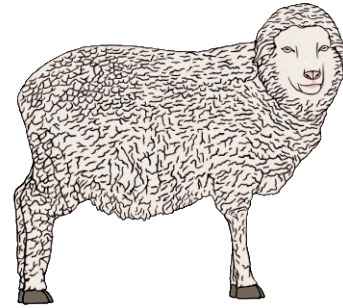


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How a Ball of Wool is Made



*Where does wool
come from?*

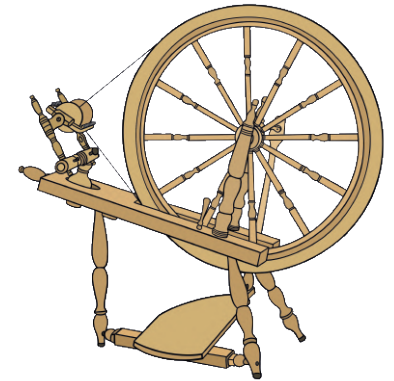
Useful resources

National Wool Museum (Wales), Dre-fach Felindre, near
Newcastle Emlyn, Llandysul, Carmarthenshire SA44 5UP
Free entry www.museum.wales/wool

Jillian Eve on YouTube. More than fifty high-quality videos, mostly
spinning related, from an excellent tutor www.youtube.com/jillianeve

Hand Spinning on Wikipedia
www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hand_spinning

Catalogue of Spinning wheels made in England, Ireland,
Scotland and Wales during the 20th century
www.ukspinningwheels.info

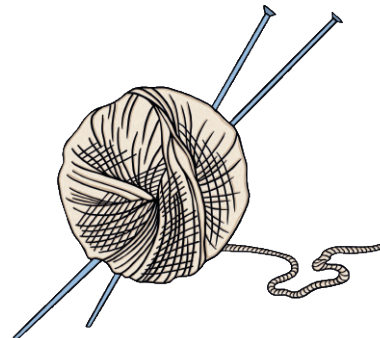


*How does a spinning
wheel work?*

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B.G., November, 2022

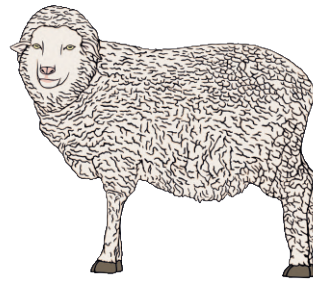
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www.vinitaart.com



*What can wool
be used for?*

Where wool comes from

Most wool comes from sheep, although it does come from other animals too, including Alpacas, Angora Goats and Angora Rabbits. Sheep grow the fluffy wool to keep them warm and dry. When the wool has grown too long, the sheep will start to get too warm, especially during the Summer,

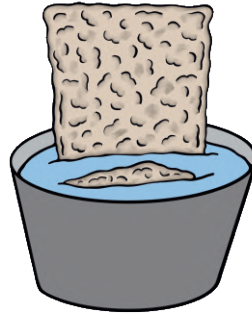


and may even become quite poorly, and so they need to have the wool cut off. Cutting the wool off a sheep is called '*shearing*', and is normally done once a year in the Summer. This doesn't hurt the sheep at all, and the wool will soon start to grow back again to keep the sheep nice and warm throughout the Winter months. We call the wool that has been sheared off a sheep, '*fleece*'.

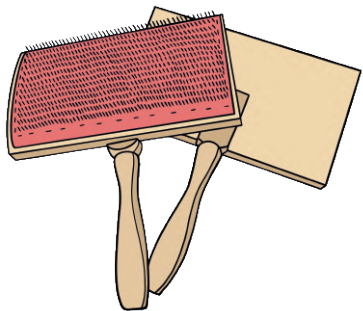


Getting the wool ready

Some of the fleece that has been sheared is used by people that like to make things with it, for example, people that use spinning wheels to make balls of wool. Normally, before fleece can be used with a spinning wheel, it will need to be cleaned, washed, and dried, and all of this has to be done very carefully to avoid damaging it. The



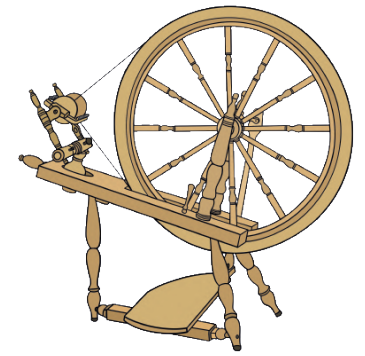
fleece is normally then either '*carded*' or '*combed*' by using special tools which helps to remove some of the tiny bits of dirt, grass, and beetles, etc., and makes all the bits of the fleece nice and straight and easy to work with on a spinning wheel.



Images shown across pages: A Sheep, Shearing a Sheep, Washing a Fleece, Hand Carders, a Spinning Wheel, Knitting.

The spinning wheel

Spinning wheels, like the one shown in the picture, with a wheel that is made to spin 'round and 'round by pressing on the foot treadle underneath, have been around for about five hundred years, and thousands of new ones are still being made each year for people to use. The '*spinner*' (the name given to someone that uses a spinning wheel) sits at the spinning wheel and feeds fleece into it. The spinning wheel then twists the fleece quite tightly into a long strand which is then wrapped around something called a '*bobbin*'. It is normally at this point that we start to call the long strand of fleece that's on the bobbin, '*wool*'. Sometimes, the spinner will want to make the wool thicker and stronger, and one way to do this is to fill several more bobbins up with a long strand of wool as before, and then use the spinning wheel to twist each of the strands together. This is called '*plying*', and if two strands are twisted together, we call this '*two-ply*' wool, and if three strands are twisted together, we call this '*three-ply*' wool, and so on. If, on the other hand, the spinner decides not to ply the wool, but instead to keep the one strand as it is, then we call this one strand a '*single*'. Normally, the single or plied wool is then unwound from the bobbin and wound either onto something called a '*ball winder*', where it ends up looking like a finished ball of wool (sometimes called a '*cake*' of wool), or it is wound, often by hand, into the shape of something called a '*skein*'.



Wearing the wool

The finished ball or skein of wool can now either be knitted, crocheted or woven, etc. into a range of different items including clothing, such as jumpers, gloves, scarves, hats, socks, etc., blankets, and even carpets! So, next time that you slip on that pair of woollen gloves, take a moment to think about all of the work that has gone into making the wool that is now wrapped snugly around your hands keeping them warm!

