

Chapter 5: Cutting Made Easy

The Face of Fear

At the workshops I give, I do a little thing called “The Face of Fear”. I select a member from the audience or class to come sit in my styling chair and pretend to get a haircut. While I carefully put the cutting apron on them and make sure they’re facing toward the audience, one of my assistants will hold up a sign behind the volunteer’s head that says “Watch their face!”

I make the same chit-chat that you’d normally hear when sitting in a stylist’s chair, until the fateful moment where I accidentally “slip” and cut a piece of their hair off. (In reality, I have several pre-cut pieces of fiber in my pocket ready to drop onto the victim’s lap at the right time.) The audience usually plays along, gasping when the cut is made. The facial expression the volunteer makes is always the same: **“Did she just cut a chunk out of my hair?!”**

I reassure the volunteer that their hair is indeed uncut, the audience verifies, and they go back to their seat immensely relieved.

Then I repeat the act again, this time on a wig pinned to a foam head. I make the exact same chit-chat, and the exact same “slip”, and drop the piece in front of the foam head’s “face”. It’s completely unphased by this potential damage to its haircut.

Do you know why? *Because it’s made out of styrofoam!* It doesn’t have emotions!

That’s the whole point of the demonstration. The reason people are afraid to cut a wig is because they’re afraid of *messing up*. If you mess up cutting someone’s hair, there are real consequences. Natural hair takes a long time to grow back, and a bad haircut can be downright mortifying. Nobody wants to be the person that *gives* a bad haircut either, especially if it’s your friend’s hair.



The foam head doesn’t care what you do to it, or its wig.

However, when cutting a wig, there is none of that built-in pressure. It’s made of plastic, it doesn’t care. If you screw up, you can almost always reattach the fiber. If you screw up so badly that you can’t reattach the fiber, then you can call it a learning process, and go buy another wig. However, if you take your time, and plan out how you want the style to look, this will probably never happen to you.

I see hundreds of message board posts every month saying, “I want to make this wig design, but I don’t want to cut the wig.” That’s the equivalent of saying, “I want to make this omelette, but I don’t want to break any eggs.” Human beings are curious creatures. We have to try new things out, because that’s how we *learn*. If you’re too scared to try something new because you might mess up, then perhaps you should put this book on eBay.

Besides, once you see how easy it is, you’re just going to feel silly for being such a chicken.

One of the most common mistakes beginners make when cutting their wig is making blunt cuts. This is the result of cutting too much fiber in one stroke, or using too large a pair of scissors.

Remember, this is not a race, the foam head isn't going to get impatient if you're taking a long time, and you shouldn't get impatient either.

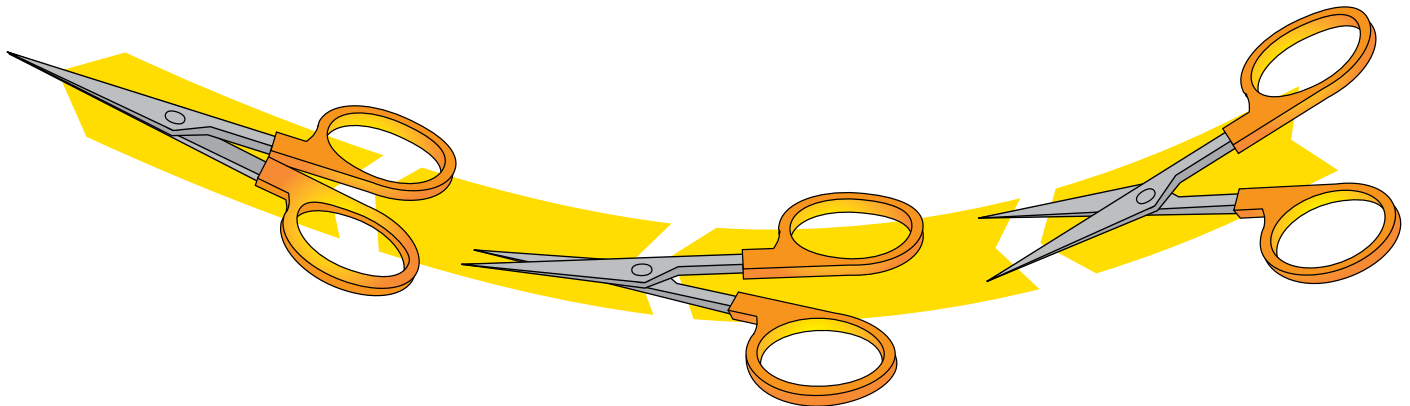
As for your scissors, small blades are always best, since you have more precise control, and won't accidentally cut fiber that's several inches away from your target area. Look for small craft scissors with 1 or 2 inch blades, maximum.

Then the rest is all about practicing the “Scoop, Scoop, Scoop”.

“Scoop, scoop, scoop? Are we talking about ice cream or wigs?”

Wigs, duh. This is a Wigcraft book, not an ice cream craft book. If it were, there'd be pictures of little ice cream clowns with sugar cone hats on the cover.

The “Scoop, Scoop, Scoop” is your key to smooth, well blended cutting. (It's also known as a “slide cut”.) The motion you make with your scissors as you open and close the blades of the scissors is like a tiny scoop. Kind of like this:



The motion shown above has been **hugely** exaggerated in scale to make it easier to see. In reality, the entire length of your scooping stroke should be no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, and only the blades themselves move upward, not your entire hand. (You shouldn't be making a visible “swoops” with your hand, just a subtle, tiny, scooping motion.) Remember the blade of the scissors is only an inch long, and you're only using the interior $\frac{1}{4}$ inch as a cutting surface.

