

CERAMIC BLADES

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When these blades come from the factory they are perfect. As they are used, the sides of the teeth of the ceramic cutter will get imperfections along the cutting edges. These imperfections tend to create a "saw tooth" on the sides of the ceramic teeth and this causes dragging, snagging, or dullness. If something like a tiny piece of sand gets in the teeth of the ceramic cutter this could cause "fragmentation" to the sides of the cutter teeth. This is harder fix. Also, if the ceramic cutter is damaged too much it may never cut properly again and may need replaced. The best advice is to use ceramic blades on clean dogs, never rough-in dogs using them. It only takes one grain of sand to cause problems so the blade doesn't cut right anymore.

As sharpeners, we have to take enough ceramic material off the bottom of the cutter and get past these imperfections and fragmentations to get the cutter to slice the hair again rather than ripping it. This is done by hand on a diamond surface, and most sharpeners charge a little extra for sharpening ceramic blades for this reason.

Ceramic material actually is used to sharpen metals, and the ceramic cutter on your blade is no different. As it passes back and forth across the lower blade (metal), it "seats" itself to that metal blade and gets rid of any imperfections. Tension is also very important, ceramic material is just like glass so the tension must be between 2 ½ to 3# side pressure. Any tighter and the ceramic cutter could shatter just by dropping the blade on your grooming table.

Here is a suggestion to try when you get your freshly sharpened ceramic blades back from sharpening, and even a NEW ceramic blade. Instead of taking them right out of the package and running them through fur, oil first, then run the blade on the clipper for a minute. As the ceramic cutter moves back and forth across the metal comb I believe it gets rid of any imperfections and will "seat" itself to the metal blade below it. Blades seem to cut perfectly when this small break-in period is done. You only have to do this break-in period one time after sharpening or if its new.

Another important thing to check on ceramic blades when they seem dull is dirt filled divots on the bottom side of the cutter (see left picture). To check, push the cutter half way to one side and turn the blade upside down, the divots are located right behind each tooth. These divots can fill up with dirt and pet dander, and when they do it will raise the cutter up enough from the bottom blade and the blade will start to snag or drag.

To clean the divots, push the cutter out half way to one side. Turn the blade over and inspect the divots. If there is dirt in the divots, take a toothbrush and scrub the divots in blade wash. If the divots are really impacted with dirt it could take aggressive scrubbing to get them spotless. Clean one side then the other in the same way. Note: Running the blade on the clipper in blade wash doesn't clean the divots, in some cases it may add to the problem. After your done cleaning, wipe the excess blade wash off, center the cutter on the blade, then oil with blade oil. Most of the time the blade will start to cut again. If not, it could be dull or fragmented and needs re-sharpened.

Another important thing about ceramic cutters is the tips of the cutter can break off. This will cause the blade to drag or snag the coat. The tips break for these reasons: First, using them on dirty coat. If the hair is matted or filled with dirt, the tips of the cutter will break off when they hit it. Secondly, If you use a blade with a ceramic cutter on a comb attachment. The ribs of the comb can slide between the teeth of the bottom blade enough that the cutter will break the tips off as the cutter moves back and forth. In both instances the cutter cannot be fixed and has to be replaced. Most groomers will replace the ceramic cutter with a steel cutter. Steel cutters can be used in all situations.

