My first knife on the Wicked Edge

Posted by mark76 - 20 Jan 2012 17:18

Yesterday my Wicked Edge arrived. First impressions. The package was much smaller than I thought it would be. Unboxing: tightly packaged in hard plastic, high-tech looking, bright colors. It made my girlfriend think of Apple. “Made in China” on the box. Probably just to annoy Americans. It made me laugh out loud, since I (from Europe) know that “made in the USA” is important for many American knife nuts. I just care for quality.

I had already bought a separate base, a wooden cutting board. The instructions, which I had got by email, said 1-1/4” thick. My base was exactly 1” thick, so I thought I’d be all right. Wrong. 1-1/4” means one and a quarter inch, not one to one and a quarter inch. Which I found out when the screws for securing the WEPS stuck out too far. So I went to the store and bought a heavy and almost two inch thick butcher’s block. (This one: www.ikea.com/nl/nl/catalog/products/40082918/). This fit the screws nicely after I drilled the holes and countersinked them on the bottom of the base.

Today I sharpened my first knife on the WEPS, a cheap kitchen knife. I had sharpened it just before Christmas on my Sharpmaker at 20 degrees. Since then it had been used quite a lot and just for fun I filed it before sharpening. I wanted to reprofile the blade at 18 degrees.I inserted the knife in the WEPS vise, tightened the screws (not too much). slid the 100 grit diamond stones on the rods and started sharpening.

At first I had to get used to the system and limited the movements to up-and-down and circles. I couldn’t see myself doing the Clay-motion. I was quite clumsy and my left hand was even a lot clumsier than my right hand. But hey, that was the reason I never got on with wetstones and got the Wicked Edge.

I had been reading posts on this forum already and knew I had to keep going until a burr formed. That took a while. I felt the edge, did the trick with a cotton ball (drag it up the opposite edge; if a burr has formed, it snags on the edge), but even after 15 minutes on one side: no burr. Luckily I was prepared and I had gotten a jeweller’s loupe, which also appears in one of Clay’s videos. It magnifies 20 times and I could see that I had almost reached the edge. Just not quite yet. After 20 minutes a burr appeared! The cotton ball trick worked quite well, I couldn’t feel the burr with my fingers yet. (Unfortunately the trick works less well at higher grids.)

I did the other side of the knife on 100 grit as well, until I thought a burr appeared on the first side. Then on to the 200 grit stones. I took me a while, though not nearly as long as with the 100 grit stones, and after 10 minutes burrs started appearing. The knife undeniable felt a bit sharper already, although the bevel was quite scratched after the 200 grit stones.

I slid on the 400 grit stones and went on with sharpening. The sound was a lot better (less scratching) than of the 200 grit stones. My initial clumsiness wore off a little bit and I got more comfortable with the stones. I then found out the knife had gotten loose in the vise and I turned the screws a bit tighter. The knifewas quite long and I had to support the somewhat flexible tip with my hand in order to sharpen it. Only then I thought of the knife brace, which is part of the WE system and is intended for exactly this purpose... Unfortunately I had clamped in my knife the wrong way around for using this knife brace.

Then the 600 stones. During sharpening I found out the thumb screws of the sliding rods had loosened, so I tightened them really well. And finally I had my knife sharpened to what should be a factory edge.

Was it? Well, hardly. The knife did cut paper, but only barely. It was half-tearing. I wondered what I had done wrong when I remembered the pencil trick. I marked the entire edge of the blade with a pencil and inserted the knife in the vise again. (This time to correct way around, so I could use the knife brace.)

Back to the 100 grit stones again. It was immediately clear from the pencil markings that on the left side I had not reached the edge yet. So I started working on it again. (Which made me think how long it would take to reprofile S30V rather than this el cheapo steal. Maybe I will get an 80 grit stone sometime.) After some time I had removed all of the pencil ink and went on with the 200 grit stones, then 400 and then 600. In between I had to tighten the vise screws a bit tighter a few times, since the knife had the tendency to remove itself from the brace.

Paper cutting again. Already improved a lot, but still not up to the level of some of my pocket knives. The cuts were still somewhat ragged. And the edges still looked scratched, although not as bad as after the 200 grit stones.

Luckily I had also gotten the 800/1000 grit stones. First 800. What a sound! So smooth... Then the 1000 grit stones. Weird. A scratchy sound. I felt the stones and the 1000 grit stones felt a lot rougher than the 800 grit ones. Would somebody accidentally have switched them? I sharpened using both stones, and although the 1000 grit stone felt rougher, it did appear to leave a smoother edge. Most of the scratches on the bevel were now gone.

So on to the 1200/1600 ceramic stones. The difference with the diamond stones was clear: the ceramic ones are lighter and remove less material. Nevertheless they worked quite well and it didn’t take me ages to get a nicely polished edge without scratches. Even when I looked at the bevels through the loupe, I could hardly see any irregularities.

Mirror edge? Not quite. Stropping would probably have gotten me that, but I feel I need a bit more experience on the WE before I am going to use those easy-to-cut leathers.

Paper cutting again. This time the knife cut the paper without any problems or ragged cuts. I still think my Spyderco Paramilitary 2 or my Sebenza cut paper better, but they are made of S30V, not el cheapo stuff. And their bevels look better: absolute mirrors that have the same width over the entire length of the blade. The bevels on my kitchen knife are much wider towards the tip. I have read about that on this forum and I'll try to find the "sweet spot" of the knife I'll sharpen next. And I'll probably do some maths to understand how it works…

I'm really happy with my Wicked Edge! It performs as I hoped it would. And I'm glad I didn't try to sharpen my Sebenza as the first knife

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Re: My first knife on the Wicked Edge

Posted by leomitch - 20 Jan 2012 18:38

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Congratulations on your new WEPS Mark!

A couple of comments:

Cheap steel very often is a devil to raise a burr on as the burr crumbles instead of forming

up nicely. In the end, the edge is rarely satisfactory. If cheap steels took the same edge as quality steels and retained their initial keenness, what would be the point of buying quality steels.

The diamond paddles take awhile to break in...you will notice a vast difference after a few knives

have been sharpened.

Don't hesitate to do one of your fine knives. My first one was my PXL folder from Fallkniven. It has a blade of the super steel 3G Powder Steel. It came out beautifully but it took some time since I hadn't broken in the diamonds yet.

Have fun with your new sharpener Mark!

Best regards

Leo

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Re: My first knife on the Wicked Edge

Posted by mark76 - 20 Jan 2012 20:01

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Hi Leo,

Thanks for your comments. I am very happy with my Wicked Edge until now.

leomitch wrote:

Cheap steel very often is a devil to raise a burr on as the burr crumbles instead of forming

up nicely. In the end, the edge is rarely satisfactory. If cheap steels took the same edge as quality steels and retained their initial keenness, what would be the point of buying quality steels.

Of course I didn't expect this el cheapo knife to be able to get an edge like S30V, for example. (The sharpest knife I have uses 154 CPM, by the way.) But are you also saying that I should be able to obtain a noticeable blurr above, say, 200 or 400 grid? That was almost impossible with the knife I sharpened today. Tips on how to recognize when you can go from one stone to a finer grid stone would be much appreciated.

Don't hesitate to do one of your fine knives. My first one was my PXL folder from Fallkniven. It has a blade of the super steel 3G Powder Steel. It came out beautifully but it took some time since I hadn't broken in the diamonds yet.

If you don't mind, I'll wait a bit longer with this. The main reason is that all of my top quality folding knives (as well as some fixed knives) have perfectly even (same width) bevels. On the knife I sharpened today, the bevel near the tip is much wider than near the heal. I have read the theory by Clay about this, but don't quite understand it. I am afraid it will be somewhat a proces of trial and error (unless I get the geometry calculations worked out well). How did you manage to do this (at least I assumed you were able to, since you were happy with the results)?

Have fun with your new sharpener Mark!

I definitely will! Tomorrow on the program are a cheap chefs knife from my girlfriend to better learn how to get an even bevel. And if that works out well, I'll do her Global Santoku knife. Still not S30V, but at least a decent steal with a Rockwell hardness of around 58.

Thanks again, Leo, for you comments on this and other topics. You were already a great help before I even owned a WE

Best regards,

Mark

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Re: My first knife on the Wicked Edge
Posted by gofly - 21 Jan 2012 12:07

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Mark

What I have been doing to keep the bevel even is if the knife is centered and the point is at C on the scale I move the tip back to halfway in between B and C and this helps to keep the bevel even

Lucky

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Re: My first knife on the Wicked Edge
Posted by leomitch - 21 Jan 2012 12:42

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HI MARK!

To be honest, I have tried several times to put edges on cheap knives and the results are always a waste of time...you can't get a burr to build up and even if somehow a miracle occurs and you get what passes for a burr, the edge you get finally is not worth the time you spent getting it. So the short answer is, don't waste your time. The only positive is that you are helping to break in your diamonds, but that is better done on decent steel.

I understand what you say about the difference in the width of the edge as it approaches the toe of the blade in some instances. I am sort of a practical guy and so my folders are all users and if there is a variance in edge width along the blade, I don't really care that much so long as the edge is sharp...I not as particular about my folders as I am about my fixed blades. If this happens with the fixed blades I care about, I adjust/move (keeping the same depth) the knife to a different position in the vise and work the belly of the blade near the toe.

Clay has a better explanation and it may even be somewhere here on the Forum or even better in one of his YouTube videos. I will look and you look too, maybe we can find what we are looking for.

I have found that I can tell when to stop with one grit of paddle and move on to the next finer grit by listening to the paddles sing to me as I sweep back and forth. You can hear when the diamonds/stones have pretty well done their job. There is a noticeable difference in sound and the feel of the diamonds cutting action. It is almost Zen but it works for me.

I am happy if I have helped you Mark. That is what this old guy is around here for. Good to know I helped you decide on the WEPS too.

Cheers

Leo

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Re: My first knife on the Wicked Edge

Posted by mark76 - 21 Jan 2012 16:46

Hi Leo and Gofly,

Thanks for your help. I have read the theory by Clay regarding bevel angles and bevel width and I think I am beginning to understand it. On his personal blog he has also devoted a few posts to it. (sharpeningtechniques.blogspot.com/2010_11_01_archive.html) Unfortunately the links to the eDrawings do not work anymore.

I did my work on the cheap knife yesterday not so much in order to improve the knife, but to learn my skills on the Wicked Edge. That said, my girlfriend enjoyed it: she produced some very thin slices of tomato this morning.

Today I worked on her Global chef's knife. That's made of a much better steel already, although it is nowhere near CPM. After the 600 grit stones it was far less scratched than the cheap knife and it cut paper smoothly already. And after the 1600 grit stones it was sharper than it has ever been (as my index finger can testify - I had just got into this nice motion pattern Clay shows, when my finger slid off)

I am still not certain on how long I should continue with a particular grit of stone before I go on to the next. With the 100 grit stones I created a burr on one side after about three quarters of an hour. I was finished with the stones after about an hour. That was a long time, but I regrinded the blade from 20* to 15*, so that's understandable.

However, after that, on the 200, 400 and 600 grit stones I had to polish for over half an hour to create a noticeable burr on one side and it took me three quarters of an hour before I could move on to the next stone. I know for certain I did hit the edge pretty soon (using a magnifying glass and the Sharpie trick, and working only on one side of the knife to create the burr), so perhaps I am just bad at feeling burrs.

How much time on average do you guys spend on the 200, 400 and 600 grit stones for this type of knife? (Relatively large - a chef's knife - and medium hardness - around HRC 57.) Three quarters of an hour just seems way too long.

Thanks again,

Mark.

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Re: My first knife on the Wicked Edge

Posted by leomitch - 21 Jan 2012 17:43

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Mark

I am sending you a Private Message. Please look for it in a few minutes and read it.

Leo

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Re: My first knife on the Wicked Edge

Posted by LukasPop - 22 Jan 2012 03:26

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Hi Leo,

Please make some comment for others. It is interesting for me, I am thinking of buing Wicked Edge, but three quarters of an hour on every grit stone sounds impractical.

Lukas

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Re: My first knife on the Wicked Edge

Posted by leomitch - 22 Jan 2012 04:24

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Hi Lukas

There has been a misunderstanding by many, that it takes a long time to sharpen with the WEPS...not

true. Part of the problem is that the many have not seen this video (link is below). Please watch it and see how Clay takes a cheaper Chef's knife from sharp to dull by raking the edge with a bastard file and the rebuilds the edge to sharp again in a short time.

One of the huge misunderstandings is this: you only have to raise a burr on each side of the blade with the 100 grit paddles 'once'. And then move up through the rest of the finer grit paddles. It is ot necessary to raise a burr with each of the sets of paddles!!!!!!

Watch the video and you will see how easy it really is. And by the way, to touch up your knife once you have done the whole process with your WEPS, does not require a raising of the burr again unless you want to change the angle or the edge has been damaged.

Please let me know your thinking after watching the video Lukas.

www.wickededgeusa.com/index.php?option=c...id=77&video_id=1

Best regards

Leo

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Re: My first knife on the Wicked Edge

Posted by LukasPop - 22 Jan 2012 04:51

Hi Leo,

Thank you very much for explanation, sounds reasonable. But i can't see the video, only this message:

Access Denied!

This video is currently not available for you to view. This could be for one of the following reasons:

The video is currently not published

The video is still being converted after upload.

The video is pending approval from the website moderators

The video has been deleted

You need to login to view the video

Your account does not give you access to this video

Could you check it please?

Best regards

Lukas

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