Transitioning to exclusive use of stones

Posted by WayneNicklin - 27 Aug 2012 21:05

In my quest to take it to the next level I'm transitioning to stones for the majority of my work. Stropping only for that absolute final step. The diamond stones are too aggressive for my taste and the stones (Chosera, Naniwa, Shaps) give such great feed back when I now sharpen. When I look at what the big boys are doing across the world it is exclusively stones. Any thoughts from the rest of the community?

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Re: Transitioning to exclusive use of stones

Posted by BassLakeDan - 27 Aug 2012 23:13

WayneNicklin wrote:

..the big boys ..

huh?

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Re: Transitioning to exclusive use of stones

Posted by KenBuzbee - 28 Aug 2012 06:28

BassLakeDan wrote:

WayneNicklin wrote:

..the big boys ..

huh?

I'm 6'6" and something over 300# and I just ordered my first set of stones so I guess he means me (though I have no idea how he knew)

Ken

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Re: Transitioning to exclusive use of stones

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 28 Aug 2012 08:15

It depends on what you are doing. I think that unless you have unlimited time and patience, when reprofiling or doing chip repair you need a fairly coarse stone. I just don't have the time or patience to take an S30V blade from 20 degrees to 15 with an 800 grit Chosera!!

You can get coarse synthetic stones. The Shapton 120 and 220 grit stones come to mind, but I haven't seen them cut for the WEPS yet. Then you have the wear concern. The coarse synthetic stones wear relatively quickly and take a considerable amount of maintainence to keep them flat.

The diamonds wear for a very long time and stay flat. Because of this, they are also relatively inexpensive in the long term.

The question that I have asked before is this, If the goal, when moving to the next grit in your progression, is to completely remove the abrasive marks left by the previous grit, what difference does it make what created those scratches. Granted, if you get too frisky with the coarse diamonds, you can create more work for yourself at the next level. If used jusiciuosly, and always finishing with several very light strokes, I find the diamonds are a very valuable part of my standard progression.

Not sure who the "big boys" that you refer to are, but I see an aweful lot of folks out there that use diamond abrasives (DMT and Atoma sell lots of plates) in their sharpening progresssions. Perhaps if you are talking about Japanese sword polishers.... but that is an entirely different class of sharpeners... IMHO

Phil

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Re: Transitioning to exclusive use of stones

Posted by StevenPinson - 28 Aug 2012 11:04

I sell a few stones for the WE, I use stones daily sharpening knives, and I like the feedback of stone so, I am biased.

STOP HERE IF YOU WANT TO ARGUE, PLEASE! LOL

Here goes:

Stones have worked great for thousands of years and many a knife maker uses stone to perfect their creations (QED). Natural stone is a great way to sharpen knives that are used in acute work, and my preferred method for knives used in high end ($$$) culinary environments.

I do like diamond plates for repair work, profile, and flattening stones of course due to their speed. Diamond can last a long time, just depends on what you do with it. Is diamond a great thing for every knife? Not in my opinion (yes, everybody has one … many stink). One thing that I love a diamond plate for is sharpening junk knives (you know, the $10.00 knife brought to you to return a $400.00 one).

Auto sharpener usage: Only if you like paying to replace high end knives. I get them all the time from the local “boutique” knife shop that have been experimented with. Somehow people associate “Chef’s Choice” with a sharp knife. I am at a loss there. I also seem to get many knives after they have been across the sharp maker … maybe it is just my market. The people all say the same thing: It was sharp for a few strokes.

Belt sander, fast but furious and you can do a lot of damage quickly to an expensive knife. Yes, you can mount a VFD to slow the belt down (can be a tough mod) and "yes" some people are great with a belt (I use one, I am still learning at year twenty-nine). If you are creating knives from plasma cut blanks this is truly the way to go … I don’t do that kind of work (but I do put a final on many custom knives from local makers, mostly hunting/skinning).

I have to say though, using stones by (freehand, WE, or whatever) makes it much easier to produce a quality product (sharp knife) as you have much more control over the sharpening process (IMHO). One last thing, I also find I have much less stropping to perform (except razors) when using stone.

But, with all of this my final take is this:

"It is all about application and what are you going to do with the knife."

YMMV.

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Re: Transitioning to exclusive use of stones

Posted by cbwx34 - 28 Aug 2012 15:59

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WayneNicklin wrote:

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I personally am sticking with the stock diamond and ceramic stones, (at least for now) but I have freehand sharpened on the Shaptons and Choseras, and they're great stones. I think it's awesome that Steven and others are providing alternative stones for use on the Wicked Edge. Not only are they fun to try, but there are advantages to using these stones, as you and others are finding.

So, I say, go for it. The comments about feedback and the type of edge created are all valid, and you may well find it taking your sharpening to a whole 'nother level! There is certainly nothing wrong with this approach!

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