

Knives – care and use

About knives

People are **not** permitted to carry knives in public so this means pocket and other knives have to be transported to camp in packs or tool boxes.

Knives can inflict a lot of damage when used inappropriately and should never be used as a toy or when playing.

Throwing knives in a SCOUTS environment is absolutely forbidden.

Pocket and carving type knives may be used in camp or during similar activities to:

- Cut ropes and cord
- Whittle pegs or toys
- Carve woggles
- Prepare food or carve cooked meat

When the activity has ended, the knives should be cleaned and put away immediately.

Safety precautions

All tools will harm you either while you are learning to use them or when used incorrectly. A Scout will always “Be Prepared” and make sure the following actions are taken:

- Learn to use the tool correctly and safely
- Learn first aid, particularly how to deal with cuts and scratches
- Have a personal first aid kit handy with plasters and bandages in it



Whittling or carving wood

This is an activity that will keep Scouts occupied for hours. It satisfies any creative instincts and will provide practice at controlling sharp tools and using them safely.

There are a several simple safety rules that must be observed when doing wood carving or whittling.

- Always sit down when whittling or carving.
- Always place you elbows and forearms on your knees.
- Always cut away from your body.



The reasons are:

- Being seated reduces the chance of falling;
- Placing your forearms on the knees places the knife beyond your legs;
- Cutting away from your body eliminates the chance of cutting yourself.

Continued on next page

Knives – care and use, Continued

Sharpening a knife

As mentioned previously, a blunt pocket or food preparation knife can be dangerous.

- Make sure that a sharpening stone (carborundum) is always in the Troop tool box and that you know how to use it.
- Make sure the knife blade is held at a 20 degree angle to the carborundum stone.
- Use water (spit) or oil on the stone and then grind the blade in a circular motion, moving the blade back and forwards along the stone so as not to wear the stone in one place.
- When finished, run the knife once across a small piece of wood to remove any steel burrs from the edge of the blade. Do not use your fingers unless you enjoy having splinters of steel in them.



Most knives are sharpened in the same manner regardless of their size.

Sharpening tools

There are three sorts of tools used to sharpen knife blades.

1. A large grinding wheel that is kept wet as it turns slowly so that the blade doesn't get hot and lose its 'temper'. Temper is the hardness of steel and if the blade gets too hot, it becomes soft and won't remain sharp for long.
2. A carborundum stone (silicone carbide abrasive) which are available in a variety of sizes and shapes. Some are oblong (see above), some are round and fit in the palm of your hand and some are like a short piece of broom stick. One side is usually very rough or coarse and is used first to grind the blade and make it thinner. The fine or smoother side is used last to put a very sharp edge on the blade.
3. The third tool is a sharpening steel and is only used to keep the blade sharp while you are working. You sometimes see people using a sharpening steel to sharpen a knife when carving a roast.



Storing knives

Pocket knives

- are easy to store, just clean the blade and then fold it into the handle and place the knife in your pocket or pack.

Carving and food preparation knives

- are best stored in a block of wood or plastic so that the blade is not damaged or made blunt by rubbing up against other blades and tools.
- are less likely to cut your hands if the blade is stored in a wooden or plastic block.

