

# Honing, Finetuning and Maintaining your Blades

You must keep your knife steel and strop handy while you're working in the kitchen. Just a few minutes of common slicing on a wooden or plastic cutting board can thrash your knife's delicate edge out of alignment.

Once you're used to the feel of a sharp knife, you'll feel the difference immediately. When this happens, just a few rapid strokes (about ten) on a good quality Honing Steel on either side of the blade will bring the edges back into alignment.

You need to hold your blade at approximately a 22.5 degree angle while simultaneously sliding the blade downward along the shaft of the steel drawing the edge of the blade toward you, covering the entire length of the blades edge.

No blade is truly sharpened until it has been stropped with good quality leather to finetune the edge for sharpness.

Stropping allows you to maintain your blade's edge for longer intervals.

Traditionally, this blade maintenance is done using a steel first, followed by stropping.

The strop does not replace the steel but enhances the work a steel does and then finishes the sharpening and maintenance process off. It is not so important to keep the blade at a particular angle while stropping, however the blade is stropped by sliding the edge backward on both sides of the blade (about ten times), in the opposite direction of the Honing Steel, drawing the spine of the knife toward you and then away from you.

Because good quality leather is like your skin, you will need to moisturise your strop every now and then to prevent it from drying out. The best way to do that is to rub a small amount of olive oil or canola oil into your strop with your finger, over the whole surface. Let the oil soak in and dry before using your strop.

After using the Honing Steel and Strop, you should wash, rinse and carefully wipe the blade dry to prevent any steel filings from getting in the food.

Stropping on leather is the last stage of blade sharpening and maintenance, and you can feel the difference instantaneously.

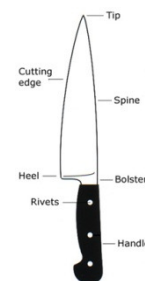
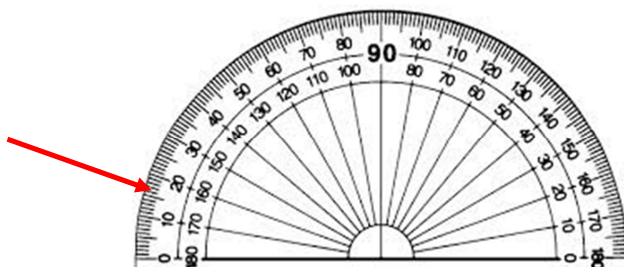
Honing Steel



Honing Leather Strop



Protractor to give you an idea what 22.5 degrees looks like, although there is no need to be scientific about the angle. As long as it is approximately 22.5 Degree angle.



Parts of the Knife