

# Grooming an Awesome Beard



✦ WRITTEN BY SHAWN RADCLIFFE

MANY WOMEN LOVE THE CLEAN-SHAVEN LOOK ON A GUY, BUT why not give them something they can really caress? Growing a beard not only increases your touchability, it also gives you a chance to show off what you can do with your hair follicles.

While any man can grow a beard, if you want to impress women, you are better off steering clear of the wild and scraggly Zach Galifianakis beard (at least until you're famous).

But that doesn't mean you always need to go for the distinguished gentleman look. Many celebrities sport more over-the-top beards, from the porn star throw-back to the mountain man look.

As with neat-and-trim styles, the trick to pulling off these beards is choosing something that works for your face and keeping it well groomed.

..... IF YOU WANT AN AWESOME BEARD, FOLLOW THESE SUPER-SIMPLE TIPS: .....

## *Stick With Simple*

Your most attractive option will be a beard that is clean and well-maintained. This is especially true if you are new to growing a beard. So skip the elastic bands, beads and braiding. And if you are going for dyes (for guys with multi-tone hair), avoid ones that don't match your natural hair color.

## *Fit Your Face*

When it comes to choosing a beard shape, a good rule of thumb is this—the longer your face, the shorter the hair on your chin. If you have a long (aka oval) face, hair that's too long on your chin will only exaggerate your facial features. Instead, trim the hairs shorter on the chin than on the cheeks.

Likewise, men with a round face can add definition to their jawbone by growing the hair longer on the chin. And fuller beards work well for men with a square face—this makes the face look less angular.

Also, it's not uncommon for men to have empty patches on their face. Don't worry, just work with what you have. Sometimes, though, you need to get creative. If the bare spots on your face are large enough, try a goatee, chin strip or soul patch beard, instead.

## *Use the Right Tools*

As with fixing your car or building a deck, the right tools can make all the difference. Before you start working on your beard, pick up the essentials (some kits may come with most of this gear):

- multi-blade razor for cleaning up around the beard
- pointed tweezers for removing stray hairs
- scissors for facial hair
- electric beard trimmer with various length guards
- beard and mustache comb
- scissors for nose and ear hair
- alum block to stop nicks from bleeding



## Go For a Natural Neckline

You can always shave right up to the edge of your beard along your neckline, but sometimes that looks strange. For a more natural look—and one that's easier to maintain over time—blend gradually from beard, to stubble, to clean skin.

Your beard line should be about halfway between your chin and Adam's apple. Blend the beard around this line. Use the shortest trimmer guard on the bottom quarter of an inch. As you go up, switch to longer guards for each quarter inch. Then smooth out the lines between each section.

## Keep It Neat

Don't let a bad hair day ruin your awesome beard. Keep stray hairs in line with a light-hold pomade. Choose one with a matte finish to avoid a greasy-looking beard. And don't forget your mustache. Comb down and use scissors or a trimmer to cut hairs that fall below the lip line. ☐

## Keep Your Beard in Top Shape

- Comb your beard while in the shower to straighten the hairs for easier trimming and to exfoliate the skin underneath.
- Apply shampoo and conditioner daily to keep the skin and hair soft.
- Soften the beard daily with beard oil.
- Trim stray hairs once a week using a trimmer with a long guard.
- Blend the neckline once a week, starting just above the Adam's apple.
- Shave your lower neck with a razor, if needed.



### Meet the Author

#### Shawn Radcliffe

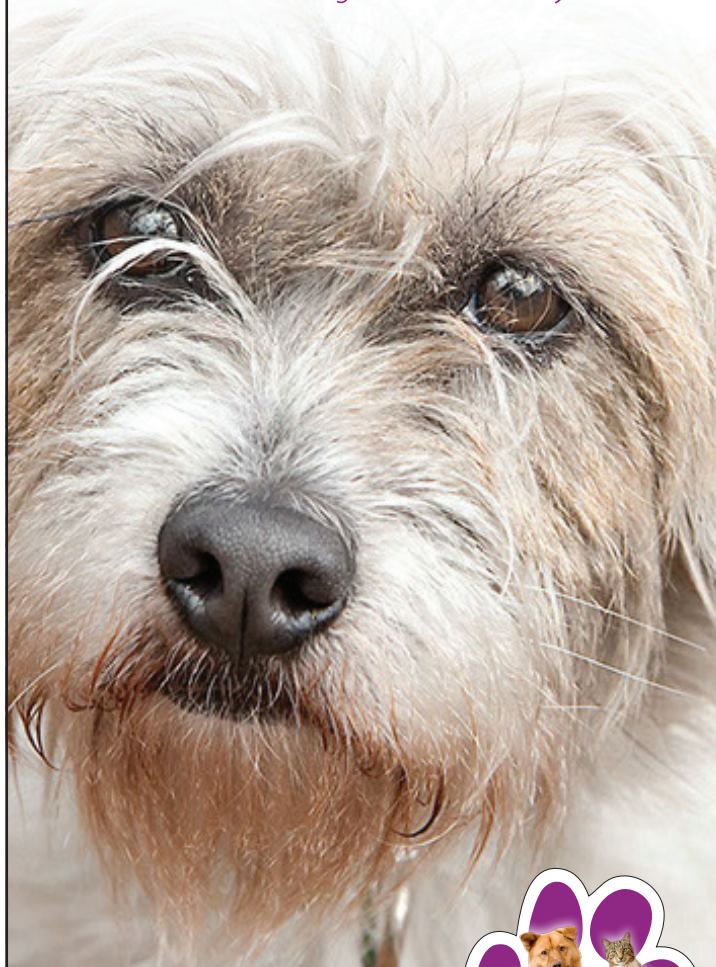
Shawn is a science writer and yoga instructor with over 15 years' experience writing about science, health and medicine. In addition to The Health Journal, his work has appeared on Men's Fitness, Greater Good and other consumer health and medical websites.



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