



Cutter's Pointers

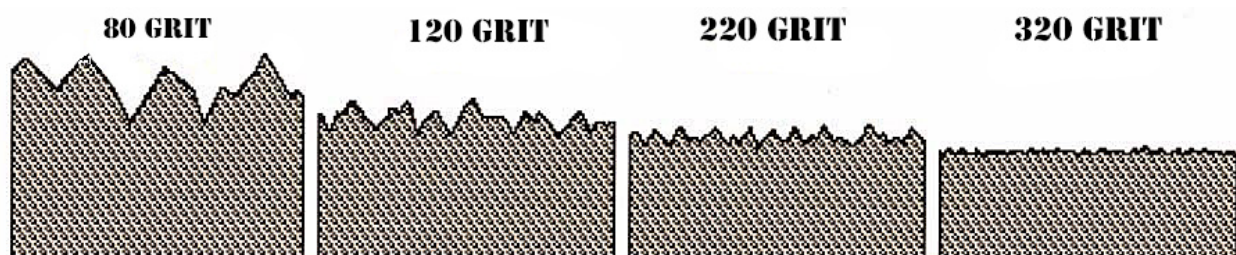
One of the distinctive traits of a well-made knife is something that you don't see; scratches. Expertise in the sanding department takes time. Learning how to effectively use a succession of grits seems like it would be obvious; but nope. The trick, of course, is knowing where to look. Use this tutorial to learn how to sand your knives to a better finish.

Before starting, we need to understand one primary objective. Each grit of abrasive is designed to take out scratches of a previous grit. One must take their time and do a thorough job to achieve a proper finish. You cannot rush this part because one mistake will be evident down the line regardless of how much one uses the finer grits. Keep reading to understand what we mean by that.

Step one is to get the right sandpaper. What is the benefit of high-quality paper versus cheap imports and off-brand stuff? Quality paper like Klingspor Abrasives has properly sifted and sorted grains of abrasives. Cheap brands have chunks of larger grits that cause deep scratches that are difficult to get out without proper successive grits. Cheap abrasives also use inferior adhesives to bond the material to the paper or cloth substrate. This causes it to have a much shorter lifespan. While it may seem that off-brands are cheaper per sheet or belt; they are not in the long run. Get good paper to start with.

Step two is to get the entire spectrum of grits. Proper sanding cannot be done by skipping grits. We keep coarse belts in 36, 50 and 80 grit for heavy stock removal. In sheet-stock we keep 60 and 80 grit for heavy removal and from there we enter what I would call, "*The Finishing Grits*". The finishing grits are as follows; 120, 220, 320, 400, 600, 800, & 1000.

Step three is to understand the objective. Here are some diagrams that will help.



*Note TWO things shown in the Diagram. The size and depth of the 80 grit scratches, AND how the 120 grit scratches (the highs and the lows) are all BELOW the previous grit; as are the 220 & 320 grit diagrams. Transitions should always look like this regardless of grit. This is proper sanding!

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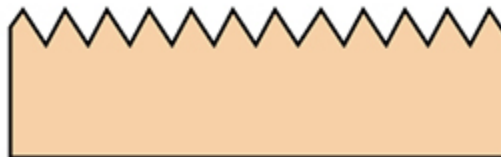
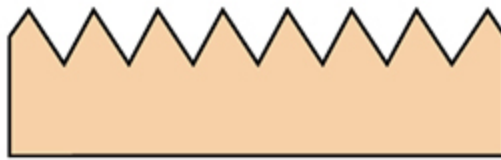
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Thus, it is especially important to see what is necessary when removing the scratches of the previous grit. Not only must the highs be sanded off, but you must sand all the way past the valley. If you do not sand past the valley, something like this will happen:



Don't skip grits. Each finer grit removes previous scratches.



Once the mistake has been made to proceed to the next grit too quickly, it becomes impossible to correct this mistake without going back to the original coarse grit. Proceed slowly through each; making sure that the entire valley is removed.

Step four is to clean the piece and remove dust. Using denatured alcohol on a rag does a nice job cleaning the surface without causing grain-raise. Clean the handle and remove all dust. If a scratch is detected, back up in grits and try again.

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The final step is to apply a finish. Odie's Oil provides several specific benefits important to the overall function of the knife. The oils and waxes penetrate deep into the wood, creating a stable and water-resistant finish. The oils bring out the luster and glow of the figure in the wood and provides lasting protection. Make your work look like this!!



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