

Cleaning a carder

1. Large drum:

One needs a brush whose teeth are long and stiff enough to get down into the teeth of the carding cloth to remove all the fiber.

All Strauch drum carders come with a doffer/cleaner brush properly designed to completely remove fiber from the large drum. The length of the pins of the doffer is 1/2" long while the pins used on the large drum are 3/8" long. Hence, the doffer's pins are meant to get down past the teeth of the carding cloth and onto the rubber backing to remove all the fiber.

The trick is not to be "delicate" when using the doffer to clean the drum. Use enough force to get the teeth of the doffer down in between the pins of the large drum's carding cloth. Use the same force as you would in currying a horse or dog.

Use the center portion of the Doffer brush to contact the curve of the large drum. Starting at the seam, swipe the Doffer brush down the drum in the same direction as the teeth on the drum. Continue across the width of the drum. Slowly rotate the drum backwards (counterclockwise) as you use the brush to clean the entire drum of fiber.

Always brush around the circumference of the drum. DO NOT, under any circumstances, brush side to side across the drum. Doing so WILL damage the teeth on both the drum and the Doffer/Cleaner Brush.

Here's a time saving suggestion:

Because of the fineness of the carding cloth, there will always be fiber left on the drum after you pull off your batt.

The amount of fiber left is usually the same quantity. So if you're only putting on a small amount, say one-tenth of an ounce, percentage wise, a lot of it will remain on the drum. If you fill the drum with one ounce of fiber, the same amount stays on but the percentage of fiber coming off will be much greater.

Cleaning out this fiber after each batt removal is too time consuming. So, here's what I do: After the first batt is removed, I leave the left-over fiber on the drum. I then card another batt, remove it and card the third batt. Keep doing this until you've made the number of batts your looking for. Now clean off the fiber still on the drum. I don't clean the drum until I am either finished using the carder, or switching to carding a different color or type of fiber.

If you are dealing only with a small amount of fiber and need to get it all off at one time, here's the technique I use. It's illustrated on a 2-min. Video that I make while visiting Esther Rogers at her Jazzturtle studio. The video is entitled "Making rolags by locking the brush attachment" but as you watch it you'll see how she uses the doffer brush (it's the brush that came with your carder and used to clean off the large drum) to remove all the fiber on the drum while pulling off the batt.

Here's the YouTube link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Vm7x7DIsoI>

2. Small infeed drum:

The unique "Slicker-Licker" carding cloth on the small drum is designed not to hold onto the fiber. This unique cloth will, however, tend to grab shorts, second cuts and neps that you really don't want in your batt. Therefore, all Strauch drum carders also come with a little brush that's used to remove this scrap from the infeed drum. You can also use the doffer/cleaner brush to remove fiber that is tightly stuck in-between the blades of the drum.

3. Drive mechanism:

Also remember, that with proper use of any drum carder there should not be any fiber dropping onto the drum shafts or drive mechanism. The trick is to keep the fiber in about $\frac{3}{4}$ " inch in from the ends of the infeed drum. As the fiber is transferred from the infeed drum onto the large take-up drum, it tends to spread out somewhat. If you feed using the full width of the infeed drum, as the fiber goes onto the large and spreads out, fiber will then fall off the ends of drum onto the shafts and drive mechanism.

The best way to remove this fiber is to use tweezers and an old tooth brush. A vacuum cleaner with a thin nozzle works great. Remember, in the case of the Strauch chain drive machines, the chain is designed to "run dry". It is not lubricated, hence fiber will not stick to it.