

How You Can Fix Sharp Clipper Blade Teeth

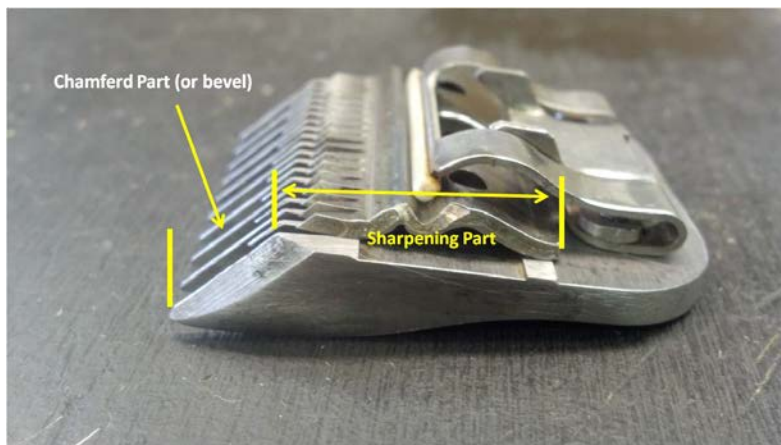
Northern Tails Sharpening Inc.

When you pick up a blade and you feel the teeth are sharp or very pointy, the first thing most groomers think its the fault of the sharpener. It may not be at all.

Although the blade came back from sharpening, the sharpener only sharpens the part of the blade with the cutting surface. Since most clipper blades are chamfered, the sharpener never made the tips sharp, What did then? Animal hair did it most likely.

Below is an illustration of a clipper blade that shows the part the sharpener sharpens, and the part that is chamfered or beveled giving the blade its cutting size. The larger the chamfering (or bevel), the higher the blade cuts.

There are only three blades that the sharpener can make either the tips sharp, or make a razor edge of the whole front of the blade. They are the #30, #40, and #50 blades because they don't have a chamfer on them. Look at your blades and see for yourself.



Dog hair can be very coarse, and as you use the blade over time it can cause the tips of the blade to become very sharp and pointy. Skip tooth blades are very prone to being sharpened by hair. They can literally make slices in the animals skin if they are sharp, thats why groomers are so afraid to use skip tooth blades. But if you the groomer can identify sharp teeth on a blade, and fix it yourself, it won't be a problem.

Here is a couple ways to fix this problem yourself. Our example blade will be a 7 skip tooth because many feel they are dangerous blades without having any sharp tips. Skip teeth are just as safe as F blades if they don't have sharp tips that can cut skin, or poke your hand while trying to get them on the clipper. How one uses a skip tooth blade can determine if its dangerous or not.



Here is a skip tooth 7 blade, as you can see there are many pointed teeth that can become sharp when running through animal hair. If you have blades like this, or even F blades, run your finger along the teeth periodically and check for sharpness. Even if the blades just came back from sharpening, a good groomer will check blades for tooth sharpness, and if any teeth from the cutter are hanging over the edge of the comb blade. Your the safety valve between your blades and the animal. If a blade scrapes or cuts an animal because it has pointy or sharp teeth, its your fault because you used it.

Now that we explained sharp teeth, what causes them, and who should look out for them before use, lets talk about how to fix them.

Professional sharpeners should check every blade, especially a 30, 40 or a 50 to see if the front edge of the blade has turned into a razor. Their sharpening process can do that to these three blades. But if one happens to slip by the sharpener, and you happen to catch it, here is what you can do to make that blade friendly again.

Most sharpeners use a diamond pad available from any home center. They set the blade on the pad, teeth on the pad, and move back and forth at about a 15 degree angle until the tips of the blade are not a razor anymore. If your skip tooth has very pointy tips that poke your hand use the same method. It won't hurt how the blade digs into the coat.



Run the blade back and forth with a slight downward force to let the diamond do its work (a motion like buttering your bread). Go back and forth a few times and check it with your finger. Do it until you feel its safe to use.

On 30's, 40's and 50's don't press down too hard because you don't want to grind the front of the blade off so the cutter teeth hang over. Just make the front edge smooth so it doesn't slice a pad or nick the face and ears.

Now, lets say you just picked up a blade you need and it has very sharp tips on the teeth. You don't have a diamond pad, you don't have time to go to the home improvement center, and your behind in the grooms....what do you do now?

You can do what us "Old School" groomers been doing for years. You can actually take that blade outside and scratch the tips on the smooth concrete sidewalk in front of your shop. We been doing it for years and it wont hurt the way the blade cuts at all. Just scratch it long enough to smooth the tips of your skip tooth, or the front edge of your 30, 40, or 50 blade.



When blades come back from sharpening, they should have been inspected for sharp edges and teeth and repaired. If a blade can't be repaired, it shouldn't be returned as "OK to use", it should be segregated and marked "No Good". Blades can't be sharpened forever, they wear out over time. Many sharpeners don't pay attention to details like this as we do at Northern Tails, we are groomers and we check several things on each blade. We go the extra mile so you don't have to worry about it.

But if a blade makes it to you from any sharpener, call and complain if you want, but fix the blade yourself so you can use it. We hope these instructions were understandable to you, and a video will be coming out very soon. Check the website.