

Amanda's Notes on Washing Fleece

1. Give the fleece a cold soak first. If you are doing it in small lots, fill a large bucket with cold water, gather up a large armful of fleece (about 1lb) and put it in the bucket and press it down under the water. Leave to soak for 30-60 minutes. If the fleece is very dirty you can repeat this stage a second time.
2. Next fill another bucket, or the basin, with very hot water (uncomfortable to keep your hands in), and a generous squirt of washing-up liquid. Put the wool into the water gently, and push it under the surface with as little agitation as possible. This time leave to soak until the water cools to a comfortable temperature. If you leave it too long the fats and oils that have melted with the heat will set back on to the wool.
3. Now gently tip off the water, or hold the wool back and pull the plug out. Refill the sink or bucket with water of the same temperature as that which you just drained off, making sure not to let it run over the wool.
4. Very carefully squeeze the wool under the surface, and change the water a couple of times until it is fairly clear, making sure that each time the temperature of the water is only slightly cooler than the previous rinse.
5. Lift the wet wool into a mesh bag and either hang it out to drip dry, or run it through the spin cycle of a washing machine.
6. Spread the damp wool out in a thin layer to finish drying.

If you remember the two golden rules: -

- i) Don't agitate the wool whilst it is wet.
- ii) Never shock it by suddenly changing the temperature of the water from hot to cold or vice-versa.

You should always end up with clean un-felted fibres.

N.B. It is possible to do a whole fleece, but for this you will need to take over the bathroom, and have plenty of hot water, to half fill the bath several times.