

Shearing an Angora  
From classactangoras.com

Keep in mind, my way is not the ONLY way. This is just how it works out best for me and doing this I can shear an English angora in about 20 minutes from start to finish, while keeping my wool neat and separating the prime cuts from the seconds.

FIRST groom and blow out the bunny so the wool is in as neat as condition as possible.

I start off with the rabbit in my lap and a freshly sharpened pair of fiskars scissors with the sof-touch handles and spring action. I use these scissors as a seamstress and love them because they are gentle on my hands and I can buy an easy to use sharpener for them so they are always perfectly sharp.

My first cut will be right down the center of the back. I part the wool and the scissor blades are slipped in completely flat against the bunny's back.

I hold the ends of the wool but it is VERY IMPORTANT to NOT pull up on the wool. Doing so will pull bunny's skin underneath the blades of the scissors. I then make the first cut in a smooth motion closing the scissors all the way to the tip. Maintaining hold of the top of the wool with my left hand, I put the scissors down and grasp the cut ends of the wool and peel it loose from the fleece to keep the fibers as straight as possible. When the first cut of



fibers is pulled away from the fleece I hold it by the tips (not the cut ends) and shake it gently a couple of times to make sure there are no second cuts left in what I have just removed. I then lay this clump of fiber neatly in a plastic shoebox so that I can easily see the color and to keep the wool from getting compressed or felted.



My next cut will be right next to the first down the back- going from tail to head- exactly what I can get in one scissor closing without moving the scissors after they are placed. Remember maintain control of the wool you are cutting, but do not pull up on it until after the cut has been made. You will get some second cuts doing this, but they are easily shaken off as the wool is removed. I work from center spine of the rabbit outward toward my knees until the length or quality of the wool changes. The longest, nicest or "Prime wool" is taken off with care before I start in on anything else.

This will leave a "skirt" of wool around the rabbit's lower sides and belly and the neck area will not be touched until the prime wool is off and boxed. When one side is done turn the rabbit so that you are not trying to work cramped up against your body.

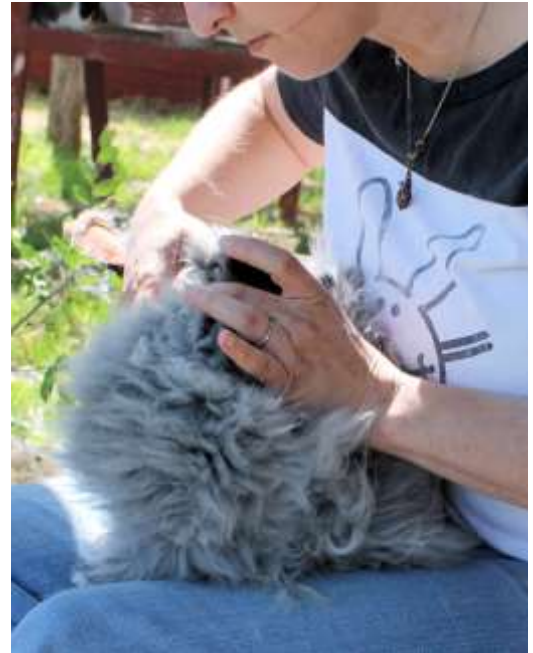


Lower side wool is taken off next. This can often be nice wool, but usually not quite as long or good quality as the "saddle" of wool that give you your prime fleece. It is boxed or bagged separately for weighing and felting. Again, always slide the scissors in flat against the rabbit and do NOT pull up on the wool. Also do not try to "rotate" around an angle on the rabbit- again this is where the rabbit may get cut. IF the rabbit does get cut, it is not the end of the world. They actually heal extremely fast- and you just need to watch it to make sure they do not get any insect invaders in their wounds.

Shearing the neck takes some firm control to get the job quickly done. I back the rabbit up against me with nose facing outward and grasp their head with my thumb on the back of their crown/skull and my finger on the bottom of the jaw and tilt their head backward maintaining full control the whole time I am working under the neck area.

In this area you will need to take smaller scissor strokes to keep your scissors flat against the bunny's skin. Do not turn or rotate the scissors mid-cut or pull up on the wool.

When YOU are not nervous, the rabbit will be calmer. If you do happen to accidentally cut the bunny try not to shriek, shake or panic. They are a lot like little kids, if momma stays calm when they have an owie- baby is a lot calmer as well. Remember because of the curve of the neck this will not be full scissor length cuts.





Shearing the belly is a little scarier for the rabbit. The important thing before you start cutting is that they feel safe and comfortable so that they don't try to turn or struggle while you have scissors operating around the ever important tender areas like the nipples and scrotum. I do not even try to get as close as I do on the back, leaving about a quarter inch of wool on the body my first pass, and trimming up as I can see better where everything is. One way to make bunny feel safer and less flight prone is to capture their ears between your knees after they have gently been rolled over onto their back. Always do this slowly and kindly so they are not stressed or frightened. The other hold I sometimes use is to tuck bunny on its back with its head held between my ribcage and elbow.



When I shear the belly I work from side to side instead of tail to head like I do on the prime wool. Belly wool is generally short and is fine for felting if it is clean, if it is dirty it makes nice mulch for your garden or potted plants to hold water in.

