Sharpening Japanese Knives (Global)

Posted by DavidKaeppel - 12 Feb 2013 13:21

Hello everyone,

I purchased a set of Globals about a month ago and use them almost daily. They are fantastic and still very sharp. However, I have been doing some reading to find the best way to maintain them. I hone them on a weekly basis on a steel. For sharpening, Global recommends a 10-15 degree angle, preferably using water stones. So, my question is, what would be the best way to replicate the same or similar edge using the Wicked Edge?

I do not own a Wicked Edge system yet, but plan on buying one in the near future. It appears that with the ProPack II, the lowest possible angle is 13 degrees. Is there a way for this system achieve the specified 10-15 degree convex factory edge?

Any input would be appreciated! Sorry if this topic has already been covered.

-Dave

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Re: Sharpening Japanese Knives (Global)

Posted by cbwx34 - 12 Feb 2013 14:02

Hey Dave:

Welcome to the forum.

The angles on the arm bar are based on a knife that extends 5/8" above the clamp. So with wider knives, and/or by clamping them higher, you can reach a lower angle. A higher knife also allows you to set the angle closer than 13 deg. without hitting the clamp.

For example here's a video of Clay sharpening a knife at 12 deg... and this is with the older arms/angle rod setup.

The video also answers your other question... Wicked Edge carries a line of Chosera waterstones you can use. I'm not sure, but I think you can call Wicked Edge if you wanted a set up with just the waterstones, although I think you'd benefit from having the diamond stones too... you'll probably find you'll be sharpening more than the Globals.

Youll also find videos that Clay and others have done for creating and maintaining a convex edge.

Hope that helps!

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Re: Sharpening Japanese Knives (Global)

Posted by mark76 - 12 Feb 2013 16:14

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Hey Dave,

Welcome!

I understand why you love your Globals. Really thin, great steel and very light, especially if you're used to Western knives with big bolsters… They were my entry to Japanese knives as well. And even though I've now got a few really expensive knives (that is not to say Globals are cheap), I still regularly grab the Global gyuto. And the 14 cm santoku is still my girlfriend's go to-knife.

Funnily enough the first knife I wrote about on my blog was a Global gyuto. And was even on creating a convex edge on this knife. If you're interested, you can find it here .

So I understand why Global recommend a convex edge. That said, I think most cooks will agree that the most important aspect of kitchen knife geometry is that it is thin behind the edge. (But don't take my word for that. Even in the knife world of knife people sometimes have completely different opinions on that and they can also have heated debates.)

What I don't understand is the angles Global recommend. I'd read that too, when I sharpened my first Global. I think 10 degrees is much too steep. Even 15 degrees is quite steep. That depends on what you do with the knife, of course. But nowadays I put a 15 degree edge on these knives with a 17 degree microbevel.

And they cut great ☺

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Re: Sharpening Japanese Knives (Global)
Posted by DavidKaeppel - 12 Feb 2013 19:20

Thanks for the info! Makes sense that the angle would vary based on knife height. I assume he used the angle cube to determine the angle?

Unfortunately, I can't afford the Chosera waterstones right off the bat, although I'm sure I'll get there soon enough. I am most definitely looking forward to having the diamond stones as I do have a wide array of fixed blade and folding EDC knives that need sharpening. At this point I'm looking at getting the Pro Pack I with an angle cube. I watched another of Clay's videos on how to create a convex edge, so that also looks pretty do-able.

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Re: Sharpening Japanese Knives (Global)
Posted by Geocyclist - 12 Feb 2013 21:17

Welcome David,

If you get the PP1 I would suggest the 800/1000 Chosera. After finishing with the 1000 diamonds this stone will pick up nicely and leave a smooth, polished edge. For kitchen knives I don't think the 5k/10k Chosera are needed anyway. With 800/1k you get a lot of bang for the buck. With the strops you can still nice mirror polish too.

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Re: Sharpening Japanese Knives (Global)
Posted by DavidKaeppel - 19 Apr 2013 10:50

UPDATE:

So I finally pulled the trigger on the WE Pro Pack I + angle cube and 1200/1600 superfine ceramic stones about 2 weeks ago. The ceramic stones are on back order until May, but even without them I'm getting some razor sharp edges. I have been practicing on some cheap kitchen knives and old pocket knives over the last few days.

A few things I have noticed so far:

- Most of the stones are very "toothy" out of the box. The 100/200 grit stones actually made some small chips in the edge on one of my old pocket knives. However, after sharpening eight or ten knives, they seem to have broken in a bit and don't bite quite as hard. Reprofiling takes very little time with these stones.

- Strops also have a break in period. It was a very slow process with the first couple knives I stropped, but after reapplying the stropping compound and using them for a bit, they work much faster now.

Are any of you able to get a true mirror finish with the 1000 grit stones + 5 micron/3.5 micron strops? All of my knives have somewhat of a reflective edge, but definitely not a mirror polish. I usually finish the 1000 grit with very light strokes, then strop about 200 passes per side with the 5 micron, then 200 passes with the 3.5 micron. I can post some pics later if needed.

My Globals are still very sharp and don't really need to be sharpened yet. I would also like to use the superfine stones on them, so I'll just wait. Anyways, I'm really happy with my purchase. My only complaint is that I've run out of knives to sharpen

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