

My FIRST Knife

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Tips on Safety, Use, Maintenance, and Sharpening of Your Knife

Message to Parents

Your children will encounter knives throughout their lives. We feel that they should be taught the safe use of these tools as early as possible. We encourage you to read this information and to help teach your son or daughter about knife safety and care.

It's important that your children understand that a knife can be dangerous if not properly treated or used carefully. Begin by showing your child safe knife use in the kitchen. Teach them how to sharpen a knife, cut properly, store the knives carefully, and respect knives as tools.

We believe it's important that each child know that:

- 1) Knives are tools, not toys.
- 2) Sharp knives are safe tools, dull knives are dangerous.
- 3) The sharp edge and point of the blade should always point away, never toward them or anyone else.
- 4) Knives have acceptable uses, but do not take knives where they are forbidden (schools).

The American Knife and Tool Institute

Introduction

Congratulations on owning your first knife. With it comes a feeling of pride in being considered mature enough to own and carry a knife. That ownership also brings with it a responsibility to use it safely and properly.

Like a hammer or saw, your new knife is a tool with which to do work. It will require regular care, a knowledge of what it can do (and cannot do) and an understanding of its proper use.

Read this manual very carefully. It offers valuable advice and tips on how to get the most from your knife for many years to come.

Know Your Knife

Your "first knife" is more than just a sharp blade with a handle to hold on to. Your new knife may include various other tools such as a screwdriver, file, or other specialized tools. You will use the cutting blade more often than the other tools, so let's talk about that first.

When not being used, the blade should always be secured safely inside the handle. This not only prevents accidents, it keeps the edge from becoming nicked and dulled.

The blade is made from a high quality alloy steel. This steel is formulated to be strong, to hold its edge well, and to retain its bright, shiny finish with proper maintenance.

Your knife may also include accessory tools in the handle. These tools can be very helpful while at home or in the field. Many scout knives include files, a screwdriver, scissors, tweezers, and other tools.

Your "first knife" can give many years of safe and trouble-free service. Like all tools, it must be maintained by cleaning, oiling, and sharpening from time to time.

Safety

A knife can be a dangerous tool when not used properly.

As strange as it sounds, a dull knife is far more dangerous than one that is kept sharp. Little "slips" can cause big gashes. The more pressure behind a slip, the greater the chance of being hurt.

Remember that a knife blade is used for slicing. If it's sharp, it will cut more efficiently and cleanly. It doesn't matter whether you are cleaning a fish, cutting a string, or just whittling a stick—a sharp knife will do the job best and safest.

A sharp knife allows the user to work more relaxed and with effortless movements of the hands, wrists, and arms. Dull blades make the muscles more tense and opens the door for accidents.

Another important rule to remember at all times is never pull the blade towards you. If your blade slips while you're cutting a rope or carving a piece of wood it may not stop until it strikes your hand or body.

Here are some other tips that will make handling your knife safer

Learn how to safely open and close your knife. Be sure your fingers are away from the edge and also the edge of the space the blade closes into. Practice opening and closing your knife so you feel comfortable knowing how it works and feels.

Never throw your knife. The blade is strong, but is not made for this purpose. The impact may cause it to break, but more importantly, it may glance off the target and hit someone else or bounce back at you.

Don't carry your knife with the blade open or out of the sheath. Whenever a pocket knife is not being used it should be folded into the handle. An open knife can cause serious injury.

Never run or attempt to climb trees with an open knife.

If the blade of your knife does not lock in the open position, never put pressure on the blade in a direction that might cause it to close on your fingers.

Never use your knife as a hammer, or to pound with it.

Never "chop" or strike objects to cut them. Besides the possibility that the knife can deflect off the object, it may also chip off pieces of whatever is being cut and damage an eye.

Always ask yourself, "If the knife accidentally slips, where will it go?" If the answer is "into my hand or part of my body," then change your position.

Remember, the best way to prevent nearly all accidents that occur when using knives is to use common sense.

Maintenance

As with any good equipment, you'll get the best service from your "first knife" if it's kept in good shape.

Remove all water and dry thoroughly if the knife gets wet. Use light oil to cover the blade and hinged parts. Wipe off all excess oil.

Whenever the knife is not going to be used for a long period of time, make sure that the blades and working parts have a protective covering of oil. This will keep it from rusting.

Sharpening

It is a simple task to keep the blade sharp. You may use a good sharpening stone or any one of the commercially available sharpening systems. For the best results and safety, follow the directions for whatever system you choose.

Sharpening is not a difficult process. If you attend to it regularly, only a few strokes will be needed to keep it sharp.

Always sharpen your knife away from your body.

When sharpening on a sharpening stone, some steel on both sides of the blade must be removed at a precise angle. Stroking the blade over the stone at a 10 - 15° angle slowly removes the metal. The metal is actually scraped from the blade making it sharper with each stroke as you push it across the stone, as if you're attempting to cut a thin slice from the stone's surface.

Parts of a knife

The number of parts of a knife will vary. Typically a traditionally made pocket knife has over 20 parts, while a rigid or fixed blade has fewer.

Never attempt to take apart your knife, as doing so will leave you with an unsafe knife that will no longer be warrantied by most manufacturers.

Organizations

The following organizations can help you locate people in your area who would be helpful in organizing a program on knifemaking, knife safety, or general knife information for your group.

AKTI American Knife and Tool Institute

PO Box 68
Burlington, IA 52601
Phone: 319-752-8770
Fax: 319-752-6114
Website: www.akti.org

The Knifemakers Guild

13950 NE 20th Street
Williston, FL 32696
Phone and fax: 352-528-6124
Website: <http://www.knifemakersguild.com/>

The American Bladesmith Society

Box 977
Peralta, NM
Phone: 505-869-3912
Website: www.americanbladesmith.com