

# Facts About Sharpening Steels

A sharpening steel works on a very fundamental principle. Quite simply, it provides a grinding surface which is harder than the blade of the knife to be sharpened; this allows sharpening to take place.

The surface of a sharpening steel can be finished or “cut” several different ways.

## COARSE “SPIRAL” CUT

The coarse “spiral” cut (also known as the “British” or “helical” cut) sharpening steel is ideal for putting an edge on a blunt knife blade.

## PRECISION CUT

The “precision” cut (also known as the “Continental” cut) sharpening steel has unbroken cuts running the length of the steel. It is ideally suited for maintaining a good blade edge.

## POLISHED FINISH

The “polished” finish sharpening steel is perfectly smooth and is used for honing a knife blade. Honing refines or polishes the edge of a knife blade.

## COMBINATION SPIRAL/PRECISION CUT

Comprised of both the “spiral” and the “precision” cuts, the “Doublesharp” steel is ideal for restoring very dull knife blades.

## DIAMOND STEELS

In recent years, diamond steels have gained popularity. They are coated with ultra-fine 100% diamond abrasives and simultaneously lightly hone as they realign a knife edge.

Which sharpening steel to use depends on the sharpening job at hand. We recommend owning both “Doublesharp” and “Precision Cut” steels to ensure that you have the proper tools available when you need them.

## SHARPENING STEEL LENGTH

Sharpening steels come in lengths ranging from 3 to 14 inches (7.5 cm to 36 cm). As a rule, a sharpening steel should be at least as long as the length of the knife blade being sharpened.

## SHARPENING STEEL SHAPE

Sharpening steels can be round or oval. Round sharpening steels are generally preferred, while oval shaped sharpening steels provide a larger sharpening surface.

## CLEANING

A sharpening steel may become soiled through use and develop a grease barrier. This grease barrier will prevent the steel from “biting” and the knife will not be sharpened properly. To avoid a dirt build up, wash the sharpening steel regularly in hot sudsy water and dry immediately to avoid rusting. Polypropylene handles may be sterilized by boiling the handle in water.

## HOW TO SHARPEN A KNIFE USING A SHARPENING STEEL

A good knife is easy to sharpen and should be sharpened regularly. “Little and often,” defines how professionals sharpen a knife. A few strokes on either side of the blade, every time the knife is used will maintain sharpness and guarantee best performance. A knife with a sharp blade always works better and more safely because it cuts easily.

After numerous sharpenings, a blade may begin to lose its original shape, or have been sharpened to the point where the blade edge is thicker than desired. If this happens, the knife should be professionally reground. This process will restore the blade to its original state.

## SHARPENING A KNIFE IN SIX EASY STEPS

1. Hold the sharpening steel in your left hand with the guard positioned to protect your hand. (If you are left-handed, hold the steel in your right hand.)
2. Hold the knife in your right hand. Place the blade's edge closest to the handle near the tip of the steel. (If you are left-handed, hold the knife in your left hand.)  
(See Figure 1)
3. Tilt the blade of the knife at an angle of approximately 25 degrees to the steel. (See Figure 2)
4. Draw the knife across the sharpening steel until the blade's tip is near the steel's safety guard. Keep the pressure light and even. (See Figure 1)
5. Repeat step four on the other side of the sharpening steel, maintaining the same pressure and angle.
6. Alternating sides, repeat this sharpening process several times.

A knife “sharpened little and often,” will provide years of perfect cutting and chopping performance.

Figure 1

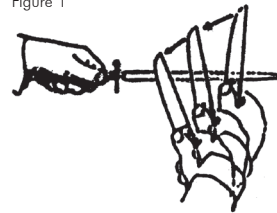
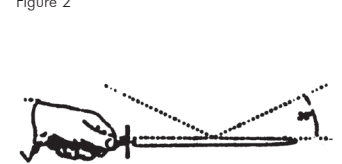


Figure 2



## WHY USE A SHARPENING STEEL?

A sharpening steel is still the best way to sharpen a quality knife. Using the correct steel for sharpening a knife will not remove more of the blade than is necessary (excessive blade removal is the major drawback of mechanical sharpening devices).

Additionally, a sharpening steel represents a long lasting investment that will prove to be economical and handy to use. 