using pastes and sprays on leather.

Posted by Scott Sherman - 29 Oct 2012 13:14

I read somewhere on a post by Clay that he only re-applies paste around every 50 or so blades. I have new leather strops and a variety of pastes. When I first used the paste, I am sure I applied too much, because I was wiping gobs of it off the edge of the blade repeatedly while stropping. But once I got the gobbed on paste off the blade, and the strop was no longer leaving rows of pasted on the edge, it seemed like there was no longer enough paste on the blade to achieve what it was designed to do. At best I don't think I could do a large number of blades. I could be wrong on that, I am still learning.

I understand that there is a slickness to it when you first apply it and as it dries there is more friction which is what causes polishing or grinding. But, how do I achieve that without wasting too much paste? I tried applying the paste and not using it for a day or so to see if the drying would make it stay on the strop more, but it did not seem to work that way, I was still wiping excess off the blade. I only used about a 1 inch bead and spread it evenly over the leather surface with my finger. It didn't seem like it was that much, and I could still see the leather through the paste. If I apply less it seems like it would be gone after the first few passes, so I need to find the right balance there.

I have no experience with pastes other than what I am learning as I go here. I did not see any good videos on just using the pastes and sprays and specifically what to expect as far as how much to apply and how long it will continue to work before re-applying more.

I think because my leather is new and very smooth, it may not be absorbing it and the paste just sits on the surface until it is scraped off. Will more use with the strop roughen the surface and make it more sponge like?

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Re: using pastes and sprays on leather.

Posted by coryschnaufer - 29 Oct 2012 13:30

Just my 2 cents on this one Scott. I put on the one inch rubbed it in and just trusted Clay. On my first few knives I was having the same issues that you are talking about but I just stuck with it and didn't reapply for a good 10 to 15 knives and then I hit them with just a little more paste maybe a half inch. Once again I felt that everything was coming off on my blade and then after a few more knives I guess the break in finally ended because I started to feel the "stiction" that everyone is talking about and my blades started shining up a lot faster. I think it is just a loading process for your leather and there is no way to rush it. Once it happens you will notice a difference imeadiatly and if your experience is like mine you will not have to add much to your strops at all. Once they are loaded a little goes a LONG way.

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Re: using pastes and sprays on leather.

Posted by mark76 - 29 Oct 2012 13:31

Scott Sherman wrote:

I understand that there is a slickness to it when you first apply it and as it dries there is more friction which is what causes polishing or grinding. But, how do I achieve that without wasting too much paste?

By using even less. Really, even a 1 inch bead is too much. A few drops will do. And only re-applying it every 50 blades or so sounds quite sensible.

The good thing is, the less paste there is on the strops and the dryer it becomes, the more sticky the strops are and the more effective they become. This ends when it feels you're almost treating the blade with chewing gum. Only then should you consider adding a little more paste.

I think because my leather is new and very smooth, it may not be absorbing it and the paste just sits on the surface until it is scraped off. Will more use with the strop roughen the surface and make it more sponge like?

Not really, unless you conistantly nick your strops. But the strops (I assume you've got WE leather strops) don't have to become sponge like (although some people appear to like that). The leather has some draw of it itself and the paste (in moderation!) only adds stiction.

If you've applied too much paste to your strops, simply scrape it off. Then after stropping a few knives, the strops work again like they should.

Success!

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Re: using pastes and sprays on leather.

Posted by Scott Sherman - 29 Oct 2012 13:34

Thanks Cory and Mark, that really helps. I haven't really had a chance to do enough knives to test your experience, but it seems to make sense and it really helps to know what to expect as I progress and gain more experience.

Thanks again. Hope this helps others here as well. I am pretty sure I am not alone in this.

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Re: using pastes and sprays on leather.

Posted by Geocyclist - 29 Oct 2012 19:53

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I saw a video of Clay stropping. His stops were already loaded. He applied 3 drops, 1/4 diameter or smalller. It didn't look like enough to completely coat the whole strop but it did. He said it just takes a little paste and after the 3rd drop said he proably used too much.

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