

Scissors 101 - Cut Through Confusion

When you decide to buy new shears or scissors, your choices encompass a wide variety of sizes, brands and investment options.

Good shears and scissors can be summed up in one sentence. You get what you pay for.

Determining what you want to cut with your new scissors will help you narrow the field of possibilities.

- Do you need sewing shears or trimming scissors?
- Do you need a great pair of arts and crafts scissors?
- Do you need household scissors?
- Do you need decorative scissors for embellishing papers?
- Do you need a scissor for a special purpose?

From Soup to Nuts About Scissors



or, the long and short of it all!

Favorite Scissor for Arts and Crafts



In the arts and crafts area, the best scissor I've ever used is the **Tim Holtz Tonic scissor**. The non-stick blades have a serrated edge. The handle loops are made of a soft material that helps prevent fatigue when doing a lot of cutting and are large enough to accommodate most any sized

hand.

Fiskars



Fiskars manufactures many good cutting tools, including scissors, snips and rotary cutters.

If you are shopping for fabric shears, this is a reasonably priced scissor. If you upgrade to another pair, you can cycle these into your craft area.

If you have difficulty opening and closing traditional scissors, you might consider the **Fiskars Softouch Microtip Spring Action** shears. There is a trim scissor in the **Softouch** line, too.

Small Sharp Scissors



In every arts and crafts studio, you need **small sharp scissors** for detail cutting.

Paper Shapers



Paper edging scissors come in an assortment of edging patterns and are relatively inexpensive to purchase. They do not cut fabric.

Fiskars makes a scissor similar to Paper Shapers called Paper Edgers.

Leather Shears



Ginger manufactures these leather shears. They cut leather and other heavy fabrics like butter.

Wacky Scissors



These cut most anything! If I think I might ruin my other scissors, I use this wacky looking scissor.

Also, it's great to have some yucky scissors that you don't care about!

Kitchen Shears



Sturdy old scissors are good to have in the kitchen or craft area. These last a l-o-n-g time!

Some of these scissors come apart for cleaning.

Scissor Identification



A scissor bell attaches to the handle of your scissors. It jingles when you or anyone else uses your scissors. If you attend classes, it's a very good idea to mark your scissors with a bell or some type of unique marking so they aren't confused with others'.

Sewing Shears



This is the **Gingher 8"** bent handle fabric shear. I couldn't sew without it.

More Shears



The top shear is a **Gingher 7" shear** - good for lighter weight fabric cutting.

The bottom shear is the 8" which come with a plastic protective sheath.

Sturdy 5" Scissor



This **5" scissor** is also made by Gingher. It's very sharp and great for clipping, trimming and grading seams.

Trim Scissor



The top scissor is the 5" Gingher. The bottom is the **3" trimming scissor** by Gingher. You can see a big difference in the thickness of the cutting blades as well as a difference in the handle loop size. You need both if you sew very much. The small one is good for clipping threads around your sewing machine. Both of these scissors come with protective sheaths. Keep them covered when not in use to protect the tips.

Curved Embroidery Scissor



If you do machine embroidery or much free-motion embroidery in a hoop, a **curve-tipped scissor** is essential for clipping threads without snipping the fabric.

Dovo Scissors



There are other great brands of scissors, too, including **Dovo** and **Havel**. If you love scissors, you'll probably want some of these in your sewing room.

Appliqué Scissors



Appliqué (or duck-bill) scissors are a must have if you do machine appliqué. The bigger blade helps protect the base fabric when you trim away the top fabric.

Scalloping and Pinking Shears



This is a **scalloping shear** for fabric. These are expensive and I don't use them to cut anything but fabric. **Pinking shears** cut a zig zag edge, whereas these actually cut a scallop shape.

Cleaning



Clean scissors and shears always cut better than gunky ones. In spite of scissors being labeled “non-stick” they will inevitably accumulate residue on the blades. **Rubbing alcohol** is usually strong enough to remove the gunk. You can apply it with a cotton swab or packaged alcohol wipes. **Be very careful when cleaning scissor blades because they are sharp and can cut you.** If alcohol isn't strong enough, you might have to use a stronger solvent like **De-Solv-It Contractor's Solvent** or **Goo Gone**. Be sure to use these in a well ventilated area as they are quite pungent. After cleaning scissor blades, cut scrap fabric or paper to be sure that all residue from the cleaning product is gone. Good scissors that are well cared for will last a long time and are definitely worth the investment.

Purchasing Tips

Don't expect \$100 results from \$10 scissors, but it's perfectly fine to buy what you can afford and then invest in a higher quality scissor at a later date.

Dedicate scissors to a specific task. If you plan to cut out a garment that you plan to sew, don't use the scissors from your kitchen.

The best advice about shears and scissors is to spend as much as you can justify because sharp, accurate cutting instruments enhance your creative experience.