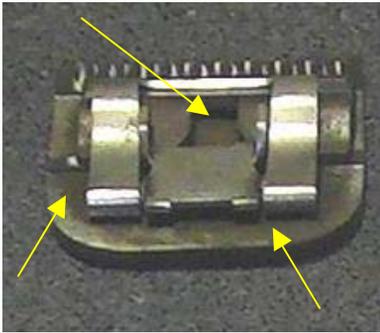


Rusty Clipper Blades

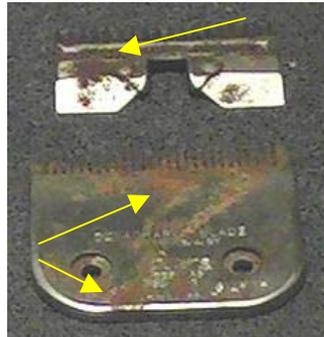
Northern Tails Sharpening – PO Box 588- Grayling, MI 49738 (989-370-1084)

When blades get rusty it doesn't mean they are no good anymore, it just means they need cleaned and cared for a little better. Rust comes from the oxidation of metals using water as a catalyst. The humidity of a grooming shop can cause this, moisture from aerosols that isn't cleaned off the blade, and storing a blade improperly by just leaving it lay out.

There are two kinds of rust on a clipper blade: Surface and Imbedded. Surface rust is just what it sounds like, rust that lays on the surface of the metal. The color of this rust is usually brown. It is easily cleaned with a mild soap or solvent and wiped away with a rag or steel wool. Imbedded rust is the kind that destroys the surface of the metal and imbeds itself in the subsurface of the metal and causes "pits". The color of this rust is bright orange



Surface Rust



Imbedded Rust

Cleaning

To clean rusty blades is easy but requires some work on your part. Don't be afraid to try this because you have nothing to loose.

Go to the hardware store and get a few different grades of drywall sanding sponges. Get the "Fine" and "Medium" grade sponge, these grades work perfect for sanding off rust from clipper blades. If the Fine and Medium grade doesn't get the rust off you may have to upgrade to "Course" grade

Sanding a clipper blade with a sanding sponge does leave very small buffing marks on the metal of the blade, this is OK. The metal on most silver blades is the same all the way through, so sanding it with a sanding sponge is not going to start a new place for rust to begin. Rust starts on a blade that isn't used or stored properly. If you use a blade all the time it doesn't rust does it?

If the spring, socket, or screws are all full of rust, its better to just throw them away and get new ones. Save the blade guide



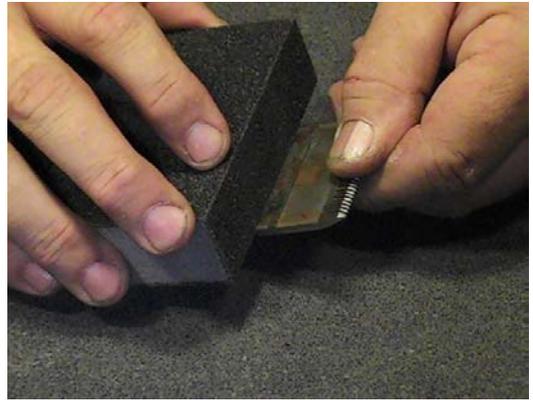
Fine to Medium Drywall Sanding Sponge



Blade taken apart and ready for cleaning. This blade is full of surface rust.

Get your sanding sponge and a part of the blade and just start sanding the rusty spots. You may have to rub hard because on "Imbedded" rust it will go below the surface of the blade a little and you want to get as much of this off the metal as you can. "Surface" rust will come off real easy with the "Fine" grade sanding sponge.

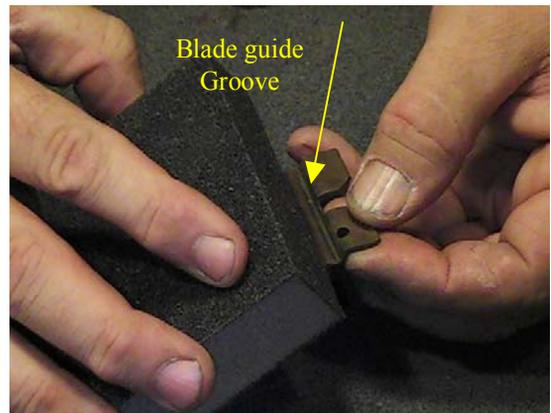
The Comb of the blade is the easiest because it is mostly flat on both sides. Keep sanding until the surface rust is gone, or the imbedded rust turns to nothing but black scars on the surface. Don't forget the sides all the way around and the screw holes.



Sanding the Comb

The Cutter of the blade is the most difficult to sand because it has several areas that are tricky to sand because of the angles. Use every corner of the sanding sponge to get above the teeth, the groove for the blade guide, and the area behind the groove.

The groove for the blade guide must be shiny and look as good as new metal. If there is any rust in this groove your blades will squeak or cut funny because the cutter will hesitate on its way back and forth..



Sanding the Cutter

Getting the rust from between the teeth is also difficult but it can be done.

Take a hard bristle brush with bristles small enough to get between the teeth and PULL the brush through the teeth towards the ends of the teeth as shown. This will get a lot of the rust but not all. Use an old tooth brush or a detail brush from the auto parts store.

Note the black scars left behind after sanding off the "imbedded" rust from this blade? With oil and use this blade may never rust again.



Brushing the rust from between the blade teeth on both cutter and comb.

After sanding the comb and cutter of your blade on both sides until only the "black scars" are left where the heavy rust was, its time to wash it now.

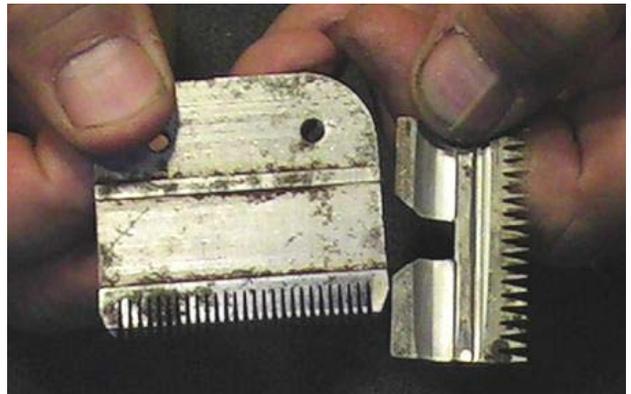
Get a small container of your favorite blade dip, and a small brush of some kind, begin brushing the entire blade while submerged in the dip. Scrub everywhere and really get between the teeth good. Dry with a rag.



Cleaning the blade in blade dip with brush

When the blade parts are cleaned to your satisfaction, its time to send them to the sharpener.

Note the scars on the cutting surfaces where the rust was? The sharpener will hopefully clean these places off to give that normal mirror-like finish blades have after they been sharpened. If they can't be removed this means there will be a "pit" in the metal.

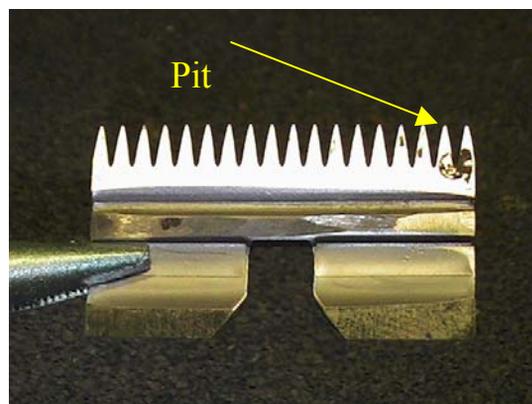


Blade is now ready for the sharpener

If a "pit" in the cutting surface remains after sharpening, you don't have to throw the blade away. Pits like this only weaken the metal slightly, so there is plenty of cutting ability left.

It's your call on this, you can assemble the blade and use it until these cutter teeth fail from metal fatigue and starts to drag on that end of the blade. Blades like this have been used for years without any noticeable difference in the cutting. Or, you can have the sharpener replace the cutter all together at a small charge.

Having a good blade care program of cleaning and oiling will prevent future rusting of this blade.



After sharpening, a small pit in the cutting surface remains. This still can be a usable blade.