

# Ceramic Blades

**By Jeff Andrews**

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.

For instance, if something like a tiny piece of sand gets into the teeth of the ceramic cutter, this could cause “fragmentation” to the sides of the cutter teeth. This is harder to fix. If the ceramic cutter is damaged too much, it may never cut properly again and may need to be replaced. The best advice is to use ceramic blades on clean dogs. Never use them to “rough in” dogs. 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 and 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 or even buy a new ceramic blade. Instead of taking them right out of the package and running them through fur, oil first, and 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 it’s new.

Another important thing to check on ceramic blades when they seem dull is dirt-filled divots on the bottom side of the cutter. To check, push the cutter halfway 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 halfway 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 you're 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 to be re-sharpened. ☹