How to use strops, I keeps slicing them

Posted by KevinCoughlin - 02 Jan 2013 19:31

Hi I was just wondering how you guys use your strops, I noticed yesterday after doing a chefs knife that my strops had about 4 slices in them, I was pissed when I noticed it and hope I didn't ruin them, was just wondering if you had any tips on how to prevent it???? And I'm gonna have to be a little more careful when sharpening long blades... Lost the tip of my pinky finger yesterday and had to take a trip to the ER, once I got home I finished the knife and the results were awesome, i love this system! Thanks everyone, Semper Fi

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Re: How to use strops, I keeps slicing them

Posted by xuzme720 - 02 Jan 2013 20:24

KevinCoughlin wrote:

Hi I was just wondering how you guys use your strops, I noticed yesterday after doing a chefs knife that my strops had about 4 slices in them, I was pissed when I noticed it and hope I didn't ruin them, was just wondering if you had any tips on how to prevent it???? And I'm gonna have to be a little more careful when sharpening long blades... Lost the tip of my pinky finger yesterday and had to take a trip to the ER, once I got home I finished the knife and the results were awesome, i love this system! Thanks everyone, Semper FiWell, first thing is, keep those little piggies behind the stones! Sorry, I'm a smarta$$ by nature, please don't take offense! But, as you know firsthand, it's real easy to cut yourself if you are not careful, especially with the edges you'll be getting with this system. That said, let's move on to the strop issue. it's just a matter of technique. Never move the strop down when it's touching the blade, obvious I know but it's really easy to nick it if you're not lifting before the end of your stroke. Use lighter pressure, one of the main things to do, and try to keep your strokes just a bit more vertical. Any time the strop is moving along the blade with no upward sweep, you risk another nick.

I hope this helps!

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Re: How to use strops, I keeps slicing them

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 02 Jan 2013 20:33

Kevin,

I have sliced the heck out of my strops in the past. I don't seem to do that as much these days. Not sure why, but I can tell you what I think the difference is.

I use very light strokes and concentrate on always moving the strop away from the edge, not sliding it

along the edge. This takes some practice with longer blades because you run out of travel at the tip.

If doing a longer blade, I pause and re-cock, at some point, so I have enough travel to keep pushing the strop away from the edge, even at the tip. It is very easy to start sliding the strop along the edge when covering the curve at the tip... don't, you will slice the leather.

Try decreasing your angle a bit when stropping. Various threads here have talked about 1 to 3 degrees. I typically decrease the angle by about a degree.. or maybe 0.5 to 0.75 if using the angle cube.

If you decrease the angle, say from 20 to 19 degrees, and use light strokes, you will also decrease the likelyhood of slicing those strops.

Don't despair though, the strops can survive a good bit of wear and tear and still work well. At some point you may decide to recondition them. I have a glass plate, I put 220 grit sandpaper on the plate and rub the leather on it until most, if not all, of the iregularities are gone. I then switch to 600 grit and resurface them. At that point, put your choice of abrasives on them and have at it. The results are just as good as if they were new.

BTW, I have sliced myself pretty good using the WEPS. This is also something that you learn.. careful and deliberate with the stones and strops... and never reach across that sharp blade for anything..

Phil

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Re: How to use strops, I keeps slicing them

Posted by coryschnaufer - 02 Jan 2013 20:45

What I ended up doing on the longer blades was shortening my strokes. You can walk your strops from one end to the other in 2 or 3 strokes and not nick them at all and still get good coverage. The other thing that I have tried to do is slow down a little. I know I know you get in that rhythm and it just feels right to go for it. The problem is that rhythm was created with your stones because you use them more than everything else and it doesn't matter if you drag a stone like it does a strop. My first set of strops lasted about a year and then they were falling to pieces. I feel your pain but I promise the second set lasts a lot better. I have yet to nick set two and I'm a good 25 knives into them. Oh and Chesty is a wuss!

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Re: How to use strops, I keeps slicing them
Posted by Geocyclist - 02 Jan 2013 22:44

I would agree with what everyone has said. I can only add this, not only pay attention to not going down, but also making good flat contact, and being careful with the tip. (I start my strop stroke tip to heel). I have sliced a few times, but more often have little bit cuts from the tip. My philosophy is that by paying more attention to the stops it will make my other stones works better too. With the stones you can't slice them, but a bad stroke can't be good for your edge.

That's dedication that you finished the knife after getting back from the ER.

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Re: How to use strops, I keeps slicing them
Posted by BobNash - 02 Jan 2013 23:51

Hey Kevin - welcome to the forum - hope your pinkie is healing up nicely

Great advice here on keeping from whittling away your leather - and your fingers.
Only thing I would add, is that unless you actually take off a big chunk of the surface or they are about to fall to pieces like Cory's were, you can just keep on using them. I occasionally have to reverse the handles on the rod as the surface can get a little bumpy. That smooths things back out again.

Gotta move out the rod faster than you move along the blade - that is what I always think about when stropping and.... **xuzme720 wrote:**

keep those little piggies behind the stones!

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Re: How to use strops, I keeps slicing them
Posted by GrahamWyatt - 03 Jan 2013 02:36

Awesome (about the finishing on yr return from ER). I too made some slicing nicks on my first long blade last night. Does any one know how to repair the leather strops.

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Re: How to use strops, I keeps slicing them
Posted by PhilipPasteur - 03 Jan 2013 09:00

PhilipPasteur wrote:

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Phil

Of course, you can also just replace the leather if they get bad enough that the above wil not work.

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Re: How to use strops, I keeps slicing them

Posted by JamesBell - 03 Jan 2013 09:11

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PhilipPasteur wrote:

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BTW, I have sliced myself pretty good using the WEPS. This is also something that you learn.. careful and deliberate with the stones and strops... and never reach across that sharp blade for anything..

Phil's note above has good advice on how to repair the leather strops. I have used what he describes with sandpaper and got very good results. Kevin with each knife you will get better, and welcome to the forum.

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Re: How to use strops, I keeps slicing them

Posted by Geocyclist - 03 Jan 2013 12:52

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James, Phil,

The stops I made by hand (leather glued on wood) I put the rough side up.

My WE's strops are smooth side up. Does sanding take the smooth edge off down to rough grain leather? Or are not not even sanding that much off?

I have never sanded leather.

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