

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.

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?

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

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 later.
- ▶ 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.

Shears and Scissor Choices:

- * There are many great brands of sewing shears and scissors including **Ginger, Dovo, Havel** and **Fiskars**. A good sharp 8" shear with bent handles will be a great choice for this task.
- * If you have difficulty opening and closing scissors easily, you might consider the **Fiskars Softouch Microtip Spring Action** shears.

- * In your sewing room, you'll also need a good sturdy scissor to clip and trim seams. The **Gingher 5" scissor** is my recommendation.
- * And don't forget a **small scissor** (3"- 4") to use at your sewing machine for clipping threads. Don't use long shears or scissors for this purpose as it's too easy to bang them into, and damage your machine.
- * Additional scissors that are really nice to have in your sewing room include, **appliqué** (also called duckbill) **scissors**, **pinking** or **scalloping shears** and **thread snips**.
- * 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.
- * In the arts and crafts area, the best scissor I've ever used is the **Tim Holtz Tonic scissor**. The nonstick 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.
- * **Small sharp craft scissors** are another essential in the art studio. I usually move my sewing scissors into my art studio when I purchase a new sewing scissor.

Sharpening:

Scissors can be sharpened, but I'd suggest that you have a professional do the sharpening even though you may find various kinds of home sharpeners. The other option is to use good scissors as long as they cut well and when they no longer serve the original purpose, relocate them into an area that doesn't require the greatest accuracy.

Cleaning:

Clean scissors and shears always cut better than gunky ones. In spite of scissors being labeled "nonstick" 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 a packaged alcohol wipe. **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.

Note:



Keep your good scissors and shears away from kids. For reasons (known only to kids) they will try to cut things like sewing pins which immediately nicks the blades. That's not good at all! Ask me how I know!