Strokes in your progression

Posted by TPeters - 22 Sep 2012 22:58

Let it be understood that I am still very new using the WE. I received my WE about a week ago and have sharpened about 2 dozen knives. The quality of the edges, for the most part, have been very good. I squarely put blame on the operator for the not so good ones.

I am working on developing my favorite progressions, I am doing okay at producing a burr at my 100 grit stone and then progressing through my other stones. My question is when someone says they do 100 strokes is that typically per sided or total (where each side gets 50)? Currently I do 25 per side up to 600 grit the bounce to 50 per side on 800 and 1000 grit. Is their a rule of thumb that I should be following for strokes per side?

I reviewed a video that Clay produced where he talks about how the sound of the stone on the blade changes as it is completing its work. Is this a better method or just a different one?

Not sure if there is a good answer for these questions because I suspect this is where the art and experience of knife sharpening come into play.

Any guidance that could be given is always appreciated.

==========

Re: Strokes in your progression

Posted by KyleMazur - 22 Sep 2012 23:59

Well i should start off by saying that my wicked edge hasn't arrived yet. HOWEVER I've used other systems. In the beginning i would always stroke count but i quickly realized that it's not the best way. For one steels are different hardnesses so there is no number that will always work. Also the state of your edge will never be the same. One time it might take 50 strokes another it might take 75. I always listen and feel. I'm going to guess that it will be the same with the wicked edge?

==========

Re: Strokes in your progression

Posted by leomitch - 23 Sep 2012 03:01

Absolutely, listen and feel!

For me counting strokes simply interferes with my listening and feeling. After awhile you will soon learn to detect when you are finished with one set of paddles and time to move on to the next set. I have been at it for two years now and here is my motto...after the burr is raised successfully, brush with the paddles as softly as a summer breeze for the rest of the sharpening, all the while listening to the sound of your tools working; feel what they are doing. You will know when to stop. Sharpening for me is a very Zen-like experience...it is relaxing and satisfying. Try doing the job with an empty mind, just listen and feel.

Sound hoaky! Don't knock it, until you try it. That's this old guy's two cents worth.

Cheers grasshopper

Leo

==========

Re: Strokes in your progression

Posted by cbwx34 - 23 Sep 2012 08:20

_____

KyleMazur wrote:

For one steels are different hardnesses so there is no number that will always work. Also the state of your edge will never be the same. One time it might take 50 strokes another it might take 75.

Excellent point!

TPeters wrote:

I am doing okay at producing a burr at my 100 grit stone and then progressing through my other stones.

TPeters wrote:

I reviewed a video that Clay produced where he talks about how the sound of the stone on the blade changes as it is completing its work. Is this a better method or just a different one?

I think the other answers have nailed it, just thought I'd comment on this. Your're right the first stone should set the bevel and establish the edge. Then, as you move through the other stones, you'll feel and hear the difference as each stone does its job. I didn't notice this at first... I think it doesn't happen until the stones break in. But once you recognize this change in sound and how the stone feels (it almost feels like it's no longer cutting, even though it is of course), you'll feel/hear it just about every time.

I would also add to occasionally look at your edge... even without magnification, you can get some idea if the results are progressing like you would like them to. When you get to the strops, if you use them (at least the leather, I don't have balsa), I look at the bevel and also feel the edge to see if it's where I want it.

==========

Re: Strokes in your progression

Posted by mark76 - 23 Sep 2012 10:25

_____

Absolutely, listen and feel!

I guess it is time to stop the old man rambling

I still recall counting the number of strokes Clay did in his videos in order to learn the right number of strokes (not knowing whether these videos were edited or not). Leo got me over the dead point when learning to use the Wicked Edge, but before that he managed to drive me nearly mad with his remarks on feeling and Zen. The advice Leo finally gave me was: raise a burr and then do 50 strokes per side with every stone.

And that was very sound advice. Rules number 1, 2 and 3 in sharpening are: the burr. With your first stones, raise a burr. First on one side of the knife, over the entire length of the edge. Then on the other side. And then do some alternating strokes to remove the burr on both sides. If you're wondering why you're not getting a burr yet, use the Sharpie trick and you can see how far you're removed from the edge of the edge. In order to raise a burr, you may use some pressure and up-down movements instead of sweeping strokes may also help.

When I was able to raise a burr, I did 100 strokes per side with every stone. Better be safe than sorry, I thought: I wanted to be sure I'd wept out the scratches from the previous stones. Later I got a microscope to be able to see exactly what I was doing, but you don't need one. And, as you'll have guessed, there is no exact number of strokes you need to do. As one accomplished sharpener who sometimes visits this forum likes to say: "it depends"

Eventually, knife after knife, you'll automatically feel what is going on, get the hang of it and listen to the stones. And then sharpening with the Wicked Edge will be Zen.

==========