

Recognize this guy?

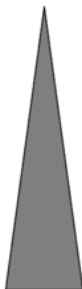


It is a honing rod and one comes with every knife set! It is a fairly misunderstood tool so we want to make sure you get the most out of it, especially now that you have newly sharpened knives!

The honing rod is used to straighten the blade of your knife. You should use it every 3-4 times you use your knife. By doing this, you keep the blade sharp and, depending on use, you will reduce how often you need to have your knives sharpened. With normal use of your knives, and regular honing, you should only need to send your knives out for sharpening once or twice a year.

Some people think the honing rod is sharpening the knife because after using it, a sharp knife will cut better. A very natural conclusion to draw! However, a honing rod will not help a knife that has become dull. Let's take a quick look at why.

The blade of a sharp knife will come to a point, like this:

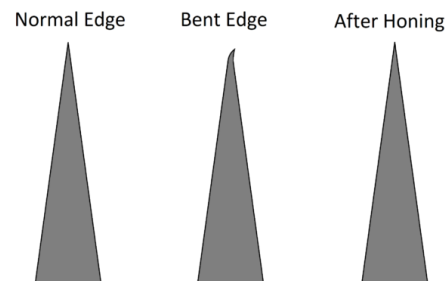


After using your knife, the sharp edge can get moved around a bit, giving the knife a bend or warp at the tip, so it will not cut quite as well. It looks like this:



This deflection in the cutting edge will decrease the effectiveness of your knife. Without correcting it, the sharp edge will flatten out and become dull quickly. However, if you hone it regularly, you realign that deflection so you get back to the freshly sharpened feel:

Honing a Knife



On the other hand, a dull knife looks like this:



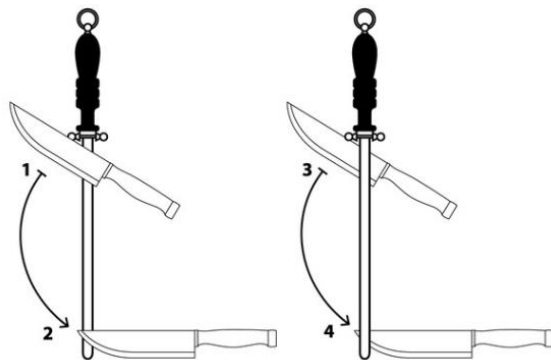
No amount of honing can bring that edge back. At this point, you need to remove metal to restore the tip- AKA: it is time to have your knife sharpened.

So make friends with that honing rod! Use it often and enjoy the feeling of a sharp knife everytime you use it. Once you notice the honing is not bringing it back, that is when you call your local knife sharpener (BKS!) who will be happy to assist 😊

Using a honing rod is pretty straightforward. Place the tip of the rod onto a surface. I like to put it on a folded dishtowel on my countertop. Place the heel of the knife at the top of the rod, near the handle. You can hold the knife level to the counter or have the tip pointed up slightly. Keep the blade of the knife in contact with the rod and tip the spine of the knife away from the rod to create an angle of about 20 degrees* (see note on angles).

Maintain this angle and gently pull the knife toward you and slightly sweep the knife down. This should be a gentle motion, remember you are *not* trying to remove steel, you are realigning it. There should be a nice ring sound, it shouldn't feel or sound like a grinding or filing.

Alternate sides and make about 10 swipes on each side. That is it! Takes about 10-15 seconds and you have honed your knife.



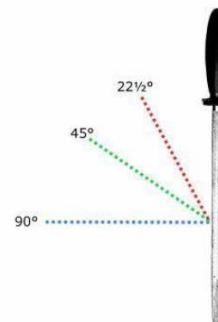
Remember a gentle motion is all that is required

*Note on angles

When honing your knife, the ideal method is to match the angle your knife bevel is at. Most knives are in the 15-22 degree range. Some Japanese knives are as low as 10-11 degrees and filet knives can be in the single digits!

As you are learning how to hone each of your knives, it is always safest to start with a low angle. If you find it didn't get any better, try moving the spine away to create a larger angle. After a few weeks or even months you will get the feel for it and go from there. Don't get overly worried about angle perfection- just know that honing your knife is better than not honing your knife!

Reference points for finding an angle:



Some common knife angles:

12-17 Degrees	17-22 Degrees	22-27 Degrees	27-35 Degrees
Fillet Knife	Chef's Knife	Hunting Knife	Cleaver
Paring Knife	Boning Knife	Pocket Knife	Machete
Sushi Knife	Most Common Kitchen knives	Survival Knife	Most Choppers
Most Japanese Cutlery		Sport Knife	