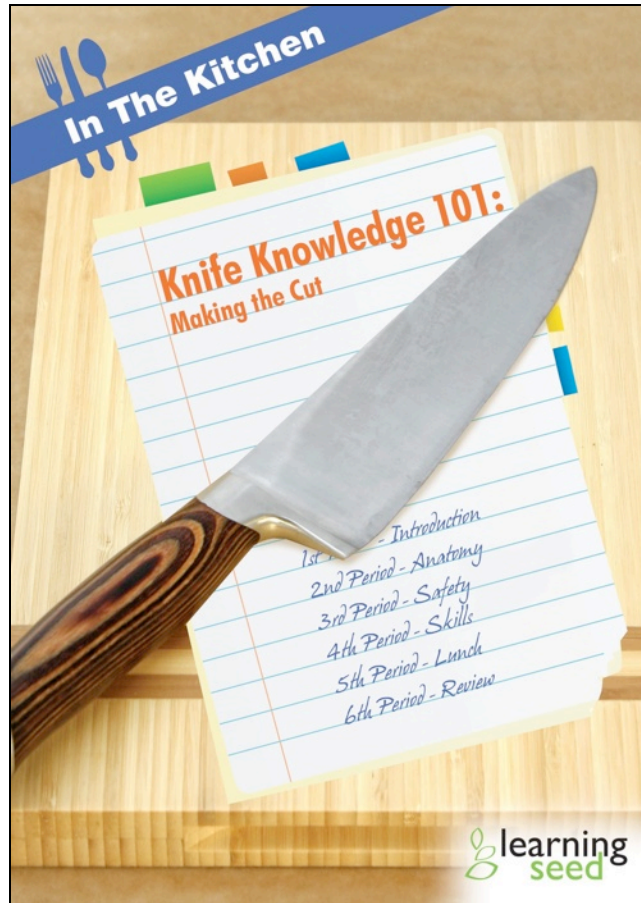


Knife Knowledge 101

Making the Cut



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Credits

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This Teaching Guide

Compilation: Jennifer A. Smith

Learning Seed Catalog and ISBN Numbers

DVD LS-1335-10-DVD ISBN 1-55740-561-1

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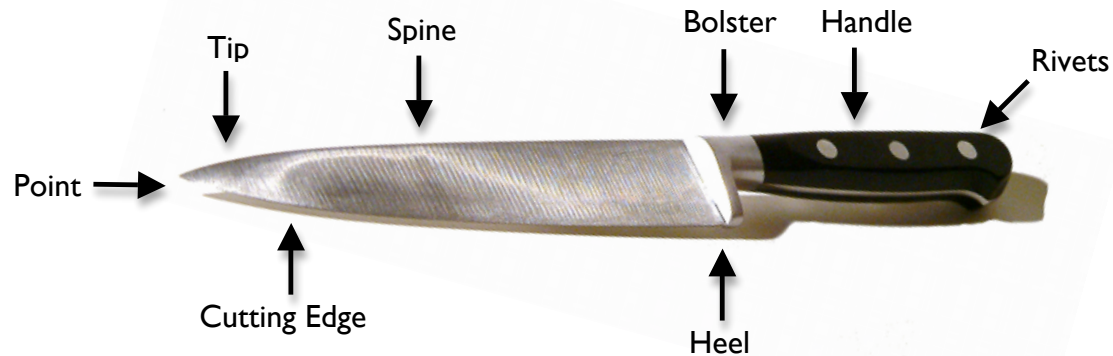
Summary

Professional Chef Christopher Koetke, Dean of Culinary Arts at Kendall College in Chicago, provides professional tips and teaching about knives. Watch as his students get hands on instruction and valuable advice about the use and care of knives.

Learn:

- Parts of a knife
- What makes a good quality knife
- Names and functions of knives found in most kitchens
- Knife care
- Knife safety
- Knife cutting techniques, including chopping, mincing, dicing, and others

Parts of a Knife



Parts of the Blade

Spine - the top, unsharpened edge that runs from the handle to the tip.

Cutting edge – the blade that runs from the tip to the heel.

Tip - the first third of the cutting edge, starting at the point; often used for delicate cuts and to hold the knife steady while cutting.

Point – the end of the tip; it can be used for piercing foods.

Heel - the part of the edge that is closest to the handle. This part is used when some muscle is needed - like to cut into squash, chop nuts, or cut chicken bones.

Types of Blades

Blades are made in one of two ways - they are either stamped or forged.

Stamped Blade

The easiest way to tell if a knife has been stamped is to look at the heel. If the blade is one thickness all the way through to where it enters the handle - it is a stamped knife. This is the most common and least expensive blade construction.

Forged Blade

A forged blade comes from a solid piece of metal that is heated and then pounded into shape. The combination of heat and pressure help the blade hold a sharp edge better and longer than a stamped knife. Forged knives have a bolster.

Handles

Knife handles can be made from hard woods such as rosewood and walnut. Such natural woods are often treated with a plastic resin to keep them more sanitary. Other handles are made from plastic or vinyl.

The handle is usually attached to the blade with rivets. Non-wooden handles are usually molded onto the blade.

Tang – the part of the blade where the handle is attached to the knife.

Full tang - the blade extends through the whole length of the handle. A full tang makes the knife balanced, sturdy, and durable.

Partial tang - the blade only extends partially into the handle. Knives with partial tangs are fine for lighter jobs, but they're not as long lasting or sturdy as knives with full tangs.

Bolster - the thick metal portion near the handle. It adds weight and balance and helps the cook's hand from slipping.

What to look for in a good knife:

- Weight
- Balance
- Blade type

Types of Knives

Chef's knife - sometimes called a cook's knife or French knife. It's the most commonly used knife for food preparation. It is curved allowing precise cuts by rocking the knife on the cutting board. This knife is used to chop, dice, mince, and slice.

Slicer - A knife with a long, narrow blade. This is usually used for cutting cooked meat.

Filet knife - It has a long flexible blade and is used mainly with fish. It's very thin. It's used to move along the backbone and slice along the skin to remove it.

Bread knife - It has a serrated blade, so it has notches, or saw-like teeth. These serrations make it much easier to slice foods with a hard surface and a soft interior – like bread. Without the serrations a knife would smash the bread.

Tomato knife - It's like the little sister of the bread knife. Tomatoes are a little like bread – they have a tough outside and a soft inside - so a small, serrated knife slices them easily.

Utility knife - It's great for cutting medium-sized foods like cucumbers or large apples.

Paring knife - It has a sharp narrow blade and it works well when you want to mince or cut small foods like herbs. It's also good for peeling and coring foods.

Cleaver Knife - It has a rectangular blade and is used for chopping as well as cutting through bones.

Santoku Knife - It resembles a narrow-bladed cleaver. It has a well-balanced grip, that is comfortable to handle and allows for full use of the blade.

Knife Detail

Granton edge pattern - This means that the blade is scalloped on the side. This detail reduces friction and helps to release thin slices and sticky foods after they have been cut.

Other tools in a typical knife block

Kitchen Shears - Many kitchen knife sets include kitchen shears. They are scissors used to cut through poultry breastbones or other foods, or snip herbs and other small vegetables.

Sharpening Steel - sometimes called a honing steel. This is a steel rod used for honing knife blades.

Knife Safety

Dull knives are more dangerous than sharp knives.

A dull knife is more likely to slip while you use it because more pressure is needed in order to cut. People also tend to be more careful if they know they are dealing with a sharp object.

TIP: Keep knives sharp for safety and faster food preparation.

Always wash knives by hand.

Never put a knife in a dishwasher. Make sure they are properly washed and sanitized by hand. Hold onto the knife the whole time you are washing; this helps to avoid cutting yourself since you can't see where your hand is going in the water.

How to hold a knife

- Put your thumb and forefinger on the end of the blade. Wrap the remaining three fingers around the handle.

Use a guiding hand

- Curve the fingers of your other hand, wrapping your fingertips under the fingers. Use this hand to guide the knife.

How to cut with a knife

- Use a rocking motion – cutting down and forward, in one fluid motion.
- Rest the blade against the knuckle of your guiding hand.

TIP: Always cut away from your body - never toward yourself.

If a knife falls off the table, NEVER try to catch it.

Trying to catch a falling knife can result in a serious injury. Let the knife fall to the floor - the knife is damaged you can grind it down or sharpen it.

How to sharpen a knife

- Put the blade at a 15 degree angle from the sharpening steel.
- Starting at the heel of the knife, draw the knife down one side of the steel, then move it to the other side.
- Continue alternating sides while drawing the knife down against the steel.

TIP: When you're done honing the knife, remember to clean it off.

Other Safety Tips

Ensure your cutting board is intended for food service.

Cutting boards can be plastic or wood. These substances are safe enough and soft enough to not dull knives, but at the same time hard enough to avoid cutting large grooves into the board which may harbor bacteria.

Ensure your cutting board is stable and stays in place.

It's hard to hit a moving target – and it's dangerous! Place a wet paper towel or damp towel under the cutting board. This will prevent it from sliding around and give you a stable cutting surface.

TIP: After cutting raw meats, wash your hands, cutting board, knife and countertops with hot soapy water. Cleaning your work area and tools makes certain no bacteria can contaminate the other foods that you handle.

Knife Knowledge 101

Matching Quiz

Match the words in the first column to the best available answer in the second column.

- | | | |
|-------|--|---------------------|
| _____ | It has a serrated blade. These serrations make it much easier to slice foods with a hard surface and a soft interior. | 1) spine |
| _____ | This means that the blade is scalloped on the side. | 2) paring knife |
| _____ | Sometimes called a cook's knife or French knife. It's the most commonly used knife for food preparation. | 3) sharpening steel |
| _____ | This is the top, unsharpened edge of the knife that runs from the handle to the tip. | 4) tip |
| _____ | It has a sharp narrow blade and it works well when you want to mince or cut small foods like herbs. It's also good for peeling and coring foods. | 5) granton edge |
| _____ | The thick metal portion near the knife handle. It adds weight and balance and helps the cook's hand from slipping. | 6) bread slicer |
| _____ | This is a rod used for honing knife blades | 7) tang |
| _____ | The first third of the cutting edge of a blade. | 8) chef's knife |
| _____ | The part of the knife where the handle is attached to the knife. | 9) stamped blade |
| _____ | A blade that is one thickness all the way through to where it enters the handle. | 10) bolster |

Knife Knowledge 101

Matching Quiz Answer Key

<u>6</u>	It has a serrated blade. These serrations make it much easier to slice foods with a hard surface and a soft interior.	1) spine
<u>5</u>	This means that the blade is scalloped on the side.	2) paring knife
<u>8</u>	Sometimes called a cook's knife or French knife. It's the most commonly used knife for food preparation.	3) sharpening steel
<u>1</u>	This is the top, unsharpened edge of the knife that runs from the handle to the tip.	4) tip
<u>2</u>	It has a sharp narrow blade and it works well when you want to mince or cut small foods like herbs. It's also good for peeling and coring foods.	5) granton edge
<u>10</u>	The thick metal portion near the knife handle. It adds weight and balance and helps the cook's hand from slipping.	6) bread slicer
<u>3</u>	This is a rod used for honing knife blades	7) tang
<u>4</u>	The first third of the cutting edge of a blade.	8) chef's knife
<u>7</u>	The part of the knife where the handle is attached to the knife.	9) stamped blade
<u>9</u>	A blade that is one thickness all the way through to where it enters the handle.	10) bolster

Knife Knowledge 101

Fill-In-The-Blank

Select the correct term from the list below and write it in the blank space.

1. A _____ comes from a solid piece of metal that is heated and then pounded into shape. The combination of heat and pressure help the blade hold a sharp edge better and longer than a _____ knife.
2. A _____ knife is more likely to slip while you use it than a _____ knife because more pressure is needed in order to cut.
3. A granton edge pattern means the knife blade has _____ sides.
4. A _____ is the most commonly used knife for food preparation.
5. A _____ has a long flexible blade and is used mainly with fish.
6. Knives with a _____ are fine for lighter jobs, but they're not as long lasting or sturdy as knives with a _____.
7. When cutting with a knife, rest the blade against your _____.
8. The thick metal portion near the handle is called the _____. It adds weight and balance and helps the cook's hand from slipping.
9. The first third of the cutting edge is called the _____. At the end of the tip is the _____, which can be used for piercing foods.
10. When using a _____, start at the _____ of the knife and draw the knife down one side of the steel, then move it to the other side.

full tang

scalloped

point

dull

chef's knife

filet knife

tip

stamped blade

partial tang

heel

sharp

sharpening steel

guiding hand

bolster

forged blade

Knife Knowledge 101

Fill-In-The-Blank Answer Key

1. A **forged blade** comes from a solid piece of metal that is heated and then pounded into shape. The combination of heat and pressure help the blade hold a sharp edge better and longer than a **stamped blade** knife.
2. A **dull** knife is more likely to slip while you use it than a **sharp** knife because more pressure is needed in order to cut.
3. A granton edge pattern means the knife blade has **scalloped** sides.
4. A **chef's knife** is the most commonly used knife for food preparation.
5. A **filet knife** has a long flexible blade and is used mainly with fish.
6. Knives with a **partial tang** are fine for lighter jobs, but they're not as long lasting or sturdy as knives with a **full tang**.
7. When cutting with a knife, rest the blade against your **guiding hand**.
8. The thick metal portion near the handle is called the **bolster**. It adds weight and balance and helps the cook's hand from slipping.
9. The first third of the cutting edge is called the **tip**. At the end of the tip is the **point**, which can be used for piercing foods.
10. When using a **sharpening steel**, start at the **heel** of the knife and draw the knife down one side of the steel, then move it to the other side.

Knife Knowledge 101

Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer for each question.

<p>1. _____ are more dangerous than _____.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Sharp knives; dull knivesb) Dull knives; sharp knivesc) Long knives; short knivesd) Short knives; long knives	<p>6. The knife that is like the little sister of the bread knife is the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) slicerb) tomato knifec) utility knifed) paring knife
<p>2. A _____ means that the blade extends through the whole length of the handle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) full bolsterb) partial bolsterc) full tangd) partial tang	<p>7. When sharpening a knife, keep the knife at a _____ degree angle from the sharpening steel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) 10b) 15c) 25d) 30
<p>3. If the blade is one thickness all the way through to where it enters the handle - it is a _____ knife.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) sharpened bladeb) stamped bladec) used bladed) forged blade	<p>9. Knives with a _____ are fine for lighter jobs, but they're not as long lasting or sturdy as knives with a _____.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) partial tang; full tangb) full tang; partial tangc) partial tang; spined) full tang; spine
<p>4. The _____ of the knife is the top, unsharpened edge that runs from the handle to the tip.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) rivetb) bolsterc) spined) forge	<p>9. A scalloped pattern on the side of many knife blades is called:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) granton edgeb) grating edgec) grater edged) gracer edge
<p>5. When transporting a knife:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) hold it down by your sideb) hold it in front of youc) hold it with both hands in front of youd) hold the blade end	<p>10. You should clean a knife:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) when you are done using itb) after using a sharpening steelc) by handd) all of the above

Knife Knowledge 101

Multiple Choice Answer Key

<p>1. _____ are more dangerous than _____.</p> <p>a) Sharp knives; dull knives b) <u>Dull knives; sharp knives</u> c) Long knives; short knives d) Short knives; long knives</p>	<p>6. The knife that is like the little sister of the bread knife is the:</p> <p>a) slicer b) <u>tomato knife</u> c) utility knife d) paring knife</p>
<p>2. A _____ means that the blade extends through the whole length of the handle.</p> <p>a) full bolster b) partial bolster c) <u>full tang</u> d) partial tang</p>	<p>7. When sharpening a knife, keep the knife at a _____ degree angle from the sharpening steel.</p> <p>a) 10 b) <u>15</u> c) 25 d) 30</p>
<p>3. If the blade is one thickness all the way through to where it enters the handle - it is a _____ knife.</p> <p>a) sharpened blade b) <u>stamped blade</u> c) used blade d) forged blade</p>	<p>9. Knives with a _____ are fine for lighter jobs, but they're not as long lasting or sturdy as knives with a _____.</p> <p>a) <u>partial tang; full tang</u> b) full tang; partial tang c) partial tang; spine d) full tang; spine</p>
<p>4. The _____ of the knife is the top, unsharpened edge that runs from the handle to the tip.</p> <p>a) rivet b) bolster c) <u>spine</u> d) forge</p>	<p>9. A scalloped pattern on the side of many knife blades is called:</p> <p>a) <u>granton edge</u> b) grating edge c) grater edge d) gracer edge</p>
<p>5. When transporting a knife:</p> <p>a) <u>hold it down by your side</u> b) hold it in front of you c) hold it with both hands in front of you d) hold the blade end</p>	<p>10. You should clean a knife:</p> <p>a) when you are done using it b) after using a sharpening steel c) by hand d) <u>all of the above</u></p>

Glossary of Terms

Bolster	the thick metal portion near the handle. It adds weight and balance and helps the cook's hand from slipping.
Bread knife	a knife with a serrated blade, like saw-like teeth. These serrations make it much easier to slice foods with a hard surface and a soft interior – like bread.
Chef's knife	sometimes called a cook's knife or French knife. It's the most commonly used knife for food preparation. It is curved allowing precise cuts by rocking the knife on the cutting board. This knife is used to chop, dice, mince, and slice.
Chopping	a cutting technique to cut food into small pieces.
Cleaver Knife	a knife with a rectangular blade used for chopping and cutting through bones.
Cutting edge	the blade that runs from the tip to the heel.
Dice	a cutting technique to create small cubes.
Filet knife	a knife with a long, thin, flexible blade, mainly with fish. It's used to move along the backbone and slice along the skin to remove it.
Forged Blade	A blade that comes from a solid piece of metal that is heated and then pounded into shape. The combination of heat and pressure help the blade hold a sharp edge better and longer than a stamped knife.
Full tang	the blade extends through the whole length of the handle. A full tang makes the knife balanced, sturdy, and durable.
Granton edge	the scalloped detail on the side of some knives. This detail reduces friction and helps to release thin slices and sticky foods after they have been cut.
Guiding hand	the hand opposite the hand holding the knife. Fingertips are curled under fingers, creating a guide for the knife. The knife rests against the knuckles of the guiding hand.
Heel	the part of the edge that is closest to the handle. This part is used when some muscle is needed - like to cut into squash, chop nuts, or cut chicken bones.
Kitchen Shears	scissors used to cut through poultry breastbones or other foods, or snip herbs and other small vegetables.
Mince	a cutting technique to cut up or grind food into very small pieces.
Paring knife	a knife with a narrow blade used to mince or cut small foods like herbs. It's also good for peeling and coring foods.

Partial tang	the blade only extends partially into the handle. Knives with partial tangs are fine for lighter jobs, but they're not as long lasting or sturdy as knives with full tangs.
Point	the end of the tip; it can be used for piercing foods.
Santoku Knife	a knife that resembles a narrow-bladed cleaver. It has a well-balanced grip, that is comfortable to handle and allows for full use of the blade.
Sharpening Steel	also called a honing steel. A steel rod use to sharpen knives.
Slice	a cutting technique to create thin pieces.
Slicer	a knife with a long, narrow blade. This is usually used for cutting cooked meat.
Spine	the top, unsharpened edge that runs from the handle to the tip.
Stamped Blade	A blade that is one thickness all the way through to where it enters the handle - it is a stamped knife. This is the most common and least expensive blade construction.
Tang	the part of the blade where the handle is attached to the knife.
Tip	the first third of the cutting edge, starting at the point; often used for delicate cuts and to hold the knife steady while cutting.
Tomato knife	a small, serrated knife - the little sister of the bread knife.
Utility knife	a smaller knife used for cutting medium-sized foods like cucumbers or apples.