WEPS Stropping 101?

Posted by JohnHolbrook - 02 Jul 2012 07:46

Hi - I've got the WEPS system and have be getting great results with it. But I've yet to use the leather stopping accessories. In fact, I've never tried to do any stropping.

Most of the videos I've seen from Clay and others don't really discuss using the WEPS for stropping. Can anyone point me to any videos or other reference material which would give me the basics?

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Re: WEPS Stropping 101?

Posted by mark76 - 02 Jul 2012 10:38

Hi John,

Welcome to the forums! You made a good choice!

I wrote a couple of articles on stropping with the WEPS. You can find them on my blog . If you've got any questions about it, please don't hesitate to ask.

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Re: WEPS Stropping 101?

Posted by JohnHolbrook - 02 Jul 2012 11:44

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mark76 wrote:

Hi John,

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I wrote a couple of articles on stropping with the WEPS. You can find them on my blog . If you've got any questions about it, please don't hesitate to ask.

Hi Mark,

Thanks for the links, but I think what you have on my blog is stopping 701 when I need 101.

Some of the specific questions I have are:

When do you strop? How lightly do you stroke and how many strokes do you make?

What are the pastes all about and when do you use which?

I've got the micro fine ceramic stone pack - do you strop after you use these stones or before? Does stropping impact a mirror polished edge?

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Re: WEPS Stropping 101?

Posted by mark76 - 02 Jul 2012 12:05

Hey John,

OK, 101. I'll take some shortcuts, so don't blame me for not putting in any details

When do you strop?

After the finest stones you've got. So if you've got the micro-fine ceramics, the order would be: diamond stones -> 1200/1600 ceramics -> micro fine ceramics -> strops. If I were you, I would strop then with some compound in the order of 1 micron – 0.5 micron compound.

How lightly do you stroke and how many strokes do you make?

Most people here recommend pretty light strokes. I used to strop a lot after the 1200/1600 stones and found it doesn't have to be that light. At least, you won't roll over the edge if you use some pressure. So I guess it is a bit of trying out what you like and whether you believe me or the others :) . It also depends a bit on what strop you use. A balsa strop has little draw and acts a bit like a "poor man's stone". A leather strop has more draw to it and is slightly better at creating a mirror edge.

What are the pastes all about and when do you use which?

I guess that's 701 and treated on my blog. However, after the micro fine ceramics I would use something in the order of 1 micron – 0.5 micron compound. The Wicked Edge diamond paste, Ken's CBN and HA diamond spray should all suffice.

If you're using leather strops: they are quite vulnerable and I would recommend up-down movements only. You can use the "normal" sweeping strokes as used with stones, but then you do run the risk of nicking your strops. The jury is still out on the number of strokes. I showed on my blog that you can still expect improvement after 500 strokes. Many people think this is ridiculous and do 50-100 strokes. And some people from the straight razor world even do far less strokes, which I think is ridiculous :-)

I've got the micro fine ceramic stone pack - do you strop after you use these stones or before? Does stropping impact a mirror polished edge?

After. And yes, you should get a mirror edge after stropping then. If a mirror edge is what you're aiming for, you should definitely use a Wicked Edge paste.

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Re: WEPS Stropping 101?

Posted by wickededge - 02 Jul 2012 12:30

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Hi John,

Those are great questions. I almost always strop after I've completed all the stones I'm using in a given sequence. You should see a rapid improvement in bevel polish with the strops. Depending on the final geometry you want, you may lower the angle by one or two degrees before stropping, the reason being that the pliability of the leather will create a convex edge and widen your angle slightly. What happens is that if you strop at the same angle and the leather compresses as you push into the blade, it will roll over the edge of the knife and give you a slight curvature and a slightly wider angle. If you strop at the same angle at which you sharpened, it's important to use very light pressure, especially if you want to limit the

amount of convexing that occurs. If you lower the angle by a degree or two, you won't have as much convexing and you can press a little harder. You'll also be able to do as many strokes as you like, improving the bevel polish. Although some of the grits of the strops are coarser than some of the stones, there is less abrasive density and the actual effect is as if you were using a finer grit, again due to the pliability of the leather. Leather also burnishes the metal, polishing it beyond what any of the stones can do. So, a quick start might look like this:

Prepare your strops - put a thin, 1" bead of paste on one of the leather strips. Rub your strops together, like-side to like-side until the paste is worked in. Allow them to dry.

Sharpen your knife as usual with the stones and then clean the blade thoroughly; I like to use a paper towel with rubbing alcohol.

Decide how much convexing you'd like to do and either leave the angle the same or lower it by a degree or two and slide the strops on the rods.

Strop with the coarsest grit first (the highest number), always with an upward stroke to avoid cutting into the leather. Do as many strokes as desired to achieve your preferred bevel polish. I tend to do around 40 strokes per side w/ the strops for basic work and upwards of 100 when I'm being really meticulous.

Clean the blade between every grit of strops to avoid cross contamination.

You can tinker with the angle, pressure and number of strokes until you develop a formula, or several formulas, to suit your needs.

JohnHolbrook wrote:

mark76 wrote:

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Re: WEPS Stropping 101?

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 02 Jul 2012 12:46

Hey,

I don't think Mark really meant up-down. You should always strop away from the edge. This would mean going "up" only, removing the strop form contact with the blade, bringing it down, then going up with the strop against the blade...and repeating. I use a sweeping motion away from the blade and try to cover the entire blade with one sweep. You just need to keep the strop moving up and away from the blade for the entire stroke. If you end up sliding it along the length of the blase, especially when you get near the tip, you will slice the leather. If you make ANY "down" movements ... sliding the leather into the edge, you will slice the leather.

I am one that believes that 100 strokes per side per grit gets you to a level of diminishing returns. Per my experience, and various quotes from Clay, you can get much of the benefit from stopping in a relatively few strokes. I am sorry, but for me 500 strokes per side, or 1000 strokes total is a bit intimidating, I only have so many hours per knife that I can write off to my high level of OCD

Some would say that after the micro-fine ceramics, and depending on what you want to use the knife for, you need not strop at all. Take a look at the knife database and see what lots of folks are doing just as a reference.

Of course, as with all of the technique discussions, you will find lots of different methods and theories. Try some things and see how they work for you.

[quote="mark76" post=3670]Hey John,

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Re: WEPS Stropping 101?

Posted by mark76 - 02 Jul 2012 13:08

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PhilipPasteur wrote:

I don't think Mark really meant up-down. You should always strop away from the edge.

Yes. Up only with contact on the blade.

Some would say that after the micro-fine ceramics, and depending on what you want to use the knife for, you need not strop at all.

That is a good point. Traditionally, stropping is not used as a means to further refine the edge or to obtain a mirror edge, but to mainly remove the burr or to straighten the edge. However, since you can treat both sides of the edge at nearly the same time with the WEPS, there is far less need to strop because of this reason. Anyone has any ideas about this?

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Re: WEPS Stropping 101?
Posted by JohnHolbrook - 02 Jul 2012 13:17

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wickededge wrote:

Hi John,

Those are great questions.....

Clay - PERFECT! Exactly what I was looking for!

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Re: WEPS Stropping 101?
Posted by JohnHolbrook - 02 Jul 2012 13:20

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PhilipPasteur wrote:

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Also very helpful - thanks Philip!

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Re: WEPS Stropping 101?

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 02 Jul 2012 13:34

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I wish I would have read Clay's reply before I posted... I could have saved some time and board space !!

Phil

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