

Dressing a sharpening stone

A flat clean stone is one of the keys to good freehand sharpening a knife blade. I learned this from Wayne Goddard who is a master knife maker. The stone is worked against a flat steel glass or cast iron plate with silicon carbide grit. Cast iron is best since it will resist wear better than plain steel. I use a salvaged cast iron drill press table that I found in my grandfather's shop years ago. It is 24 inch diameter but no need for one that large. Probably 12 inch would work fine. I have experimented with different grit silicon carbide and settled on 80 grit as the most efficient. 120 will work but takes longer. Any thing coarser than 80 leaves a finish that is too rough. Put some grit on the flat surface and just rub the stone in a circular motion. As the grit cuts it will lap the stone flat. The hollows and low spots will show up quickly. Just keep working it till it looks flat. I use window cleaner for a lube and it will also help to deep clean the surface and really get the particles out. Use a brush and window cleaner to do the final cleaning. If compressed air is available use high pressure to do a final blow off on the surface. Silicon carbide grit is used for rock polishing and is available at lapidary supply houses. I get mine from Johnson Brothers in southern California. 5 pounds is a good amount to start with and it will last a long time.