

how to get a close shave from an old blade

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Would you believe me if I told you that I've been shaving with the same Gillette Platinum-Plus razor blade every morning . . . for about a year? It's true! And it doesn't look as though that blade needs to be replaced even yet.

No, I don't own a plastic pyramid and I don't believe that the "power of the universe" flows through me or my home. There's no magic in what I've done . . . I've just found a way to make my razor blade last a good deal longer than normal. Here's how:

Each morning, I begin by washing my face with plenty of ordinary soap and water. After rinsing off, I then immediately lather my beard from my shaving mug and start shaving. When I've finished, I wipe excess soap off my skin with a very wet washcloth (a process which re-moistens my face) . . . then I shave again, this time pulling my razor in the opposite direction. Afterwards, I rinse and go about my business.

I liken my technique to the double-lather procedure most folks use when washing their hair. The first dab of shampoo doesn't *appear* to do much (it certainly doesn't produce much in the way of suds) . . . but when you rinse and lather up a *second* time, the suds billow. The soap with which I wash my face before shaving is analogous to the first dab of shampoo: It doesn't *appear* to do anything . . . but I think that in fact it must loosen or remove a water-repellent layer of dirt and grease, after which the shaving cream can really get in and wet the beard (sort of like the second application of shampoo). A thoroughly wet beard, of course, is softer than a barely moist one . . . and thus doesn't require as sharp a cutting edge.

To test the above theory, I decided several months ago to see what would happen if I *skipped* the pre-wash altogether. Ouch! I could feel the blade practically pull each whisker out by its root! After rinsing my kisser and lathering up again, however, the same blade did a super-smooth job of cutting.

I've also noticed something else: Namely, on mornings when I use too much water in my pre-wash or in my shaving mug, my face definitely tells me that the blade should be chucked in the trash. But the next day—if I go through my normal routine and use the right proportion of soap to water—the ole face says that everything's fine.

Needless to say, the year-old blade I'm using now isn't as sharp as a brand-new one . . . but it does a commendable job on my beard nonetheless (and I don't nick myself nearly as much as I would with a fresh-out-of-the-package blade). Besides that, it's surely a lot easier to use this one razor blade over and over than to sharpen a straight razor every morning like I used to have to do.

I suppose I really should buy a new pack of blades, make careful observations, keep accurate records, and document this phenomenon in some sort of halfway scientific manner . . . but what the heck? The way I figure it, why should I buy new blades before I have to? Especially when my trusty year-old Platinum-Plus is still going strong! ●