

ness of the hone and the number of strokes taken, the razor edge may be keen, blunt, coarse, or rough. Different sensations are felt when the razor is passed lightly across the thumbnail as follows:

- A perfect or keen edge has fine teeth and tends to dig into the nail with a smooth, steady grip.
 - A blunt or dull razor edge passes over the nail smoothly, without any cutting power.
 - A coarse razor edge digs into the nail with a jerky feeling.
 - A rough (coarse) or over-honed edge has large teeth that stick to the nail and produce a harsh, grating sound.
 - A nick in the razor produces the feeling of a slight gap or unevenness when drawn across the nail.
9. To correct an over-honed edge, draw the razor backward in a diagonal line across the hone, using the same movement and pressure as in regular honing. One or two strokes each way will usually remove the rough edge. This is called *back honing*. The razor is then honed again, being careful to prevent overhoning.
 10. Always clean and disinfect the hone and razor before using.

STROPPING THE RAZOR

Stropping a razor is a fine art that is developed through repeated practice. Its aim is to smooth and shape the razor into a keen cutting implement. A razor should never be used for shaving without first being stropped. Once the razor has been honed, it should not need stropping on the canvas side of the strop. Instead, the honed razor is stropped directly over the leather surface of the strop. The time to use the canvas strop is when the razor develops a smooth edge from continued use during a service and requires the mild honing effect of the canvas.

The strop is usually attached to the arm of the barber chair by a closed clip that keeps it from accidentally coming off during the stropping process. Under the guidance of your instructor, practice the following stropping procedures to master the technique.

1. Hold the end of the strop firmly in the left hand so it cannot sag. Hold it on a slight diagonal from the chair and as high as is comfortable. Grasp the razor firmly in the right hand so that the index finger is on the shank, the subsequent fingers are on the handle, and the thumb rests lightly on both parts. The index finger of the right hand should rest at the edge of the strop (Figure 6-47).
2. Practice turning the razor. Place the razor on the strop and turn it with the index finger and thumb. Practice the turning action until it is mastered.
3. *First stroke:* Start the stroke at the top edge of the strop closest to the hand. Using a long, diagonal stroke with even pressure from the heel to the point, draw the razor perfectly flat, with back leading, straight over the surface. Bear down just heavily enough to feel the razor draw. Do not worry about speed, as this will occur with practice (Figure 6-48).
4. *Second stroke:* When the first stroke is completed, turn the razor on the back of the blade by rolling it between the fingers without turning



Figure 6-46 Testing a honed razor.



Position the index finger along the top of the shank to ensure even pressure against the blade while honing.



Stropping may also be performed from the chair to the hand. Be guided by your state barber board rules and instructor.



Figure 6-47 Placement of razor and hand on strop.