Leading or Trailing Strokes

Posted by wickededge - 21 Aug 2012 16:45

I did a quick experiment with the .6 Micro-Fine Ceramic stones and edge-leading and edge-trailing sharpening. First I polished the edge .25um with the kangaroo strops. Here is the clean edge:

I didn't go for perfect, just good enough to have a clean slate.

Next I did 5 very light trailing strokes with the .6um Micro-Fines at 5 degrees wider. Here is the result:

I did another 20 strokes, edge-trailing:

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Re: Leading or Trailing Strokes

Posted by xuzme720 - 15 Dec 2012 19:31

I tried your technique with my CRKT Ripple and I have to say, it's probably the sharpest blade I've done so far. I also now have the upgraded ball arms and paid special attention to keeping pressure very light. Still, it was able to shave facial hair in relative comfort, and other hair was no issue whatsoever! I shouldn't have changed so many variables at once to get a better idea of what is making the greatest difference, but it has to be the combination of all. Light touch is key. I'm now a believer.

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Re: Leading or Trailing Strokes

Posted by Geocyclist - 15 Dec 2012 20:06

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cbwx34, why do you not do edge leading with coarse stones?

I noticed an improvement on my last knife by doing both heel to tip and tip to heel, finishing each stone

with tip to heel. I can feel/tell I am working the scratches out. The sharpness was better also.

For a re-profile I do scrubbing strokes to get a burr with 100# stones. Then from there its alternating strokes.

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Re: Leading or Trailing Strokes

Posted by Geocyclist - 15 Dec 2012 20:18

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cbwx34, why do you not do edge leading with coarse stones?

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Re: Leading or Trailing Strokes

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 15 Dec 2012 21:35

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I know you were asking Curtis. I can just throw in how I do things and why I do not alternate at lower grit levels.

I run through all of the stones until about the 3K Choseras.. including (today anyway) the WEPS ceramics edge trailing. In the past I have done everything edge trailing. Not sure I can get anything any sharper...

Lately with the real fine stones I have been doing ... depending on OCD level, about 100 strokes edge trailing, 30 or so edge leading and a few edge trailing. The dge leading strokes at the higher grits can get rid of the very fine scratches a bit faster... but not so much that I worry about it... nor can I see it without lots of magnification. So... why? Because it is easier for me to do with the level of coordination that I possess. I can control the paddles consistently better... I think, being consistent is as important as anything that I do while sharpening. Muscle memory is very important in getting there.

Some folks have said that they can cut some things better by angling the scratch pattern toward the heel,,

I think they are talking about lower grits. I have a knife prepped up to the 5K choseras... I will go to 10K and a bit of stropping. Then, as Clay suggested increase the angle by a degree and go down to the 1200 cermaics. Usually I would just do this edge trailing... because that is what I do. Maybe I can do that.. do some tests, and go back and try edge leading for a few strokes. See if I find any improvement. If I do, maybe I work a new wrinkle into my progression.

I think,if you feel you are getting blades sharper with one direction over the other, it could be the direction that you leave the "tooth" pattern. For a couple of years and lots of knives ...hair whittling ,hair tree topping, rope parting from 2 inches away (not really) I am not sure that I can improve sharpness results from the primarily edge trailing method... though cosmetically I have seen faster scratch removal by alternating..

Bottom line, why do I do it that way... because I am comfortable with it and it works for me... I get great results.

Of course, as always, do what works for you.. It is always great ot hear what others do to get good results!

Phil

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Re: Leading or Trailing Strokes

Posted by Geocyclist - 16 Dec 2012 00:15

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Thanks Phil,

I understand the coordination thing myself. I started out thinking I should go with edge trailing since I have to use it for stropping it would improve my coordination for stropping and help eliminate nicking the strops. But then I started wondering if there was any advantage or disadvantage to either direction.

I was wondering if there was any negative result with edge leading that caused people to avoid it, such as leaving a burr or wire edge.

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Re: Leading or Trailing Strokes
Posted by cbwx34 - 16 Dec 2012 12:44

Geocyclist wrote:

cbwx34, why do you not do edge leading with coarse stones?

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For a re-profile I do scrubbing strokes to get a burr with 100# stones. Then from there its alternating strokes.

I don't think it matters alot, but I feel it leaves a better edge for the finer stones, not having really coarse particles running into the edge. On the finer stones, it doesn't seem to make as much difference. I probably should have said "rarely" not "never" and added a bit more... for example if trying to do a re-profile, some major work or repair, scrubbing up and down is a good method.

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Re: Leading or Trailing Strokes
Posted by Jet B - 16 Dec 2012 14:35

This is an interesting topic.

I've recently been reading some stuff on the Spyderco forum where Cliff Stamp was really speaking against any kind of trailing edge strokes and also stropping in general. He was saying something about stropping and edge trailing strokes just push the metal back and forth and fatigue the edge causing a loss in edge retention. This confused me because from my own limited experience, I seem to have better edge retention since getting my WEPS and adding stropping to the finishing step in my sharpening routine.

It's sometimes hard to sift out the truth when so many seemingly experienced knife people can have directly opposing viewpoints on how to achieve the best edge...

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Re: Leading or Trailing Strokes
Posted by wickededge - 16 Dec 2012 15:51

Jet B wrote:

It's sometimes hard to sift out the truth when so many seemingly experienced knife people can have directly opposing viewpoints on how to achieve the best edge...

Ain't that the truth! Most of the knowledge base in the field is based on anecdote, which doesn't mean it's necessarily incorrect, but a lot of it has not been tested rigorously with controlled variables.

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Re: Leading or Trailing Strokes

Posted by Geocyclist - 16 Dec 2012 15:52

Calling Clay.....

I read the entire post here. Sound like edge trailing creates a better edge (as in smoother), by using very light pressure the "burr" or slop on the bevel is minimized. Using strops this is cleaned up. Is it accurate to say the better edge comes from edge trailing?

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Re: Leading or Trailing Strokes

Posted by Jet B - 16 Dec 2012 15:54

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wickededge wrote:

Jet B wrote:

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Ain't that the truth! Most of the knowledge base in the field is based on anecdote, which doesn't mean it's necessarily incorrect, but a lot of it has not been tested rigorously with controlled variables.

I like how you experiment and post pictures like this Clay. It really helps sift things out.

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