

Rod Neep Shaving

CARING FOR YOUR SHAVING BRUSH

After use it is *essential* to run the tap into the end of the brush to make sure that it is *totally* cleaned of soap. Sniff your brush when it is dry (now there's a novelty to add to your morning ritual) before you have your next shave. It should not smell of soap. **Do not wring out excess water. Just give the brush a gentle squeeze, a few light flicks, (hold the handle tight!) and then strop it lightly on a dry towel.**

Stand the brush either on its base or hang it on a brush stand. There is a lot written about which is best, but I am not convinced that one is better than another. The important thing is to *NOT* store it in a closed cabinet. Leave it out in the open to dry naturally.

It is perfectly normal for a new brush to shed a few hairs for up to a week or so of use, and the odd one thereafter. This is especially so with the extra dense badger knots.

Dried soap at the base of the hairs is the most common cause of hair failure! The soap hardens around the hair, the hair becomes very fragile, and it breaks loose at the root. I have seen one month old brushes shed hairs and fail for this reason! Moral: make sure the brush is thoroughly washed out after every use. This is especially important with extra dense silvertip badger, so run clean water into the END of the brush for 30 seconds or so. DESPITE THIS WARNING I HAVE HAD SEVERAL COMPLAINTS OF BRUSHES STARTING TO LOSE HAIRS. IN EVERY CASE THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE ROTTEN & FRAGILE HAIRS DUE TO NOT HAVING BEEN WASHED OUT THOROUGHLY ENOUGH AND DRIED PROPERLY. I WILL NO LONGER REPLACE KNOTS FREE OF CHARGE IF THIS IS FOUND TO BE THE CASE.

NEVER MASH A SHAVING BRUSH HARD AGAINST YOUR FACE FLATTENING THE HAIRS. THE HAIRS WILL FAIL. In areas of very hard water, calcium deposits may form on the hairs. That can also make the hairs very brittle and stiff, and they may shed as a result. Soaking the hairs (not the handle) in a mixture of white vinegar and water for a couple of hours once a month or so can solve problems.

General maintenance occasionally to keep your brush in first class condition:

- warm bath
- wash with soap
- warm rinse
- soak in water/vinegar mixture if you are in a hard water area.
- warm rinse and another soap wash
- rinse
- conditioner - use normal hair conditioner. It works a treat.
- rinse
- A gentle squeeze, few light flicks, and strop it gently on a towel.
- It is OK to use a hair drier, but on *low heat only*.

The wooden and stone bodied brush handles in particular must be handled with special care in order to avoid

damage to the product, which Pens of the Forest will not be held liable for. To ensure that your brush remains in beautiful condition over time, please observe the following:

- With stone handled brushes avoid hard contact (e.g. knocking against objects) which could cause scratches, chips and other damage. In normal use there will be no problem with scratching as the stone is actually quite hard. With stone handled brushes do NOT soak the brush and handle in hot water. The sudden change in temperature can sometimes cause the handle to crack around the knot.
- Avoid contact with abrasive materials.
- Wood handled shaving brushes are finished with either:
 1. Danish Oil: (DO) Soaks into the wood and provides a satin sheen waterproof finish. Oil finished brushes can be treated occasionally to a hand rubbed coat of oil if required to liven up the finish.
 2. Marine Yacht Varnish: (YV) glossy
 3. Tru-oil: (TO) this is an oil based varnish that is used on gun stocks. It doesn't have such a high shine as acrylic, but it is an excellent finish that protects the wood really well as it soaks *into* the wood. It looks more natural too. (Not used on naturally oily woods).
- Brush handles with copper or bronze are *intended* to develop a patina with use. That gives an antique appearance to the metal. If you are lucky, then it may even develop rainbow shades of blue and green. (The metal may be polished back to a high shine using metal polish if you prefer).

You *do not need* to leave a badger hair brush to soak in water before use. Badger hair does not absorb water. A badger hair brush needs no "breaking in" period. You *do need* to leave a boar bristle brush to soak for a minute or so in warm water before use to soften the bristles. Boar bristle brushes will improve after a few weeks of use. The bristle ends will each split into three, and then the brush will feel softer as a result.

A shaving brush serves two functions:

1. To create a lather
2. To spread the lather on your face

Many people prefer to create a lather *on* the face, (note that hard mashing of the brush on the face can damage a brush), but the very best creamiest lather will be produced by creating the lather in a bowl. The ideal lather will be thick, very smooth, and slippery between the fingers, and contain no visible air bubbles. It takes about a minute of whipping to produce a really good lather. It will then hold moisture against the face and produce the very best lubrication for irritation free shaving.

Rodney Neep

www.pensoftheforest.co.uk/shaving/