

Instructions for using the BMC Dual Grit Sharpening Whetstone

Our stones have been made to offer an effective way to sharpen a blade without damaging it and maintaining its life.

The below instructions are intended to outline effective sharpening of a standard Sabre grind found on most kitchen, utility and outdoor-use knives and machetes. A Sabre ground blade is essentially one which has a main (primary) grind and a cutting edge (secondary) grind. It is the secondary grind which needs to be sharpened on both sides of the 'V'.

The Dual Grit Whetstone consists of a fine grit side (White, #4000) and a medium grit (Green, #1000).

Use this side Green side first when the cutting edge is dull. If the blade is still relatively sharp but just needs a touch up, you can skip the coarser green side and move straight to the White #4000.

1. Place the entire stone into a sink of cold water and leave it submerged for at least 5 minutes. You will also need to keep some water nearby when sharpening to occasionally sprinkle a few drops onto the whetstone. This helps keep the whetstone moist and carries the loosened grit and steel particles off and away from the whetstones surface.
2. Set the stone on a flat surface, ideally around waist height if you are standing, or table height when seated.
3. First establish the correct sharpening angle of the blade. This can be done by using a permanent marker, felt tip pen or similar to colour the cutting edge. Draw the edge across the stone at the correct angle – confirmed by the removal of the marker from the entire surface of each side of the cutting edge. Check after each pass.
4. You will notice the marker will not be completely removed from the entire cutting edge in one pass. This is why repeated passes will be required for a properly sharpened blade – as explained below.
5. If the edge is in bad condition (blunt), establish the edge by pushing the cutting edge toward the stone, imagining you are slicing a layer off the stone usually ensures an effective angle. Do not use excessive pressure, but use your supporting hand to gently maintain even, downward pressure on the blade across the entire cutting edge.

For a longer blade start at the tip. You can hold the blade at an angle relative to the stone, so that each pass across the stone covers more cutting edge, rather than having the blade spine perpendicular to the stone. Do this five times each side, then four, three, two, one.

6. Next, we suggest drawing the cutting edge over the stone, away from the cutting edge (imagine spreading butter on toast). Keep the same angle established in point 2. Begin with 10 times away from you, 10 times spine towards you, then 9, 8, 7, 6, five, four, three, two, one each side.

*NB – If the blade has a curved tip (as many knives do) you may find raising the handle-hand elbow upward a few inches will keep the blades tip cutting edge angle consistent with the rest of the cutting edge being sharpened.

Your edge should now be nice and sharp, but perhaps still a little rough.

7. You can test the sharpness by slicing paper. A sharp knife should be able to slice cleanly across a normal sheet of paper without catching or sounding too 'rough'. Try an 'S' shape cut. You can also lightly place the cutting edge on a thumb nail and see if it 'bites' into the nail without wandering. This would indicate it's likely sharp enough.

Warning! Never slide your finger/thumb along a blades edge! You can run a fingertip across a blade to get a 'feel' for the sharpness.

8. If you want a more refined edge, then repeat step 5 above using the white #4000 side of the whetstone. Once finished, the cutting edge should be very sharp. Use with care.

If the cutting edge is still not very sharp do not panic! Take a break and come back to it. The most likely explanation is the sharpening angle wasn't quite right. Attempt the marker pen on the cutting edge and slow down the sharpening strokes until the marker pen is removed consistently. Keep checking, go slow and you'll start to pick up muscle memory of the correct sharpening angle.

After several sharpening sessions, you will notice the whetstones surface is no longer flat, but likely has raised edges. To flatten the stones surface once more, a fast and effective way is to find an area of pavement, patio slab or other hard, flat surface outside and work the uneven side of the whetstone back and forth and in circular movements until the stones surface is flat once more. Wash off any loose grit and it is ready to keep using.

The topic of sharpening has had whole books written about it! This is intended as a quick intro to get the best from your new whetstone and return your blades to full sharpness.

You may find the sharpening process described above very satisfying. For it to be effective, it does require several minutes of concentration and mild effort. If time is against you, we would strongly recommend coming back when you have more time, rather than using a less effective method, such as a 'pull-through' sharpening tool. Those items may appear to sharpen knives, but on a microscopic level, what they do is tear steel off the cutting edge and leave it jagged. You will likely find our sharpening method described above is a more effective way at giving a longer sharp cycle to your cutting edge. It also removes steel in a more consistent and far less aggressive way; thereby extending the usable life of your blade.

Let us know if you need any more pointers and how you get on by contacting us here:

<https://www.britishmacheteco.com/contact>