

Making A Leather Strop

Get your knife as sharp as you possibly can in that manner then get out your leather strop. They can be purchased and you can pay big bucks for one if you want, but you can easily make your own. Just find yourself a piece of wood, approximately 1 1/2 inches wide X 3/4 inch thick X 16 inches long. These figures can be changed to suit yourself. These are the dimensions I used to make mine. I left 11 inches as is and carved a rounded handle with the other 5 inches. I drilled a hole in the end of the handle and put a piece of leather through it and tied the ends together with a knot. This is mostly for looks. Get a piece of leather 1 1/2 inches X 11 inches, from a shoe repair shop or a leather craft shop and glue it to the wood. If you have an old leather belt laying around in the attic of the appropriate size, it will serve the same purpose. Of course you will want to glue the finished side down. I'll bet you can do that can't you? I put a handle on one end of mine but you might rather have a handle on both ends. Make it to suit yourself. I used 5 Minute, 2 Part Liquid Epoxy, the kind that comes in a double barrel plastic tube that looks sort of like a big hypodermic needle without the needle. You can buy it at any department store.



Stop Pattern

Get some sharpening compound. Ask 10 woodcarvers what is the best kind to use and you'll probably get 5 different answers. I have tried several kinds and I like yellowstone. It comes in a solid block 4 inches long X 1 inch

X 1 inch and is packed in a little cardboard box. It has a consistency similar to chalk. Scrape some of it off with the back side of your knife and let it fall onto your leather strop. In other words you are making a powder of it.

After coating the leather, it doesn't take much and after you get it embedded into the leather, it will last through several stroppings. You don't have to put it on every time. Strop your knife by laying it as flat as you can on the leather and while holding downward pressure on the knife, draw it toward you with the sharp edge trailing away from you. If you are using yellowstone, you will see your strop start turning black very quickly as you work your knife on it. This is the metal that is being cut from the knife. This lets you know that the strop and the yellowstone are doing their job.

continued

Your knife will be razor sharp with just a little effort.

Your knife will be ready to use. When it shows the least sign of losing its sharpness, strop it again. Don't wait until it becomes dull. Strop it often and you will seldom if ever use the stones again.

I didn't go into degree of angle to hold the blade and all that technical and scientific stuff. I don't know of too many people who are so machine like that they could hold a knife at a constant angle throughout a sharpening session anyway. Keep the blade of the knife protected by putting it in a case or toolbox where it won't be bumping up against any of your other tools or it will be dull the next time you need to use it. If you just follow these simple guidelines, use common sense, and do a little experimenting on your own you will find a happy medium for the angle that works best for you. You should get good results.

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