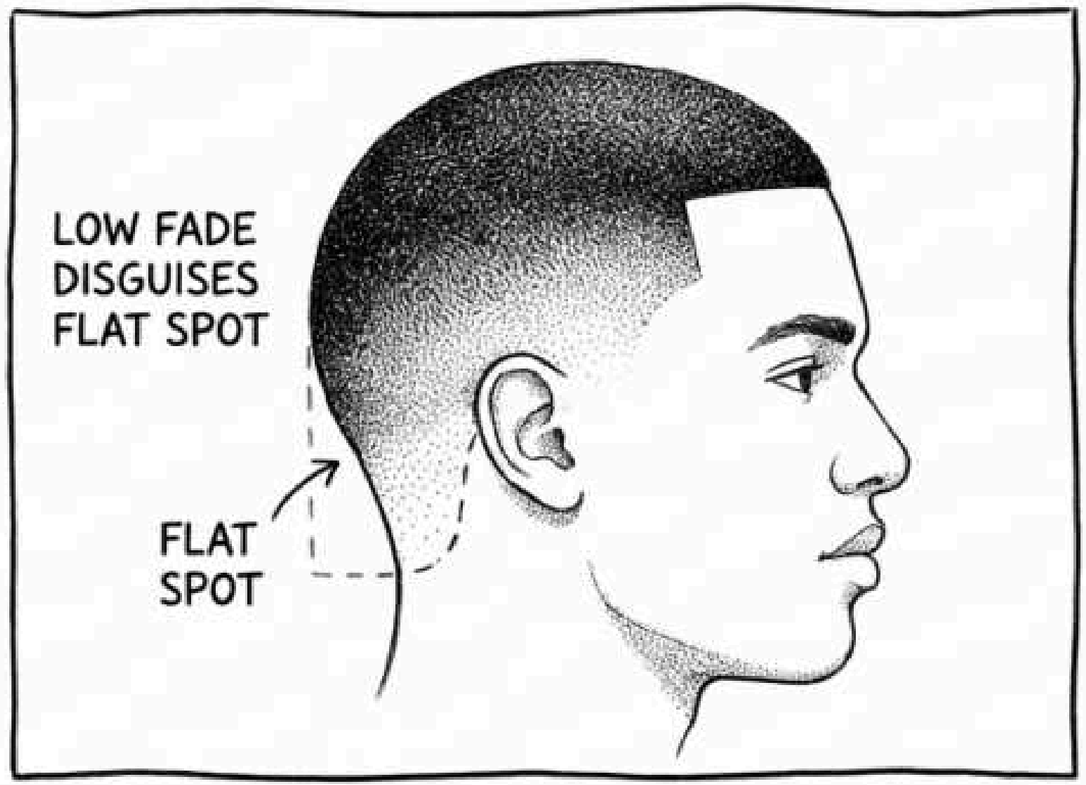
A [Height] [Shortest Point] fade, blended into a [Length] on the sides.

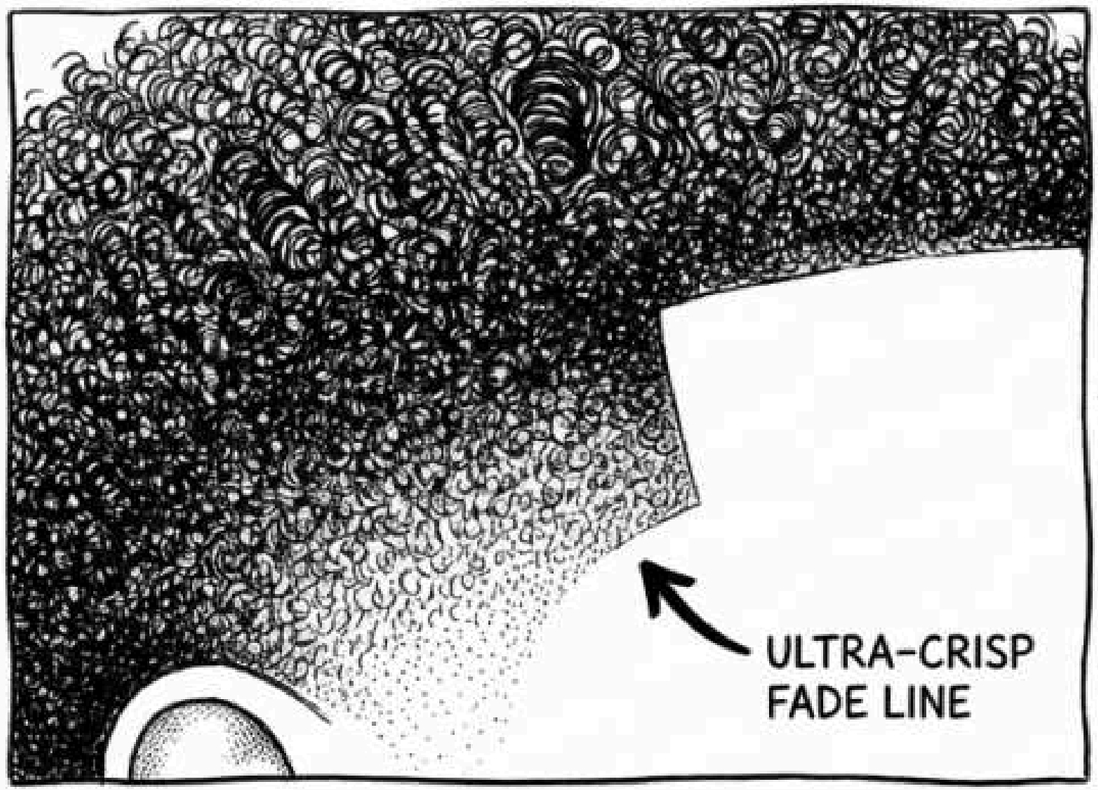
Example 1: A mid skin fade, blended into a number three on the sides.

Example 2: A low fade from a half guard up to a two, and leave the top long.

Nuance: Specify "Keep the blend soft" or "Make it sharp."

Paragraph 3.14: Head Shape & Hair Type

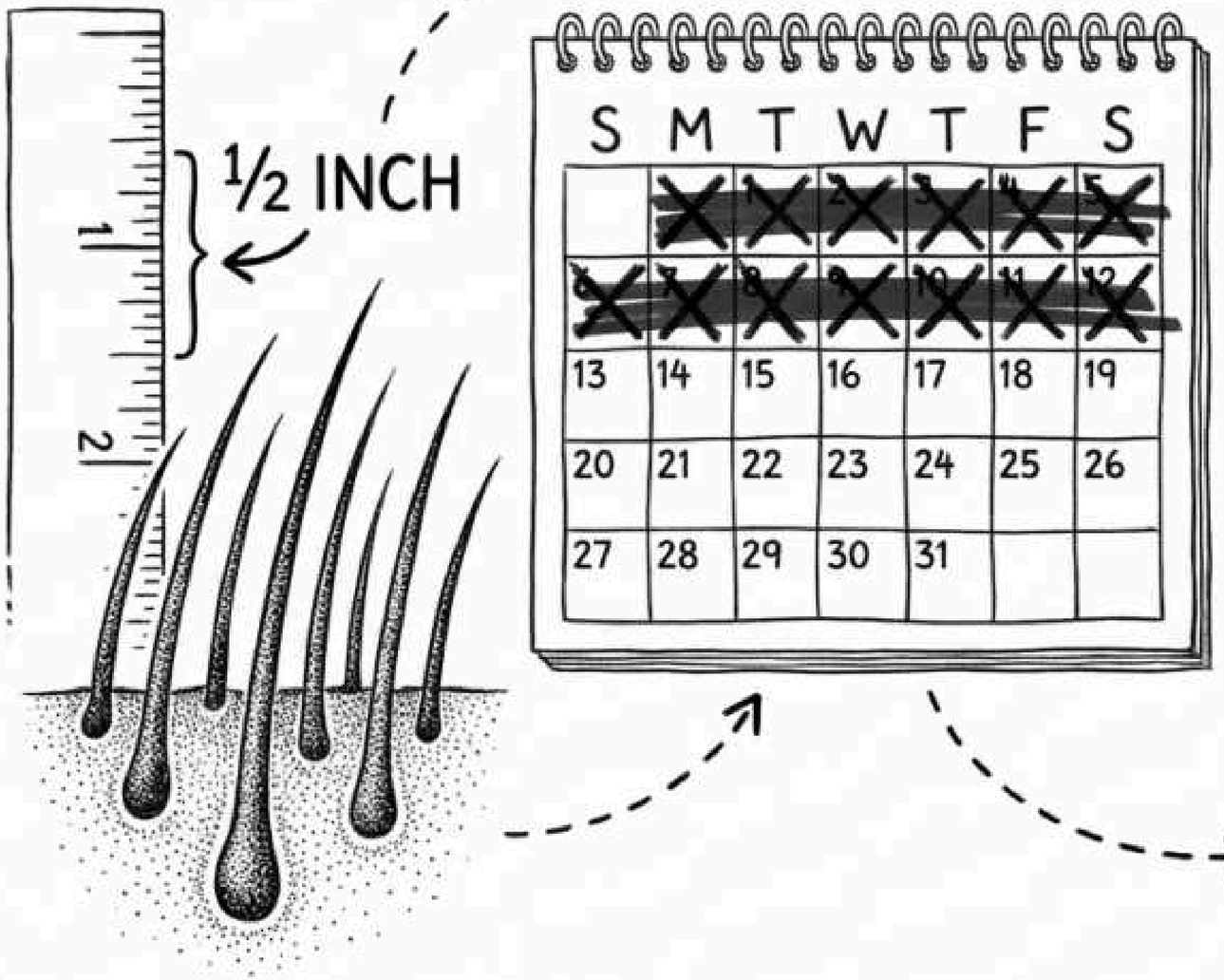




Head Shape & Hair Type Matter

- High fades show the exact shape of the skull (disguise flat spots or bumps with low fades or tapers).
- Dark, thick hair = strong contrast; light, fine hair = subtler blends.
- Curly & coily hair holds a crisp fade exceptionally well (techniques refined in Black barbershops).

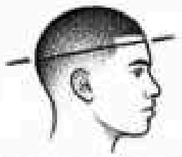
Paragraph 3.15: Upkeep & Growth



Upkeep & Growth

- Hair grows about half an inch a month.
- Skin fades look grown in within 1 to 2 weeks (requires return every 2-3 weeks).
- Tapers or fades starting at longer guards last longer between full cuts.
- Quick fix: Ask for a quick edge-up or neck cleanup between full visits.

Paragraph 3.16: Visual Synthesis

Summary: Fades & Tapers			
Height (How far up):	Low 	Mid 	High 
Bottom Length:	Skin (bare)  vs. Shadow (Guard Number) 		
Shape of Line: 	Drop (curves down), Burst (semicircle) 		
Edges Only: 	Taper (Stays at hairline) 		
Mechanics: Stepped guards in bands, rocking motion, taper lever 			