

What to expect with your freshly sharpened blades & shears

As a mail-in customer, your sharpener has not seen your clippers as he would if the job were done at your salon. Even though you may think everything is OK with them, there could be some unforeseen clipper problems when you start using the blades. Your blades are clean and set to factory specs on tension which should be a little tighter than a dull blade, and a lot looser than blades containing that red buildup. This new tension could bring out some hidden clipper problems you didn't see when using the blades before they were sharpened.

Passing blades around the shop to see if they cut on another groomer's clippers is not a good test. They may have clipper problems as well causing the same problems as you are experiencing. We want to know why that blade doesn't work on your clipper.

If there is any free play in your clippers drive assembly the blades may drag. This is caused by a loose link or worn lever in the Oster, and a broken or very weak blade drive in an Andis, or even a worn hinge on both Oster and Andis. Blades can cut a "Corn row" type pattern, or a #7 & #10 blade will drag when the hinge is worn and loose. You change the hinge and the symptoms go away. Test your hinge by closing the lip that you put the blade on, if you can open it any distance with your finger it's worn out. Overly tightened blades will work on a worn out hinge, but that will cause clipper problems and blades will get hot quicker. And, blades that are too tight cause the hinge to go bad. Most clipper manufacturers recommend you change your hinge twice a year, and your lever or blade drive once a month. Is this being done? Most hinge problems show up in the spring shave down season.

Notice how clean and shiny the blades are right now, especially the cutting surfaces. Did your blades have a black or red buildup on them, and were tight, before you sent them off to be sharpened?? The buildup is caused by heat and pet dander melting on the cutting surfaces. Not cleaning and oiling blades will cause this along with the miss use or over use of spray coolants. Many coolants contain a propellant (propane), an alcohol (propanol), some water, and little or no oil. There is not enough oil in most of these sprays to replenish the lubrication on your blades. Most say to use clipper oil along with the coolant. If you use coolants I recommend spraying the back of the blade with the clipper turned off. Then put a drop of oil on the teeth and start the clipper again. Spraying the teeth of a blade while the clipper is running is an unsafe act according to most MSDS's written on spray coolants. They have a flammability rating of "4" which is the highest. Read the label and follow the manufacturer's instructions on its use, don't let another groomer show you how to use it. They have many warnings you need to know.

Shear tension is very controversial. If you had 10 groomers set the tension on their shears to fit their cutting style, you will have 10 different tensions. Your shears were set to $\frac{3}{4}$ " of freefall so it's easy to open and close, and the cutting is centered on the front of the shears (tips). If shears are set too loose they could fold hair at the tips, too tight and they could cause hand problems. If you have hand problems setting the shears too loose is not the answer, they make shears to accommodate these problems. You can re-adjust your tension if needed to fit your cutting style with a screwdriver. I can talk you through it if you've never done it, just call.

Use "Old School" methods for longer blade life. Clean the hair and buildup off your blades at least once a day, more if you can by using your choice of blade cleaner. Then Oil the blade good. Keeping oil on the blades keeps the heat down, and extends the life of the cutting edge dramatically. You can control how much money you spend on sharpening, why throw your money away?