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How to Get a Barbershop Shave at Home

Shave like a boss ... without leaving your bathroom.

Facial hair can make you mad handsome. Facial hair can help you express yourself. Facial hair might even protect you from germs and from the sun. If you ask other guys, however, perhaps the biggest reason to grow a beard is that it's convenient: Because when you grow a beard, you no longer have to shave every day. And let's face it: Shaving sucks.

But it doesn't have to. If you've ever gotten a professional shave at a barbershop, you know that shaving can feel next-level awesome. Sure, it's cumbersome and uncomfortable at home. But under the warm lather and sharp blade of a barber named Gino, it's pure pampering. And every fella's face deserves to be pampered.

Unfortunately, not every day can be a barbershop day.

Or can it? Whether you've got a naked face that you shave in full every morning or a full beard whose dregs you shave just once or twice a week, you can achieve a barbershop-quality shave as often as you want without ever leaving home. All it takes is the right shaving routine and the right shaving products.

1. First, turn up the heat.

At the barbershop, the first thing the barber does is drape your mug with a hot towel. That's the secret to a barbershop shave—especially if you're prone to shaving rash. The hot towel moisters your whiskers, relaxes your skin and opens your pores, which facilitates a closer shave with less irritation.

To get their towels piping hot, barbers typically bake them in a special hot-towel oven known as a towel warmer. You don't need one at those. All you need to do is run a washcloth under hot water, or pop a damp washcloth in the microwave for 30 seconds. And if you really want to mimic the barbershop, you can kick things up a notch by adding a few drops of essential oil, a touch of eucalyptus, lavender or sandalwood (I all it takes to make your nose swear it's at the spa. (Pro tip: If you don't have essential oils on hand, you can use a few drops of beard oil, like Billy Jealousy Devil's Delight Beard Oil, which already has skin-conditioning essential oils baked into it along with a sweet sandalwood scent.)

Finally, rest the washcloth on your face for a few minutes until it's cool. Before you remove it, rub it against the grain of your beard to help the hairs stand up.

Pressed for time? Skip the hot towel and take a hot shower, instead. The steam from the shower will do the same job without adding an extra step to your grooming routine. Or, streamline things even further by using Billy Jealousy Hot Towel Heating Pre-Shave, which features a water-activated heating agent that lifts and softens your facial hair with zero fuss; with or without a shower, put it on before you apply your shaving cream, then use a wet razor to keep it activated as you shave.

2. Prepare your canvas (i.e., your face).

If you're like most guys, the only thing you put on your face before shaving cream is a splash of warm water. That's a rookie move. To achieve a professional shave, follow your hot-towel treatment with a pre-shave oil. Billy Jealousy CBD Pre-Shave Oil, for example, is infused with CBD, antioxidants and essential fatty acids that hydrate and relax your beard and skin, maximizing razor glide while minimizing razor burn.

Now you're ready for shaving cream. If you've got time to be extra, consider using a shave brush to apply a traditional shaving cream like Billy Jealousy Whipped Cream Traditional Shave Lather; the creamy consistency improves razor glide while the shave brush exfoliates your skin and brings your beard hairs to attention for a closer shave.

No time to fiddle with a brush? Billy Jealousy Hydroplume Super Stick Shave Cream is the best shaving cream for men who are short on time, patience and finesse. Its water-activated, foamless cream can be slapped or slathered on for a shave that's super close, super fast and super comfortable.

3. Shave, already!

At last, it's time to shave. For the closest possible shave, your barber uses a straight razor — and so should you. If you don't trust yourself with your jugular, however, a safety razor is a good plan B. To use one, pull your skin taught with one hand and hold your razor in the other, using light pressure and short strokes to shave in the direction that your beard grows, rinsing frequently. Take your time. For a closer shave, lather up a second time and shave with the lightest touch against the grain.

A multi-blade cartridge razor should be your last resort. If you insist on using one, you can avoid shaving rash by following the same advice: First, shave lightly with the grain using taught skin and short strokes, then repeat against the grain with a fresh coat of cream if you like.

4. Cool it.

The best shaves start with something hot and end with something cold — a splash of cool water, for example, or a cold compress that repurposes your discarded hot towel. The cold closes open pores and calms angry skin, thereby reducing irritation. For extra measure, finish the job with an aftershave lotion like Billy Jealousy Shaved Ice Cooling After-Shave, which features several types of aloe to cool, calm and moisturize the skin, and allantoin to help it heal.

Finally, look in the mirror and admire your good looks — er, good work. Gino would be proud.

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