Testing Sharpness

Posted by TedS - 26 Nov 2012 22:48

I know there are scientific ways to test sharpness but it seems that most videos show a sharp knife slicing a piece of 8 1/2 x 11 computer printer paper. If a knife easily slices thru a piece of computer paper is that considered a Wicked Edge?

I have never seen any video where the person was cutting a single page from a telphone book.

After sharpening a Hen & Rooster steak knife at 20 degrees on a WEPS (100/200/400/600/800/1000) the knife easily sliced thru any side of computer printer paper.

It did not slice thru all sides of a telephone book page.

Telephone book page - top of page, right side of page, bottom of page and left side of page that was torn from the phone book. Knife easily sliced thru right side of page. It did not slice thru the top of page or bottom of page. It was hit or miss slicing thru the torn left side.

Why wouldn't the knife slice thru the top of the page or botom of the page?

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Re: Testing Sharpness

Posted by cbwx34 - 10 Dec 2012 13:01

TedS wrote:

If you or anyone else sharpened a cheap knife at 20/40 degrees up to 1K diamonds, would the knife be able to easily slice thru the short side of a phone book page?

I am just trying to determine if I am getting the best results from the WE. I have tried hundreds of strokes per side for each grit as well as varying strokes (circular, scrub and sweep) and I have never been able to easily slice thru the short sides (top or bottom) of a phone book page.

Hi Ted:

I tried a quick test this morning to answer your question. I took a cheap "Made in China" "Surgical Stainless Steel" (which I've heard is often 440A or less), and sharpened it at 20 deg., stopping at the 1000g diamonds. I was able slice all four sides of a phone book page, both straight in and at an angle as well as pushcut, although on the short side it started to tear after a short distance.

A lot is mentioned about stone break-in, but another factor to consider is pressure. I know when I first got the WE, I used way too much, and it affected my results. I actually took a break from it for a while, and when I came back, I noticed I was using less pressure, my strokes seemed smoother, and the results were noticeably better.

I also finish my knives by doing edge trailing strokes from the tip to the heel. This sets up the "teeth" in a direction that facilitates slicing. Not totally necessary, but if you try both ways, you should see a difference. An alternative would be straight up and down, but I like the first way better.

Hopefully that helps a bit.

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Re: Testing Sharpness

Posted by xuzme720 - 10 Dec 2012 20:24

Yes, pressure makes alot of difference! My sharpest sessions have always been when I am being "delicate" with the paddles, especially on the higher grits. I find trying to slow down and be more deliberate helps lighten the touch, too. When I am in a hurry, I find myself getting a little ham-fisted on the paddles.

When I am stropping, I set the wicked edge in my lap so I am more "over" the blade. I find it helps me, but of course, we are all different. Plus, my base is round. I used some drops from cutting mdf rings for my speaker box. Waste not, want not.

Testing I do on those shiny catalogs they send you in the mail. Thin and slick, nice test for a razor edge but for tooth, some rope or cord.

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Re: Testing Sharpness

Posted by TedS - 10 Dec 2012 23:06

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cbwx34 wrote:

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Thanks Curtis. Finishing with tip to heel trailing strokes made the difference. I can now easily slice thru any side (top, bottom, left or right) of a phone book page.

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