



Using Knives

Knives basically come in two forms, a folding knife and a sheath knife. Whichever knife is used, it should be suitable to the skill level of the user and the task it is to be used for. A locking folding knife is safer than a normal folding knife as there is less chance of the blade closing on the user and causing injury.

DO:

- Keep the blades closed or sheathed, except when you are using them.
- Cut away from yourself, ensuring that no one is within arms reach of your knife
- Keep your knife sharp and clean. A sharp blade is easier to control than a dull one; a clean blade will last longer.
- Pass the knife in a safe manner – close the blade of folding knives and use the technique below with sheathed knives. When handing over the knife, the person receiving the knife should acknowledge they have a grip of the knife by saying 'Thank You', allowing the other person to release their grip.



DON'T

- Carry a knife around the site in your hand or carry a folding knife with the blade open.
- Cut toward yourself. If the blade slips, you may be injured.
- Pound on a knife handle, it will damage it.
- Pound on the blade of a folding knife to split light wood as it may break. Sheath knives are more suitable for batoning/splitting light wood.
- Throw a knife.
- Pry with the point of a cutting blade. It can snap off.
- Put a knife in a fire. New knife blades are hardened with just the right amount of heat. Reheating may ruin the temper and weaken the knife.





Care & Maintenance

Caring for your knife:

Most knives are made either from Stainless or Carbon steel. Carbon steel can rust if it's not cared for properly. Folding knives can collect dirt inside the mechanism which can dull the blade and affect the mechanism.

Cleaning a pocketknife:

Open all of the blades, taking care not to nick your fingers. Twirl a small bit of cloth or paper towel onto the end of a toothpick. Moisten it with oil and wipe the inside of the knife. Be sure to clean the joint at the base of each blade. Swab out excess oil with a clean cloth.

Cleaning a Sheath Knife:

Clean off any excess material from the knife and give it a wipe of light machine oil. If you have used your knife to cut food or spread peanut butter and jam, wash it in hot, soapy water – being mindful of the blade.

Sharpening:

Sharpen your knife with a whetstone. Most whetstones are made from granite and other materials harder than knife metal. Some are covered with diamond dust. Stones are used dry or with a few drops of water or honing oil.

- Hold the blade against the stone at an angle of about 30 degrees. That means the back of the blade is tilted off the stone one-third of the way to vertical.
- Push the blade along the stone as though you were slicing a layer off the top. The stone's gritty surface will sharpen, or hone, the blade much the same way sandpaper smooths wood. To sharpen the other side, turn the blade over and repeat the process. Clean tiny bits of metal off the stone by slapping it on your hand or pants leg.
- Work the blade on the stone several more times. Wipe the knife with a clean cloth and look directly down at the edge of the blade in the sun or under a bright light. A dull cutting edge reflects light and looks shiny. A sharp edge is so thin that it has no shine at all.

Keep Track of your Knife:

About the worst thing that happens to knives is that they get lost. Keep track of yours by using a bowline knot to tie some cord to the handle. Your knife should always be within easy reach. You can also use brightly coloured cord that will help you find your knife if you drop it in grass, leaves, or snow.

