Newbie-- trouble raising a burr

Posted by MikeKing - 14 May 2012 07:19

Just got my WEPS last week. I had been using a Sharpmaker to maintain my knives and it worked quite well but I had no luck setting/resetting a bevel on some knives so I decided to get a higher end system.

After a little practice with cheap knives, I tried my KBAR USMC which I had never been able to get sharp enough to cut notebook paper. I set my WEPS up for 20 degrees (which is what KBAR says the knife should be from the factory), colored the bevel with a red Sharpie, and mounted it in the WEPS. I took a few swipes at the blade with the 1000 grit stone and found all the red except for a thin line right at the edge had been removed along the whole blade. It seems that it was ground close to 20 degrees but not quite there. I then went to work with the 100 grit stone. After quite a while (probably 30 min) of either scrubbing up and down or swiping the stone along the blade, I had all the red marker gone. I worked another 20 strokes or so on one side and tried to feel for a burr (both with fingers and with cotton) but did not sense one. I tried some more with the 100 stone, but still no luck. I then re-colored the bevel and took a few swipes with the 1000 stone. The red was gone right away so it would seem as if I was hitting the edge. Not knowing how to proceed, I thought that maybe I was raising a burr but was unable to detect it, so I went up with my stones all the way thru 1000. When I was done, the edge looked quite smooth with a very fine scratch pattern.

I then tried cutting notebook paper, and the knife seemed as dull as when I started. I could not even get the edge to catch enough to make a 1/4 inch cut into the paper. I am guessing I am doing something wrong at the 100 grit stage in not getting a burr to start with. Does anyone have any advice for a WEPS beginner?

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Re: Newbie-- trouble raising a burr

Posted by razoredgeknives - 14 May 2012 08:20

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have faith man! the only knife I have not been able to get a burr on is a ceramic knife - which is because they won't burr =). Anyway, If you have both felt and tried using the cotton ball then I would say that you have not truly reached the edge of the edge since there was no burr formation. You will really feel a nice burr that will be NOTICEABLE with the 100 grit stone. Go back to the 100 grit and, just to make your job easier, increase the angle to 21* (will help you to hit the very edge easier). Then use a black sharpie (easier to see) and proceed. I would guess that you are close but need to go that last step to finally get the burr. Let us know how it goes!! I have sharpened several large survival/combat knives on the WEPS, including the kabar, and it works great! I'm sure you will get it worked out soon... ttys

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Re: Newbie-- trouble raising a burr

Posted by jendeindustries - 14 May 2012 09:08

Sounds like you're off to a good start!

When profiling/reprofiling for the first time, there is usually no quick and easy burr formation. Try doing sets of 50-100 scrubbing strokes on each side of the blade to work both sides toward the middle. If that's not enough, try doing some circles.

You'll eventually get there

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Re: Newbie-- trouble raising a burr

Posted by mark76 - 14 May 2012 09:48

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Hi Mike,

Welcome to the forum! You'll find a lot of information here!

The WEPS also has a learning curve, although fortunately, it is not very steep for most of us. Like you, I had some problems with the initial burr. The good news is that you completely removed the Sharpie markings, so you are near. The trick is, like Tom said, to do some scrubbing – up-down movements – on one side of the blade. A burr should form on the other side of the blade quite soon. If you have done half an hour of sharpening already, it should appear in minutes. Then do some scrubbing on the other side of the blade, and a burr should form on the first side. Then finish of with sweeping movements (the type of movements Clay shows in his videos).

If you start off with sweeping movements, and do one movement on one side of the blade, followed by one movement on the other side of the blade, a burr will never form.

It may also take some practice to actually feel the burr. Now I know what it feels like, I cannot imagine I was able to miss it at first, but I was . Some people use a cotton swab to detect a burr, but to be honest, I find it easier to feel it by hand now.

Success with the next steps!

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Re: Newbie-- trouble raising a burr

Posted by BassLakeDan - 14 May 2012 11:55

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MikeKing wrote:

Just got my WEPS last week. ..I tried my KBAR USMC which I had never been able to get sharp enough to cut notebook paper. ...so I went up with my stones all the way thru 1000. When I was done, the edge looked quite smooth with a very fine scratch pattern.

I then tried cutting notebook paper, and the knife seemed as dull as when I started. .. Does anyone have any advice for a WEPS beginner?

Hi Mike,

First thing until you get the hang of the WEPS (and yes there IS a learning curve..) may I suggest a few things.

You did not say how much luck you had with your "little practice with cheap knives".. Try choosing a knife like a thin little 1.25 or 2" blade like a cheap thin slip join like a Swiss army knife or something to practice on. Your KA-BAR USMC is a very fine knife, no question about that, but you want 'first learning curve feed-back' much faster that that blade will be able to give you. I would not advise someone just starting with the system to battle a blade that large. Use a blade you can "dominate" not a blade that will dominate you !

Second, go to Radio Shack and buy one of their 5 dollar hand loupes, or maybe you can pick up other good 10 power hand loupe at Wal Mart or just anywhere you fine one. I want you to look more closely at the blade edge as you work on it. The Human eye is going to have a tough time resolving the kind of detail that you need to be seeing... For instance, are you sure that you have the Red marker erased at the top of the blade? You might be surprised what a hand loupe will reveal..

Last thing is keep at it! Like anything in life the rewards are worth the effort when it comes to developing expert skills. Eventually the results you will obtain with the system will amaze you. And don't be discouraged. If you are still having trouble then keep posting here, there are many people to help you. Remember, there are no dumb questions, only dumb answers.

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Re: Newbie-- trouble raising a burr

Posted by holymolar - 14 May 2012 20:48

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I usually use the 50/80 diamond when I sharpen a blade for the first time (or reprofile). It raises a bur much faster than the 100 and there is no question about the bur when you start with a 50 diamond. Get the 50/80 diamond stone, you'll be glad you did.

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Re: Newbie-- trouble raising a burr

Posted by mark76 - 15 May 2012 06:26

This morning I was reprofiling a Becker BK16 from the factory edge of (at least) 30 degrees per side to 20 degrees. This was quite a chore with the 100 grit stones I usually use for reprofiling.

Then I suddenly thought of your post, Holymolar. I do have the 50/80 grit stones, I had just never used them. I used only the 80 grit stones and man, they cut very quickly! The reprofiling was done in minutes.

I did have to spend enough time later to wipe out the 80 grit scratches, but those stones certainly saved me a lot of time. Thanks!

Here's the knife:

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Re: Newbie-- trouble raising a burr

Posted by MikeKing - 15 May 2012 08:25

I gave another try last night. This time I used a black marker. It was removed to the edge right away.

I then worked one side with the 100 stone for about 5 min. I felt and was not sure if I had a burr or not but could not think of anything else to try. (I was looking at the edge with a magnifying glass, I plan on getting a 10x loupe as soon as I have a chance.) So, without expecting much, I went on up through the

stones which gladly does not take all that long. When done, I found myself able to shred glossy newspaper ads.

So it looks like I was close on my first try and I just had to stay longer on one side alone to form a burr.

As far as feeling/sensing the burr, I guess I need some practice.

I do plan on getting the 50/80 stones (as well as the ultra fine ceramics) in the near future.

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Re: Newbie-- trouble raising a burr

Posted by mark76 - 15 May 2012 16:13

Good work, Mike! You'll get there.

Please don't interpret my post as if you *need* the 50/80 stones. In fact, until this morning I'd never used them and I've reprofiled quite a few.

If you're looking for a loupe, take a look at this one . Only $7.95 and 60x. Works very well, a lot better than 10x.

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Re: Newbie-- trouble raising a burr

Posted by dgriff - 15 May 2012 18:21

As one who doesn't consider himself a good sharpener, I have no trouble raising--and we say raising because the burr seems to stick out from the edge on the side opposite--a burr with the WEPS. If you've ever opened a tin can of beans or tuna and felt the edges then you know what to look for. It doesn't seem likely that you haven't raised one yet based on what you've said so far.

Forget the magnifier, you can raise an easily felt burr with 100 stones after 5 minutes of scrubbing, especially if your initial marker line has been ground away.

Try using fingernails instead of fingertips with moderate pressure and see if they scratch up, stroking from spine to edge.

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