

Blade Cleaning and Care

BY TIM LOVE

I don't have time to clean my blades! How many times have you heard or said that? If I told you a way to save sharpening costs would you be interested? Clean and oil your blades! It is amazing how much gunk a blade accumulates in just an hour between the cool sprays, oil and dirt from the animal, heat generated by the blade, etc. As this gunk builds up a few things start to happen. 1) The blade starts to not cut like it should. The blades are being held slightly apart by the gunk so they are not cutting anymore, but instead are pulling the hair. 2) The blades get hotter faster. This can also be from blade tension. When a blade is harder to move it will heat up quicker. 3) Clipper starts to slow down or get hot. This is due to the clipper having to work harder to keep the blade moving. (check previous issue for article on "why do my blades get hot")

Usually when a blade starts to not work right, some will reach for the Cooling Sprays. They spray the blade and it speeds up and starts cutting again. What has happened is the gunk had been diluted and some has been removed, but will soon build up even worse than before. These sprays get sticky like hair spray once they dry. Now think how sticky hair spray is and how hard a clipper must work to keep the blade moving. Some of the Cooling cans now say to re oil the blade after using them. One thing that happens when using the sprays is the oil is removed from the blade guide (plastic piece on top of the small blade) and this will create more friction, which results in more heat generated and more wear on the clipper. Sometimes you will hear a high pitch squeak on the faster clippers. This is the blade guide. It is important to keep this well oiled all the time. You may have to put a couple of drops on it once an hour or more. This depends on how much of the Cooling stuff you use. It does not take a lot of oil to keep a blade working, but you have to do it regularly.

What type of blade cleaner to use. Some take the blade apart and use soap and water, dry completely and re oil. Some use a commercial product of some type and re oil. I have even seen a mixture of mineral spirits and motor oil. I know it works, but why do you want to put motor oil on an animal and take a chance of skin irritations or worse. The commercial product I like is the H-42. It has a rust inhibitor, kills stuff, has some oil in it, and smells good. It does come in a spray bottle so you can use it as you are grooming. You still have to re oil the blade. The cheapest blade cleaner is rubbing alcohol. It cleans well, dries fast so you can re oil and get going again. **DO NOT PUT HOT BLADES IN RUBBING ALCOHOL!!** This is for cool blades only. Rubbing alcohol does not disinfect blades either, so you will have to use something for this.

How often do I clean my blades? At least once a day. If you don't feel like cleaning the blades at the end of the day, then take a brush and get most of the hair out of the teeth and use the blower to get the rest of the hair out and place the blades into a caddy of H-42. In the morning run the blades in the solution according to the directions on the bottle and re oil the blade. Place

oil on all of the contact areas: blade guide, teeth and on each side of the back rail. You need only a drop on the teeth and rail, but a several on the blade guide. If a blade is left dirty it can cause rusting and pitting of the cutting area and shorten the life of the blade.

Tips on when to clean and re oil a blade:

- 1) When blade performance is not normal.
- 2) If the clipper seems to be slowing down.
- 3) Blades seem to be getting hotter quicker than normal.
- 4) If an animal you just did was dirtier than normal. You may have to even clean it during the groom.
- 5) You can't hurt a blade by keeping it clean and oiled. If you want to keep repair and sharpening cost down, then clean and oil your blades.

Blade cleaning procedure

- 1) Remove excess hair and dirt from blade. Use a soft bristle or wire brush to get hair out of the teeth. **MAKE SURE THE CLIPPER IS TURNED OFF!**
- 2) Put blade on to clipper and dip the blade only in to the blade cleaner of choice while it is running.
- 3) Remove blade from cleaner and turn clipper on to its side or down to the floor. Never point the clipper straight up with a wet blade. Liquid can get into clipper and cause serious damage.
- 4) Wipe off excess cleaner and re oil
- 5) Repeat same procedure with all other blades

Sources for H-42

Fortworth Shaver and Appliance 800-816-2126

Huff's wholesale 800-664-8337

Ryan's Pet Supplies 800-525-7387