

The Shave

Prepare your Beard

While showering, start by wetting your face in the shower several times and washing your face with a facial soap such as a glycerin based soap. Or, if shaving without showering, first wash your face with a facial soap such as a glycerin based soap, rinse well, and then place a hot pack towel (usually a towel that has been steamed or run under hot water then rung out) on your face for about 1-2 minutes the hot pack should be as hot as your can safely tolerate. Either one of these processes will soften the hair and cleanse the face of dirt and oils that dull the razor and prevent the razor from gliding across the face.

Suds Up

The shave cream you use does make a dramatic difference as does the application method for the shave cream. A glycerin based shaving mug soap such as the Col. Conk shave products are considered the best in the world for use with a straight razor, because of their ingredients and lubricity. A standard shaving gel or foam will also work well, however it may not provide your face the protection that a good glycerin based shaving soap provides.

If you use a shaving mug soap you will also need a Shaving Brush. Many of our clients use a Shaving Brush with their regular shaving creams and gels because the Shaving Brush is another important part of the shaving process that has been overlooked and forgotten over time. The Shaving Brush pushes the lather into the beard and skin and helps the beard to stand up for shaving. Modern shaving foams attempt to replicate the function of the shave brush with chemical additives, however the action of the shave brush can not be completely duplicated with chemicals alone.

If using a shaving mug brush, drench the brush bristles with hot water (this will rinse the brush of any previous residues and will provide for a nice warm lather), brush the shave soap in a circular motion with the shave brush until a rich lather forms. Work the later into the beard in a circular motion. The lather should look foamy. The lather can be renewed on the face while shaving by simply reworking the lather with the shave brush.

The Shave

Start by opening the razor 270 degrees so that the handle is pointed up and the blade edge is pointed down. This position is considered the standard shave position for the razor handle and

allows good control of the razor while shaving. The beard should be shaved with the beard growth (not against it) in the following order: side-burns/cheek bones, neck sides, middle of neck, upper and lower lip areas, then finally the chin. This shaving order allows the lather more time to soak into the thicker beard hair of the next shaving area.

A modern razor locks the razor angle in at one angle regardless of facial features and beard density where as the straight razor allows you to adjust the blade angle for different parts of the beard and face. Most of our clients find that they nick themselves less when straight razor shaving. The razor angles can range from a 90 degree angle from the skin to a more aggressive 30 degree angle. We encourage you to start shaving with a more forgiving angle of around 90 degrees. The idea is to scrap all of the shaving cream off of you face with the razor as if you were using the razor as a squeegee.

Remember even at the oldest of barber shops, a shave may entail being shaved two to three times, so don't worry if you need to lather up and re-shave to achieve a closer shave.

- **Precautions:**
 - Be careful to NEVER move the razor in a cutting motion parallel to the blade edge, this will cut you.
 - Rinse the razor under running water prior to and frequently during use to remove oil, soap and hair. Be very cautious to NEVER hit your razor on the sink, faucet, etc. as this could permanently damage the razor and make the razor extremely dangerous to use.
 - Strop the razor before and after each shave. Those people with thicker hair may also need to strop several times during a shave session to retain the razor edge.
 - If the razor is jarred (for example: accidentally dropping a closed razor on a hard surface or tapping the blunt spine of the blade on a watch) this will jar the delicate edge out of alignment and will require the razor to re-stropped before any further use.
 - Take your time. Hurrying through a straight razor shave is not a good idea.

The Finish

Finish by thoroughly rinsing you face with cold water, pat you face with a mild astringent such as Dickerson's Witchhazel, or Original Bay Rum aftershave and face lotion or a combination astringent and lotion such as Colonel Conk's After Shave Balm. These after shave astringents are low in alcohol and will burn less than normal high alcohol after shaves. The Original Bay Rum aftershave is very

high in alcohol, but continues to be one of the best and most popular all-natural aftershave skin conditioners. This final step soothes and protects your face and prevents your face from becoming irritated.

Rinse your razor and shave brush under running water and allow to dry before putting into any enclosed area or container. The brush should be stood on its base or hung on a brush stand to allow it to fully dry each time.

Most of the best straight razors are high carbon steel and will rust if not cared for properly. After shaving, rinse and dry the razor and protect from rust by applying a rust preventative treatment every one - two weeks or lightly oil after each use. This will insure that your razor remains rust free. The razor can be left closed while drying. Premium Knives recommends applying a light coat of Sentry Solutions Tuf-Glide treatment (a non-oil based product that chemically bonds with the metal and dries to protect the steel from rusting) every one to two weeks. For long-term storage of the razor, coat liberally with a heavy oil or other long-term protectant and store in a cool dry place. DO NOT use food oils, food oils are acidic and can pit and rust steel. Most oils and protectants do not pose health risks for grooming items, however a razor should be rinsed prior to use to avoid any potential skin irritation.

After you finish shaving your first few times, you start to develop your own personal style and technique. Shaving with a straight razor will become a very enjoyable part of starting each day.

Enjoy your shave.