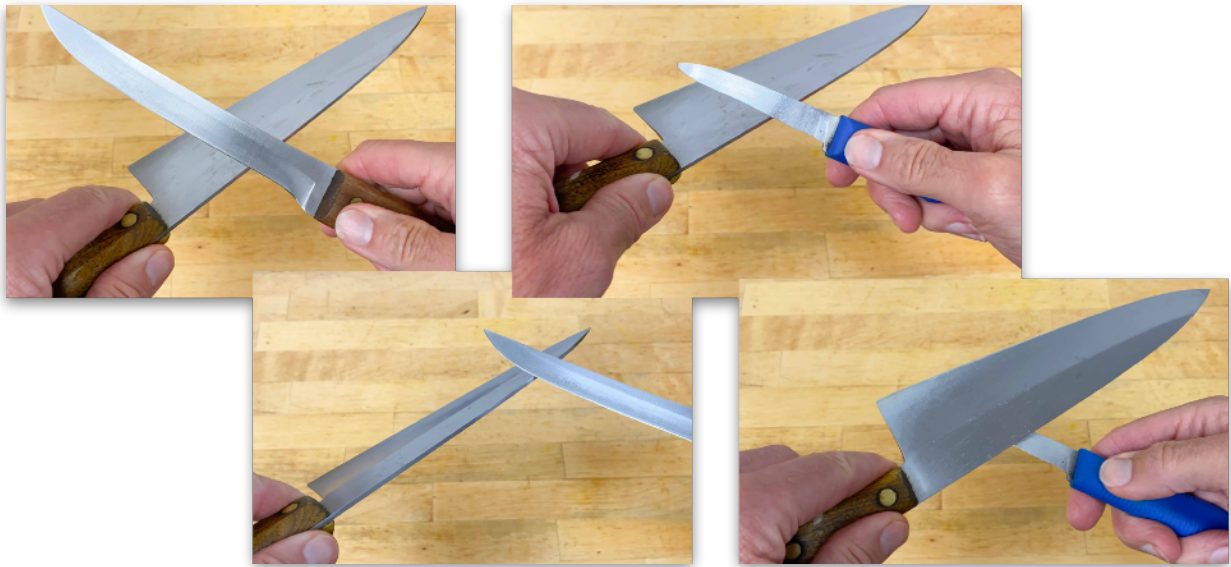
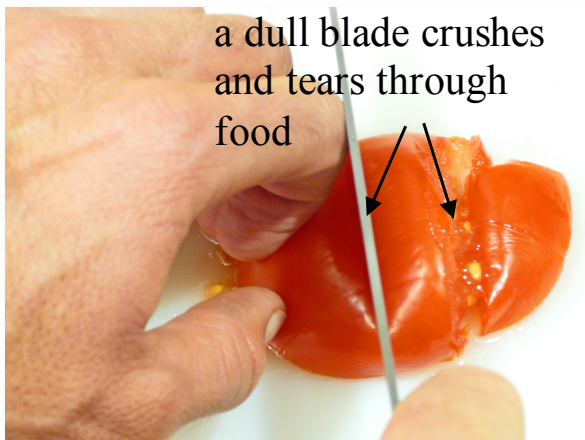


How To Sharpen a Kitchen Knife

Knife-On-Knife

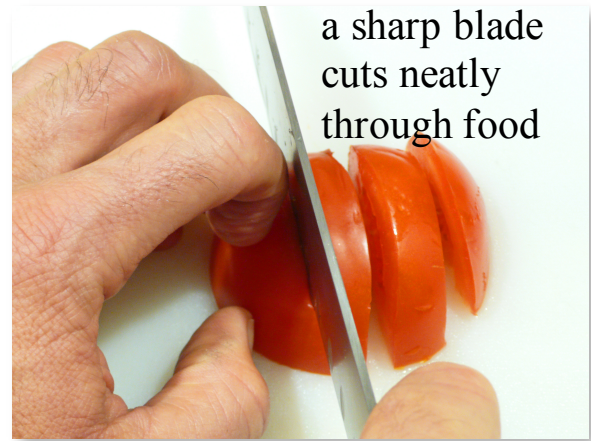


HOW TO KNOW WHEN TO SHARPEN A KITCHEN KNIFE: For safety's sake, sharpen any kitchen knife as soon as you notice it start to lose its edge. You'll see for yourself that a knife has lost its sharp edge when the knife blade starts to crush or tear (left photo, top of next page) instead of slice neatly (right 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

But what if you're stuck with a dull knife, either at home or at a friend's, and don't have a knife sharpener? No problem. I learned this simple, practical knife-on-knife sharpening technique from Tibetan Buddhist monks visiting Veterans Incorporated in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, years ago.



And that knife-on-knife technique will work on any size knife, like those shown below.



The key is using the squared back of one of the knives as a sharpening edge, like the back of this chef's knife.



Start by laying the heel of the knife blade to be sharpened at about a 10-30 degree angle against the hard-edged back of the knife you're using as a sharpener. Press both blades against each other firmly, but not with overwhelming pressure, and slide the blade to be sharpened down and across the sharpening edge as shown below and...



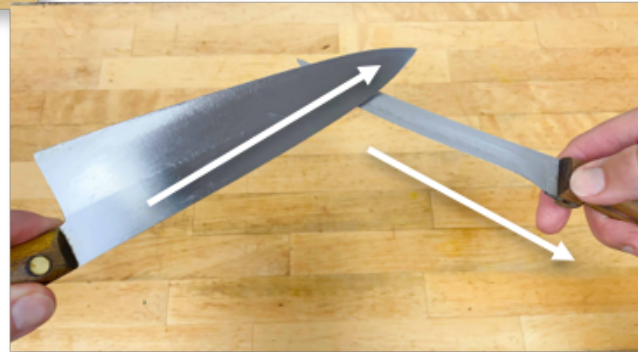
Alternate sliding one side of the blade to be sharpened down and across the length of the back of another knife with...



...alternate sliding the other side of the knife to be sharpened down and along the bottom side of the back hard edge of the sharpening knife.



...sliding the other side of that same blade to be sharpened under and across the length of the back of the knife you're using as a sharpener.



Here's how to use the same technique to sharpen a short-bladed knife, like a paring knife.



Just one note: though this knife-on-knife sharpening technique is actually a very easy and effective way to sharpen a knife "on-the-fly", using your choice of traditional knife sharpeners: like the sharpening steel, electric sharpener or handheld sharpener shown below, will do a better job keeping the blade to be sharpened both sharp and true (straight) without pits and gouges that can develop on the knife edge if you use only this knife-on-knife sharpening method.

