

The Simple Secret to Knife Sharpening

I recently had the pleasure of being a guest chef at the Country Club in Menard, TX. Located 31 miles north of Junction, TX, [Menard](#) is special because, although the population is small, it has an abundance of intelligent, interesting and talented people. One of the most memorable parts of the weekend was meeting [Clayton Miller](#) (shown at right). Clayton is a world class knife maker, whose passion for the art began in high school and has only increased over the years. He makes knives for every purpose, including the kitchen, and fashions them from everything from ordinary stainless steel to the Damascus steel of samurai sword fame. Handles are carved from many exotic materials, including native mesquite, axis deer horn, and mastodon tusks. I was thrilled when, as a thank you for the dinner, I was presented an engraved carving knife made by Clayton.



Among other good qualities, I immediately discovered that the knife was the sharpest I have ever owned. And that's saying something because I have some expensive Japanese kitchen knives that I used to think were about as sharp as a knife could be. Maybe right out of the box they were but never again, at least until I sent them out to professional sharpeners. Even then they were not as finely honed as I would have liked. Over the years, I spent a fair amount of money on various whetstones, machines, and other devices that promised to make knife sharpening both easy and effective. They all worked to some extent, but they never produced an edge keen enough to shave with. When I mentioned that to my friends in Menard and the fact that having sharp knives is essential for any serious cook or chef, they called Clayton and he invited us to his home and workshop.

When we arrived, he first gave us a tour of his shop. Full of power tools and work areas, one for each step in the painstaking process, it reflected his approach, which is both logical and creative. A former Chemistry teacher, he understands the complicated science behind his craft and uses that knowledge to good effect.

After the tour, I asked Clayton how he got his knives so sharp. With a wry smile, like a magician about to reveal an absurdly simple secret behind one of his acts, he pulled out two DMT diamond sharpening stones, and I handed over my good quality but only moderately sharp pocket knife. He held it at a 20 degree angle to one of the stones and then scraped it over the surface, as if trying to cut a thin slice from it. He did that three or four times on each side then repeated the same thing with the other stone, which he explained had a finer grit for finishing. In less than a minute he handed me the knife. I was amazed to find that it would now shave hair from my forearm! The next morning, Clayton dropped by my friend's house to say he had found two old DMT sharpening stones that were well worn but would still work, and he wanted me to have them.

Ten minutes after I returned to San Antonio, all my knives were as sharp as the pocket knife! I spent the next five minutes emptying an entire drawer of what was now, to me, useless sharpening equipment, soon to be donated to Goodwill Industries.

I have since had great success [ordering a set of three stones](#) for my home in La Jolla from sharpeningsupplies.com. They include the first stage, rougher grit blue stone, the finer grit red stone, and a green stone that is even finer and puts the finishing touches to the process. The cost was \$99, including shipping, less than I paid for other devices that did not work nearly as well. To see how easy it is to sharpen your knives, check out the [instruction video](#) on [DMT's site](#).

For anyone wanting a beautiful one-of-a-kind knife for their kitchen or any other purpose, or a gift for a valued friend or relative, contact Clayton Miller. He will be pleased to work with you to create one of the few beautiful and useful things that can last a lifetime! He can be reached by telephone at (325) 396-2659 (home); or (325) 456-7647 (cell).

Important note to readers: I have no financial relationship with anyone or any product mentioned in this blog. My only interest is in providing information that will inform others of what has worked so well for me.