How to get that razor sharp feeling

Posted by EricCleland - 24 Nov 2012 12:04

I was working on my folding knife I carry, and reshaped the blade with the 100 then worked the blade up to the 1000 stones then stropped it with the 10 leather, and the 14 leather but it does not have that razor feeling like you would get when you buy a new knife, I used a 22 deg. ankle for ATS 34 steel. How do you achieve that kind of sharpness?

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Re: How to get that razor sharp feeling

Posted by cbwx34 - 24 Nov 2012 13:30

Hey Eric..

Part of the answer depends on what you mean by "that razor feeling". New knives that are factory sharpened, are often left at a more coarse grit, so that if you run a finger down them, they'll feel sharp, vs. an edge like a razor blade that is sharp, but may not feel that way to the touch. (Just hitting opposite ends of the spectrum here).

One way to test it, is to see how it cuts what you want it to. You might also vary how much you strop, and look at some of the threads on stropping at a lower angle, so that the edge isn't rounded over or smoothed out too much.

I'm also assuming you correctly sharpened the knife... raising a burr etc.

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Re: How to get that razor sharp feeling

Posted by ApexGS - 24 Nov 2012 13:50

There's a lot of discussion spattered around the boards on what exactly "feel" entails in regards to sharpness of an edge. Curtis has a very good point that coarser grits, even just stopping at 1000 grit diamond, will give more of a "sticky" sharpness compared to a finely polished and stropped edge. I noticed that during my experimenting with the strops, and for EDC type use I tend to favor the 1000 grit diamond stone with a couple passes on the 5um leather to clean the very edge up a bit. That keeps more of the "feel" I'm after, and cuts perfectly for my usage.

I also noticed that when using strops, changing the angle on the arms can result in a very different feel.

I'm not sure what the mechanics are there, but I played with Clay's suggestion to slightly decrease the angle when stropping. It definitely feels more like a smooth, glassy sharp to me at least. Though it may not feel it, it's still screamin' sharp!

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Re: How to get that razor sharp feeling
Posted by EricCleland - 24 Nov 2012 13:54

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How much do you decrease the angle to strop? is 1-2 deg. or more like 5

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Re: How to get that razor sharp feeling
Posted by cbwx34 - 24 Nov 2012 14:03

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I can't find the post... but I think he was going 2 degrees lower and still cleaning up the edge.

I've had good luck keeping the same angle, but only stropping about 10 strokes/side, with either the 10m or 5m strops... just enough to clean up the edge.

Another alternative that some like is to strop the edge, then go back and just do a couple of strokes per side with either the ceramic or finest diamond stone you have... just enough to add a little "bite" back into the blade.

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Re: How to get that razor sharp feeling
Posted by EricCleland - 24 Nov 2012 14:27

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yeah I have the 10 and the 14 strop but can you do the same with the new stones clay has out that our diamond stones?

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Re: How to get that razor sharp feeling
Posted by cbwx34 - 24 Nov 2012 14:46

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Sorry, I don't understand your question.

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Re: How to get that razor sharp feeling
Posted by PhilipPasteur - 24 Nov 2012 15:34

If I am reading your post correctly, No. Stones and strops act differently at the edge. Clay talks about decreasing the angle with the strops because thy give a bit and tend to wrap around the edge.

You can change the angle, increase it, to add a micro-bevel, but that it a different technique entirely.

If you decrease the angle with stones, unless you spend lots of time, you will not be hitting the edge at all... and waste your time in the process.

EricCleland wrote:

yeah I have the 10 and the 14 strop but can you do the same with the new stones clay has out that our diamond stones?

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Re: How to get that razor sharp feeling
Posted by Geocyclist - 24 Nov 2012 16:25

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cbwx34 wrote:

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If you are thinking of what I am thinking of it's "WEPS Stropping 101" page 1, Clay's first post. He says 1-2 degrees.

This is because leather gives a little, so the exact same angle it would start rolling/rounding the edge off. Also the "give" of leather depends on how much pressure you use stropping.

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Re: How to get that razor sharp feeling

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 24 Nov 2012 17:43

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www.wickededgeusa.com/index.php?option=c...2&Itemid=63#3671

Clay says:

"Those are great questions. I almost always strop after I've completed all the stones I'm using in a given sequence. You should see a rapid improvement in bevel polish with the strops. Depending on the final geometry you want, you may lower the angle by one or two degrees before stropping, the reason being that the pliability of the leather will create a convex edge and widen your angle slightly. What happens is that if you strop at the same angle and the leather compresses as you push into the blade, it will roll over the edge of the knife and give you a slight curvature and a slightly wider angle. If you strop at the same angle at which you sharpened, it's important to use very light pressure, especially if you want to limit the amount of convexing that occurs. If you lower the angle by a degree or two, you won't have as much convexing and you can press a little harder. You'll also be able to do as many strokes as you like, improving the bevel polish. Although some of the grits of the strops are coarser than some of the stones, there is less abrasive density and the actual effect is as if you were using a finer grit, again due to the pliability of the leather. "

I have seen other places where he talks about up to three degrees. This may be when he is stropping with so much stiction and pressure that he is lifting his base off of the table..

I go about 1.5 degrees steeper with cow leather strops, 1 degree with kangaroo or horse butt, and the same angle as my base angle if using nanocloth. I got there by trying different combinations. If you use very light strokes with strops where the media is quite dry, and stay under 30 or so strokes you probably can ignore all of this. I did a whole bunch of knives before this ever came up and was really happy with my results.

BTW, I have soem decent knives, some that people rave about how sharp they come from the factory (one such manufacturer is Spyderco, just read their forums to see the raves..). I have yet to get one out of the box with as gpretty/functional/sharp an edge as I get with the WEPS.

I really don't understand what you say about edge feel, this is higly subjective. I can say that I am pretty

sure that if you spend some time experimenting and following some of the advice offered here you will get to where you feel the same as I do about factory edges (no comparison with the perfected WEPS edge!!

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