Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?

Posted by RoccoSanello - 24 Jan 2013 23:12

Looking for a little clarification. In Clay's introductory video, he goes from the 100 through the 1000 grit paddles (I think) with alternating single direction strokes. While checking out a few random wicked edge YouTube videos, I noticed a lot of "scrubbing". It seems pretty easy to create a burr with the scrubbing motion. Is there a reason to use one method over the other? Should I do alternating strokes with everything except the ceramics? Should I use scrubbing through the first few grits to get a burr on the other side then switch to alternating single direction strokes towards the finer grits? You guys never let me down. Thanks.

- Rocco

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Re: Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?

Posted by Geocyclist - 27 Jan 2013 12:58

The "feel" is important. Not only can you sort of tell when a stone is finished, and ready to move on, but you can also feel when the stone is off (bad stroke) or you have a section of the blade that isn't quite right, needs more work, etc.

For example, I do all strokes tip to heel, edge trailing. For stones 600 and below I do some edge leading strokes in middle of each stone to clean up any burr. You can "feel" the difference right away on the first 4 strokes when I switch to edge leading, then the next 4 are much smoother. Going back to edge trailing the first few stokes I can feel the stone cutting more, then it gets smoother again.

IMHO, I think tactile feedback and sound (hearing) are equally if not more important than sight when it comes to sharpening. With the WE once you set everything up and get the bevels/angles right it is more about sound and feel than sight. (since the blade never moves and the angles don't change). I am not suggesting you sharpen blind folded by any means.

I have to give kudos to the WE for the excellent tactile feedback. I didn't get this with other systems.

At the same time the WE design eliminates a lot of variances in other systems, so even if you can't "feel" the stone you can still get a great edge with the WE.

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Re: Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 27 Jan 2013 13:22

Geocyclist wrote:

The "feel" is important. Not only can you **sort of tell** when a stone is finished, and ready to move on, but you can also feel when the stone is off (bad stroke) or you have a section of the blade that isn't quite right, needs more work, etc.

I agree, feel gets one in the ball park... The problem is, when someone is learning and asks for a number of strokes, it does not tell them what they need to know by telling them to feel it. Feel, I think is developed over time. Even when you can feel it... this is very relataive. I don't feel things the same way you do, nor does anyone else. Feel is something that is hard, if not impossible to define or teach, especially via text communication. It is highly subjective and personal.

As I mentioned, I can feel and hear differences to a point. But I cannot feel, especially with the finer stones or strops, the difference between very good and nearly perfect.

Now the OP asked for number of strokes to use at first. If he was an accomplished sharpener that could feel it, he likely would not have to ask that question.

Maybe I am just jealous because my ZEN is so darn elusive to contact... or so limited that I cannot detect the level of differences that I need for the reults that I want...

Phil

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Re: Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?

Posted by cbwx34 - 27 Jan 2013 15:40

PhilipPasteur wrote:

The problem is, when someone is learning and asks for a number of strokes, it does not tell them what they need to know by telling them to feel it.

Good point!!!

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Re: Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?
Posted by Geocyclist - 27 Jan 2013 17:39

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I agree, sorry I missed the original question. 50 per side sounds about right.

For a count I guess it boils down doing too many or too few. If you too many it doesn't really hurt anything. (unless you do a thousand strokes then our just grinding your blade away). Too few and the next stone won't work as efficiently. After each stone I wipe the blade clean with a paper towel and inspect. I am looking to see smaller scratches and a smoother edge.

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Re: Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?
Posted by NicholasAngeja1 - 27 Jan 2013 17:57

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From what I've learned and experienced either scrubbing or alternation single direction strokes work, but again they each have their own advantages that makes them unique. I personally scrub on lower grits or when fixing an edge; I find I'm able to develop a burr a lot easier scrubbing. I then transition into alternating single direction strokes at higher grits when i've apex-ed the edge and start refining it; I find the sweeping motion helps de-burr the edge more effectively.

In terms of how many strokes on each side of the blade?? Honestly..... TILL YOU FEEL A BURR (period)

Once an edge has been apex-ed, then why not benefit from what makes the WEPS special and UNIQUE, use ALTERNATE sweeping strokes to refine the edge.

Just my two cents

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Re: Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?
Posted by PhilipPasteur - 27 Jan 2013 18:24

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Just to make it clear... there is absolutely no reason to raise a burr more than **once on each side using the coarsest stones in your chosen progression**
. After that you are simply wasting time and steel to raise a burr!!!

This:

In terms of how many strokes on each side of the blade?? Honestly..... TILL YOU FEEL A BURR (period)

Can only make sense if you are talking about using your coarsest stones.. **one time in your complete progression (period)** !!

Phil

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Re: Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?
Posted by NicholasAngeja1 - 27 Jan 2013 18:26

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PhilipPasteur wrote:

Just to make it clear... there is no reason to raise a burr more than **once on each side using the coarsest stones in your chosen progression**
. After that you are simply wasting time and steel to raise a burr!!!

Absolutely!!!

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Re: Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?
Posted by PhilipPasteur - 27 Jan 2013 18:32

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OK..

Then after your coarsest stones, how many strokes do you do and how do you determine what is enough ?

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Re: Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?
Posted by NicholasAngeja1 - 27 Jan 2013 19:15

I only apex my edge and create a burr at either 600 grit or 800 grit depending on the steel. I use a microscope to determine when i change stones. I look for a consistent scratch pattern on the bevel and a perfectly spaced bevel prior to changing grits. I'm pretty lucky to have such equipment and it removed the "skill" "experience" or "Zen" required to sharpen and perfect an edge, and Microscopes aren't that expensive. In my experience there has never been an appropriate number of strokes before changing, it really depends on the Knife Steel, Forging process, and how the knife was previously sharpened. IF I WAS TEACHING SOMEONE TO SHARPEN, I STILL STAND BY THE FACT THEY SHOULD DEVELOP A BURR AT EVERY GRIT TILL THEY LEARN THE SKILL, EXPERIENCE, OR "ZEN;" LOSS OF METAL IS A SMALL COST TO LEARN HOW TO SHARPEN AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON WHEN SHARPENING. But hey experience sharpeners will not need to develop a burr till higher grits and they can focus on preserving metal. That's something experienced sharpeners learn from experience and testing different sharpening techniques.

So.... does a hand made carbon knife need the same 50 strokes per grit and side as for example a super soft chinese steel knife???? a new sharpener wouldn't understand that the soft steel might only take 5 strokes at any grit to burr the edge, because of the steel. But on the other hand, a super hard steel like the carbon wont even remove the previous grit scratch patterns after 100 strokes and never create a burr....

there are too many variables to contented with to put a number of strokes on grit progression other then visually seeing it and measuring it.

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Re: Scrubbing or alternating single direction strokes?
Posted by PhilipPasteur - 27 Jan 2013 19:33

RoccoSanello wrote:

Looking for a little clarification. In Clay's introductory video, he goes from the 100 through the 1000 grit paddles (I think) with alternating single direction strokes. While checking out a few random wicked edge YouTube videos, I noticed a lot of "scrubbing". It seems pretty easy to create a burr with the scrubbing motion. Is there a reason to use one method over the other? Should I do alternating strokes with everything except the ceramics? Should I use scrubbing through the first few grits to get a burr on the other side then switch to alternating single direction strokes towards the finer grits? You guys never let me down. Thanks.

- Rocco

Hey Rocco, any specific videos that you are looking at.. Links?

I had this crazy idea that we should define terms before going much further.

Maybe this is wahy we are getting crossed up in the discusion a bit.. What does the term "scrubbing strokes" mean to you ?

I use three different classes of strokes and variations from there. There are the circular scrubbing strokes, only used for very agressive material removal. This method leaves the most and deepest scratches. I believe that it should only be used for reprofiling. After doing this, even with 100 grit diamonds, I would finish with sweeping strokes to align the scratches and make it easier to remove them going forward. This is what I think of first when I read "scrubbing strokes. The motion I might do to clean a floor or a dirty pan.

Then there is the "scrubbing" that is up and down perpindicular to the blade edge. I use this when changing grit at lower grits, say up to 1000 diamonds or Choseras. It is more agressive than the sweep, but not as much as the circular scrub. I do this to help remove the scratches from the previous grit more quickly. I may do this for a minute alternating sides and working heel to tip. It is real hard to count actual strokes. I always finish with a full stroke count using sweeping strokes. This is what I would do when finish sanding wood... with the grain. Though I guess it is a form of scrubbing, maybe I jump to the wrong conclusion that others don't think of this first when scrubbing is mentioned.

Sweeping, well this can be edge leading, edge trailing and heel to tip or tip to heel. I always use sweeping strokes with finer grit stones and as above with the coarse stones. I use mostly edge trailing sweeping strokes heel to tip. Lately, thanks to Clay, I have been doing a full stroke count (whatever I determine to be the requirement) then adding about 25% more strokes edge leading. This really seems to help in scratch removal, but only is needed whan you are looking for that perfect mirror edge, or possibly to "aim" the micro teeth in the direction you prefer.

It seems like I saw at least one video with someone doing all "scrubbing" perpindicular strokes. I tried this once... only once. I did not like the results nor the speed of scratch removal. That is just me though, I can't say it is the wrong approach.

Try it, but for precision and appearance, my vote it for sweeping strokes to finish.. you might try both edge leading and edge trailing... but finishing with sweeping strokes is the ticket IMHO.

The beauty of the WEPS... or one of them, is that there are so many ways you can get a very sharp edge.

Is the process more important than the results? I think not. See what works for you and go from there. People can generally tell you what works for them, but never what is best for you.

I am coming from reading what Clay has done and some of the instructional stuff from Tom. I have seen neither use any form of scrubbing as anything more than an interim step. This is my story, and I am sticking to it... !

Phil

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