

Totin' Chip

Materials Needed

- Pocketknife
- Saw
- Ax
- Sharpening file
- Sharpening stone
- Cleaning material for knives
- Protective eyewear
- Gloves
- Rope and stakes
- Pine stakes for whittling

Part 1: Pocketknives

Selecting a Pocketknife

- The ideal pocketknife for a scout has 1 or 2 cutting blades.
- Additional tools such as a screwdriver and can opener can be helpful; however, if you carry a knife with any accessories, you should learn how to use each one of them proficiently. More accessories than a few is usually not good.
- Knives cannot be longer than 4 inches.
- Knives must have a locking device.
- Knives should be made of a material that will not rust, such as stainless steel.

Safe Zone (or Blood Circle)

- Before using any bladed instrument, you must ensure that your area is free of people or obstacles that could cause problems.
- Hold your closed pocketknife in your hand with your arm outstretched, and slowly move around in a circle.
- If a person or animal enters your blood circle, it is your responsibility to close your knife and wait for them to exit before continuing to use your tool.

Opening a Knife

- Make sure that you are in your safe zone before opening a knife.
- Hold the knife with one hand with the blade facing away from you, and open the blade with the other hand.

- Most blades have a small semicircle cut into the blade near the top to give you better hold on the blade while opening it. You can use your fingernail or grab that edge with your fingers to pull the blade open.
- Be sure to hold the sides of the knife firmly as you open the blade.
- Make sure your knife is locked open before you start to use it.

Closing a Knife

- Hold the handle in your left hand with your fingers safely on the sides.
- Push against the back of the blade with the heel of the right hand (or your fingers) and swing the handle up to meet the blade.
- Let the knife snap shut.

Passing a Knife

- Whenever you need to pass the knife to another person, always close the knife first.
- While holding one end of the knife, allow the person to get hold of the other end of the knife. Do not release your hold on the knife until the person taking it from you says "Thank You". This indicates that the other person realizes that they are receiving the knife and are ready to accept responsibility for it.
- After hearing the "Thank You," you should say "You're Welcome" as you release the knife. This indicates that you have released the responsibility for the knife to the other person.
- Never throw or toss a knife to another person.

Practice: Open a knife, close a knife, pass a knife

Inspecting the Knife

- Before you use your knife, do a quick inspection.
- If the knife handle or blade is loose, do not use it until it can be repaired.
- If the knife blade is cracked, broken or chipped, do not use the knife.
- If the knife is too small for your hands or too heavy to easily control, do not use the knife.

Care of the Pocketknife

- Wash with soap and water, and rinse after using to cut food, make sure to dry.
- Keep inside clean of dirt.
- Open all blades and accessories.
- Using a toothpick and a small patch of lightly oiled rag, clean the blade storage area.
- Using a light oil, slightly oil all hinges.
- Keep your knife sharp. Sharpen a knife using a whetstone.

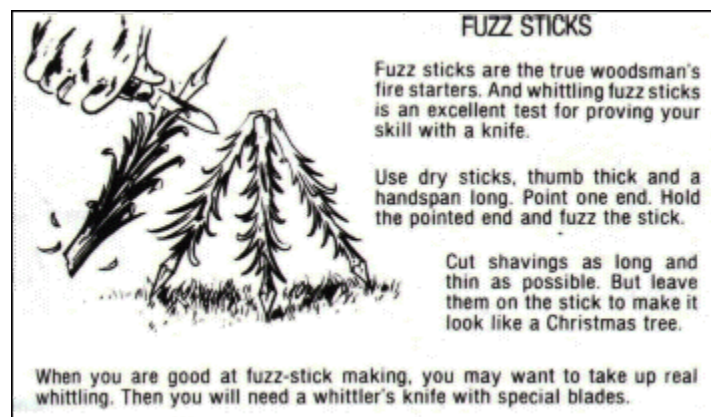
Sharpening Steps

- Place the stones on a level surface.
- Wet the stone with a little water or oil.
- Place the blade of the knife flat on the stone, then raise the back edge about the width of the blade itself, keeping the cutting edge on the stone.
- Draw the knife straight back toward you, or move it straight back and forth putting pressure on it only when you pull it toward you. This is always better than moving it in a circular fashion.
- Turn the blade over and repeat on the other side an equal number of times.
- Repeat steps 1 thru 5 on a finer grit stone until the knife has a smooth, sharp edge.
- If you have some leather available, you can use this to finish the edge by dragging the blade edge along the leather. Repeat the same number of strokes on each side of the blade.

Practice: Sharpening knives

Prepare tinder for cooking fire

- Whittling fuzz sticks is a classic wilderness technique to make tinder out of a piece of kindling sized wood.
- To create a fuzz stick, find the driest stick you can. It can be any size or shape, but something thumb-thick, straight, and a foot long is ideal.
- Hardwood sticks are more difficult to carve, yet they burn for a long time. Softwoods are easy to carve, but short lived.
- After you have made your selection, start carving long thin curls near one end of the stick. Work your way backward while spiraling your cuts to create a shaggy-looking stick.



Part 2: Ax Yard

Ax Yard

- An Ax Yard is a marked off area, possibly with rope, to form a safety barrier. The idea is no one except the person using the tool is inside, this keeps other from being accidentally hit and or hurt.
- The area should be at least 10 feet in diameter.
- The area should have all the safety equipment necessary, including eye protection, gloves, and a place to store the tools.
- Only one person is allowed to operate tools in the ax yard at a time. The person wielding the tools is in charge of the safety of the yard. If you need to enter an ax yard, ask the tool wielder for permission and then obey that person if they tell you no or to wait.

Camp Saw

- A saw is the proper tool for most outdoor wood cutting.
- When using a saw to cut downed wood, brace the piece of wood against a chopping block, sawhorse, or other solid support. Use long, smooth strokes. Let the weight of the saw pull the blade into the wood.
- Only cut standing trees with permission from a ranger, property owner, property manager, and your Scoutmaster. To cut standing trees, first make an undercut on the bottom of the limb to be cut, then cut from the top. Cut close to the tree trunk. When cutting saplings cut close to the ground.
- Always carry a saw with the blade turned away from your body.
- When passing a saw, turn the blade away from both persons. Wait to release the saw until they say "Thank You." Reply with "You're Welcome."
- Replace or sharpen blades when they become dull.

Sharpening a Saw

- You can remove any rust with fine sandpaper or a wire brush.
- To file the teeth, use a small triangle file. Stroke the file upwards following the shape of each tooth. Sharpen one side of the saw and then the other side.

Parts of an Ax

- Ax Head: Typically has two ends — the bit or blade on one side, and the poll or butt on the other
- Bit: The cutting portion of the ax head; also known as the blade or the edge
- Poll: The blunt part of the ax head that aids in balance and control; also known as back, butt, or heel
- Toe: Upper corner of the bit where the cutting edge begins
- Heel: Bottom corner of bit
- Cheek: The side of the axe head
- Beard: Part of the bit that descends below the rest of the axe head

- Handle/Haft: Usually made of springy hardwoods like hickory but can be made with durable synthetic materials
- Shoulder: Where the head mounts onto the haft
- Belly: Longest part of haft; often made with slight bow
- Throat: Where haft curves into the short grip
- Knob: End of haft
- Eye: Hole where the haft is mounted

Using an Ax

- An ax must be in top condition. If the head is loose, handle is cracked, or the blade is dull, DON'T USE IT.
- An ax will be used primarily for splitting logs into smaller pieces to be used as fuel for a fire. You can also use an ax for limbing logs and bucking.
- To swing an ax, securely hold the belly of the handle in one hand. Right handed people hold with the left hand. With the other hand grasp the handle just under the head of the ax. Position the ax about eye level. Bring the ax down with a smooth motion allowing the upper hand to slide down the ax handle to meet the stationary hand which on the belly of the handle. Allow the weight of the ax to do the cutting.
- To split wood, you want to do so lengthways. Ideally you will use a chopping block (flat soft wooden surface). Stand the log to be split on the chopping block. Select an age crack, which is a natural split through the diameter of a log caused by the drying of the wood. Using proper swinging technique bring the ax down striking the log at the age crack. Remove the log from the ax, reposition on the chopping block, and use the swinging technique again. Never swing the ax while the log is still attached to the blade.
- Always place a sheath on an ax before carrying. Carry the ax by the handle just under the head of the ax. Carry with the blade pointed away from you.
- Never carry an ax on your shoulder.
- When handing someone an ax, hold it by the handle, with the head hanging down vertically. Wait until the other scout has a firm grip on the handle and says "Thank You" before you release your grip.

Sharpening the Ax

- Use a 8 or 10 inch mill bastard file to sharpen an ax.
- Wear leather gloves to protect your hands and use a knuckle guard on the file.
- Place the ax head against a log of about 6 inches diameter. Use 2 pegs or tent stakes to secure it at the butt.
- Place the file at a 30 degree angle against the blade and push it into the bit.
- Sharpen with firm, even strokes.
- Lift the file from the bit when recovering from a stroke.
- Turn the axe around and sharpen the other side of the bit.

- TIP: When looking straight onto the bit in sunlight or a bright light a dull blade will look shiny. A sharp blade will have no shine at all.



Practice: Enter an ax yard correctly, pass an ax, sharpen an ax

Practice: Prepare kindling and fuel wood for a cooking fire using a saw and ax

Part 3: Pledge

The Outdoor Code

As an American, I will do my best to:

Be clean in my outdoor manners,
be careful with fire,
be considerate in the outdoors,
and be conservation minded.

- We must remember to follow the Outdoor Code whenever using knives, saws, and axes.

Pledge

I understand that it is my responsibility to:

1. Read and understand wood tools use and safety rules from the Boy Scout Handbook.
2. Demonstrate proper handling, care, and use of the pocketknife, ax, and saw.
3. Use the knife, ax, and saw as tools, not playthings.
4. Respect all safety rules to protect others.
5. Respect property. Cut living and dead trees only with permission and for good reason.
6. Subscribe to the Outdoor Code.

Rank sign offs: Scout rank 5, Tenderfoot rank 3d, Second class rank 2b.

Anatomy of an Ax

