Need help picking which kit to purchase: NEWB

Posted by DeepFriedSouth - 16 Aug 2012 13:55

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After much trolling,googling and youtubing I've settled on the Wicked Edge system over the edge pro. The sole reason is to maintain/restore my Japanese kitchen knives instead of having the local hack sharpeners continue to destroy the edge and removing the tips. I'd love to be able to preserve the razor edge on these Gyuto style knives, and am wondering if that can be accomplished with the basic sharpener kit or do I have to step up to the Wicked Edge Pro kit to obtain/maintain a razor sharp edge? I don't really care if the finish is mirror polished, as long as it moves through solid food as if it were butter with little resistance. These knives are used for production cooking so I keep a steady rotation of blades and am constantly sending them out to be sharpened(my ability to water stone sharpen has never been successful). Thanks for the help.

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Re: Need help picking which kit to purchase: NEWB

Posted by cbwx34 - 16 Aug 2012 15:48

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Welcome to the forum!

My .02... Pro pack. You save a bit of $$, but more importantly, you'll benefit from the finer stones and strops... especially on the knives you mentioned.

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Re: Need help picking which kit to purchase: NEWB

Posted by davidmcm77 - 16 Aug 2012 18:39

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cbwx34 wrote:

Welcome to the forum!

My .02... Pro pack. You save a bit of $$, but more importantly, you'll benefit from the finer stones and strops... especially on the knives you mentioned.

+1, definitely get the pro pack.

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Re: Need help picking which kit to purchase: NEWB

Posted by DeepFriedSouth - 16 Aug 2012 22:51

Pardon my ignorance davidmcm77 and cbwx34, but I'm not sure what I'm getting for all the extra money with the Pro Kit. Looking around the forums it seems that the sharpness of the edge is set with the basic stones and then polished with the high stones. I'm completely ignorant on this subject, so I'm just trying to figure out what all the extra money is getting me, looks aren't a priority over sharpness. It's a lot of money to cough up between the 2 kits.

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Re: Need help picking which kit to purchase: NEWB

Posted by WayneReimer - 16 Aug 2012 23:01

I'll go a bit contrary to the already expressed opinions in suggesting the basic kit to begin with. As you said, a polished edge isn't important to what you're doing, and the basic kit will give you an incredibly sharp, very serviceable edge without a high polish...certainly more than sharp enough to cut whatever you want to cut effortlessly. I'd suggest getting a set of strops in addition to the basic stones though

I've got several Japanese kitchen blades, with my Nakiri getting daily use. I sharpen it to 12 degrees per side(24 degrees inclusive, then strop. I can get several days use on the blade before touching it up with the strops. It is far sharper than when it came out of the box, and considerably better than the few times I had it sharpened "professionally". Once you've got it sharp initially, you can maintain the edge with only a few minutes work every couple of days.

If you decide you want to go to a higher polish, you can always get additional stones...just my opinion of course

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Re: Need help picking which kit to purchase: NEWB

Posted by mark76 - 17 Aug 2012 02:54

The 600 grit stones will get you a perfectly workable edge, better than what 99% of "professional" sharpeners deliver.

However, once you've been bitten by the bug... or... eventually you'll get them all

Particularly Japanese kitchen knives (carbon steel?) really benefit from the higher grit stones, since at least the good ones are able to take a terrific edge. And the higher grit stones allow you create such edges. They're not just "polishing" in the sense of only making the edges smoother, they

actually get your edges sharper.

At least you've made the choice for the right device! Success and let us know how you get on with it! (And... we're having far too little pictures here of Japanese kitchen knives :)

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Re: Need help picking which kit to purchase: NEWB
Posted by leomitch - 17 Aug 2012 04:38

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DeepFriedSouth wrote:

After much trolling,googling and youtubing I've settled on the Wicked Edge system over the edge pro. The sole reason is to maintain/restore my Japanese kitchen knives instead of having the local hack sharpeners continue to destroy the edge and removing the tips. I'd love to be able to preserve the razor edge on these Gyuto style knives, and am wondering if that can be accomplished with the basic sharpener kit or do I have to step up to the Wicked Edge Pro kit to obtain/maintain a razor sharp edge? I don't really care if the finish is mirror polished, as long as it moves through solid food as if it were butter with little resistance. These knives are used for production cooking so I keep a steady rotation of blades and am constantly sending them out to be sharpened(my ability to water stone sharpen has never been successful). Thanks for the help.

I agree with Mark! If you own such excellent knives, then it behooves you to develop the finest edge possible with the least amount of lost steel. This way your knives will last you and yours a lifetime of razor sharp usage. Yes the standard package will be good enough, but not as good as the ability of the Pro pack.I believe it goes beyond just a mirror finish, although for some, that certainly is a factor.

In the end it depends on your expectations for the maintenance of such fine knives.

Regards

Leo

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Re: Need help picking which kit to purchase: NEWB
Posted by cbwx34 - 17 Aug 2012 07:09

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mark76 wrote:

They're not just "polishing" in the sense of only making the edges smoother, they actually get your edges sharper.

I thought this was worth repeating. To me, polishing is just a side effect of sharpening.

Both Mark and Leo pretty much hit the reasons, so I won't repeat them. I will add... a few years ago I sold another sharpening system that came in various levels. Many people would by the lower kits with less stones to save money. Without fail, almost every customer within a couple of weeks, would contact me wanting to add the finer stones, and would become irritated at having to pay additional shipping, and the higher cost vs. the "kit' setup. It happened so often that I quit selling the lower end kits... I realized that it was actually bad for the customer in the long run. That's why I recommend, that if you can afford it up front, to get the package... in the long run, I think you'll be happier.

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Re: Need help picking which kit to purchase: NEWB

Posted by WayneReimer - 17 Aug 2012 07:54

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I'm not disagreeing at all that the finer stones ultimately give a sharper edge in addition to polishing it. Rather, I'm passing along the same advice I got from Clay when I first purchased my basic system (I noticed in my original post I neglected to say I'd also gotten a set of 800/1000 stones as well).

When I asked him what else I should consider to begin with,i.e. ceramic stones, he said that his recommendation was to go with what I had ordered to start. If I wanted to seek a sharper and more polished edge in the future, to certainly consider some ceramic stones, but to start out with, the stones I had in the base kit and the 800/1000 stones, plus strops would be more than enough.

Further refining increases the sharpness incrementally in comparision to the dramatic change seen from properly setting a bevel and then sharpening through the basic selection and refining with strops.

On a couple of knives that I've really spent some time on (i.e. doubling or tripling the number of passes with each stone and strop), although the edge is sharper and more highly polished than those that had only seen say 25 passes per side, per stone, it was also more fragile. Using those highly refined and polished edges, for me anyway, resulted in them dulling more quickly and needing more frequent touch ups to maintain.

As the OP said, he was less concerned about a polished and highly refined edge as he was with a functional one...I also fall in that category. My knives, both kitchen and daily carry knives, are all subjected to near constant use. For my needs, a slightly higher inclusive bevel and lower polish level gives me precisely what I want; a very serviceable, extremely sharp edge that lasts.

I have some custom knives that don't see a lot of time in my pocket, and will eventually get a highly

refined, mirror edge...when I feel completely comfortable with what I have now. At this juncture though, the edge I get with the stones I have in extremely sharp, very nicely refined and polished to a point where there is no mistaking visually that the edge is extremely sharp.

To my mind, getting all of the stones available right out of the gate, while it does save you some money in the long run, also to a degree falls into a similar catergory as a question I posed shortly after getting my system about the straw modification; is this necessary to get a really good edge, or is it more about seeking a "perfect edge". Please don't misunderstand; I'm a firm believer in a comment made by Japanese straight razor maker Tosuke, many years ago..."Perfect is good....I like Perfect".

I know that I am OCD enough that I will ultimately have every single stone ever available for the Wicked Edge, and will likely pay premium prices for discontinued stones so that I can pursue my quest for the "holy grail"...the sharpest knife on the planet. Once I achieve that, I know myself too well to believe that knife will ever be actually used; instead it will spend it's days being taken out for special occasions to whittle a hanging hair, then reboxed. For the day to day user knives, they will likely continue to get a less refined and functional edge.

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Re: Need help picking which kit to purchase: NEWB

Posted by cbwx34 - 17 Aug 2012 08:07

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WayneReimer wrote:

... but to start out with, the stones I had in the base kit and the 800/1000 stones, plus strops would be more than enough.

Hey Wayne...

You bring up some good points... but I think they're might be some confusion here. What you just described in the quote above, (with the exception of the base), is essentially what the Pro pack is. At least that's what I thought we were talking about. I wasn't suggesting he buy every available stone. Thanks for bringing this up... maybe it needed clarification.

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