Paste or no paste or one paste?
Posted by PhillipHyun - 12 Sep 2012 18:39

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Can I strop without using a diamond compound? Why not just strop with bare leather? I bought some Kangaroo strops but no paste as I like a toothy edge...am I messed up in the head? If I were to use just one compound what would you recommend for a toothy edge?

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Re: Paste or no paste or one paste?
Posted by WayneReimer - 12 Sep 2012 18:53

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you absolutely can strop with bare leather...I do regularly. you won't get the same sort of "gleam" on your edge as you will with a paste or spray, but it depends on what you like and how sharp you want to go. Personally, I don't care all that much about a highly polished edge except on a couple of specific knives.

The majority of my knives get diamond stones to 1000 grit, then stropped with bare kangaroo for a couple of hundred strokes. After I've done that, I do a single pass on the edge with the 1000 grit stone to restore a tiny amount of the tooth ond call it good.

The bare leather gives it a "sheen" as opposed to a "shine" or "polish". It cuts like crazy , it's easy to touch up and is quite durable on most of my knives.

The difference (in my mind...others with more experience will chime in) with adding a paste or spray is really fine tuning the edge. A polished edge is certainly sharper, but I find it gets to a point where it's almost TOO sharp...there is no grab left. I like a bit of tooth as well, so that I can get a cut started, especially on smooth, hard surfaces like zip-ties. I find those very tough to cut with a polished edge, but much easier to cut with an arguably duller edge with some tooth to grip the surface and start the cut.

Are you confused now? I am...

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Re: Paste or no paste or one paste?
Posted by PhillipHyun - 12 Sep 2012 19:07

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Thanks! No I'm not confused, you have expressed my thinking exactly. I'm glad my thinking is supported by what you do too!!! None of my knives need a mirror polish, they just need to cut like a lazer beam...

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Re: Paste or no paste or one paste?
Posted by razoredgeknives - 12 Sep 2012 21:10

WayneReimer wrote:

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This exactly 🙂
I totally agree!

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Re: Paste or no paste or one paste?
Posted by cbwx34 - 13 Sep 2012 08:53

In this thread... wickededgeusa.com/index.php?option=com_k...&Itemid=63#2642. (link should take you to the results of some of the testing), Clay tests using plain leather. Here's a summary...

wickededge wrote:

For each stage in the latest progression, I repeated the same tests - hanging hair test (HHT) and copy paper push cut (CPPC). Below are the results, in order of the progressions:

Medium	HHT	CPPC
1600# Ceramic	Fail	Pass, slight fraying of the edges
5k Chosera	Fail	Pass, slight fraying of the edges
10k Chosera	Fail	Pass, very smooth cut
1um Diamond on Balsa	Fail	Pass, very smooth cut
.5um Diamond on Balsa	Fail	Pass, very smooth cut
.25um Diamond on Horsebutt	Fail (Split)	Pass, very smooth cut
.125um Diamond on Horsebutt	Fail (Split)	Pass, very smooth cut
Plain Horsebutt (Top)	Pass	Pass, very smooth cut
.5um Diamond on Cow Leather	Pass (Top)	Pass, very smooth cut
Plain Cow Leather (Top)	Pass	Pass, very smooth cut
.125um CBN on Cow Leather	Pass (Top)	Pass, very smooth cut

I was surprised by these results, especially how well the plain top leather, both cow and horsebutt did with the hanging hair test, even more so considering the difference in scratches.

What *I think* I've learned so far from this exercise (and from regular usage) is that there is a lot to be said for the common (on this forum anyway) wisdom about applying different finishes for different usages e.g. the super smooth finishes that we get from the strops are not ideal for when I'm butchering meat, specifically all the very fine work of trimming silverskin and connective tissue - for that, a finish of 3k or 5k really works the best. Clearly if I want to cut hanging hairs, I need to finish with plain leather. It's almost mind boggling (but loads of fun!)

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