

PATHWAY TO GOLD

First Steps in Shearing Training





Receive certificates as you progress through the levels.

Blue Certificate



You will be able to have outline knowledge of the equipment that is used in shearing and how to set it all up.

You will be able to shear three sheep unaided in thirty minutes within 80% of the pattern taught.

Bronze Certificate



You are now able to shear 100% to the pattern being taught and have a good knowledge of all aspects of the gear including comb selection and grinding.

You will now be able to shear a minimum of 12 sheep in an hour and can work unsupervised.

Silver Certificate



You have moved into the commercial zone and have a very good knowledge about all aspects of gear, types of sheep etc.

Shearing a minimum of 18 sheep an hour to a high standard.

Gold Certificate



You now have achieved a good commercially viable rate of shearing being able to turn out a minimum of 24 an hour may be over 35 an hour set in easier sheep.

You are now competent with all aspects of shearing and are able to point others in the right direction.

Pathway to Gold.

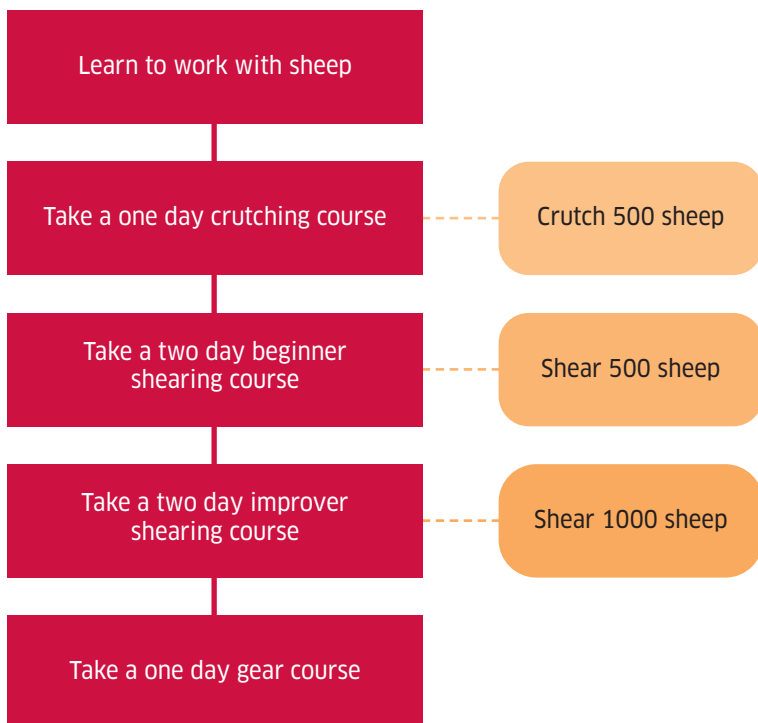
To be the best we can be at anything it is important to start doing it right from the start.

This applies to shearing probably more than most.

Like learning any sport when we start it pays to get the basics right first then with practice and good mentoring we progress up to higher levels and so on until we reach our natural levels.

Set out your goals, where do you want to be?

Here we set out a path to follow to take you to the top if that is what you desire.



Now you are starting out on the pathway to gold.

Follow on with courses that will see you moving up the ladder through the various levels to the most advanced.

SITTING DOWN WITH MANUFACTURERS, RETAILERS AND CONSUMERS. STANDING UP FOR PRODUCERS.



Our support includes:

Shearing Training
Transport and Logistics
Regional Depots
Wool Grading
Auction
Consumer Marketing

We understand the effort, passion and skill involved in the production of British wool, that's why we're committed to doing more. **More to support producers, more public awareness of the benefits of wool and more profit for everyone involved in the production of wool.**

At British Wool our mission is to create a quality mark, recognised by consumers for superior product performance while creating a fairer deal for producers.

Together we're growing something special.

To find out more call us on **01274 688666**
or visit our website at **britishwool.org.uk**



THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL
Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales

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PREPARATION OF THE SHEARING AREA

Choose the best site to set up portable pens or trailer to establish a shearing area. The trailer and boards should be on a level surface.

Sheep run better uphill and towards daylight, so pen up sheep to be shorn, so that they run towards daylight making it less stressful on the sheep and on the shearer when filling the catching pen.

Sheep to be shorn should be **empty, rested** and their wool **dry**.

Do not overcrowd the pens; this keeps sheep and wool clean prior to shearing.

- **Safety:** Ensure shorn sheep have a clear access away from the shearing area, so that they do not interfere with those involved in shearing.



PREPARATION OF MACHINERY

- **Safety:** Check the shearing machine is secure to its mounting bracket.

The machine is suspended so that the dropper sits 10mm clear of the floor, to allow reach for shearing all areas of the sheep.

- **Safety:** Electrics - Check that all plugs, sockets and cables are clean and undamaged.

Cable clamps should be secure at both plugs and sockets to prevent wires pulling loose.

Cables should be sound. Never run over a cable or bend it severely.

Place a RCCB (Residual Current Circuit Breaker) at the source of power not where the motor is plugged into an extension lead.

Ideally the power supply should be as near to the shearing trailer as possible. Long extension leads, lead to voltage drop.

- **Safety:** Suspend all extension leads away from sheep and shearers.

CHOICE OF COMBS

Combs and cutters for shearing must be sharp. Grinding and Gear Maintenance is covered in separate courses, which are held over the winter months.

It is important that you know which comb you should use and why. It is important when you buy a comb that it is suitable for your needs.

Combs range from those with a 7mm bevel down to a 3.5mm bevel and each has a particular use. It is critical that shearers understand this.

Bevels are indicated in the diagrams below, the 7mm bevel is a long slender bevel with a more pointed tooth; the 3.5mm bevel has a shorter curve and is more bulbous at the tip.

The finer and denser the wool is, the longer and finer the required bevel is.

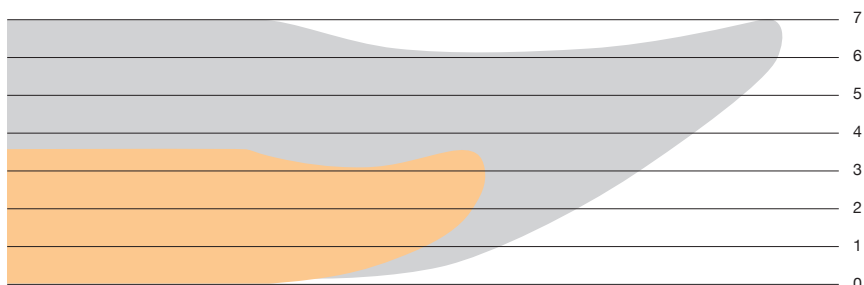
The 3.5mm bevel is used for open woolled sheep and is therefore the most commonly used bevel in the British Isles.

The 7mm bevel is used on fine dense wool such as the Merino.

Bevel Diagram:

3.5mm suitable for open woolled sheep

7mm suitable for fine, dense wool



SETTING THE HANDPIECE

Before fitting the comb to the handpiece, run it through the palm of your hand. If it scratches you it will scratch the sheep. If so, run the comb over a leather strop to polish the offending tooth.

Turn the handpiece upside down and place the comb with the cutting edge down, under the comb screws parallel to the comb bed. Finger tighten the comb screws.

Turn the handpiece back over and place a cutter into position with the chicken feet of the forks locating in the outer holes of the cutter.

There are two settings to establish once the comb and cutter are located; Throw and Lead.

Lead is the distance between the scallop of the comb (see diagram) and the point of the cutter, set from the middle tooth of the comb.

A comb has thirteen teeth, so set the lead from tooth seven.

The cutter can be set to the left or right.

Lead will vary with the type of wool and the degree of rise.

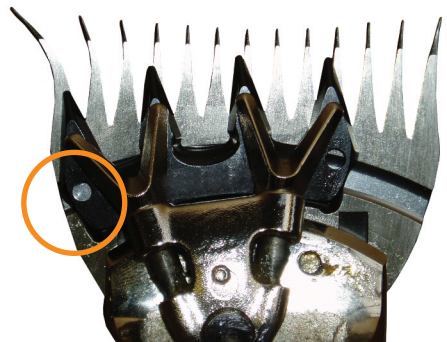
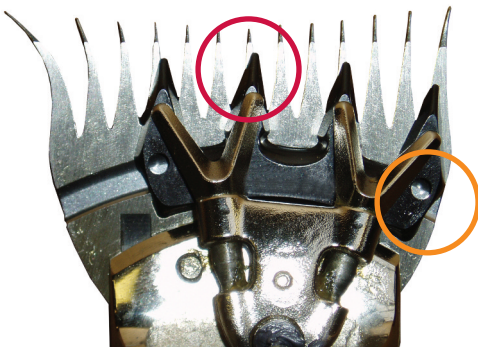
Novice shearers set lead at 5mm.

Throw is the movement of the cutter across the face of the comb.

The outer tooth to the right as you look at the ground surface, is the bottom tooth and the outside tooth to the left, is the top tooth.

The comb should be set so that the cutter covers the bottom and top teeth, without passing over the outer edge. The comb should still be parallel to the comb bed.

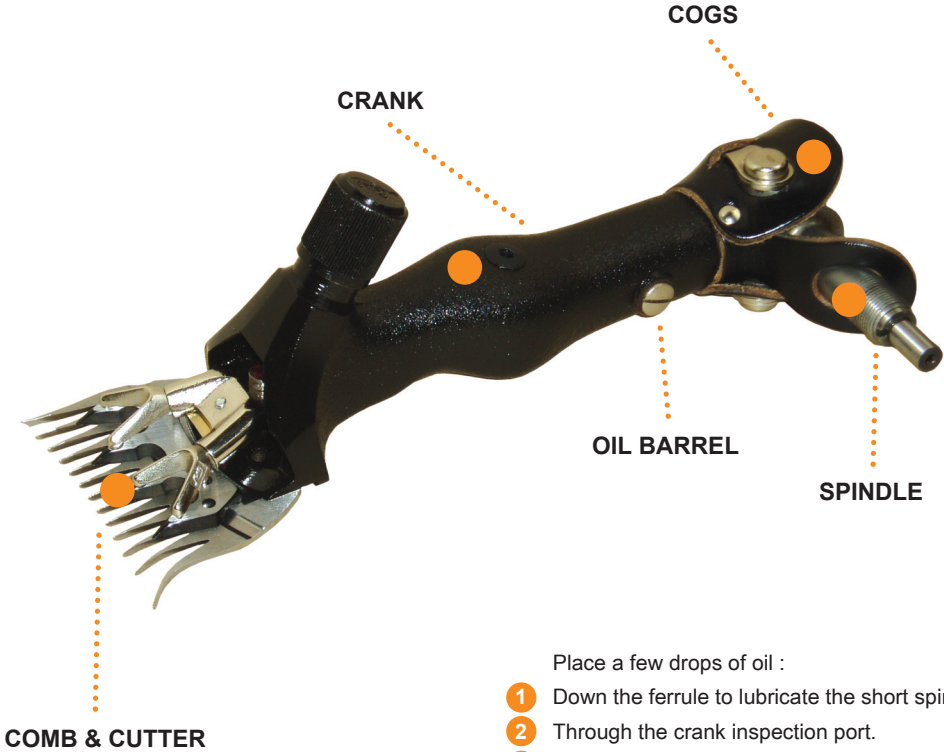
Tighten the comb screws slightly to hold the comb in position.



LUBRICATING THE HANDPIECE

Using clean oil, an SAE 30 or similar, lubricate the handpiece before commencing shearing, and at regular intervals during shearing.

Remember oil is a coolant as well as a lubricant. Where there is moving metal to metal contact friction occurs, heat is generated.



Place a few drops of oil :

- 1 Down the ferrule to lubricate the short spindle.
- 2 Through the crank inspection port.
- 3 Along the comb and cutter.
- 4 The cogs.

PRE SHEARING WARM-UP

Shearing is hard physical work, do not start shearing from cold without warming up. A few short simple exercises will avoid injury through putting strain on muscles, particularly the back, legs and shoulders.



The shearer must comply with bio security and as such, clothing and footwear should be clean for each new shearing venue.

REDUCE THE RISK OF DISEASE SPREAD.

SHEARING CLOTHES

Shearing vest or singlet, long enough to cover the back when bending, sleeveless for comfort and safety.

Shearers Trousers have a double layer of denim down the front part of the leg, which is designed to protect the shearer from lanolin, sheep grease, which could enter the pores and lead to skin sores.

Moccasins provide the shearer with comfortable footwear, allowing flexibility of foot movement, to be able to feel the sheep for positive control and are non slip for safety.

Towels, one for sweat and one for after washing.

Clean warm clothes to change into immediately after finishing.

TRAINING RESOURCES

Training resources available include:

- DVD's
- Shearing Poster

These can be obtained via our website or contacting Julia Robinson

T: 01274 688666

E: juliarobinson@britishwool.org.uk

W: britishwool.org.uk

SHEARING: THE BRITISH WOOL WAY

Prior to shearing ensure your handpiece is in the correct place for starting, the long dropper hanging straight down with the short dropper at ninety degrees to the pen with the handpiece laying parallel with the pen.

Removing the sheep from the catching pen

Keep the sheep quiet and relaxed. **DO NOT STRESS THE SHEEP OR PULL WOOL.**

Turn the sheep in the pen, then the right hand takes the right front leg and the left hand takes the wool at the head of the brisket to move the sheep. The left hand is also breaking the wool for the point of entry of the handpiece when commencing shearing.

The sheep should be under control before we reach the point where we shear.

The sheep is positioned 3 to 4 inches from the heel of the handpiece, with the drive shaft in line with the flank.

Spear Belly Position

Note the position of the shearer's feet in the diagram on page 12.

The right foot of the sheep is positioned between its right ear and an eye and as the shearer squats slightly to open his knees, the sheep is pushed between them.

As the shearer straightens his legs, the sheep is held by his knees and legs. The knuckle of the sheep's right front leg will be behind or inside the shearer's right leg.

THE BELLY

Remember the left hand is working close behind the handpiece when shearing the belly; this removes wrinkles and creates a flat shearing surface.



The belly should be shorn in 4 to 5 blows.

The first blow starts on the left hand side of the brisket aiming for the flank, finishing by turning toward the teats with the shearers left hand working behind the handpiece keeping the skin tight.

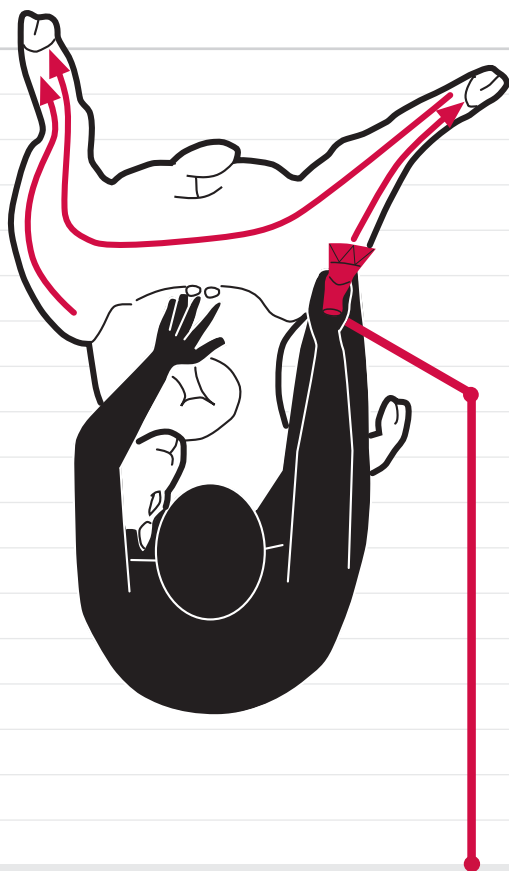
The second blow passes down the belly with the left hand still working behind the handpiece to keep skin tight. The points of the comb remain on the sheep at all times, both in forward and reverse travel.

Never flick out over the teats – danger of cutting teats.

Entry for the third is achieved by straightening and stretching your right leg keeping the sheep's knuckle joint inside or behind your right knee and turning your right heel into the sheep.

The belly is completed with the final blow to the flank, dropping the heel of the handpiece so as to run across the flank.

Remember the left hand is working close behind the handpiece when shearing the belly; this removes wrinkles and creates a flat shearing surface.



THE CRUTCH

Safety – cover the teats of ewe lambs and hogget's while shearing around the crutch.

Remove the tassels from the top of the right hind leg; entering on the hard part of the leg, as the blow travels, bodyweight is transferred from the left to the right foot, allowing the shearer to step forward with the left foot a few inches.

One blow is placed around the crutch, keeping the bottom tooth on the skin; the blow commences inside the right hind leg and is completed down the inside of the left.

Safety – cover the teats of ewe lambs and hogget's while shearing around the crutch.

As the blow travels, bodyweight is again transferred from right to left feet allowing the shearer to step forward with the right foot.

As the crutch is completed. The brisket remains in front of the shearer's right knee, keeping the sheep in an upright position, with the hind legs outstretched.

LEFT HIND LEG

Using the top teeth of the comb, remove the tassels from the top of the left hind leg, shearing from the hard part of the leg to the toes.



Using the top teeth of the comb, remove the tassels from the top of the left hind leg, shearing from the hard part of the leg to the toes.

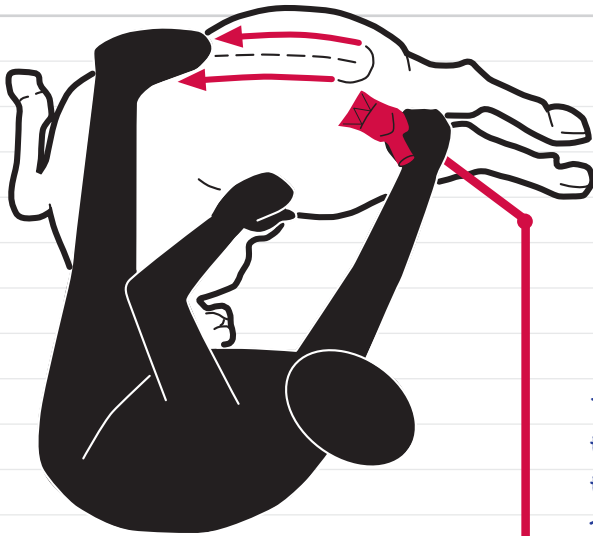
The first blow up the left hind leg commences at the hock, with a full comb width on the flat of the leg and ends at the flank, dropping the heel of the handpiece and easing the skin back with the left hand to avoid cutting skin.

The second blow follows parallel to the first, finishing on the near side of the backbone. Raise the heel of the handpiece as the blow is completed to keep the points of the comb on the skin to avoid second cuts.

As the second blow is placed, the brisket slides behind the shearer's right knee, which rolls the sheep towards the handpiece.

As the remaining blows are placed to complete the hip, the shearer is easing back with the right foot and forward with the left foot, moving the sheep round towards the catching pen gate.

To complete, a short blow is placed below the vulva to clear that area.



THE UNDERMINE

Two blows, one either side of the spine. When placing these, the spine is roughly parallel with the floor.

Two blows, one either side of the spine. When placing these, the spine is roughly parallel with the floor.

Blow one commences with the bottom tooth at the centre of the tail, and the heel of the handpiece down. The blow follows the near side of the spine to the kidneys, and finishes with the heel of the handpiece up.

Blow two commences with the bottom tooth on the right hip, the top tooth on the centre of the tail and the heel of the handpiece down. To reach as the blow enters, walk forward with the left foot and back with the right foot. As the blow is completed, raise the heel of the handpiece and keep the points on the skin to avoid second cuts.

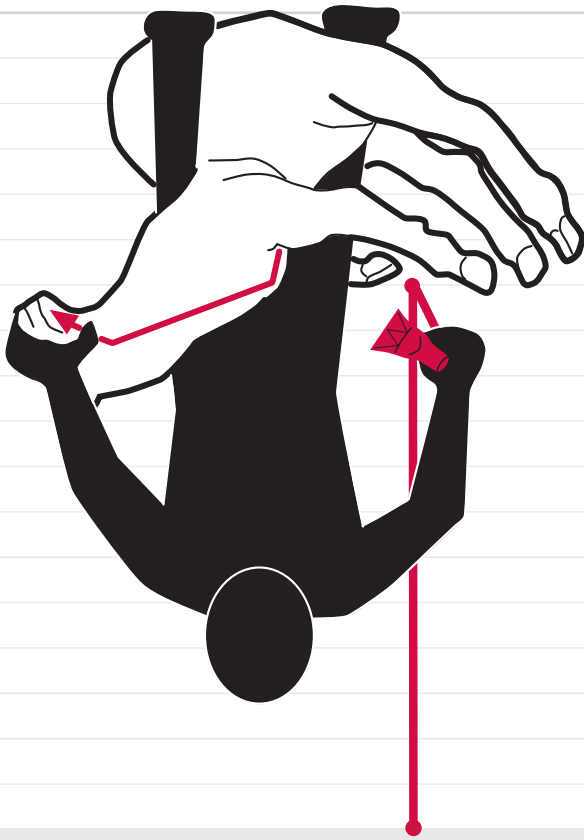
TOP KNOT



Three blows are placed between the eyes and the ears and over the crown of the head.

The sheep's head is positioned above the knees; the left hand gently controls the muzzle.

With the points of the comb on the skin and the heel of the handpiece raised, three blows are placed between the eyes and the ears and over the crown of the head.



THE NECK BLOW 1

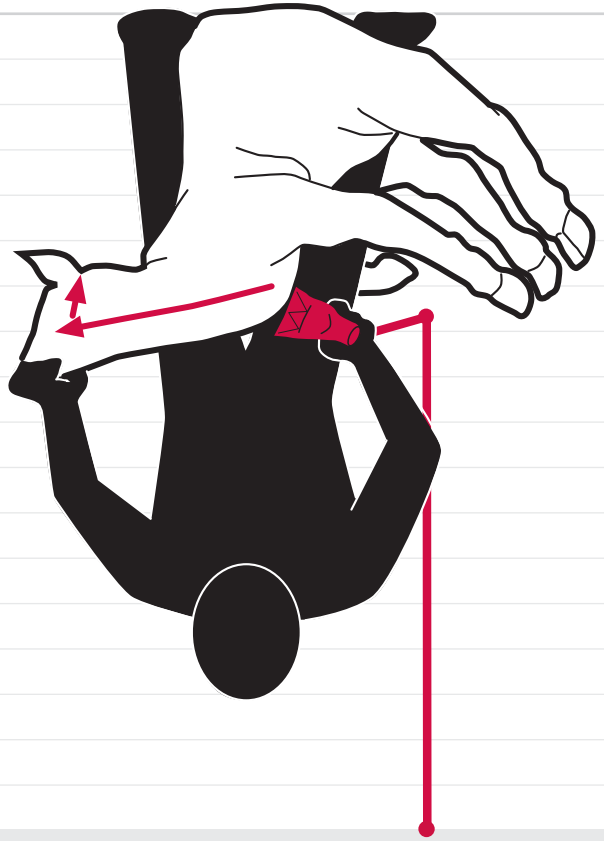
Keep the sheep head down to keep it relaxed.

Stepping through to shear the neck, the left hand reaches between the shearer's legs and grasps the wool at the top of the brisket, the shearer steps forward with the left foot alongside the sheep's left hip and pulling the sheep through. (Keep the sheep head down to keep it relaxed).

Then step forward with the right foot between the sheep's hind legs; the shearer's right knee will be between the sheep's brisket and right front leg. The point of the sheep's shoulder is behind the shearer's left knee. The sheep is controlled solely by the shearer's legs; there is no upper body assistance.

The blow commences on the right hand side of the brisket and is placed up the right hand side of the neck, directed toward the shearer's left knee (to keep the blow high). The left hand takes hold of the head holding it parallel to the floor and rolls it toward the shearer. This allows the blow to be completed under the sheep's chin. The wool is broken out down and away from the sheep.

**THE NECK
BLOW 1
COMPLETED
& BLOW 2**

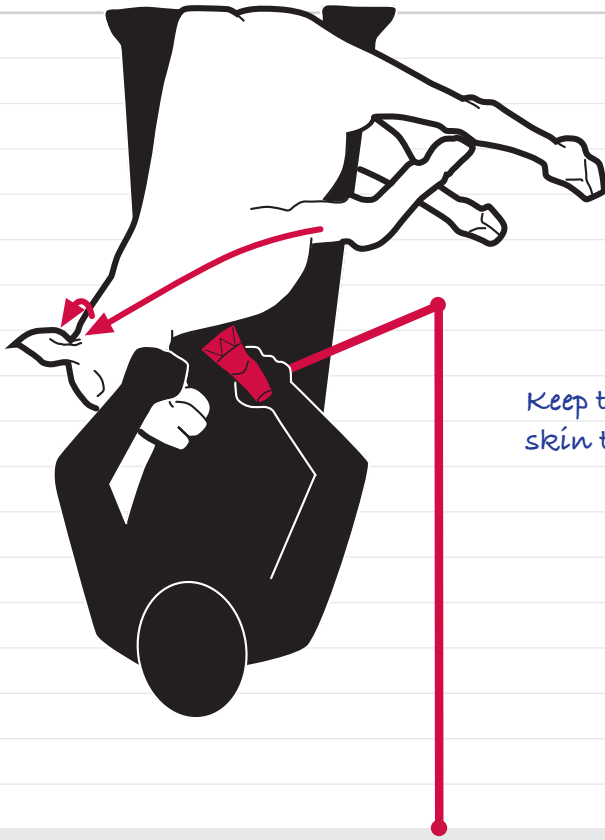


Keep the points on the skin to avoid lug marking sheep.

Holding the sheep's head on the shearers left thigh the left cheek is shorn, to complete the blow. Keep the points on the skin to avoid lug marking sheep.

Keeping the sheep's head down, the second blow travels from the left side of the brisket and finishes below the ear. Keep the bottom tooth on the skin.

THE NECK BLOW 3



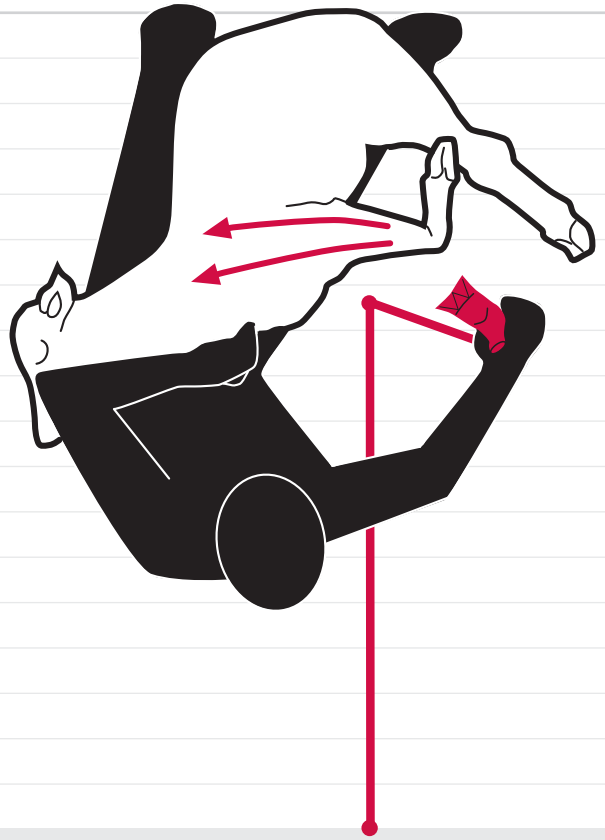
Keep the bottom tooth on the skin to avoid second cuts.

Move back slightly with the right foot keeping your knee beside the brisket. Step out slightly with your left foot and keep the left leg straight, this flattens the sheep's shoulder.

The third blow commences at the top of the left front leg and is completed with the bottom tooth between the sheep's ears. Keep the bottom tooth on the skin to avoid second cuts.

Keeping the sheep's head across the shearer's thigh and holding the sheep's left ear a short blow is placed around below the ears from ear to ear.

THE LEFT SHOULDER



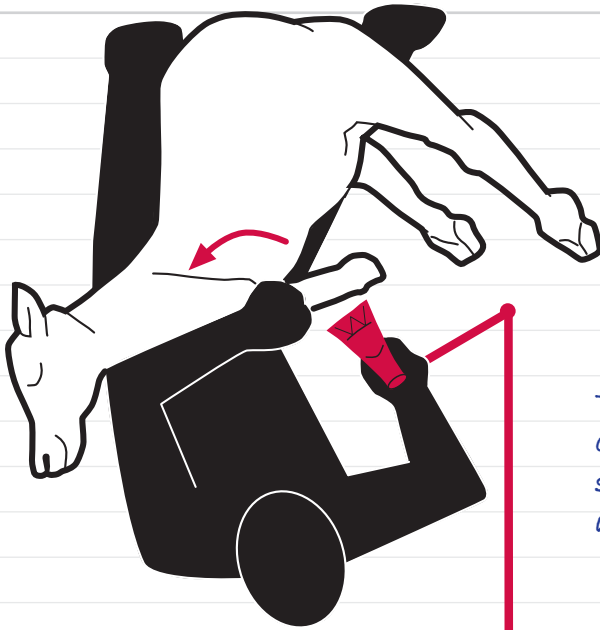
The first blow starts on the left front leg and is completed in line with the last neck blow.

The first blow starts on the left front leg and is completed in line with the last neck blow.

As the second blow commences, the shearers left hand takes hold of the sheep's left front leg pulling it gently toward his right knee and twisting clockwise to tighten loose skin. The blow is completed in line with the first blow.

As each blow is being placed, the shearer moves back with the right foot pulling the sheep round ready for the long blows, keeping the right knee close to the sheep at all times and tucking in the left toe's toward the sheep's backbone with every movement.

THE LEFT FRONT LEG



The blow is an arc avoiding cutting skin behind the shoulder as shearing is against the wrinkles.

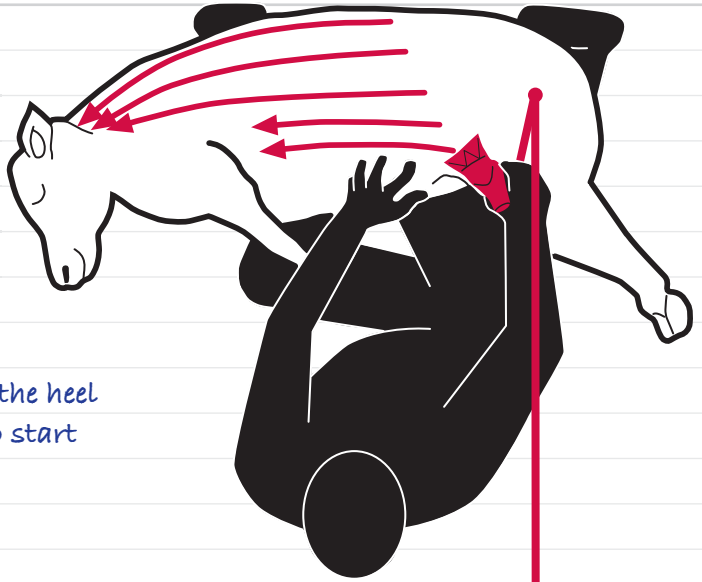
The final blow is placed behind the left shoulder to complete the left front leg. The blow is an arc avoiding cutting skin behind the shoulder as shearing is against the wrinkles.

The right foot continues moving back dragging the sheep, the left toe of the shearer is placed under the sheep's right shoulder. The sheep is being lowered as the shoulder blows are being placed.

With the shoulder completed, the sheep is lying off the spine toward the shearer, with the shearer's left foot under its shoulder and the shearer's right foot between its back legs. The sheep's front legs are pointing toward its hind legs.

The shearer is facing toward the catching pen or the shearing trailer.

THE FLANK & LONG BLOWS



Important to drop the heel of the handpiece to start with a full comb.

Important to drop the heel of the handpiece to start with a full comb.

Following the first two short blows, the shearers left leg is straightened, this rolls the sheep toward the shearer allowing the shearer to see access for the third blow.

Depending on the size of the sheep, there may be two or three short blows.

Following the first long blow all the shearers bodyweight is on the left leg, this allows the shearer to step over with the right foot placing it 10 - 12cm away from the sheep in

front of the loin. The left hand is controlling the head, keeping the ears forward to prevent lug marking and a straight arm to keep the sheep's head down.

The shearer's bodyweight transfers from right to left foot as each blow is placed. With the bodyweight on the right foot, the shearer is able to ease back with the left foot, rolling the sheep on the shearers left foot and allowing sight of access for the subsequent blow.



LONG BLOWS TO & OVER THE SPINE

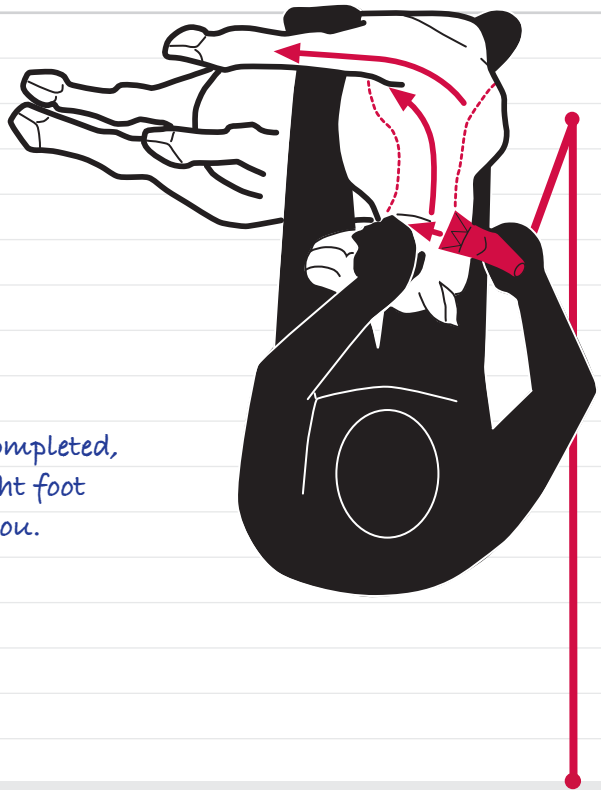
Keep the bottom tooth on the skin with all long blows to avoid second cuts.

Shear to the backbone on the near side of the sheep, narrowing the blow with the smaller shouldered sheep prevents second cuts.

At least one long blow should be placed over the far side of the spine. Start with a full comb and narrow as the blow runs from shoulder to neck.

Keep the bottom tooth on the skin with all long blows to avoid second cuts.

RIGHT CHEEK & SHOULDER



As the last long blow is completed, walk forward with the right foot sweeping the fleece with you.

As the last long blow is completed, walk forward with the right foot sweeping the fleece with you. The foot is placed 3 - 4cm from the sheep behind the sheep's shoulder. The shearers left heel is dragged back to raise the sheep's front feet off the ground.

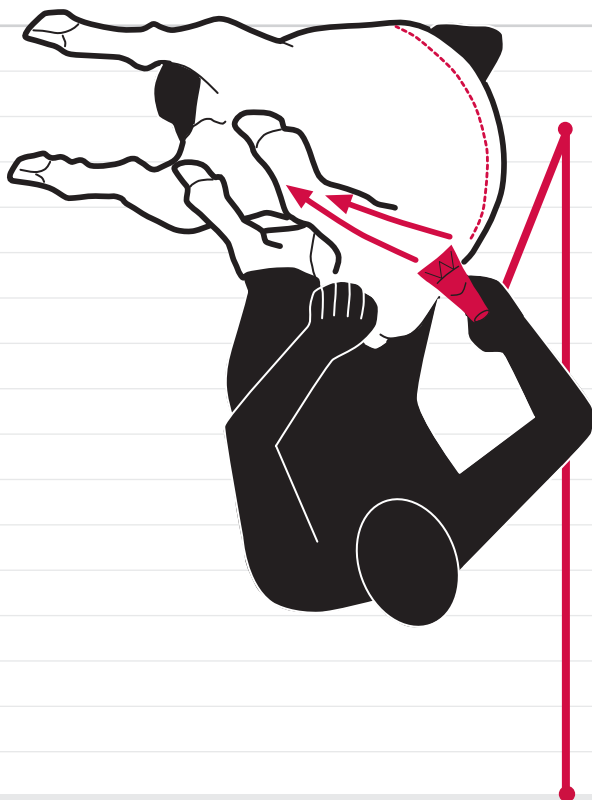
Pressing down on the sheep's head with the left hand, the head is controlled and the eye and ear are protected as the blow enters the right cheek is shorn by presenting a flat surface.

The neck is cleared to the top of the shoulder blade, dropping the heel of the handpiece and rolling through to the top of the brisket.

As the blow is delivered the right front leg of the sheep is released, the shearer's left hand takes the sheep's head under the jaw and with the thumb between the eye and ear, the head is placed between the shearers legs above his knees, with the muzzle vertical.

The weight of the sheep is on the shearer's upper body.

The next blow commences below the shoulder and is completed by clearing the top of the right front leg.



THE RIGHT FRONT LEG

Start with a full width blow and run narrower as you run out the leg.

As the previous blow is completed, the shearer steps back with the right foot keeping it into the sheep and back over the sheep's hind legs with the left foot, tucking the toes so they are visible under the sheep's left hind leg.

Pressing down on the shoulder with the left hand straightens out the leg.

Start with a full width blow and run narrower as you run out the leg.

Keep the skin tightened with your left hand, for the blow to clear of the underside of the leg.

THE LAST SIDE

As each blow starts ensure the comb is full.



The first blow enters below the right front leg and is placed vertically to the right hind leg.

All blows follow the same line, with the second or third blow running straight out down the right hind leg.

As the blows are placed, the shearer eases back with each foot keeping the legs straight and heels together.

Subsequent blows clear the hip and the face of the right hind leg. As each blow starts ensure the comb is full.



FINISHING THE RIGHT HIND LEG

*Watch the hamstring
with small sheep.*

The sheep's head is held above the shearer's knees as the feet ease back, left and then right, 2cm at a time.

Controlling the right hind leg with the left hand, the shearer completes the leg by dropping the heel of the handpiece on entry and rolling the wrist as each blow clears behind the gigot. Watch the hamstring with small sheep.

The final blow will be placed on the near side of the tail.

Place the shorn sheep down the port hole or if being released at ground level make sure it rises onto four feet.

6 KEY POINTS OF GOOD SHEARING

1. CONTROL OF THE SHEEP

Get right down over the sheep and 'become part of it'

2. POSITIVE HAND

Know exactly where the handpiece has to go; don't poke - be positive with all blows.

3. GOOD WRIST

Be flexible and supple to ensure comb points stay on the skin.

4. RETURN ACTION

Must be fast, close to the sheep and taken no further back than the start of the next blow; wasted centimetres are wasted effort.

5. LEFT HAND

Use it confidently to prepare the way for the handpiece.

6. RHYTHM AND TIMING

Develop a rhythm so that shearing of each section runs smoothly into the next.

KEY POINTS TO ELIMINATE SECOND CUTS

- Keep the bottom tooth on the skin.
- Start and finish each blow on the skin.
- Shear in position.
- Shear to a pattern.



British Wool Marketing Training offer a range of shearing courses including Beginner, Refresher & Advanced arranged throughout the UK.

For more information, to register your interest, or reserve your place on any of the courses for course information or to book online:

Web britishwool.org.uk

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