First question
Posted by Staze - 01 Oct 2012 13:31

All,

So, got the WEPS (Pro Pack 1), and was extremely pleased with the packing in the box, as well as the all around quality of the device.

But, as so many others have seen, the edge I got on my first knife was, bluntly (har har) terrible.

One thing I'm wondering about is that in the documents it says to make sure the stone doesn't come off the edge of the knife. So, my question is, does that include the tip? I haven't seen any good videos that show whether the person is basically pulling away with the stone as it reaches the end, or are they running off the tip of the blade continuing the "arc". I think it would probably take a top down slow motion video to really see this, so I figured I'd just ask instead.

Anyone?

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Re: First question
Posted by cbwx34 - 01 Oct 2012 14:27

I initially tried running the stone beyond the tip in an "imaginary arc" like you described but didn't like that.

I learned to just stop when the tip is about half way across the stone. It's pretty easy to tell.

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Re: First question
Posted by Staze - 01 Oct 2012 14:28

Okay. Yeah, I figured I might end up rounding off the tip. =/ I'm going to try again tonight and not go off the tip.

Anyone else do this this way?

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Re: First question
Posted by cbwx34 - 01 Oct 2012 14:56

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I was going to add a bit more to my post... but you're fast.

If you watch some of Clay's videos, you'll notice that he can "attack the blade" from any direction... heel to tip or tip to heel, while going edge trailing or edge leading. By learning to stop at the tip... it made it easier to start at the tip if I want to change directions and still do a edge trailing stroke. This helps if, for example, I want to change the direction of the striations left by the stone... which influences how the knife cuts, or I want to work a particular section a bit more.

I also found that, by running off the tip, you may not round it necessarily (although that does happen), but you'll keep sharpening the tip away and forming a new one with each stroke. This can cause a subtle (at first) change to the blade profile... until all of a sudden you notice your knife has a totally new shape. (This isn't WE specific btw... it can happen with just about any sharpening method).

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Re: First question
Posted by Staze - 01 Oct 2012 15:01

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That makes sense, and what I was probably experiencing. The crappy edge I got probably was the result of not fully developing the burr on the knife, which I figured would happen, I just need to take longer.

Thanks for the input. I'm going to try some more tonight. Will post back with results.

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Re: First question
Posted by ApexGS - 01 Oct 2012 18:17

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Working with the tip of a knife is definitely the most challenging part to develop a technique for, when you're first starting out. I still have to get some more practice with the fore-aft placement in the clamp to match the blade's curve, which can definitely impact the profile if you hurry through that stage to get to the sharpening process. One of the first tasks I took up after practicing on some junky blades was to restore the edge on my tanto blade Hogue, which has served as a great knife to focus on handling the

stones properly to keep the geometry crisp.

Definitely be patient on your first few tries, you'll get a feel for the burr forming and how each stone does. Later on you can use the 200 and 400 for restoring edges that aren't too bad, once you practice a bit and get a good idea how fast each grit removes metal. Also you'll probably go overboard initially and end up with a REALLY hardcore burr

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Re: First question
Posted by Staze - 01 Oct 2012 18:35

Gotcha. Yeah, I should have taken a picture of this blade before, because I honestly can't recall if it had much of a tip or not. Right now, there's not much for the tip, it's pretty rounded, and I'm not entirely sure if I did that, or if it was already like that. Luckily, it's a POS paring knife.

I was kind of shocked how fast the 100 grit removes metal.

Will work on it tonight and report back, but I'm guessing with some more work with the 100/200, and a good developed burr, I should be good to go.

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Re: First question
Posted by Staze - 02 Oct 2012 03:23

Wow, okay, what a difference a day makes.

So, first off, the knife I was playing with is an old Robinson "Stainless Steel" pairing knife. Awesome, right.

So, last night, I went 22°, but tonight, I changed to 20° (would have gone shallower except the blade is too short to allow for any less). So, I started from scratch, and made sure to build up a full burr. Then "polished" away with 100/200/400/600/800/1000. Results, better, but not great. So, went back down to 400, and built a burr again, this time pretty quickly since it was apexed already, and went back up the progression, taking more time at each step. Results, better still, but not awesome. So, back down to 600, burr, repeat. Results, pretty good. Cuts paper well, but doesn't push cut, or anything, and still not nearly as sharp as my Shun pairing knife.

Okay, so, I think "maybe it's the steel". Grab another old dull pairing knife. This one a 30 year old Gerber. Still doing 20°. Burr, polish, polish, polish. Whole process took me maybe 20 minutes, at most (largely during commercials of "Castle"). Finish with 1000, and the edge is at least 2x better than the Robinson. Cool. So, I figure I should try stropping (I've never really stropped a knife before, and honestly thought it was kind of silly to think leather would really do much). First dry, and they do something, but not much after a few minutes. So, I grab the paste, and do the 5µ side. Boy howdy, after a few minutes I had something, Didn't hurt the strops at all as the motion for me is quite natural. "Finished" with that, and moved to 3.5µ. Even better. It'll push-cut paper now. I am still not sure it's as sharp as the Shun, but I'm figuring some of that is angle (Shun being 16°).

One other thing of note: boy do the shoulders burn after 20-30 minutes of solid work. Guessing that'll pass though once those muscles get used to it. =)

So, what did I learn? 1. It's all about the burr, stupid. 2. patience. If it sucks, don't be afraid to go back and redo a step. 3. Steel quality/type heavily influences edge quality. 4. Stropping isn't make-believe.

I'm very impressed, and glad I splurged on the Pro-Pack I. Because while the 600grit edge on the Gerber was very serviceable, it was nothing compared to the edge post 800/1000, and stropping. =)

Going to keep at it and will be sure to ask any questions I come across. Will also be posting a review on my site in the coming days. Want to try something bigger than a pairing knife first, though. =D

Thanks for all the help everyone. The learning process, while still/always ongoing, would be MUCH steeper and daunting if not for this forum and its members. =D

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Re: First question

Posted by wickededge - 02 Oct 2012 07:30

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Hey Staze,

That's a great write-up of your process. Thanks for posting it. I think you'll find that the more sharpening you do, the better it will get, especially as your stones break in more. I know I preach it a lot, but there is a considerable break in period with the stones and you'll continue to be surprised at the constant improvement. The results that the strops produce are pretty awesome. If you look around the forum at some of the microscopic photos of edges I and others have done, you can really see just how much the strops are doing at the microscopic level to improve the edge. Happy sharpening.

--Clay

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Re: First question

Posted by cbwx34 - 02 Oct 2012 08:56

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Staze wrote:

One other thing of note: boy do the shoulders burn after 20-30 minutes of solid work. Guessing that'll pass though once those muscles get used to it. =)

Nice write up... this comment though made me wonder if maybe you're using too much pressure? Just thought I'd mention it... too much pressure can be counter productive. (Sometimes there's a clue in passing comments.).

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