Edge for butcher
Posted by JamesSmith1 - 24 Nov 2011 01:36

I should get my WE next week. I bone 25 beef bodies a day and my wife slices. Can any one recomend what sort of edge/angle would be best for each job?

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Re: Edge for butcher
Posted by edhead35 - 24 Nov 2011 09:20

It depends.

For hacking through big heavy bones you want a wider angle 28-30 or more degrees per side on a thick cleaver. My uncle was a butcher for most of his post military life and his 13" dexter russell butcher knife which was high carbon steel (chef knife shape) he put a 20-25 degree per side for general use such as breaking down meat after quartered with less cutting through heavy bone. If the mrs. Has a thin slicer i wouldnt go less than 20 degrees per side unless she has a super hard Japanese supersteel type knife. If it is a standard saber style industrial steel goto 25 per side.

Try an angle and if it doesnt last make it wider. If it lasts and you want it to slice smoother narrow the angle. From my experience in kitchens, most run of the mill restaurant and industrial knives are cheap. You will have to hone on a steel often anyways. Hone until honing doesnt work then sharpen. With high hardness knives now you can get into actual sharp edge retention because they hold it well.

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Re: Edge for butcher
Posted by davidmcm77 - 24 Nov 2011 13:39

You could also go thinner and if it doesnt last you can increase the angle a couple of degrees and just put a micro bevel on the knife. That way it cuts like a thinner knife but has the edge retention of a wider angle.

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Re: Edge for butcher
Posted by gofly - 25 Nov 2011 09:59

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davidmcm77 wrote:

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this is good advice` I bought a Kershaw skyline after watching the crazy swede shave with one and put a 15 degree bevel on mine and down to .5 diamond spray on a strop. Man did that thing come out sharp. but while field dressing a deer with it I rolled the edge. The cutting part went great but when I split the ribs that is when the edge rolled a little. So instead of resharpeneing to the original 15 degrees I put a 20 degree micro bevel on. It still seems very sharp. Now all I need is another volunteer deer that needs the ribcage split to see if this edge will roll or not.

Lucky

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Re: Edge for butcher

Posted by wickededge - 26 Nov 2011 11:13

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gofly wrote:

davidmcm77 wrote:

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Lucky

Good stuff. I use the same technique until I find what a given knife will support. Then I have nice slim shoulders and an edge that suits the steel and use of the blade.

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Re: Edge for butcher

Posted by ronyd69 - 10 Dec 2011 19:27

I also agree with micro bevelling. I too am a butcher, but not the shop kind, i started off boning beef quarters on the table(block boning)in one of the biggest meat and lamb processing plants in ireland boning on average 110 plus quarters a day. We now work on a line system that me and another colleague developed and implemented making the flow of product more efficient and less risk of injury to the workforce. I have found that a basic v edge is good in the beef boning business if you just need your knives sharp,but when boning you also need the edge to be strong and this is where micro bevelling comes in. I run my victronox knives at a 17 or 18 degree angle depending on the thickness of the blade with a primary bevel 21 degrees. Now just to prove how effective this was i took one of the lads old knives and i mean it was old,like a needle and as sharp as a spoon, if you were to run it across your arm you would more than likely get a bad friction burn. I sharpened it up on the wicked edge exactly as i explained and boned all day every day for too weeks without touching it up on the wicked edge. No joke it was still super sharp at the end of the second week. Steeling is still required to maintain the edge. Knife steeling is an art in its own,can take years to master and can destroy a knife if wrongly used but this is a whole different topic. Hope this helped.

Ronan

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Re: Edge for butcher

Posted by Algonquin - 11 Dec 2011 12:44

Ronan,

Tell us more about steeling. Now that I have some really great edges on my kitchen knives, 18 - 20 degrees without any microbeveling, I want to try to keep them cutting well. Before the WEPS, when I did my best by hand, and the knife had been used some and needed steeling, I would do perhaps 2 fairly gentle passes on the steel on each side, 1-2, 1-2, and that seemed to bring the edge back nicely (such as it was!) I see these chefs on TV making a zillion passes on the steel with a lot of flourish and technique, but I always heard/thought that the steel just straightens a somewhat rolled edge and removes no material, so my thinking was, why keep going back and forth, back and forth. If it doesn't straighten after a couple gentle passes, it's not getting any better.

At least that's my uneducated thinking. Can you enlighten us on the basics of your steeling technique?

Regards,

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Re: Edge for butcher
Posted by JamesSmith1 - 12 Dec 2011 03:19

Thanks for all the feed back. While waiting for the WEPS to arrive I modified my old flipover bladesharpner to work similar to the WEPS. I set the angle at 21 and it works great but is a bit akward with the big stones. I will try the micro beveling when I get the real thing! Ronan what stones do you use for the primary bevel? I am getting all the diamond stones and the ceramic and strops. I've also made a double hollow grinder with two grinders, fully adjustable, water cooled, it can hollow a knife under 10 minutes which keeps the blade nice and thin. As for steeling I use a polished steel and an acid pitted steel to maintain the edge. Steel lightly at the same angle as the edge.

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Re: Edge for butcher
Posted by ronyd69 - 13 Dec 2011 14:43

To me the technique of blade steeling is all a matter of preference. Every butcher and or chef needs to make there own mistakes in order to master this very essential skill, but i will try and explain the technique i use that works best for me. If you search the internet on HOW TO USE A STEEL you always get these videos on some guy holding the steel vertical on a table top steeling at the same angle that he thinks the knife edge is honed at. When boning beef this isn't very cost effective as it is very time consuming and in the meat business time is money. If you for example hone your knife at 21 degrees and steel at exactly that same angle in my experience the knife will dull very quickly immaterial of how well you polished the edge to. I have always steeled higher than that of the honed edge thus creating a micro bevel making the knife both sharp and strong enough to withstand a hard days graft. If you hold the steel nice and firmly in your left hand (taking into account your right handed) your hand should be roughly level with your bellybutton with the steel pointing up in the air. Set your desired angle then make 2 or 3 alternating passes on each side of the steel with light pressure. keep raising the angle until you hit that perfect angle that your knife cuts through the beef like butter. The 3 steels that i use are the dick hygienic (rough) dick 2000(medium) dick polish. This works well for me and i hope this helps.

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Re: Edge for butcher
Posted by ronyd69 - 13 Dec 2011 14:49

Almost forgot the stones and the strops that you are getting should be fine as this is the combination that i use for all of my knives.

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