

stay *Sharp!*

Keeping knives sharp makes kitchen work easier.

■ Honing

A dull knife can be a safety hazard in the kitchen. It requires you to use more pressure to cut and that could result in the knife slipping. Knives should be honed before every use and sharpened at regular intervals. Honing a kitchen knife requires a steel; a long rod with a handle at one end. Using a steel will realign the knife edge and do some sharpening at the same time. They can be purchased at most housewares stores.

To use the steel, hold it upright at a 90-degree angle, pointed end down, on a flat surface. It's a good idea to set it on a towel to avoid slipping. To hone properly you want to run the edge of the knife along the steel at a 22-degree angle. The easiest way to calculate the angle is to visually cut a right angle (90 degrees) in half and then in half again.

Begin with the heel of the blade contacting the steel as close to the handle as possible, with the tip of the blade pointing away from you. In one motion, pull the blade back towards you and down the shaft of the steel. You should end with the tip of the blade in contact with

the steel towards the bottom of the shaft. Repeat four or five times. Switch sides and do the same thing on the other side of the blade.

■ Sharpening

Sharpening a knife requires a grinder or whetstone. Oil stones, diamond stones and Japanese whetstones are the most common. It can take some time to perfect the technique of sharpening but all good stones will come with instructions. There are also electric grinders that do a good job sharpening your knives.

When sharpening by hand it's important to remember to stabilize the stone on a towel. Keep your knife blade as close to the stone as possible and work in only one direction at a time. Move the blade in an arching motion from left to right and from heel to tip. Use your free hand to apply a light pressure on the blade to keep it close to the surface of the stone.

Repeat the motion about 10 times, then switch to the other side of the blade. When done, wipe the knife clean and dry before using. 🌿