



Washing Icelandic Fleece

When you wash Icelandic fleece you need to handle it gently. Never agitate or wring it harshly because of its ease of felting. Unless the fleece is very dirty, a gentle wash or two, rinse, and rinse again, is adequate. This will leave in some lanolin, which makes it easier and better for spinning.

This is the way I wash my fleeces:

Pull the fleece into small manageable pieces, take out any unwanted bits, then wash the fleece in small batches. In between each stage I scrunch the wool up in my hands to get rid of as much water as possible.

I use hand hot (as hot as is comfortable) water with a sprinkling of washing soda in the first wash together with a washing liquid that is specifically for wool/silk (I use Adritt wool & silk from Lidl). Press the fleece pieces gently down into the water several times to allow any dirt and grease to float out. Do not agitate the fleece around in the water unless you want felt! If the fleece is particularly dirty then you can leave it to soak in the hot water for a few minutes. Take the fleece out of the water and gently squeeze some of the excess water out of it. Empty the water away, taking care not to let any bits of fleece clog the drain.

Refill the sink/bowl with slightly cooler water than previously, and repeat the above process without the washing soda.

Then rinse the fleece in warm water with nothing added, gently pressing it into the water several times until you feel that the fleece is clean.

Finally, rinse the fleece again in much cooler water with a fabric conditioner added (I use lavender and camomile Lenor). Squeeze out excess water.

Hang the fleece pieces up to drip dry in a warm place. It dries very quickly in warm weather, but in the winter months can take up to a week - depends on your central heating!

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Cae'rddraig Icelandic Sheep

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