

A Guide to Honing and Sharpening

Initial Hand Honing - Creating The Wire Edge

Click on the picture to enlarge



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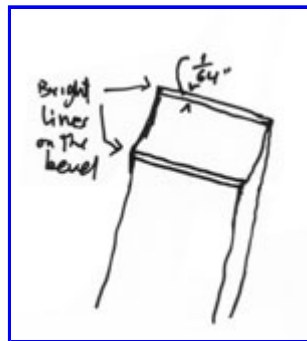
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What follows now is the sequence for first creating the "burr" or "wire edge" on the tool and then in succeeding steps, removing it by abrasion and and fatiguing the metal by alternately rubbing the bevel, then the back, onto the stone. The steps (shown on the previous page) for holding and moving the tool on the stone are always the same regardless of where in the honing procedure we are.

Hint: at first, try stopping at the end of each stroke to check the solidity of the down holding pressure on the bevel. The bevel should "click" against the stone. As your hold-down technique becomes consistently good progress to continuous back and forth strokes.



A. Rub bevel on medium India oilstone



1. If tool is fresh from the grinding wheel, rub until a bright line appears on the bevel all along the cutting edge and the heel (= 20-30 strokes). (**Note: Do not rub back of tool yet.**) The bright lines are flats abraded by the stone; they needn't be wide. A scant 1/64" is enough.



Feeling for a burr. Always feel by moving your finger from the back of the chisel off the edge, not onto the edge.



The burr or wire edge on the back

2. If tool already has the bright lines (i.e., was previously honed on an oilstone) then rub till a slight roughness (a "burr" or "wire edge") can be felt on the blade's back, just behind the cutting edge. This burr should be palpable all along the cutting edge. Keep checking your progress. When examined under a bright light **no** light should reflect **on** the edge itself (on the edge viewed from the end, not the flats on the bevel). Any reflected light indicates dullness. Sharp edges reflect no light!

Thoroughly wipe all the oil from the



blade before switching from the India stone to the Arkansas stone. The oil is contaminated with coarse grit from the India stone that can scratch the Arkansas stone. This step is very important to protect your Arkansas stone.



B. Apply a liberal coat of oil to the surface of the Arkansas stone. Rub the bevel on the Arkansas Stone (20 - 30 strokes).



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