

DE-razor and Razorpit®?

For quite a while ago I received an email from proshave.dk, a Danish vendor of shaving equipment, with the subject: "Fancy testing a Razorpit?"

A lot of thoughts went through my mind, of which most probably were fit for a horror movie. As I had only heard of Razorpit in connection with cartridge razors, I think it was understandable that I thought I was asked to test the Razorpit in connection with a cartridge razor, and the shave snob in me only had one resounding answer: "No thanks!"

I was however somewhat surprised when I realised that the question actually was a bit different, it actually was if it was possible to use a Razorpit in connection with a DE razor? After short consideration, I thought it sounded as a quite interesting question and so I accepted the "challenge" and agreed to test the Razorpit with a DE-razor.

It was with some curiosity, I received the Razorpit, got it unpacked, examined and read the instructions – the latter is usually only something I do, if all else fails, but in this case I felt that it was the appropriate thing to do.

There is not much to it; a rubber plate that has to have some foam/lather applied to it, after which the (cartridge) razor is pushed across the plate 4 times, rinsed and put in place.

I must be honest and admit that I have seen the Razorpit more as a promotional stunt rather than something that actually works as described. It is developed for the cartridge razor, but that it should be possible to get "up to 150 shaves" with the same blade sounds too good to be true, and "up to" can mean anything from 10 to 150, and if you only get ten? Well, in that case the investment does not correlate to the outcome in my opinion.

To minimize the amount of variables I chose to use the same razor and the same brand of blades throughout the experiment.

Razor

The razor I chose to use for the experiment was a Gillette Fat Handled Tech (1938-1942) and I selected it for two reasons:

- 1) It is my absolute favourite razor, and if I were to be in company with the same razor for a long time, it had to be good and one I would not get tired of.
- 2) It is a mild razor that gives a very good feedback, and it was important in an experiment like this.

Blade

I chose to use the Derby Extra blade for the experiment, because it is an easily accessible, popular and good all-round blade.

All blades used in the experiment came from the same package, again to make any variations as small as possible.

Experiment

So finally, with some biased scepticism, I went along with the test, and to do it as comparable and fair as possible, I started with a control. The control consisted of a fresh Derby Extra blade, which I used until it felt worn. The blade was not removed from the razor after the shave; the razor was simply rinsed under the hot tap and then put in its place.

All shaves throughout the experiment has been four passes; WTG, WTG, XTG and ATG.

With my control, I achieved 36 shaves before the blade was worn. It was surprisingly many I had expected somewhere between five and ten, but at least I had a starting point.

After the control shave a new blade was put in the razor and the shaving process repeated, with the only difference that the razors head after the shave was pushed over the lathered up Razorpit four times for each side, rinsed under the hot tap and set into its place.

I had to practice a little, so the blades edges actually came into contact with the rubber surface, the safety bar and rounding of the head can make it a little difficult to obtain a good contact, the Razorpit is designed for a cartridge razor, which is flat.

I have found it difficult to establish a success criterion for something I do not know what I can expect from, but in my view, it would be if I could achieve an improvement of at least 25% with the Razorpit than without it. Since I got 36 shaves in my control, my goal would be to reach 45 in order to be able to say that there was an improvement.

Up to around 30 shaves, the feeling was normal, even though I could feel that the blade wasn't entirely new any longer. When I reached around 40 shaves, it seemed as if the blade began to deteriorate, and I just waited for it to go off soon, but around the 45th – 46th to my surprise I got a completely comfortable BBS.

This made me analyze the past few shaves, and I concluded that the lather in the previous shaves had not been "on the money", which had the effect that the blade was worn. For the next shaves, I was very aware that the lather was as perfect as possible, and it resulted in close, comfortable and problem free shaves.

When I reached around the 60 shaves, I could not quite believe it, I almost thought it was a lie, but as I had plotted all the shaves in a spreadsheet from the start of the challenge there was nothing wrong, the figures spoke for themselves.

When I reached about 80 shaves, I could clearly feel that the blade wasn't super sharp anymore; it didn't shave quite as close as earlier, but it was still by no means uncomfortable, and I discovered that by using "The Gillette Glide" technique, I could achieve a minimum of a DFS each time. In addition, when I used a soap/cream with a good glide and got a perfect lather a BBS was still just achievable (including touch-ups).

When I reached around the 90-92 shaves, I would probably have scrapped the blade under normal circumstances because it felt quite tired. It required quite some touch-up work to get a close shave, and I could definitely feel the blade was worn, but as I was so close to the 100 mark I thought it could be fun to try and reach that number – without the shaves becoming uncomfortable in any way, it just took some more work.

After 100 shaves, the blade finally gave up and I must say that it almost deserves to be put on display, because 100 shaves with the same blade is rather impressive.

I ended the experiment with yet another control shave, where the razor this time was rinsed in cold water after use. In this control shave, I got 23 shaves out of the blade.

Conclusion

The question was; "Does Razorpit work on a DE razor?"

The short answer is; "Yes."

There is really nothing more to say.

The test clearly shows that the life span on a blade can be improved considerably – I got an improvement of 64 and 77 more shaves or expressed in percent; an improvement of 178 % and 334 %.

The Test results must of course be taken with the reservation that another person most likely will come to a different result when it comes to the number of shaves. Some will probably get fewer shaves and some perhaps more than I have achieved, but I am totally convinced that regardless of who tries the Razorpit, they will be able to extend the life of a DE-blade compared to normal use.

As to if the Razorpit is worth the investment (money + time), I will leave for the individual to assess.

I have read a theory that says that the blade will last longer in a mild razor than in an aggressive one.

I have never really been wondering whether this could be true, but with this experiment behind me, it could be fun to choose an aggressive razor (open comb) and repeat the experiment with that.

Since the blade is more exposed in an open razor, it should be a little more easy to use on the Razorpit, and if nothing else it should be correspondingly obvious if the theory holds water – but for now I think I will give my straights a little love, they have been neglected for quite some time ;o)

Besides the Razorpit, I had an interesting discovery as the control shaves quite clearly shows that a blade rinsed in hot water has a longer life span than a blade rinsed in cold water.

Photos of the blades supports this statement as it is obvious that the build-up of scum happens faster on the blade rinsed in cold water.

And when I look at the blade that made it through 100 shaves, I can almost be surprised it could shave at all in the end.