



## Straight Razor Starter Guide

### How to Straight Razor Shave

Time and technique are important components of achieving a perfect shave. We are pleased to share with you some insights into mastering the art of straight shaving.

#### 1. Preparation

We recommend straight shaving after a hot shower one that the warm water and steam has had a chance to soften your facial hair and open your pores. You can apply a hot wet towel on your face for 5 minutes as well. We recommend The Blades Grim Pre-Shave Oil found in our store. (HOW TO APPLY?) Next you will want to lather your face with a fine shaving soap like the highly praised Smolder Luxury Shaving Soap also found on our website. Using your shaving brush and some Smolder Luxury Shaving Soap to a shaving mug with a little warm water. Use your brush to whip the soap and water into a lather. In a circular motion, using your brush, apply lather to your face. You are now ready to start your journey into straight shaving. (We recommend first learning with one of our Practice Razors or one of our famous Straight Razor Learning Sets)



#### 2. Get a Grip

How you grip your straight razor is very important. Please observe the illustration above for how to properly hold your straight razor. While shaving, be sure to hold your razor at an angle of 30 degrees to your skin. This will ensure you do not tear the stubble or cut your skin with too steep of an angle. You shave the right side of your face with your right hand and the left side of your face with your left hand. Of course, some people prefer always using their dominate hand. You'll need to determine what's most comfortable for you.

You will want to stretch your skin with your free hand to keep the shaving surface of your skin taut. Always keep your free hand away from the direction of shave or blade.

#### 3. First Strokes

Start at the sideburn and take your first stroke down toward your cheek. These can be small, even strokes keeping your blade level and moving in line with the blade face. Never move side to side with the blade edge. No jerking or chopping motion. Nice small, smooth passes are the goal. Keep your skin stretched tight to ensure a smooth shave.

#### 4. Facial Areas (Upper Lip, Lower Lip, Chin & Neck)

**Upper Lip** – Divide the upper lip into left and right sections. You will want to stretch the skin by pulling the opposite side of the lip to keep the skin smooth and taut. Now you will just need to clean up under the nose. You do this by holding the nose up a bit and that will tighten the skin for a close shave.

**Lower Lip** – Use your jaw and mouth to stretch the skin in this area tight. You want to start in the corner of your lower lip and work your way toward the center (do this for both sides). You can clean up the remaining hair with careful up-strokes from your chin toward your lip.

**Chin** – Careful attention is needed here and you will want to start with small stroke that begin a slight bit away from the prominent features of your chin. Lifting the angle as you work down the chin is recommended and you will want to use the center of the blade as you work down your chin.

**Neck** – Follow your hair grain growth on the neck for your first pass. This will help avoid irritation. You may use multiple directions, carefully testing which direction work best.

#### 5. Rinse and Repeat

This first pass of shaving is known as a With the Grain (WTG) pass. After completing the WTG pass it is a good idea to start over again and this time utilizing a Cross the Grain (XTG) pass of your facial hair. Now for a silky smooth face you can start round 3 with an Against the Grain (ATG) Pass. Just like it sounds, this pass goes against the grain. Lather up after each pass and as needed if the soap dries at any point during your shave. Keep the skin taut and try to take longer strokes with the XTG & ATG passes.

#### 6. After the Shave

Splash your face with cool water and clean off any residual soap. Apply one of our Made in America Aftershave Gel's, like Smolder, to your face and neck. This will help moisturize and cool your skin. Be sure to apply by patting as opposed to rubbing. This will help avoid irritation of your freshly shaved skin.

### Congratulations on Your New Straight Razor!

Our handcrafted straight razors are created from quality High Carbon Steel and then hollow ground to precision. Hollow ground blades are preferred throughout the straight shaving world for their ability to provide a sharp, thin blade edge thus producing the world's cleanest, closest and most comfortable shave.

Hollow ground blades are ground in such a way as to produce an inward arch on the blade. This area is known as the hollow of the blade. Our carbon steel blades are very forgiving. This gives the razor pliability and durability enabling the edge of the blade to be maintained more easily compared to a ridged stainless steel blade.

Straight Razor blade widths vary in size from 3/8"-9/8" and sometimes larger on custom blades. The most common sizes are our 5/8" & 6/8" round tip straight razor.

We hope you enjoy your new foray into "wet shaving". Please feel free to let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Thank you.

#### Contact us:

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#### The Shave Network



# Stropping Your Razor

You should strop your razor prior to every shave as stropping prepares the blade edge for the best possible shave. We recommend purchasing our "Straight Razor Learning Set" in order to learn the complete art of stropping and shaving. Follow these instructions precisely to avoid damaging your blade or strop.

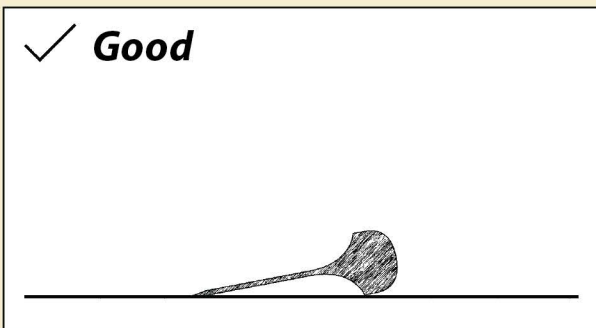
## 1. Stropping Preparation

Hang your strop on a wall or solid fixed point at about abdomen or chest height. Firmly grasp the lower handle of the strop and pull taut, taking up the slack and bringing the strop horizontal.

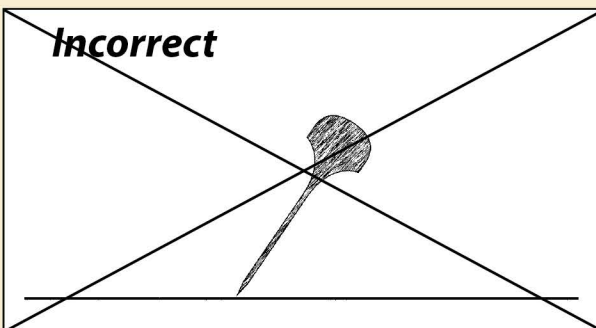
## 2. Stropping Methodology

Grip the straight razor firmly with the tang (non-sharpened base of razor) between your thumb and your pointer and middle finger. Your other fingers will cradle the scales (razor handle).

Start with the canvas/backside of your leather strop as this rougher material warms and aligns the blade edge in preparation for shaving. The stropping method will remain the same for all materials.



Correct way to lay the blade on the strop.



Incorrect way to Lay the blade on the strop.

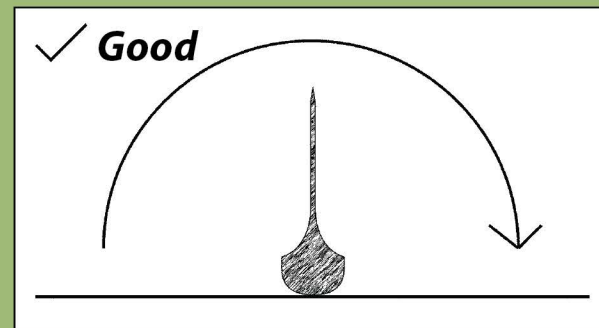
## 3. Lapping - Back and Forth

Place the straight razor on its spine (blade edge up) near the strop handle. Roll the straight razor on its spine toward the strop handle until the blade edge is resting on the strop. Holding the blade flat on the strop, gently make the first stroke upward away from you. The weight of your razor is ideal pressure on the strop.

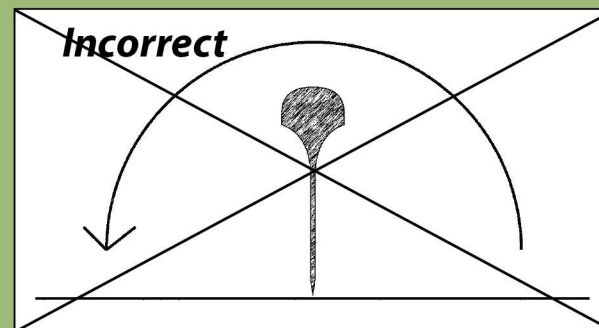
At the end of your first stroke roll the straight razor on its spine until the blade is gently resting on the strop, with the blade edge pointed away from you. Keep the blade flat while gliding the razor back along the strop. This back and forth round trip equals lap. Complete 25-30 laps, concentrating first on technique and method. Work evenly across the face of the blade to address the entire blade edge as technique is more important than speed.

## 4. Flip & Repeat

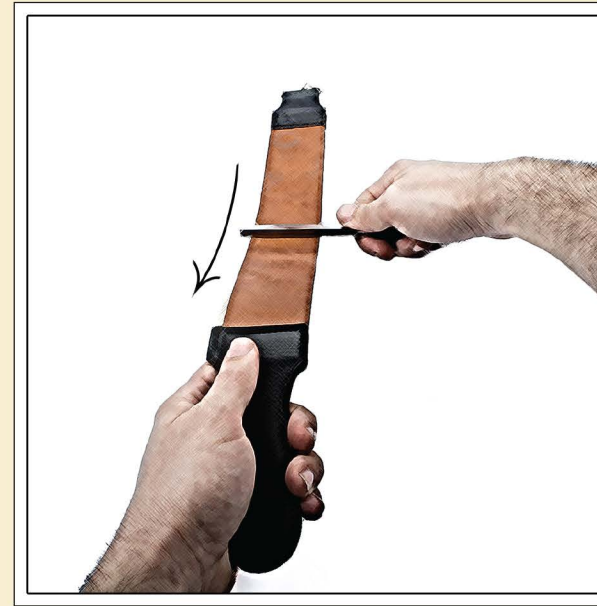
Now you are ready to move from the Canvas or Rough Leather side to the smooth top grain leather. Use the same methodology and motions while completing another 30 laps. Your straight razor is now ready for another shave.



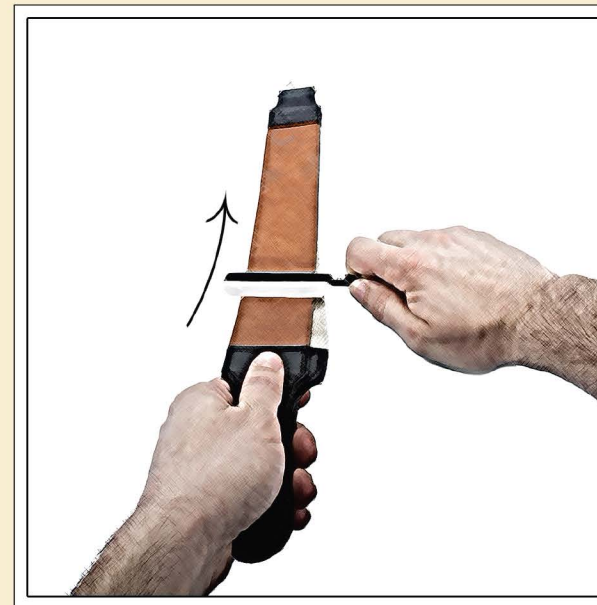
Correct way to roll the blade.



Incorrect way to roll the blade.



Back Stroke



Forward Stroke

When these steps no longer provide a comfortable shaving edge on your straight razor, it is time to have your straight razor professionally hand honed. Be sure to utilize our hone service when needed.

## Straight Razor Care

To ensure a long life for your straight razor, proper care is important. Cleaning and completely drying your razor after each use is required to avoid rust and maintain the integrity of the blade.

After each use, clean the entire surface of the razor with a Q-tip dampened with either ethyl alcohol or rubbing alcohol. This will help clean and degrease the blade.

Apply a thin coat of light mineral oil to the blade, let it sit for about 10 minutes and then wipe the excess oil off using a clean, dry cloth. This oil coating will help prevent any further rusting. Use rubbing alcohol to remove the oil before use, and again after each use to clean the blade.

After each shave, apply mineral oil again to the blade as well as after sharpening. Be careful not to get any alcohol or oil on the handle.

You will want to store the blade in a dry room temperature environment out of direct sunlight.

With proper care and sharpening, your handcrafted straight razor should last a lifetime. Enjoy the closest, cleanest and most comfortable shaving experience you'll ever have.

