Edge Touch Up With A Power Buffer?

Posted by FredHermann - 04 Jan 2013 09:33

There are a number of sharpening threads going, and I didn't want to muddy them with this question. Also, it has very little to do with the WE system...except for the Kopis.

I've been bouncing between 2 crap viking swords hand sharpening, (sandpaper blocks) and the scratch pattern on the edges is making me crazy, I just don't like the look.

I know using any sort of power tool on anything sharp is a disaster waiting to happen, but I want to know if anyone has used a power buffer on an edge.

Things I suspect:

Heat can become a problem very quickly and damage the temper.

You can still sand divots into the steel if not careful (just like a belt sander)

Depending on polish refinement, you need multiple wheels so you don't cross contaminate.

But it would seem since Euro swords cut best with a nice appleseed/convex edge, that once you get it very close, a buffer would be a good finish to polish out the edge. A hard wheel would have more tendency to flatten the convex while polishing, and softer would keep to the original shape, more evenly polishing and removing material.

So has anyone done this, or have experience with it? I've seen things like this for sale on the net, but never knew anyone who had/used one.

Also, I'm working on reprofiling a Cold Steel Kopis Machete with my WEPS, and doing individual bevels at 2 degree increments from 20 to 35 degrees. It's hard to see, but the edge is starting to look facetted, I can't wait to see how this cuts. I suspect that if I don't strop and smooth the tiny bevel lines, it will reduce the cutting ability as the bevel would be somewhat rough.

So...thoughts? Am I crazy? (well yes, but about this?)

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Re: Edge Touch Up With A Power Buffer?

Posted by xuzme720 - 04 Jan 2013 09:55

My first thought when you brought up power buffer is a trip to the emergency room to get the sword removed! I first thought you meant something like a D/A buffer, like you'd use on your car or boat! lol

I am subscribed though, I want to see what others thoughts are on this as well...

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Re: Edge Touch Up With A Power Buffer?
Posted by FredHermann - 04 Jan 2013 10:02

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Oh man...I hear ya!

I have some frightening stories about seeing knives that the buffer catches. (I was making knives at the time)

One was flung off a wall, and straight into my wife's front tire. It looked like I stabbed it. So...that cost me a tire, and taught me about making a catch wall to keep flung items from going too far. And of course....refining my technique. So I have not had any slips in years, but I always wear as much safety gear as possible.

Murphy loves me.

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Re: Edge Touch Up With A Power Buffer?
Posted by PhilipPasteur - 04 Jan 2013 20:31

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I have not tried any of the wheel type sharpeners, though I have neen tempted. More the kind of paper wheels with abrasives that you mount on cmpatible bench grinders. The ads and you tube videos make them sound very attractive... I just feel like I have enough sharpening tools for now. Besides, I have had material that I was polishing with a buffing wheel take off on me... would hate to have that happen with a big honkin blade of some kind.

What I have done is go back to all of my machetes and very large knives, the ones that I have traditionally done with files, then something like different grades of carborundum stones...with the knife in a vice and holding the stone... and resharpen them on the belt grinder.

Now it takes some practice...and I never have gotten the guts to sharpen edge leading, I have gotten some great edges on the things. If done right, you can leave a pretty toothy edge with a 400 grit belt that will still shave arm hair after a quick hit with leather and some "white compound".. HF1 if I remember. Using jewlers rouge, one can even get close to a mirror finish... if that is what you want.

I have belts from 50 grit to 3000 grit and 7 leather belts with various grits on them down to 0.25 microns.

The 50 and 80 grit belts have to be used very judiciously... they can make a quick mess of a blade... but if required and after some practice, they can take lots of material off for a re-bevel job, real fast. If using the orignal bevel, I have gotten to where I can pretty well follow it by varying the angle and start with 180 to 200 grit or so belts. Oh, and slack belt grinding can make a real nice convex edge... real nice !

I won't address conservation of steel here ..

Once you get some practice, the belt grinder can do a real nice job, very, very quickly.

So far, and after many hundreds of blades... 50 or 60 lawnmower blades and at least that many machete class knives... I still have all of my body parts.

Phil

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Re: Edge Touch Up With A Power Buffer?

Posted by FredHermann - 04 Jan 2013 21:33

I've used a belt sander for years sharpening, and they get exciting fast when the belts break. The sharpening flinging from a buffer is bad comedy. I'm looking for do' s and don'ts.

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Re: Edge Touch Up With A Power Buffer?

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 04 Jan 2013 22:05

HUH ???

Do's and Don'ts for what??

Do buy good belts.

Do replace them before they are likely to break.

Do learn the machine.

Do use a light touch.

Don't screw up...

But, if you have been using a belt grinder for years, you know all of that..

If you are concerned about using machines, do what you are doing now!

You asked for suggestions for sharpening Machetes...

Mine is, use the belt grinder (my experience with the Kalamazoo 1X42 belt grinder has been entirely positive).

After using it I don't feel real inclined to use abasive wheels. I think the grinder is safer.

Do use the belt grinder... a good one

Don't use a motor mounted buffer or abrasive wheel..

IMHO

If you need specifics, tell us specifically what you need.

I, for one, will try to help.

BTW, are you talking about having used a little hand held belt sander, like for wood working, or a bench belt grinder ???

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Re: Edge Touch Up With A Power Buffer?

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 04 Jan 2013 22:21

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Just for the sake of clarity..

this is the machine I am referring to that I have been using for the last couple of years or so:

www.amazon.com/Kalamazoo-Sander-Motor-Co...-Wheel/dp/B000REJM3K

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Re: Edge Touch Up With A Power Buffer?

Posted by FredHermann - 19 Jan 2013 01:01

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Nice sander there Philip.

So an update, I used my WEPS to reproducible the machete. I did two degree increments from 30° to 16°.

Hours and hours of learning, it looked really weird, nearly facetted. So cut testing you could hear the facets making odd noises. So I took it to my belt sander and evened it out. What a waste, but it's easily the sharpest machete in the neighborhood.

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