



Stay a Cut Above the Competition with Oster's Clipper Advice

Today's hairstyle trends run the gamut from sleek to messy. Despite the fashion industry's attempts to bring curl back into the mainstream, women still opt for straight styles of all lengths. They tend to prefer brighter hair colors and highlights throughout the spring and summer, switching to richer hues and solid shades during the fall and winter. For young men, the messier the look, the better—they want color, but they want the highlights applied further off the scalp so that it doesn't look like they just had them done, and instead of a clean cut, they want their hair to look as if it has at least a month's growth.

Although stylists may browse the shelves searching for the perfect pair of shears to create these hairstyles, according to David Guerin, global artistic director for Oster Professional Products, they will achieve better results if they reach for a different tool to add the finishing touches: clippers. Guerin said, "Clippers are not just for flattops anymore. They really allow you to impart a lot of texture and movement into the hair that you can't get with shears alone."

For nearly 100 years, Oster has been at the forefront of clipper innovation: the Model E hand-operated hair clipper was introduced in 1924 and patent was placed on the detachable blade in 1933. To find out more about clippers, from how to use them to what features consumers should look for when buying them, *OTC Beauty Magazine* caught up with Guerin and Dan Parsons, senior director of sales and marketing for Oster.

There is more than one tool for the job

Just as there is no one right way to cut hair, there is no one tool that can do every job. Whether stylists are cutting or texturing, chances are they will need to use a combination of shears, razor and clipper to achieve the desired effect. For instance, according to Guerin, after using shears to create a crisp-cut hairline, a trimmer, like the Vorteq, can clean up the edges around the neck and ears. Likewise, after using shears to quickly take off length, a professional can use clippers to easily texturize hair. Stylists need only insert the texturing blade into their detachable-blade clipper, such as the Classic 76 or Power-Teq, lift the hair up using the teeth of a comb, and drop the hair into the blade while they pull the clipper out toward them. The faster the motion with the clipper, the less hair the blade cuts off.

Although clippers texturize hair better than razors or shears, many stylists resist using them for anything other than flattops because they are afraid that they will cut off too much hair at once. But that's not the case, said Guerin: "A texturing clipper blade actually removes less hair than a texturing shear. The person using the tool is able to fit the texturing to every hair type, even using it to freehand texturize a woman's fine hair to give it more lift and volume, which they cannot do with texturing shears or razor."

"We use the clippers a lot when texturing guys' hair since they can leave a rougher edge so it doesn't look so freshly cut,"

Jarden Consumer Solutions/ Oster

2381 NW Executive Center Dr.
Boca Raton, FL 33431
888-865-6810
www.osterstyle.com

Top 3 Products:

- Oster Classic 76
- Oster ColorTeq series
- Arius Eickert shears



David Guerin,
global artistic director
for Oster Professional
Products and founder
of the Style Renegades

Guerin continued. “When you cut hair with a pair of shears, it leaves a very clean, crisp-cut line. When you go across it with a clipper blade, it doesn’t; it shatters and leaves it uneven. As soon as it’s done, it can already have a grown-out looking edge to the hair.”

To provide stylists with the versatility they desire, Oster will launch its TeqNique cordless clipper in early fall, which will complement Oster’s line of cordless trimmers and is lightweight, ergonomic and features a full-steel blade.

Clippers 101

Though it’s easy to sell clippers to a barber, some stylists need to see clipper cutting in action before they add the tool to their arsenal. To show professionals the proper way to incorporate clippers into their hair-cutting routine, Guerin created Oster’s Style Renegades three years ago. Now, he and his team of 26 clipper-cutting experts conduct over 100 educational seminars at trade shows across the country each year, demonstrating the techniques on all types of clients stylists run across.

And since Oster’s parent company, Jarden Consumer Solutions, also owns Arius Eickert, a leading manufacturer of professional-grade shears and razors, the Style Renegades have the freedom to demonstrate an authentic approach to cutting hair: “We can go out and teach a barber or hairdresser everything from beginning work to advanced work with every tool available because we make razors, clippers and shears,” Guerin said. “We teach the truthful way of doing hair.”

Plus, Oster offers a line of five DVDs that demonstrate clipper-cutting techniques, which are ideal for everyone – from stylists who are looking for a few tips to consumers who would like to use their clippers to create more challenging hairstyles at home. Since Oster does not offer a basic instructional video about how to use clippers, Guerin advises consumers who are using the tool for the first time to start with the longest setting or attachment and use it until they grow comfortable with clipper cutting.

But whether your customers are using the clippers at home or in the salon, it’s imperative that they properly maintain and sanitize the tool. To keep the blades sharp, they need to oil them before every use (every other time in a salon),

since clipper oil will dry off. Plus, the clipper must be sanitized before every use, even if it is only used to cut the same person’s hair—if a small amount of blood gets on the blade, it creates a breeding ground for bacteria, which can lead to an infection during the next use. If you don’t have enough shelf space to house Oster’s full line of maintenance products, opt to carry the Blade Lube and the Spray Disinfectant.

Making the Merchandise Move

For most OTC customers, buying a clipper is an afterthought, so product placement is essential for triggering a sale. Clippers should be grouped vertically in a location that will remind the busy mom who just came in to grab a few beauty supplies that she could use a faster, easier way to keep her son’s hair trimmed between salon visits.

Although clippers offer OTC retailers a high profit margin, they are also high-ticket items that are often targeted by shoplifters, along with shears and other high-end tools. To combat theft, many retailers store the clippers behind the front counter, a move that cuts down on shoplifting, but also on impulse buying. “That, in itself, is a deterrent for people to pick them up, try them, read them and understand what they’re all about,” Parsons said. “People really want to feel a clipper and maybe even turn it on before they buy it. It’s a big challenge.”

Unfortunately, there are no easy display solutions. To drive the message home to consumers, Oster offers retailers numerous marketing tools, from feature and benefits sheets to blade charts that will walk customers through which additional or replacement blades they should buy for their clipper model. This fall, Oster will introduce a new styles poster, which shows the different looks, lengths of hair and textures that can be achieved with its range of blades.

“Take advantage of those tools,” Guerin advised. “We’ve been changing the packaging and coloring on our clippers to make them more visually appealing for people to look at. Group the clippers together in 4’ x 4’ sections instead of scattering them out to make it look like it’s a billboard. When customers come in, all of a sudden there’s this flash of color. They can’t miss it.” Once you pique their curiosity, it’s much easier to close the sale. **JM**

A Clipper for Every Need

When it comes to clippers, there’s no one-size-fits-all model. While an experienced stylist may want a powerful and versatile clipper, it’s too aggressive, not to mention too expensive, for the average consumer. Here’s what you need to know to recommend the right clipper for your customers:

Stylists:

- **Needs:** Versatility is a must. The professional needs a clipper with interchangeable blades that can easily be used to perform a range of cutting techniques, such as clipper over comb, texturing, layering and flat-topping. Plus, a stylist’s clipper must be powerful enough to use on wet or dry hair.
- **Most Popular Oster Model:** Oster’s Classic 76, which features 13 interchangeable blades and a powerful motor that quickly and efficiently cuts through thick, wet hair.
- **Advice:** If the stylist has little-to-no clipper experience, recommend a midline adjustable blade model, such as Oster’s Fast-Teq clipper, which will enable the professional to gain confidence with the tool without being scared off by the power or high cost of a top-of-the-line version. Once the stylist grows more comfortable with clipper work, he or she will return to buy a more expensive model with additional features.

Consumers:

- **Needs:** Low cost is key. The “home hairdresser” wants a lightweight, inexpensive and simple tool to use to keep her son’s, husband’s or neighbor’s hair looking even and neat.
- **Most Popular Oster Model:** Oster’s ColorTeq series of clippers and mini-trimmers, available in Manic Mandarin, Razzberry Rage and Atomic Kiwi colors.
- **Advice:** If most of your customers purchase clippers for at-home use, stock your shelves with low- to midline models to keep the products moving through your store. Clippers, like Oster’s Classic 76, are too cumbersome and expensive for consumers to purchase for occasional at-home use.