Does anyone shave regularly with a straight edge?
Posted by drmatt357 - 31 Oct 2011 00:52

I've been thinking about it now that I have the tool to keep it razor sharp. I saw Clay sharpen one and saw Tom shave with a kitchen knife. Does anyone use one daily? If so, any advice on technique or where to get the best ones?

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Re: Does anyone shave regularly with a straight edge?
Posted by babo - 31 Oct 2011 08:02

I use a Hart Steel razor www.hartsteel.com/catalog/item/7762903/8899171.htm and Truefitt & Hill Trafalgar shaving cream with a boar bristle brush. There are many websites on shaving with a straight razor just google it. I shave after a shower letting the heat and moisture soften my beard. The one thing I will caution you on is NEVER draw a straight razor diagonally; it WILL cut you. A good razor should not need honing often if properly maintained with a leather strop. Take some time and do the research before you buy; a good razor is $$$ but you can't get a better shave.

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Re: Does anyone shave regularly with a straight edge?
Posted by jendeindustries - 31 Oct 2011 08:31

I'm just chiming in quickly for now

You don't need the WEPS for most razor honing and routine maintenance. However, you can still use the hones, stones and strops from the paddles... I'll come back with more as soon as I can!

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Re: Does anyone shave regularly with a straight edge?
Posted by komitadjie - 31 Oct 2011 09:53

Not daily yet, but a couple times a week. I've actually got one of Tom's straights right now that I'm using. Takes time, but it's a lot of fun and gives a great shave.

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Re: Does anyone shave regularly with a straight edge?
Posted by babo - 31 Oct 2011 10:57

I've found that a good shaving soap/cream make the difference. Never use anything out of a can; the alcohol dries out your skin. I have a fair complexion and the Truefitt & Hill creams work great. About $30 for a tub but so far mines lasted 6 months plus.

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Re: Does anyone shave regularly with a straight edge?

Posted by jendeindustries - 31 Oct 2011 17:39

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First, I don't expect people to be shaving off their kitchen knives or hunting knives on a regular basis - like this crazy Swedish guy

However, for the razors, the vast majority are honed (sharpened) with the spine flat against the stone - essentially straight razors have their own jig. While the WEPS paddles are on the short side for razors honing, they can certainly be used off the guide arms as hones.

There will be times, however, when the geometry of the razor will be off due to various reasons, mostly due to factory grinding or accumulated honing and stropping issues. Normally a layer of tape would be used, but you could put it in the WEPS clamp and set an angle of 18-20 degrees per side and go from there.

Some pointers:

In general, you do not raise a burr like in knife sharpening.

You will definitely need to lighten up on the pressure. Pressure can bend the edge over, fatiguing the metal, which won't hold up for a shave later. Razors are thin and will flex with even the slightest pressure. There is usually a learning curve that goes through several stages of "oh - so THAT'S what you mean by no pressure".

The light pressure slows down the initial sharpening of a razor (called bevel setting). You can use the diamond plates, but I recommend starting with no less than the WEPS 600, and even that may be a bit much, depending on the razor. In general, the Choseras or Shaptons are much better suited for this work, but the WEPS diamond pastes are also good once you've got the bevel properly set.

You'll need to refine to at least 8K (2 micron), but higher refinement is smoother for shaving, IMO. (That's another argument for later.)

Always use the clean leather to lightly strop the edge before a shave.

I've found that a good shaving soap/cream make the difference. Never use anything out of a can; the alcohol dries out your skin.

+1 on Babo. A good pre-shave is usually the make-or-break factor of a successful shave, too. A hot towel and even hot lather goes far, and feels wonderful. Don't forget to stretch that skin!

And one last thing - We'll need a video if you do it!

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Re: Does anyone shave regularly with a straight edge?

Posted by gofly - 01 Nov 2011 10:16

Tom

I watched the video and got the name of the kershaw knife and went to knifeworks and purchased one. The steel is advertised as 14c28n. I hope this is close to the same as the 13c26, do you have any ideas on that, what angle do you use to sharpen that puppy on and can I get to shavin sharp with the WE system? I have the pro kit and the two strops they sell.

Thanks

Lucky

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Re: Does anyone shave regularly with a straight edge?

Posted by Razoredge - 01 Nov 2011 14:07

Lucky, the 14c28n is basicly updated 13c26. (added nitrogen to increase rust resistance)

Mark

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Re: Does anyone shave regularly with a straight edge?

Posted by jendeindustries - 01 Nov 2011 19:24

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gofly wrote:

Tom

I watched the video and got the name of the kershaw knife and went to knifeworks and purchased one. The steel is advertised as 14c28n. I hope this is close to the same as the 13c26, do you have any ideas on that, what angle do you use to sharpen that puppy on and can I get to shavin sharp with the WE system? I have the pro kit and the two strops they sell.

Thanks

Lucky

Lucky,

First, I don't advocate shaving with anything other than a proper standard razor... not that I have any intentions of stopping you - just be sure to get a video.

That crazy Swede (Jens) from the previous video is a very experienced straight razor shaver, as you can see from the speed and deftness at which he moved his EDC across his face.

OK, with the proper caveats out of the way, you'll quickly find that there is a difference between knife sharp and shaving sharp. They serve two different purposes.

If you're going for shaving sharp, whittling hair won't be a comfortable shave. You'll need to get the hairs to pop.

The pro pack from WEPS has up to 1K diamond, which is a very good start. At the very least, you'll need the 5 and 3.5 micron diamond pastes if you have them, although adding the 10 micron may help the transition from the different types of scratches of the plates vs. strops.

I would highly recommend adding Hand American's 1 micron diamond spray (here) to at least get you more in the refinement level ball park for a decent shave. I haven't used the HA 1 micron specifically, but the general rule is that if it's from Hand American, it's good (I have their finer then 1 micron diamond products, though)

You can certainly use the WEPS to sharpen the Kershaw. I know Jens (the crazy Swede) did his freehand, but when I did my cleaver, I ended up at 18 degrees. I would suggest something between 15 and 20 degrees per side. The Angle cube will really come in handy here.

Start by profiling the knife on the 100 WEPS, you can raise a burr here, when you've raised a burr on both sides, then still with the 100 WEPS, continue to do abot 50-60 extra light and consistent alternating strokes - you don't want a burr, but you want the smoothest surface from the stones. Then continue on at each level with light alternating strokes - If you can check with some sort of magnification that will help you gauge where you are in terms of scratch consistency on the bevel. When you get to the plain leather, do 10-20 super light strokes and without taking the knife off the clamp, try popping a hair on the blade or try running the hair up and down the edge.

It you whittle it, it is not quite there - go back to your finest or second finest abrasive and do dome more strokes.

Oh - and don't forget the shave video

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Re: Does anyone shave regularly with a straight edge?

Posted by jendeindustries - 02 Nov 2011 18:54

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Jens The Crazy Swede is back! This time with a head shave with a cleaver and a chisel - no joke! I'm beginning to wonder if he has any regular straight razors at all.....

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