Thought on Hand Stropping with cheap compounds?

Posted by dschur - 21 Aug 2011 10:28

I was wonerding what thoughts are on hand stropping with the mass produced compounds after using the wicked edge for maintenance?

I currently use my wicked edge down to 1 micron strops and I love the edges. I'd like to keep it that way for as long as possible.

But, I do have a few strops around from my pre wicked edge days. I keep one at home, one in the office, and a portable one for camping. Typically they are loaded on one side with the green compound (chrome oxide?) and the other with red rouge (ferric oxide?).

There is just something so convenient (and a little Zen) about being able to pull out the hand strop after a little knife use and touch it up. It's a bit more convenient than setting up the WE, and to be honest I find it relaxing (I know, I'm weird).

I think I would just use the red jewelers rouge for touchup, as it is very low abrasive, more of a polishing compound from what I understand.

So my question is, would this be a bad thing (hand stropping on the red rouge)? Am I actually regressing the blade faster by giving it 20 or so strokes occasionally and requiring more frequent trips back to the WE, or is it good for the knife/edge (better than leaving it alone)? I also wonder if the randomness (varying angles/pressures/draws across the edge) inherent in hand stropping (and controlled out on the WE), might actually lead to a higher polish or appearance of it, by crossing the scratches.

Dave

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Re: Thought on Hand Stropping with cheap compounds?

Posted by leomitch - 21 Aug 2011 17:02

A good question Dave. I use some Veritas Green Compound(aluminum and chromium oxide mix .5 microns) from Lee Valley and some gold and a red compound(ferric oxide 1 micron) from a local carving supply to give a few strops now and again to maintain my edges. I am not sure of the micron sizes of these compounds but they seem to do a good maintenance job. The yellow/gold compound seems to be

titanium oxide (.25 microns) from what I read on Google a few moments ago.

Leo

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Re: Thought on Hand Stropping with cheap compounds?
Posted by wickededge - 22 Aug 2011 10:08

Hey Dave,

I think that if you're liking the results and the process of hand stropping for touch-ups, then go with it. If you get carried away some time and roll up on the edge too far, it's easy enough to correct. You could color the bevel with marker to make sure your hitting the angle correctly freehand.

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Re: Thought on Hand Stropping with cheap compounds?
Posted by dschur - 22 Aug 2011 10:25

Thanks Clay for confirming hand stropping is not harmful, and thanks for the marker trick, I never thought of that on strops and it gives instant feedback on what is being stopped (really confirmed for me that the whole edge was stropped in one pass - wow!)

I really like that even through your business sell the wicked edge and the associated supplies (diamond strop pastes), you are not overly pushing the supplies, both on this question and the how many knives can I strop before I recharge (~100). It shows you are keeping it real (the results) and not trying to over-push the reusables (strop paste) in the shampoo label model (wash, rinse, repeat).

To me, that is very cool

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Re: Thought on Hand Stropping with cheap compounds?
Posted by leomitch - 10 Sep 2011 07:55

I am not sure of the micron grits I suggested in the post above. Please feel free to correct any errors.

Leo

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Re: Thought on Hand Stropping with cheap compounds?
Posted by garyfergus - 15 Oct 2011 08:48

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dschur wrote:

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To me, that is very cool

Good point, fully agree!

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Re: Thought on Hand Stropping with cheap compounds?
Posted by leomitch - 15 Oct 2011 18:50

Like any kind of stropping, aside from touching up the edge, it is also slowly convexing the edge. So eventually that bevel will change its shape to the convex shape we know and love. Nothing wrong with that! But if you want, it is but a few minutes work on the WEPS to get a nice sharp shoulder with the attendant bevel. Sweet!

Leo

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Re: Thought on Hand Stropping with cheap compounds?
Posted by dgriff - 15 Oct 2011 22:50

I read all of this good information and wonder; "Will I ever get *my* WEPS so I can try it too?". Well, will I?

Heh, I don't know either...

Currently, after I sharpen a blade with my existing system, I strop with 3M lapping film @ 3 micron on a firm mouse pad. It seems to do the job (with my little experience) and it's not very expensive.

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Re: Thought on Hand Stropping with cheap compounds?

Posted by KenSchwartz - 16 Mar 2012 01:23

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leomitch wrote:

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Leo

Well you could use the strop mounted on the paddle to freehand sharpen as well, but as LEO points out, stropping on the WEPS will give you greater precision and less rounding of the edge over time. Precision stropping is especially advantageous if you are using several levels of refinement (grits) stropping as opposed to just your final strop. Of course, the compounds you use for stropping on the WEPS can be applied to bench sized strops as well. And the cheap compounds could be used on the WEPS too (not that I would recommend that, but I'm biased 🙂
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Ken

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Re: Thought on Hand Stropping with cheap compounds?

Posted by BassLakeDan - 31 Mar 2012 00:18

KenSchwartz wrote:

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Leo

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Ken

I did not realize that this thread was here on the forum, as I am a newbie to posting, and have limited understanding of how all this works. So long story short mistakenly I posted my thoughts about the above topics at:

www.wickededgeusa.com/index.php?option=c...tart=6&Itemid=63 but will expand them here a bit..

Mentioned in my other post was my preference for non-leather strops and the use of cheap easy to obtain spanish cedar wood strips for a non compliant base material to hold strop compounds. I feel there is a strong case to be made for the abandonment of leather as the stropping material of choice. Now that you have a nice edge on your steel via the WEPS system, why should you convex it with a leather strop? It is the form compliant nature of leather that is causing the convexing, not the compound. I have been stropping blades for many years, experimented with all sorts of compounds and strops, and can say that (for me anyway..) the evil-doer of a bad strop is (in order of issue..) : 1.) a compliant base material 2.) bad hand technique 3.) and running a distant third (if at all) is the compound itself.

For what is worth, I feel that in the world of knife sharpening, once you get past the level of any compound that is capable of mirroring the metal to the naked eye then you at the limit of what you can reasonably achieve for the purpose of knife sharpening. Discussions of 0.25 micron high purity CBN sprays and the like, are to me (sorry not trying to offend anyone) are more or less of an exercise in nonsense and probably frustration. It takes very specialized, and very expensive equipment to apply such abrasives in a productive way. If you are a technician in a Class 5 clean room, with the right equipment, and the task at hand is flattening the base for a space satellite sensor then yes maybe we should be talking sub micron abrasives.

So I say, go ahead and use "cheap compounds" ... experiment, and have fun!

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