

IMANISHI COMBINATION STONE

Use and Care Guide



Don't be daunted. If you begin slowly and with attention, sharpening your own knives can become intuitive surprisingly quickly. We've done our best to describe our method for you here—keep in mind that there is a wide world of instructional video and discussions on technique out there, and you might find further research (or a quick in-person lesson with an experienced friend) helpful.

Preparation:

Soak the stone in water for 15–30 minutes. It will bubble a bit as it becomes saturated. When it's ready, remove it from the water and place it on a flat surface with its grey side (1,000 grit) facing up. Position a piece of rubber or a wet paper towel under the stone to keep it from sliding during sharpening. (The blue rubber included with your stone is intended for this purpose.) We prefer to situate the stone with its length perpendicular to the countertop edge.

Sharpening:

Touch your blade to the surface of the stone, with the cutting edge facing away from you. Hold the handle securely but comfortably with one hand, and place the fingers of your other hand on the blade itself to guide it across the stone. Rock the blade slightly until you have found the angle at which its narrow bevel is flat against the stone—probably with about a 15–22° angle between the blade and the stone’s surface. Keep this angle as constant as you can during sharpening.

Drag the blade toward you, applying a bit of gentle pressure, and then push it back away from you, lightening up on the pressure so as not to dig into the stone with the knife’s edge. You can work on one area of the knife at a time, or use diagonal strokes that involve the entire blade. Aim for long, even strokes.

Use your hand to splash the stone with a bit of water every time it begins to look or feel dry as you’re sharpening. Ideally, a small amount of visible liquid will be present at all times, and will help the stone work effectively. After a few minutes, flip the knife over and repeat on its other side. You may want to switch from side to side a few times, removing the burr that builds up.

When your knife’s bevel is sharpened and uniform, it’s time to turn the stone over and use its white (6,000 grit) side to refine the edge you’ve just created. Rinse the stone and the knife before switching sides to prevent contamination between grits. Repeat the sharpening motion using the white side of the stone until the edge of your blade is smooth and polished.

Care:

From time to time, when areas of the stone have worn down a bit from use, you’ll need to level its surface. To do this, draw a grid on the surface of the stone with a pencil. (You can free-hand it—it doesn’t need to be precise.) Then place the gridded surface down onto a large piece of medium-fine sand paper over a flat surface, and rub the stone flat against the paper until the pencil marks have worn away evenly. Repeat to flatten the other side of the stone.

Allow the stone to dry in the open air before storing it. Then place it in its box or wrap it in a soft cloth. Store it away from extreme temperatures; if it freezes it could crack.

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