

Knife Safety



Always use your knife under adult supervision.

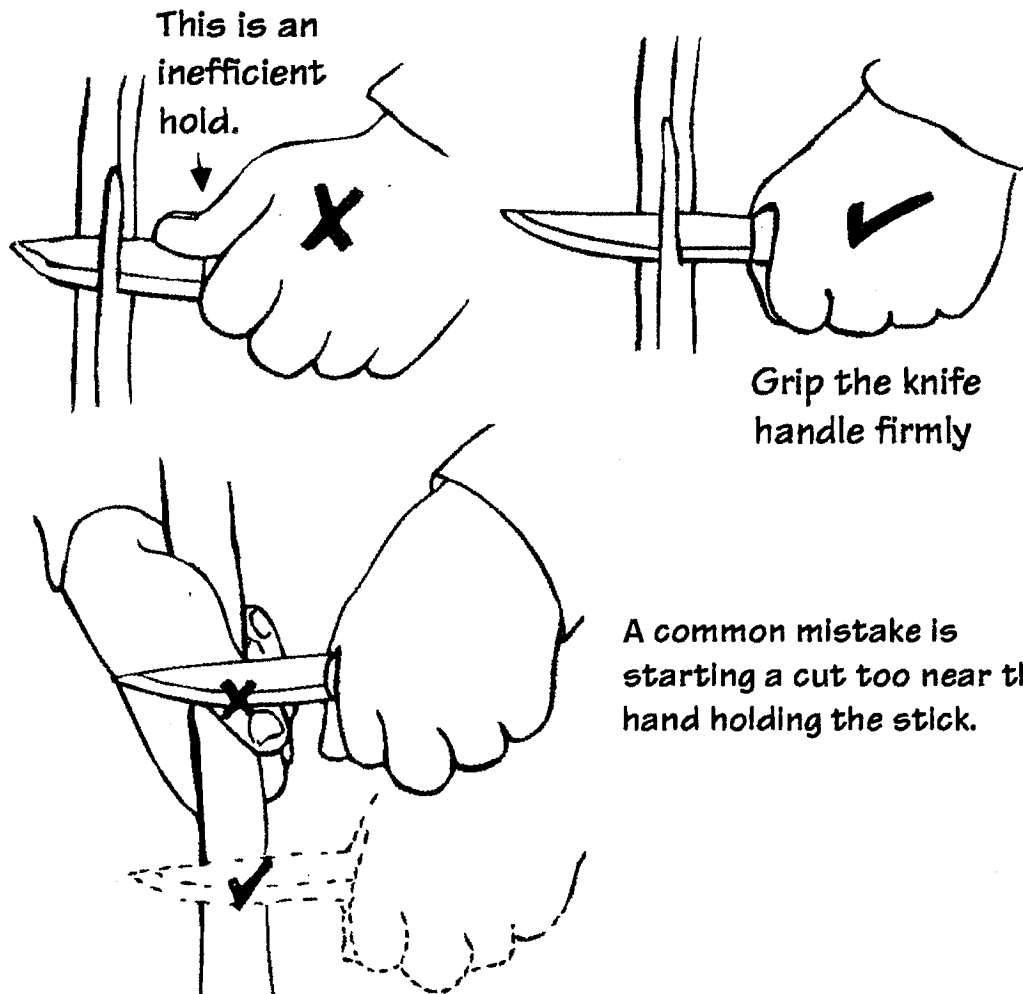
Once you learn how to use your knife, it will be your most useful tool for JFW projects and campouts.

Using your knife safely

Peeling a stick is a basic technique that leads to skillful wood carving. Peeled sticks dry out quickly and become lighter and tougher than unpeeled sticks. Heavy knots and branches should be trimmed off first.

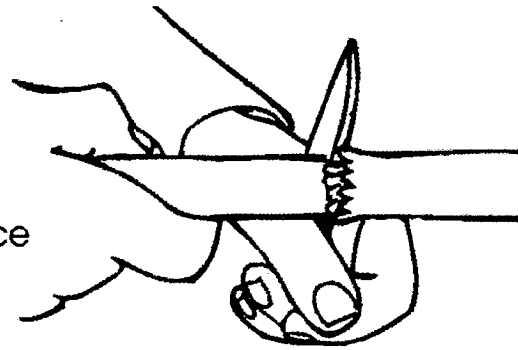
Peeling a stick with a knife

Wrap fingers firmly around the handle and make strokes away from your body.

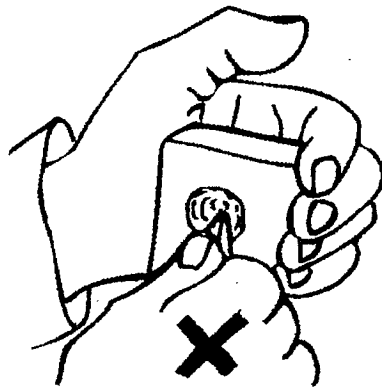


Cutting through a stick

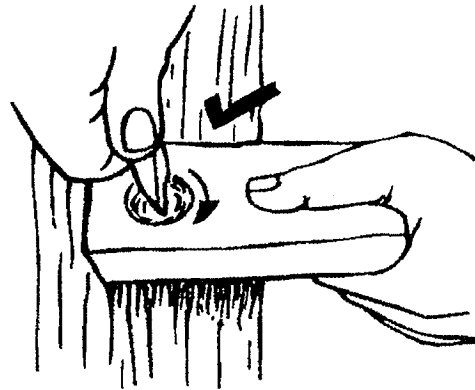
Make a series of small cuts all around the stick. (For a large stick this may need to be repeated a number of times.) Each time around, the blade can cut a little deeper. Once the cut is deep enough, the stick can be broken. The ends are then trimmed to complete the cut.



Using a log for support



It is dangerous to hold the wood in the palm of your hand when carving.



It is much safer to support your work on a log or the ground.

First Aid for Knife Cuts

The more you learn about using a knife, the less likely you are to cut yourself.

The most common cuts occur on the thumb and forefinger of the hand holding the wood. Areas where painful blisters are likely to form is on the palm below the baby finger and at the junction of the thumb and forefinger. A common site for stab wounds is on the palm of the hand holding the work in the palm (see illustration above).

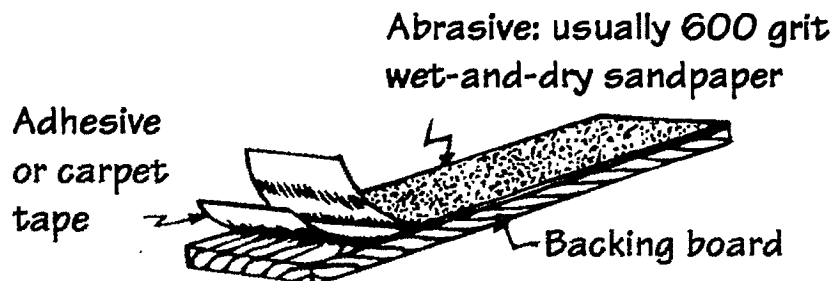
Keep your hands and knife clean. Always have a first aid kit nearby that includes Steri-strips, non-stick dressing and antibiotic ointment. The faster you close the wound or cover it and exclude oxygen, the less pain and the quicker it should heal.

Stop bleeding immediately on any cut by applying pressure and elevating the wounded part.

How to Sharpen Your Knife

An adult must always be with you when you are sharpening a knife. Take care not to cut yourself. If you do, tell your Leader immediately.

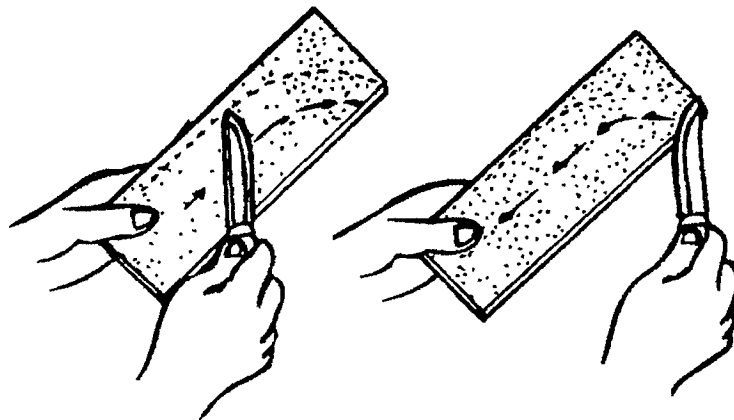
How to make a sharpening board:



Method of Sharpening:

Use a curved motion to sharpen the curved part of the blade.

Each stroke ends or begins with an arc to sharpen the curved portion of the blade.

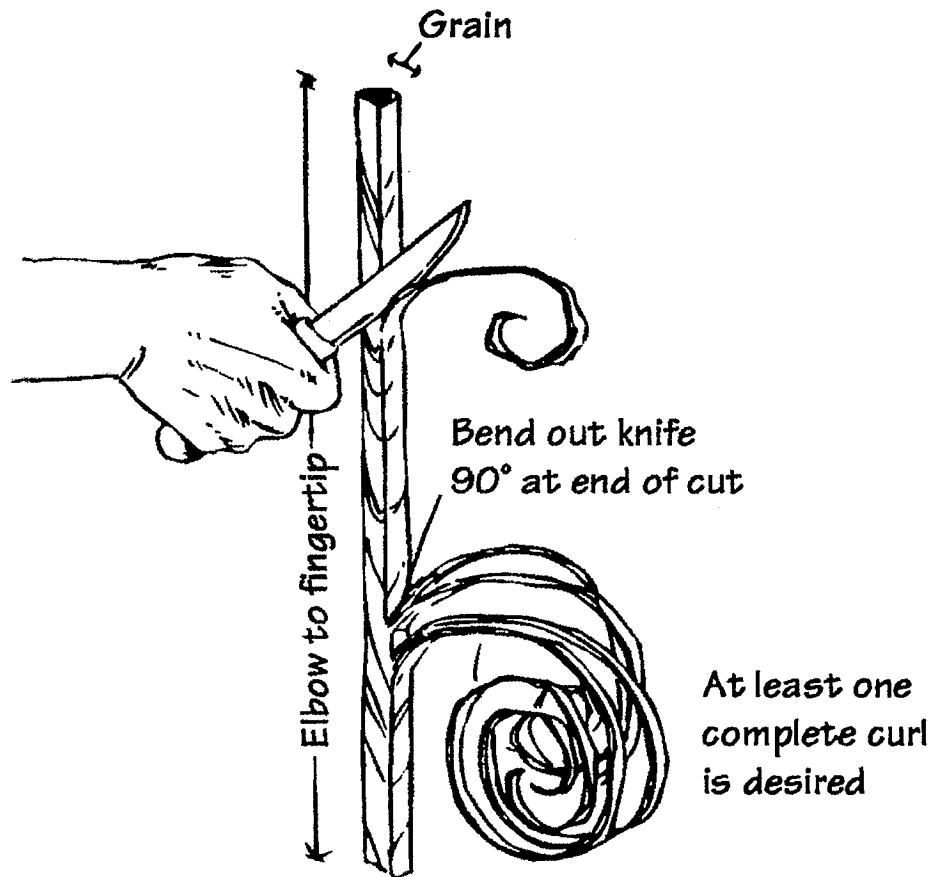


The entire bevel face should come in contact with the abrasive surface:

Test your knife for sharpness by cutting a piece of writing paper cleanly. This is the degree of sharpness you will need for woodworking projects.

How to Make a Featherstick

You can use your knife to make fine, easy to ignite kindling. Make the featherstick elbow to fingertip long and about as thick as your thumb. Choose a stick that is knot-free with a straight wood grain. You can find out how well your featherstick works by lighting the curls and trying to make the shaft burn. A good featherstick creates enough heat to start the shaft on fire.



Cutting Down Saplings With a Knife

Almost any green tree that is wrist thick or less can be bent and easily cut down with a knife. Some deciduous trees, like black poplar or cottonwood, that are up to 10 cm in diameter have been cut down in this way. A frozen tree is more difficult to cut down. It is more easily broken after starting the break with a knife cut.

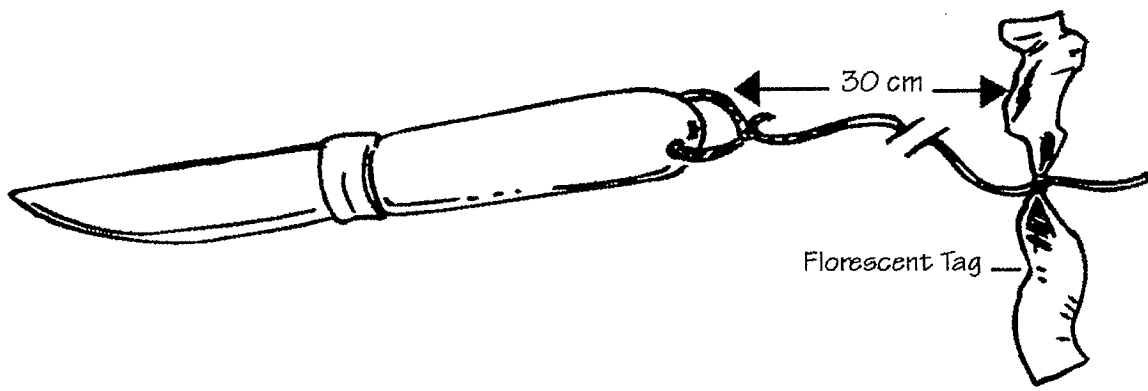
The reason for cutting a tree of this size is to make emergency shelters. **Never** cut green trees needlessly.

Don't Lose Your Knife

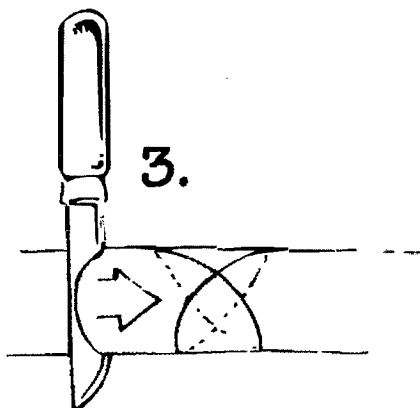
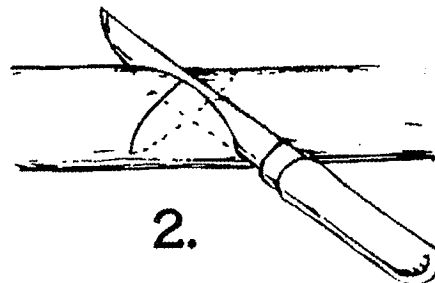
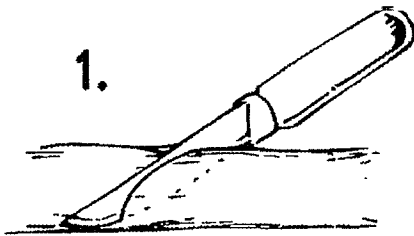
You can make the handle easier to see by painting it fluorescent orange or by taping it with fluorescent orange tape:

Knives can be accidentally lost when they fall into soft snow. Drill a small hole near the end of the handle for the cord. Tie a piece of nylon cord about 30 cm long with a fluorescent tag on to the end of the knife. The tag should still be visible on the surface of the snow even though the knife is buried.

Always keep your knife in its sheath when you are not using it. Attach a shoelace or cord to the sheath and carry your knife around your neck.



How to Make a Pot Hook



Finished pot hook



Source: Text and illustrations courtesy of Mors Kochanski