600 grit diamond —> microfine ceramic?

Posted by matthewfrey - 12 Sep 2012 07:54

I'm going to be buying a WEPS soon and was wondering if it is possible to omit the 800/1000 diamond stones from the progression and move directly from the 600 to the ceramic microfine stones. Is that an effective protocol or is the 800/1000 stone necessary? Will the coarse ceramic remove the scratches from the 600 or only smooth over the ridges leaving micro-serrations?

I'm just trying to keep my initial cost down and keep my long-suffering wife from blowing a gasket over my newest fixation.

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Re: 600 grit diamond —> microfine ceramic?

Posted by KenBuzbee - 12 Sep 2012 09:17

It will work but you're going to spend a lot more time on the ceramics than you need to if you're really wanting to remove all the 600 scratches. Only a guess. Maybe 800+ strokes? You'll get there (if you don't get carpal tunnel first)

Ken

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Re: 600 grit diamond —> microfine ceramic?

Posted by cbwx34 - 12 Sep 2012 12:24

Welcome to the forum!

I did a little test after reading your post. I sharpened a blade, but after the 600g stone, on one side I moved to the 800 --> 1000 --> Micro coarse --> Micro fine. On the other side I substituted the Micro stone for the 800/1000, so I did Micro coarse --> Micro fine --> Micro coarse --> Micro fine. (Guess I could have done Micro coarse twice as long then Micro fine, but I'm not sure it would have made much difference). The end result, I spent twice as long on the Micro stones.... but not a really long time total... just a normal sharpening.

Surprisingly, visually there wasn't really a noticeable difference. Even under a handheld microscope they looked pretty close. But, neither path will really get you to a mirror polish if that what's you're looking for. Both sides had a hazy finish, and you could see scratching.

If I have time later, I'll try to strop both sides with some leather to see what happens. Are you considering leather or other strops? Part of the answer depends on what you're looking for... but sharpening wise, going from a 600g to the MicroFine should leave a sharp edge with a nice "bite" to it.

Also remember the results will improve as the stones break in.

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Re: 600 grit diamond —> microfine ceramic?

Posted by matthewfrey - 12 Sep 2012 13:22

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Thanks for the welcome and for your testing. I appreciate it.

I asked the initial question because in a post a while back Clay mentioned a progression where he performed some testing where he went from 600 to microceramic but he didn't report back on the results. He seemed to indicate that the coarse microceramic was pretty aggressive and was able to address the scratch pattern of the 600. He didn't really say definitively, though.

I'm trying to decide which stones to buy in addition to the basic WEPS for finishing. It sounds like I might be better served buying the 800/1000 stones and the 5/3.5 strops instead of investing the same amount of money in the microceramics.

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Re: 600 grit diamond —> microfine ceramic?

Posted by KenBuzbee - 12 Sep 2012 14:00

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matthewfrey wrote:

I asked the initial question because in a post a while back Clay mentioned a progression where he performed some testing where he went from 600 to microceramic but he didn't report back on the results. He seemed to indicate that the coarse microceramic was pretty aggressive and was able to address the scratch pattern of the 600. He didn't really say definitively, though.

Here's the thing. My coarse micro stones actually feel rougher than the regular ceramics leading me to a progression of 1000->1.4 micron->1200 ceramic -> 1600 ceramic -> .6 micron. Several folks "fixed" this by lapping the 1.4 micron stones on fine plates (> 1200) to make them smoother but (so far) I've left mine as received and just changed the order. It works great (and a few othes around here have done the same.)

If your goal is to remove the scratches of the 600s I still maintain you can do it with the micro fines, but as I mentioned, it's going to take you some time to get there. It's up to you whether the cost savings are better than the time you're going to spend. Probably a better short term goal is to use them to refine the edge a bit but not go for complete removal of the 600 scratchs. As CBW says, you'll still get a very nice edge and in a reasonable amount of time.

It's all a trade off... You can sharpen a totally dull blade with nothing but the .6 micron stones. It may take you 10,000 stokes, but you could do it...

Ken

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Re: 600 grit diamond —> microfine ceramic?

Posted by KenBuzbee - 12 Sep 2012 14:19

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matthewfrey wrote:

I'm trying to decide which stones to buy in addition to the basic WEPS for finishing. It sounds like I might be better served buying the 800/1000 stones and the 5/3.5 strops instead of investing the same amount of money in the microceramics.

That's another approach with the same caveats. If you are thinking to remove the scratches of the 1000 diamonds with the 5/3.5 micron strops, you have a lot of stropping in your future. Not to say you can't get a very nice, usable edge before that but you'll be polishing the scratchs, not removing them. Eventually you'll polish them out but we're talking maybe thousands of strokes. 1000 diamonds will give you a nice edge and 40-50 strokes with the strops will smooth them out quite a bit.

Many folks consider a 1000 edge to be the perfect working edge.

If it were me, I'd start with your first scenario of the micro fines. See what you think of the edge and what it took you to get it and you'll have a better idea of whether you'd rather add 1000 diamonds or strops next. Ultimately, I think you'll want both.

Ken

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Re: 600 grit diamond —> microfine ceramic?
Posted by cbwx34 - 12 Sep 2012 15:38

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matthewfrey wrote:

I'm trying to decide which stones to buy in addition to the basic WEPS for finishing. It sounds like I might be better served buying the 800/1000 stones and the 5/3.5 strops instead of investing the same amount of money in the microceramics.

I think, either way, you won't be dissappointed.
Some knives seem to benefit more from stropping on leather, so for an initial purchase, this could be a good route to go, that way you'd have this option available to you. OTOH, I really like the edge I'm getting from the Microfine stones, and you don't have to mess with diamond paste, figuring out stropping, etc. So, Ken's also right, you could go this route and then decide what to add from there.
There's no wrong answer here. Maybe one thing to consider... If you do a lot of stropping on a bevel trying to polish it out... you probably won't get an edge that slices well.

Either route, (600 and MicroFines or 800/1000 and 5/3.5 strops) you'll probably not reach a polished edge (in a reasonable amount of time anyway), but you'll have a wicked edge! haha

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Re: 600 grit diamond —> microfine ceramic?
Posted by KenBuzbee - 12 Sep 2012 16:23

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cbwx34 wrote:

and you don't have to mess with diamond paste, figuring out stropping, etc.

That's an excellent point. Stropping on the WEPS is a bit of a different kill set and takes some practice to learn. You can't go into the blade. Not even a little or you'll damage the strops. (note - this is not different from hand stropping but it seems easier to misjudge what you're doing. WEPS stropping takes a lot of focus initially)

Pasting is another skill yet.

The ceramics will play into the skills you're learning on the diamond plates. The strops, much less so.

Ken

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Re: 600 grit diamond —> microfine ceramic?

Posted by wickededge - 13 Sep 2012 09:46

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Ken and CBW are correct in that it can be a successful progression depending on your goals. If you're looking for a mirror finish, you're best off adding in the 800/1000 diamonds and/or the (soon to be in stock again) Superfine ceramics before using the Micro-Fine stones. The bit about changing the progression order is also correct - if you don't lap the 1.4um stones, then they work best after the 600# diamonds, then the 1200#>1600#>.6um ceramics. For my recent elk hunting trip, I prepped my knife on the Field & Sport model and used only the stock diamond stones: 100#>200#>400#>600#> and then went to the Micro-Fine ceramics and the edge was fantastic for the job; not a mirror but extremely aggressive and very durable.

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