Strategy for a New Knife

Posted by peppersass - 02 May 2012 13:33

As promised in my Welcome Mat post, here's my question about the best sharpening strategy for a brand new knife. What I'm looking for is probably different than what people thought from my post. I'm not so much looking for *how* to sharpen it as much as *when* to sharpen it.

Here's the deal: I have a brand-new Spyderco Sage 1 with a very sharp factory edge. I'm sure you Spyderco owners are familiar with the factory edge. It's sharp enough to shave, but it's not a mirror edge. Very functional, though.

The question is this: as the blade wears, can the factory edge be touched up effectively using the WEPS fine stones and strops, or is it better to re-profile the edge using the coarse stones -- i.e., start all over with a WEPS-created edge? If the latter, do you wait until the factory edge starts to dull, or do you re-profile new knives right out of the box so you can touch them up as soon as the edge falls below optimum sharpness?

I'm not looking to change the angle of the edge (unless that would make for a much better edge than the one put on by the factory.) It's more a question about strategy for using the WEPS with high-quality new knives.

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Re: Strategy for a New Knife

Posted by peppersass - 02 May 2012 13:37

Replying to my own post --

I meant to put this under Techniques and Sharpening Strategies. I don't see any way to delete or move it, so could a moderator do that for me?

Another question: I couldn't find any info under Help. The main question I have is whether photos need to be resized before uploading (i.e., is there a pixel/size limit?)

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Re: Strategy for a New Knife

Posted by DennisHibar - 02 May 2012 15:38

Dick,

My personal pref is to just strop a new knife if I am satisfied with the edge/bevel. If it is damaged or has an uneven bevel ... I reprofile it. As a note, when I got my Sage 1, it was so sharp from the factory that when I cut myself running my finger along the bevel ... I was bleeding even before I felt the cut!

As for photos, I tend to upload my photos to either Photobucket or Dropbox, then link to them in my post. Easy, quick and no worries about size limits.

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Re: Strategy for a New Knife

Posted by mark76 - 02 May 2012 18:10

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Very good question, Dick. I don't have a set strategy, but I do see a few trends.

On users (kitchen knives, outdoor knives, some pocket knives) I usually ruthlessly put on a new edge, which involves a regrind. The great thing about the WEPS is that if you do this once, touchups become a breeze (provided you use the depth key and the ruler). Also, I usually have specific requirements for these types of knives, so a regrind is necessary anyway.

For other knives it is sometimes different. Like Dennis, I strop them if the edge just needs a touchup. The same thing applies to convex edges. And sometimes, if they do require a more major touchup, I try to stay to the original edge as close as possible (i.e. no regrind). I use the sharpie trick to establish what the original edge was (although a goniometer helps in this as well) and then use only the 1200/1600 grit stones to improve the edge.

Obviously I don't know what works for you, but I usually find the Spyderco edges from the factory among the best of the factory edges. If you're out for a mirror edge, the WEPS stropping pastes work very well to produce this after the 1200/1600 stones (and maybe even on a courser edge).

But you will have to try out and, as Tom said, you will make mistakes, so I also suggest you start on some cheaper kitchen knives.

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Re: Strategy for a New Knife

Posted by leomitch - 02 May 2012 21:36

Don't worry too much about where you have placed it my friend. We have all done it, so I will let it sit here. Everybody here reads every post so not to be troubled! 🙂

When I buy a new knife, I usually reprofile the edge to my specs because then I know exactly what I have. If the factory edge is excellent I may let it stand until I get the itch to experiment. It has been my experience that I have never injured one of my knives using the WEPS and if the edge wasn't quite what I wanted, oh well, I could change that very quickly.

The result is I have a collection of some very expensive knives with edges I used to just dream about. Now they are razor sharp in a real world way. I would shave with one like Tom does but I have a full beard and have no intention of changing that...also I am a big pussy and do not relish the thought of wandering my last years minus a lip or the tip of my nose! Certainly I would never use a cleaver like some I know! ROTFLMAO!

Cheers

Leo

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Re: Strategy for a New Knife

Posted by peppersass - 03 May 2012 23:12

Thanks for the great replies.

I think the first thing I should do is get a little more experience with the WEPS before doing anything with the Sage. I've got plenty of kitchen knives crying out for a little love, and that'll be great practice.

After using the Sage a few times, I'll try touching up the edge with the strops. Once the knife is in need of sharpening, I'll use the Sharpie trick with fine or super fine stones to assess the edge geometry and see if I can match it with the WEPS. If so, I'll use the fine/super fine/strops to maintain the blade for a while. If not, I'll re-profile.

No doubt, I'll re-profile once the newness of the Sage wears off 🙂

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