

# How To Sharpen a Kitchen Knife with Sharpening Steel

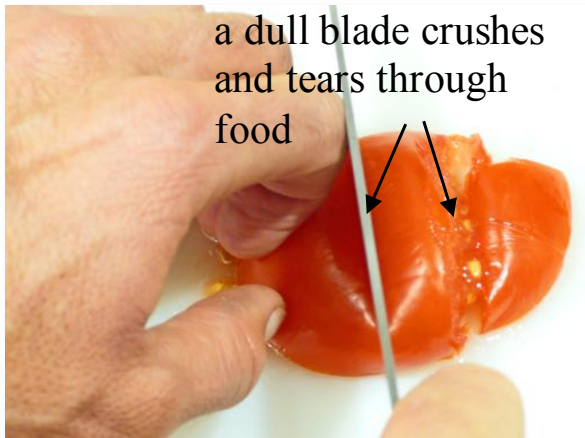


(Sharpening a wide bladed  
(chef's) knife)



(Sharpening a short bladed  
(paring) knife)

**HOW TO KNOW WHEN TO SHARPEN A KITCHEN KNIFE:** For safety's sake, sharpen any kitchen knife as soon as you notice it start to lose its edge. You'll see for yourself that a knife has lost its sharp edge when the knife blade starts to crush or tear (left photo, top of next page) instead of slice neatly (right photo, top of next page) through food. Sharpening a knife that's still relatively sharp takes a lot less effort and time than sharpening a knife with an edge that has gotten as dull as a butter knife.



a dull blade crushes and tears through food

Dull Knife



a sharp blade cuts neatly through food

Sharp Knife

**NOTE ABOUT SHARPENING STEELS** – Below are two kinds of sharpening steels: one coated with diamond dust, the other cut with hair-width grooves into the steel. The diamond coated steel (more expensive, but worth it) will actually put a fresh, sharp edge on a dulled knife. The grooved steel will not actually put a new edge on a knife but will straighten an already sharp knife edge that has gone out of alignment with use. Using either steel requires the same technique as shown in these directions.

### Needed

**Kitchen Knife** (these directions will show how to sharpen both a short and long bladed kitchen knife)  
**Sharpening Steel**

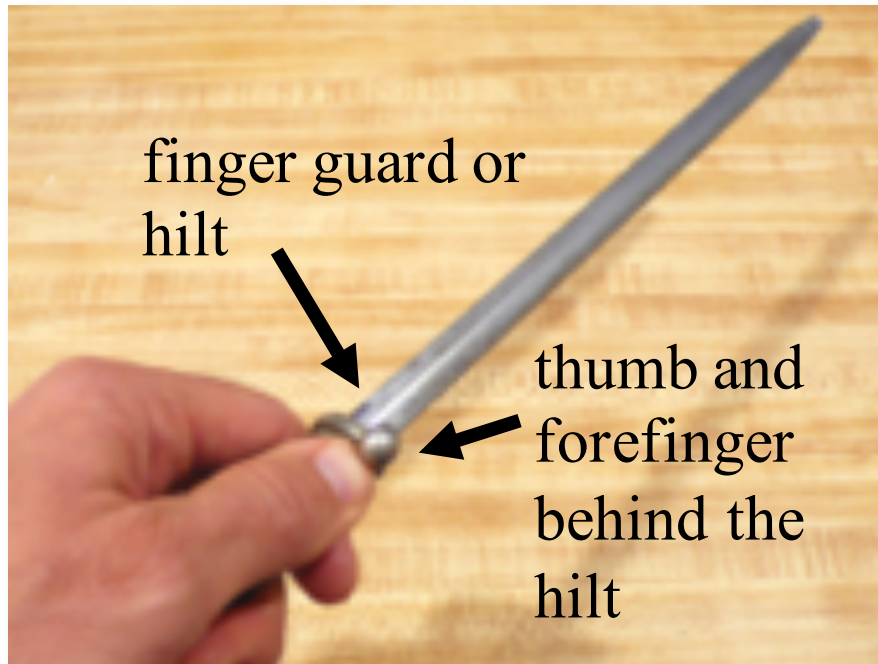


1. Hold the **knife** comfortably in your hand as if you were going to cut with it as shown below whether you're using a long bladed (left photo) or short bladed knife (right photo) below. Then...



...grip handle of the **sharpening steel** with your free hand, and if your steel has one (it should), make sure your thumb and forefinger middle knuckle are in line with and safely behind the

steel's **finger guard** (also called a **hilt**) as shown below

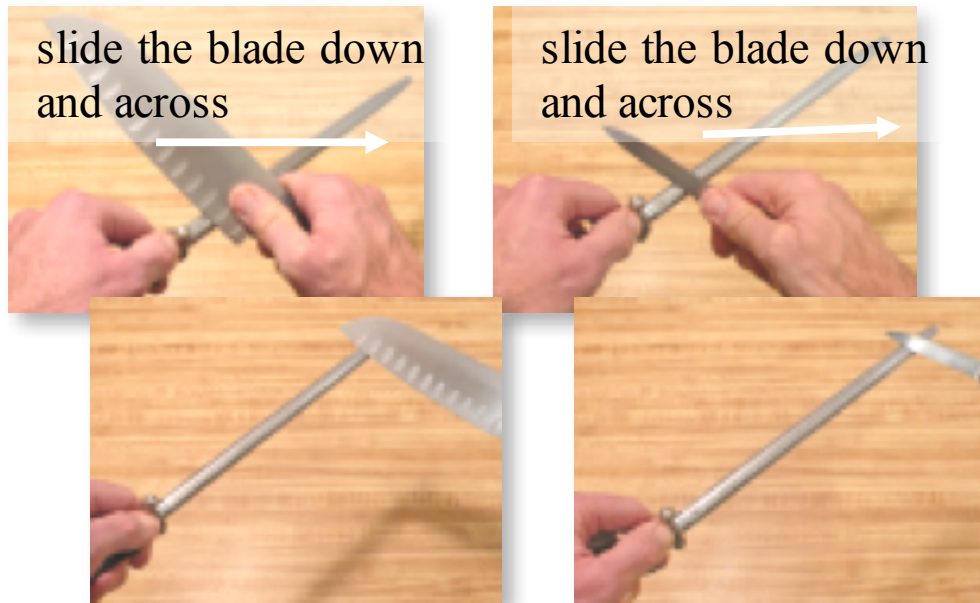


2. Lay the **heel of the knife blade** at about a 10-30 degree angle against the **handle end of the steel** as shown for either a **long bladed knife** (left photo below) or **short bladed knife** (right photo below) and...

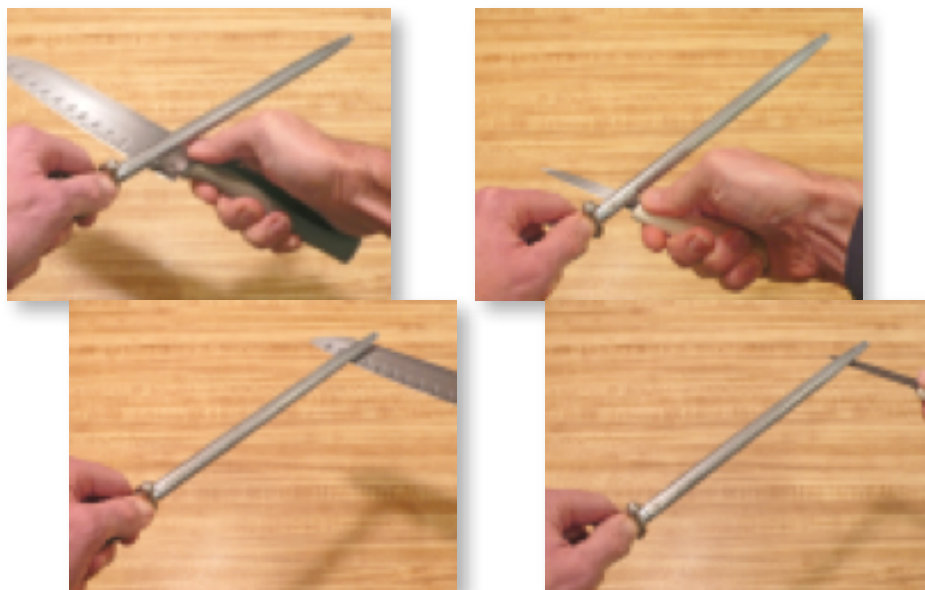


...slide the **knife blade** in a fluid motion both down and across the **steel** with even, firm

pressure as shown in the next photos.



3. Next, start the **heel of the blade** on the bottom of the steel at the same angle as in step 2, and slide the **knife blade** both away from you and across the **sharpening steel** with the same pressure against the **steel** you used in step 2.



4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 at least four to five times.

5. Check for sharpness by rubbing your **thumb** lightly **ACROSS THE BLADE** as shown below.



The **knife edge** is sharp if it feels as if the **blade** could cut through room temperature butter just by the weight of the knife blade alone (this is just a mental image – you'd need to apply force to the knife blade really to cut into butter). If the **blade** doesn't feel sharp, repeat steps 2 and 3 until it does.

6. After sharpening, wipe the **knife blade** with a **towel** to remove any residue **metal dust**.



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