

HOW TO STUDY

It's a lot of fun to study, if you do it right. But it's not much fun if you are whining and grouchy, and have the idea of getting it over as quickly as possible.

Books are interesting things—and just because they are school-books doesn't mean they're less interesting. History is exciting to read. English—putting words together to form different meanings—is a game you can play every day for the rest of your life without ever becoming tired. Numbers are amazing—with them men analyze the stars, the sea, and build bridges, roadways and great buildings.

Every study is mysteriously romantic under its cold surface. When you do your lesson, forget about getting a set amount finished in the shortest possible time. Ask your instructor about something you don't quite understand; get below that cold surface to find the exciting mystery. It's there in every subject, if you have the curiosity to dig it out.

When curiosity arouses real interest, you'll find yourself eager to get to your studies, rather than hate them.

The first studies given should concern the honing and stropping process.
Chapter 3
Honing and Stropping

Honing and Stropping

Honing

HONING is an art that must be carefully learned. Speed and grace, or the general skill that characterizes the expert's honing process, are only acquired through adequate study and practice.

Skillful honing, however, does not lie alone in graceful movements, as some practitioners would lead one to believe, but rather in a combination of graceful movements with scientific principles involved.

One point that cannot be emphasized too much is that, no matter how clever a barber may be, he cannot give a good shave with a dull razor.

For instance, a barber may be ever so fancy in honing a razor, but if he makes such technical errors as taking one long, heavy stroke in one direction, and one light, short stroke in the opposite direction, he will never get a perfect edge on a razor.

All hones contain some sort of fine-to-coarse abrasive particles that actually grind the edge of a razor, just like a piece of sandpaper on a block with grind a piece of wood passed over it.

If a piece of hardwood is passed over a piece of sandpaper, its surface would soon present a multitude of fine, perceptible scratches.

This is precisely what happens to a razor's edge when passed over a hone, except that in this case the scratches are so minute that they are imperceptible to ordinary vision.

On the other hand, if we view the edge of a razor through a microscope, we see minute scratches, and instead of a perfectly smooth edge, as we would suppose, we find the edge resembles saw teeth. These microscopically fine teeth form the actual cutting edge. (Fig. 15.)

Rules for the Correct Technique in Honing

1. The razor must be stroked edge-first diagonally across the

Magnified Razor Edge (Side View)

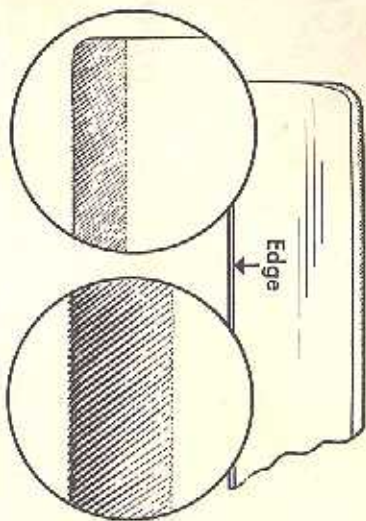


Fig. 15. Razor Edge Magnification.



Fig. 16.

Honing Position.

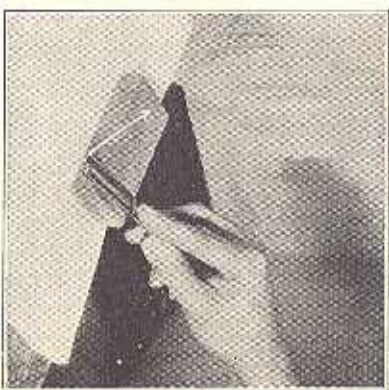


Fig. 17.

home. This is to produce teeth with a cutting edge, which is a very important factor in increasing its cutting quality. (Figs. 16 and 17.)

2. The angle should be equal on both strokes, to insure that the teeth will be set at the same angle on both sides of the blade.
3. The razor must be stroked with equal pressure on both sides of the blade and with equal pressure from heel to point to insure an equal bevel on each side and a uniform parallel bevel from heel to point.

4. The razor must always be kept perfectly flat on the hone while the strokes are made, for if the razor is rocked the least bit the bevel will in time become uneven, and the result will be a

in honing the estimate of the honing the straightness of the

crooked edge instead of one that is perfectly straight. Be sure to give an equal number of strokes on each side.

The Art of Honing

Before beginning the actual honing process, one should first master the technique of turning the razor without turning the wrist. This may seem a trivial matter to the novice, but it is necessary to insure keeping the razor in perfect condition, and it is one of the many characteristics which will later distinguish the expert from the careless workman in the eyes of the employer. The first step in the actual honing process is to place the razor with the heel on the hone, and back at a slight angle to the right end of the hone, as in Fig. 18A.

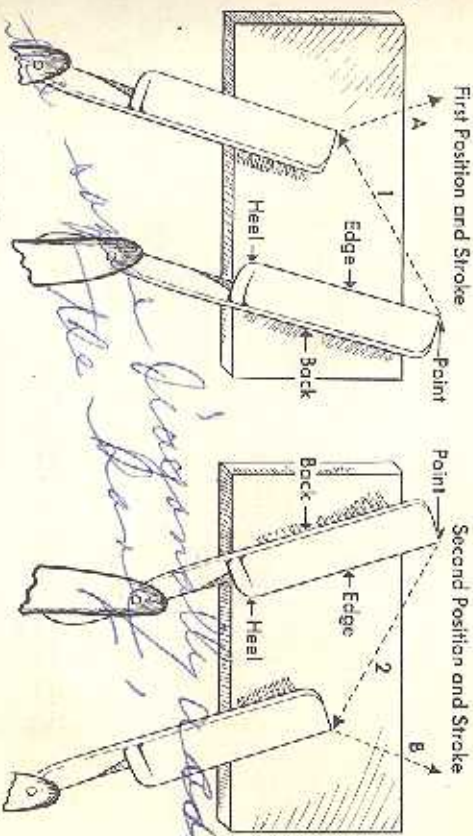


Fig. 18A.

Razor Honing.

Fig. 18B.

Draw the razor diagonally across the hone along the dotted line 1. This is stroke No. 1. When this stroke is completed, turn the razor on its back, and at the same time move it up to the second position, with the back of the blade next to the left end of the hone at a slight angle to the hone, as in Fig. 18B.

Make stroke No. 2 as in Fig. 18B, then turn the razor and bring it up to the first position (Fig. 18A) again. Repeat these movements slowly at first, carefully following the rules given above.

If the razor is quite dull, the first honing strokes should be made with firm pressure, easing up the pressure on the strokes as the razor takes an edge. Experience will prove to be a guide. It is well to practice on a slow-cutting hone at first, with an old razor, until the action of honing has become an easy and free

the honing of straightness

the use of both increases its sharpening ability.

muscular act. Try to acquire smooth, even strokes, and remember that it is highly important to acquire correct technique at first, for speed and grace will come naturally with practice.

Honing Technique for the Advanced Student

After a student has learned to hone a razor evenly and has mastered the honing motions and strokes, he may direct his attention to the method of maintaining the correct "curve" on the cutting edge. A perfect cutting edge should have its highest point at the center of the edge and should slope very slightly

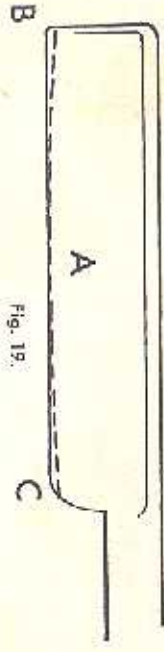


Fig. 19.

(dotted line) from the center (A, Fig. 19) to the point and heel of the edge (B and C, Fig. 19). If the center of the edge is the low point and the point and heel are the high points on the edge, then the razor will drag and fail to cut smoothly, and the patron will complain of the razor "pulling." (Fig. 20, dotted line.)

The average barber has a tendency to hollow out the cutting edge of his razor, due to the fact that as he takes the honing stroke he instinctively exerts pressure along the center portion of the cutting edge, and unless this tendency is corrected the edge will soon take on the shape illustrated by the dotted line in Fig. 20.

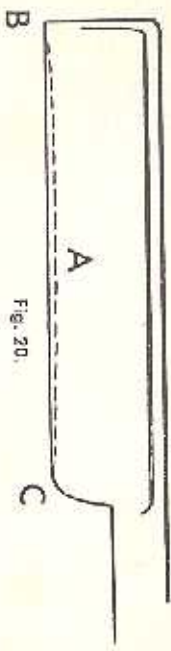


Fig. 20.

To fashion and maintain the correct "curve" on the cutting edge of a razor:

Lay the razor flat on the hone, making sure that the edge and the heel of the razor are flat on the hone surface. Take four short honing strokes with pressure exerted at the heel of the razor. Shift the position of the razor on the hone so that the edge and the point of the razor are flat on the hone surface. Take four short honing strokes with pressure exerted at the point of the razor. Shift the position of the razor on the hone so that the center portion of the razor lies flat on the hone surface. Take several light strokes with little or no pressure. It is easily understood that more of the razor edge is honed

at the heel and at the point of the edge than is honed at the center portion, which develops the desired "curve," as illustrated by the dotted line in Fig. 19.

Testing the Edge

After the mechanical action of honing has been mastered, the next step is to learn to test the edge. This is an act that requires the training of a delicate sense of touch, and it can only be acquired by diligence and many patient trials. The two rules for testing a razor are:

1. A honed razor is to be tested by passing it lightly over the moistened thumb nail. (Fig. 21.) Do not use saliva in these tests. It is not sanitary.
2. A stropped razor should be tested by passing it gently over the moistened ball of the thumb or index finger. A stropped razor should never be tested on the nail. (Fig. 24.)

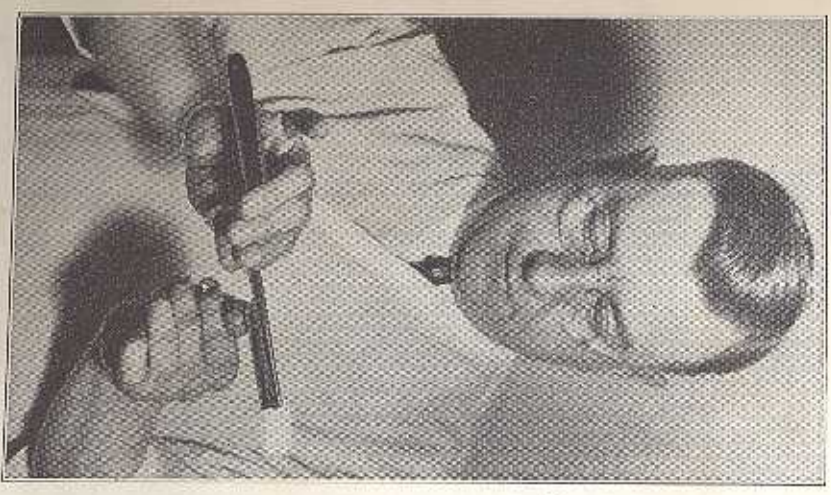


Fig. 21.

Sensations of Testing

After Honing

- 1. Blunt edge: Passes smoothly and freely over the nail without any sensation.
- 2. Keen edge: Drags or tends to dig in, but it is smooth in sensation.
- 3. Coarse edge: Drags, and digs in with a slight, grating sensation.
- 4. Rough or over-honed edge: Tends to stick and gives a harsh, disagreeable, gritty sensation.

Sometimes one may detect two or more of the above sensations along the razor edge. This indicates that the razor has not been honed evenly; and there is some fault in the technique of the honing process.

A student should consult the teacher in such cases, in order to

A faculty should razor and compare as to method

alter his honing technique immediately, for if a faulty technique is allowed to become a habit it will be very hard to correct. Pains taken while learning will mean ease, speed and perfect results later.

As the razor edge tends to become sharp, gradually lighten the pressure in honing, take fewer strokes and test it more frequently. This will prevent over-honing, for an over-honed razor is no better than a dull razor. A fine, slow-cutting hone is recommended for beginners.

Stropping

After the razor has been keenly honed it is ready to be stropped. Although it may have a perfectly-honed edge, one that will split a fine hair with ease, it is not yet smooth enough to be used on the face. Remember, a razor should never be used for shaving without being stropped.

The purpose of stropping is to smooth the whetted edge, or "finish" it, preparatory to the shaving process.

It must not be thought that expert honing is the only action necessary to put a good edge on a razor. Proper stropping is also essential. A well-honed razor which has been improperly stropped fails to slide smoothly through the beard and give that even-cutting sensation that is so pleasing to the patron.

Most barbers use a pair of strops, consisting of a canvas and a leather. The relative importance of canvas and leather is still a moot question. The viewpoint is accepted by barbers that the leather strop is indispensable, where the canvas may or may not be necessary, depending on the individual's co-ordination of hone and strop. With some types of hones, however, the canvas is considered to be necessary.

The general principles of stropping are little different from those of honing, except that stropping is reversed, i. e., the razor is stroked with the back moving forward, and at a slight angle. The razor must be kept perfectly flat against the strop, with the strop held taut. Guard against sagging. The pressure of the razor must be heavy enough to feel a firm drag or "draw."

The razor is held with thumb on top of the shank and rolled in the hand without moving the wrist. This not only makes for equal pressure on both strokes, but also makes the act more graceful and easy.

First learn to turn or flip the razor by holding it in one position without making the strokes.

After this act has become easy, proceed with the strokes slowly, as illustrated in Figs. 22 and 23.

When the razor is freshly honed, it should be finished on the

Depositing for improvement!
Japan for improvement!

leather only. Subsequently, it is advisable to use the canvas first, then the leather, each time the razor is stropped.

To test the razor edge after stropping, use the ball of the thumb or index finger (the flesh), touching it lightly along the

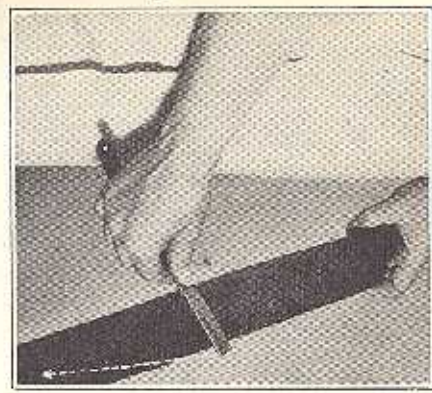


Fig. 22.

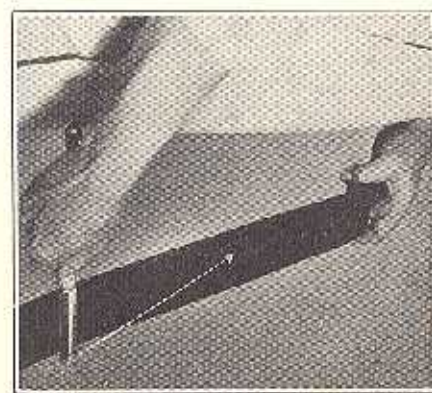


Fig. 23.



Fig. 24.

edge: (Fig. 24.) If the edge is dull it will not stick or draw. If it has the correct edge, it will have a keen, drawing sensation. This method of testing requires a great deal of experience, but eventually the razor's edge can be tested quite accurately in this manner. When a razor is properly honed, and the knack of stropping has been perfected, one should be able to give many shaves with the same razor without rehonoring, simply by stropping it before and during the shaving process.

1. The razor should remain in contact with the strop at all times during the stropping process.
2. To enhance an overhoned razor, use the thumb along the

The length of stropping stroke should be from 6 to 10 inches