The Five Pillars of Shearing are the core underlying principles that you can use to develop an efficient shearing style. These core principles were developed by shearing coaches from around Australia. To become a competent shearer individuals need to focus on the Pillars.

1. GEAR AND CUT
   - Keep handpiece well lubricated and maintained
   - Regularly check plant and equipment
   - Set height of downtube

   Sharpening NOT Grinding:
   - There is no in between; tools are either sharp or blunt!
   - Don’t use dull emery papers
   - Change emery papers regularly
   - Clean disks thoroughly
   - Tighten nuts on discs
   - Find the radius and set the height of the pendulum

2. POSITION
   - Transition between section
   - Feet Position
     - Direction
     - Feet in relation to sheep
   - Timing of footwork
   - Knee pressure / position
   - Position from drag
   - Sheep position
     - Balance
     - Comfort
     - Height
     - Angle
   - Position of shearer/sheep to downtube
   - Sheep dispatch

   Shearer Position (body)
   - Position of shearer to sheep
     - In line (shoulders, hips, knees, feet & head)
     - Weight transfer
     - Height
     - Weight distribution
   - Eye use
   - Handpiece return
   - Never stop thinking

3. FREE HAND
   - Use your freehand to:
     - Apply pressure points
     - Manipulate skin
     - Free wool
     - Position sheep
     - Achieve grips and angles of freehand
     - Placement
     - Timing
     - Roll wool, don’t pull

4. GRIP
   - Grip Points
     - Forward
     - Back
     - Too Tight
     - Loose (release the back of the handpiece)

   Thumb Position
   - High
   - Low
   - Forward
   - Back

   Tips:
   - Point index finger for blows that run away from your body
   - Point thumb for blows that run across your body

5. ENTRY
   - Look for bare surfaces
   - Leading tooth on skin
   - Start blow slightly back from wool line
   - Full comb
   - Flat comb
   - Single tooth entry (where necessary)
   - Angle
   - Look for entry point
   - Finish off the blows
   - Under the tail right side in crutch (alternative for learners)

TAKE HOME MESSAGE
- Once these core principles are clearly understood; the next step is to develop a sequence of steps that will lead to a more proficient method of shearing.
- The Pillars are a diagnostic tool to overcome any problem you may be having with your shearing.

ALWAYS REMEMBER
- Comfortable Sheep - Comfortable Shearer - Keep Your Spine in Line

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