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When it comes to mens haircuts, tapering is one of the most popular techniques for achieving a clean, polished look. Whether youre trying to decide on a style for yourself or simply looking to understand the difference between various fade styles, two terms that often come up are low taper and high taper. While both offer a fresh and stylish look, they each cater to different preferences and face shapes. In this article, we will compare low taper vs. high taper, helping you decide which one is right for you based on your style, hair type, and lifestyle.

What is a Low Taper?A low taper is a type of fade where the hair gradually shortens from the top of the head to the sides, beginning just above the ear and tapering down around the lower part of the head. This cut creates a subtle, smooth transition that is relatively understated compared to higher fades. The hair on the sides and back is clipped short, but the taper is not as dramatic or sharp as a high fade, giving the hairstyle a more natural, clean look.

Low taper haircuts are highly versatile and work well with a variety of hair types, whether straight, wavy, or curly. The gradual fade allows you to maintain a bit more length on the sides, making it an excellent option for those who dont want their sides too short but still want the neat, polished effect a taper provides.

What is a High Taper?A high taper, on the other hand, starts much higher on the head, typically around the temples or even higher. The hair is cut gradually shorter from the top down to the sides, creating a more pronounced fade effect. This haircut offers a sharper contrast between the longer hair on top and the shorter sides, making it a more noticeable and striking style.

High taper haircuts often create a bolder, more dramatic look, and they tend to give a more edgy, stylish appearance. Because the fade begins higher on the scalp, it can help accentuate the natural shape of your head or facial features, making it a great choice for individuals looking for a bold, attention-grabbing hairstyle.

Low Taper vs. High Taper: The Key Differences

While both styles involve a gradual fade, the low taper and high taper differ in several key areas. Heres a breakdown of the most important differences between the two:

- Position of the Fade:**The most obvious difference between the two fades is the position where the fade begins. A low taper starts closer to the ear and fades downward from there, creating a subtle and smooth transition. The fade remains closer to the scalp, giving the style a softer appearance.
- In contrast,** a high taper begins much higher up the sides of the head, often around the temples or even above them. This creates a more noticeable, sharper fade that provides a stark contrast between the top and sides of the hair. The higher fade is more dramatic and distinct.
- Boldness and Subtlety:**A low taper tends to be a subtler, more conservative option. It offers a clean look without being too extreme. Because the fade starts lower, it gives the hair more volume on the sides, allowing for a balanced and understated aesthetic.
- A high taper, on the other hand, is much bolder. The higher starting point creates a sharper contrast between the hair on top and the sides, resulting in a more edgy and attention-grabbing appearance. Its a hairstyle that demands attention and is often chosen by those who want a more daring, modern look.**
- 3. Versatility:**The low taper is incredibly versatile and can be adapted to a wide range of styles. It pairs well with a variety of haircuts, such as crew cuts, pompadours, buzz cuts, or even longer hairstyles. Because of its subtle fade, its also an ideal choice for those who want a professional or more refined appearance.
- The high taper is also versatile but tends to be more suited to bold, modern hairstyles. It works best with shorter cuts and more structured styles, such as a high fade with a quiff or a buzz cut. While it can be paired with different hairstyles, the overall effect is typically more conservative than a low taper.**
- 4. Maintenance:**Both styles require regular maintenance, but a high taper may need more frequent trimming.
- A high taper, however, requires more frequent touch-ups. Since the fade starts higher up the scalp, it grows out more noticeably, which means youll need to get it trimmed more often to maintain the sharp, crisp look. Those who opt for a high taper should be prepared for more maintenance to keep the fade looking fresh.**
- 5. Suitability for Different Face Shapes:**Both the low taper and high taper can be adapted to suit various face shapes, but they may work better for different individuals based on their specific features.
- Low taper: This style works well for almost all face shapes. Because the fade starts lower and the sides are kept slightly longer, its a great option for people with round or square faces, as the softer fade can help elongate the face and provide more balance.**
- High taper: The high taper can help highlight your natural bone structure and facial features, making it a great choice for individuals with oval or rectangular faces. The dramatic contrast between the top and sides can help add definition and structure, though it might not be as flattering for round faces, as the sharp fade could emphasize the fullness of the face.**
- 6. Ideal Lifestyle:**Your lifestyle can play a big role in deciding whether a low taper or high taper is right for you. If you're someone who prefers a low-maintenance, clean, and professional look, the low taper might be the better choice. Its perfect for individuals who work in more conservative environments or who dont want to worry too much about upkeep.
- On the other hand, if you enjoy experimenting with your look or want something a bit more daring and bold, a high taper is ideal. Its perfect for those who are into fashion-forward styles or for people who want a haircut that makes a statement.**
- Which One is Right for You?**Choosing between a low taper and high taper comes down to personal preference, lifestyle, and the type of look youre going for. If you want a haircut that is versatile, subtle, and works for both professional and casual settings, the low taper might be the perfect fit. Its gradual fade is low-maintenance and complements most face shapes, making it a safe yet stylish option.
- If youre looking for something bolder, more striking and easier to maintain with regular trims, then the high taper might be the better option for you. Its perfect for individuals who want a dramatic look and dont mind the extra maintenance.**
- Ultimately, both the low taper and high taper are excellent choices depending on your personal style, hair type, and maintenance preferences. Whether you go with a low taper or high taper, youll be able to achieve a fresh, clean, and stylish look that enhances your overall appearance. When in doubt, consult with your barber or stylist to determine which fade will best suit your face shape and personal style.**
- Fade Haircut: A bold, modern style where hair length decreases dramatically from the top to the sides and back.**
- Taper Fade: A balanced, versatile cut that blends the subtle decrease of a taper with the dramatic contrast of a fade.**
- The Difference: While both styles are trendy, the fade offers a more striking contrast, while the taper fade provides a subtler, more flexible look.**
- Let's dive into the nitty-gritty of these haircuts, help you discover the best fit for your style and head shape.**
- The Fade: Classic and clean.**
- Picture this: your hair transitions from short at the sides and back, gradually getting longer as it reaches the top. That's a fade. It's all about that smooth transition, giving you a clean, modern look.**
- We as barbers like to call this transition as "blurry." Blurrier the better!**
- Which pretty much means there's no lines, and the transition is smooth.**
- AF. And it doesn't stop there. There's a bunch of different ways to wear your fade.**
- Low fade, high fade, mid fade, skin fade, drop fade, temple fade, burst fade - each one's got its own unique twist on the classic fade style.**
- And it's best to see the differences visually; check out our Haircut Finder.**
- The Taper Fade: Best of Both Worlds**
- Next, let's talk taper. The taper gives you a subtle decrease in hair length from top to sides and back. Often containing the "blurriness" and transition separately in 2 areas; the sides and back of head. Fades on the other hand have one connected blurry road or transition.**
- Again, it's best to see it visually just like the fade, the taper fade's got its own variations. Low taper, high taper fade, mid taper fade, skin taper fade, temple taper fade, burst taper fade - each one offers a different level of contrast and can be tweaked to suit your style.**
- Choosing Your Style: Fade or Taper?**
- How do you choose between a fade and a taper fade? It's all about your hair type, lifestyle, and personal style. If you've got thick hair and want a style that's easy to manage, a fade might be your best bet. If you're after a classic, versatile look, you might want to try a taper fade.**
- And remember, your barber's there to help you find the best style for you.**
- Keeping Your Fade or Taper Fade Fresh**
- This is the unfortunate catch of rocking a fresh cut like a fade or taper fade.**
- Your hair grows back within 2-3 weeks so the blurriness is sadly... no longer blurry.**
- We recommend coming in at this 2-3 week mark to maintain the look.**
- Conclusion**
- Whether you go for a fade or a taper fade, you're in for a style that's sure to turn heads.**
- At Mancave Barbershop, our crew has got you covered.**
- We'll listen, and figure out what's the best cut to suit you.**
- FAQs**
- Is a fade or a taper fade better for thick hair?**
- A fade is better for thick hair because it creates a more dramatic effect.**
- Can a taper fade be combined with a pompadour hairstyle?**
- Why not? It'll give more of a slick 'old-money' look since the sides are grown out a bit longer compared to a fade.**
- Can a fade or a taper fade be done at home?**
- It's certainly achievable, but would require lots and lots of practice and an ability to withstand being roasted by your mates as you learn.**
- How often should I get a fade or a taper fade haircut?**
- It is recommended to get a fade or a taper fade every 2-4 weeks to maintain the style.**
- Tapers and fades are common cuts that many request at barbershops.**
- Lots of people, even barbers, use these names interchangeably. Both of these cuts look similar at a glance and involve cutting the hair short down the back and sides of the head. Understanding the differences between these cuts is the key to communicating with your barber and getting the look you want.**
- We'll explain the main differences between the two fades, and give some examples of each cut.**
- A tapered cut changes the hairs length more gradually than a fade. Tapers arent as dramatic as fades, and are cut more subtly, and typically leave hair longer on the top and sides compared to a fade.**
- The best cut for you depends on your face shape, style, and the look you want.**
- We'll go in-depth on both cuts below so you can see some examples. A taper is a cut that leaves your hair full at the top and short on the sides. Hair gradually gets shorter as you move down the back and sides of your head. Your hairline has the shortest part of your hair. Hair is evenly cut as it gets shorter, giving your hair a clean finish.**
- Tapers are great if you want a classic look that doesnt leave your hair too short. This cut also gives you room to try different styles as your hair grows out.**
- Some of hairstyles also incorporate a taper, so you may end up with one without asking. Below are some examples of different types of tapered cuts. A low taper is a cut that starts to get short above the ears. This cut gives your hairline a clean look without cutting off too much length. Its also a great choice if you dont want to expose your scalp.**
- Go with a little low taper for a posh, everyday look. A high taper shortens hair a couple inches above the ears. The cut creates more contrast than a low taper. Its also commonly paired with other cuts like comb overs and modern high tops to add visual contrast.**
- A taper or a fade can include a tapered neckline. Your necklines cut adds even more personality to your hair. You can get a design, disconnect, or a classic neckline shape.**
- A tapered neckline will look the most natural when it grows out. Rounded or blocked necklines require some maintenance to keep their shape.**
- A skin taper is when the scalp is visible because hair is shaved close to the skin. You can get a skin taper with other cuts and other tapers. For example, you can get a high taper that tapers into the skin. Its a practical cut to keep hair off your face when the weather warms up.**
- A skin taper is also an easy way to spice up any cut.**
- A fade is a cut that also has hair go from long to short, but normally goes very short towards the bottom and fades into the skin. A typical fade gradually changes hair length all around your head. The change from long to short is more dramatic with a fade than with a taper.**
- Fades are also incorporated into many other haircuts. Fades are perfect if youre looking for a fresh, clean look. A low fade looks similar to a low taper since they both start above the hairline. The major difference is that a fade typically changes hair lengths. Low fades add extra flair to your look, and a buzz cut. Drop fades are a perfect when you want to steer away from the classic fade.**
- A drop fade is a fade that drops below your ears and follows the shape of your head. This cut requires some maintenance to keep up the contrast as it grows out. You can do some at-home fade maintenance when you go in between appointments. A skin fade is also known as a bald fade. Like the skin taper, the skin fade shaves hair close to the skin, stopping before the natural hair line. You can get a skin fade while keeping the top of your hair long enough for a quiff or a pompadour.**
- Skin fades also look great with short cuts if you arent a fan of styling your hair every day. Undercut fades feature a blurry fade thats normally cut high above your ears. This style looks especially great with long hair since you can show off the length differences.**
- A hard part or disconnected cut adds some edge to more classic looks, like the ivy league cut. Faux hawks and mohawks differ based on the length of hair left on the sides of the head. A mohawk has fully shaved sides while a faux hawk keeps some hair on the sides.**
- A faux hawk fade will definitely stand out because of its subtle height and length contrast.**
- This style with tapered cut is the route to go if you want something more subtle but still stylish. The high fade gives a fresh take to any style. A high fade starts a couple of inches above the ear and gets shorter as you go down. It also gives your barber lots of room to add designs. If you want to keep things simple, you can opt to keep the top short.**
- A taper fade is a barber term that popped up when people started to mix up tapers and fades. This isnt a specific haircut or style.**
- Your barber will probably give you a taper if you ask for this style, so its better to come to your appointment with a few photos to show them what you want.**
- Comb overs were previously a practical style people used to cover up thinning hair. Today, a comb over is a fashionable cut thats flattering for everyone. There are lots of variations you can try that have different lengths and shapes. The fade comb over has a clean look that looks great with facial hair.**
- Tapers and fades are both great styles to get for your next haircut. Start looking through photos to see what you like to try. Once youve narrowed down a few options, take them to your barber to get their opinion on them. They can take a look at your picks and give you advice on what they think would be best for you.**
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