

brush hair



BLICK offers a large selection of natural hair brushes and choosing the hair that best suits your purpose can save you time, money and trouble. One rule that you can follow to avoid disappointment is to **buy the best-quality hair that you can afford.**

kolinsky sable — is not really from a sable at all, but comes from the tail of a species of mink that is a member of the weasel family found in Siberia and northeastern China. It is generally conceded to be the best material for oil and watercolor brushes due to its strength, spring and ability to retain its shape (“snap”). It holds a very fine point or edge. This is considered a professional grade of hair, and if properly cared for, Kolinsky will last for many years.

red sable — is obtained from any member of the weasel family with “red” hair — not at all from the animal known as the sable. It is found in a variety of brush styles for many varied mediums, with quality and characteristics varying greatly. A good-quality pure Red Sable is a good alternative to the more expensive Kolinsky, with similar performance and durability. Often, weasel hair is blended with ox hair to make a more economical brush, but the fine point is sacrificed.

ox hair — the best quality comes from the ears of cattle or oxen. The hair has a very strong body with silken texture, is very resilient, has good “snap,” but it lacks a fine tip. Therefore, it is most useful in medium-grade wash brushes, or flat-shaped brushes. Frequently, ox hair is blended with other natural hair to increase the resiliency of a brush.

fitch hair — a traditional hair for oil painting similar to Mongoose and Sable. Fitch is super smooth, ideal for blending and portrait painting. Sourced in Europe, fitch is a more affordable substitute for Sable and great for detail.

squirrel hair — gray squirrel, most highly in demand for lettering brushes and quills, is native to Russia and nearly always in short supply. Brown squirrel is more readily available, and is used mainly for medium-quality and scholastic watercolor brushes. A very fine, thin hair, taken from squirrel tails, it points as well as Kolinsky, but has very little “snap” (or memory) because the hair is not very resilient. It works best with liquid paints and inks.

pony hair — soft but strong, from mature animals at least 2 years of age. It is primarily used for scholastic-grade brushes, but often blended with other hairs for inexpensive watercolor and touch-up brushes. Pony hair lacks “snap” (or memory) and will not return to a point after a brush stroke.

camel hair — does not come from camels at all. It is found in watercolor and lettering brushes and usually made of squirrel, goat, ox, pony or a blend of several hairs, depending on the desired softness and intended cost of the brush. Camel hair lacks “snap” (or memory) and will not return to a point after a brush stroke.

hog bristle — obtained from hogs in several parts of the world, the most sought-after coming from China. Bristle is unlike any other natural filler in that it forms a V-shaped split or “flag” at the tip and tends to have a natural curve. The best grade has “interlocked” bristles, with the curves formed inward to the ferrule, has a natural resistance to fraying and spreads medium to thick paints smoothly and evenly. A selection of pure hog bristle brushes is recommended for oil, and is a far less expensive alternative to good-quality softer hairs.

how to measure a brush

To be most accurate, measure brushes according to the following:

length — the distance from the edge of the ferrule out to the tip of the hair in the center of the brush.

diameter — the distance of the hair at the opening of the ferrule.

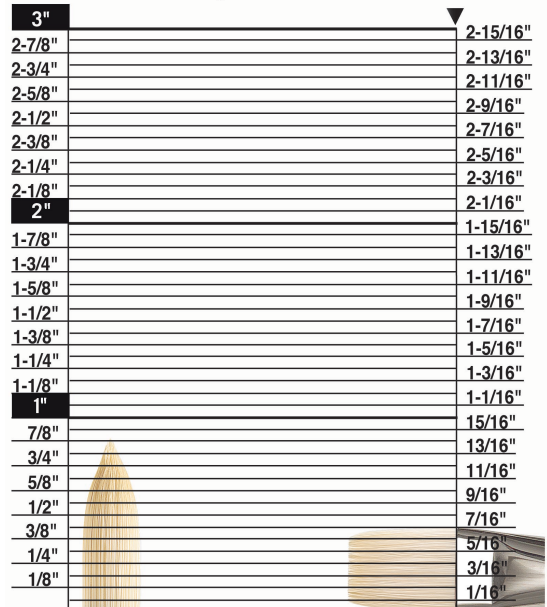
width — the distance across the hair above the opening of the ferrule.

Measure brushes while they are dry. Width is not the width of paint stroke that the brush will make. The width of a brush stroke will vary according to the amount of pressure used, the angle at which the brush is held, the media used and the flexibility of the brush hair.

The charts should help you to determine the size brush you need to purchase. If you would like to measure a brush you already own, use the charts this way:

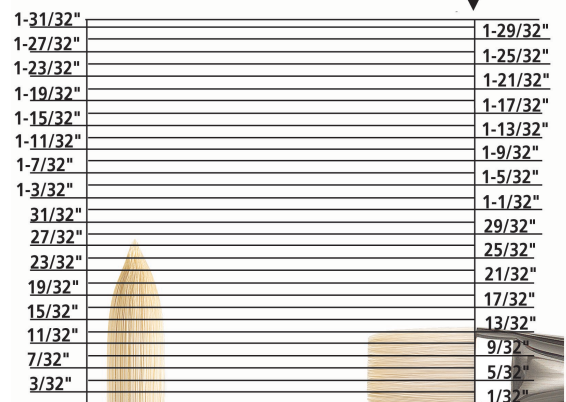
- 1). Lay your brush on the line so that the line is just above the edge of the ferrule. Use vertical line to measure width or diameter, horizontal line to measure length. Check each side to be sure it lies straight.
- 2). Do not apply pressure or tilt to the brush. Brush hair should not be spread.
- 3). Follow the line over to read the measurement, or, if it falls between two lines, move on to the next chart with smaller increments until you find the exact measurement.

Measure width or diameter of brush from right edge of chart (example: brush in lower right corner measures 7/16" wide)



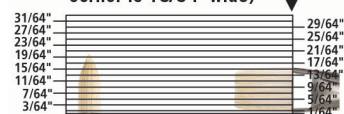
Measure length of brush from the bottom of chart (example: brush at left measures 7/8" long)

Measure width or diameter of brush from right edge of chart (example: brush in lower right corner measures 13/32" wide)



Measure length of brush from bottom of chart (example: brush at left is 27/32" long)

Measure width or diameter of brush from right edge of chart (example: brush in lower right corner is 15/64" wide)



Measure length of brush from bottom of chart (example: brush at left is 19/64" long)