

FREE PRINTABLE RESOURCE

KNIFE SHARPENING & FIELD MAINTENANCE CARD

A sharp blade is a safe blade. Hold the angle, match both sides, then keep it dry when you're done.

SHARPENING: ANGLE & GRIT

Sharper is safer. AKTI: a sharp blade takes less force and is less likely to stick. A dull one invites the extra force that causes slips.

- ☐ **Hold a 10–15° angle per side**
AKTI guidance for most fixed blades. Exact angle shifts with flat, convex, or hollow grinds
- ☐ **Coarse grit (under ~800) rebuilds a dull or damaged edge**
- ☐ **Medium grit (800–2000) is the working middle ground**
- ☐ **Fine grit (2000+) polishes an edge that's already there**
- ☐ **A basic two-sided stone covers most needs**
Roughly 1000 grit on one face, finer on the other

THE 5 STEPS

- ☐ **1. Wet or oil the stone first**
Check what your specific stone calls for
- ☐ **2. Set the angle, lock your wrist**
Hold it steady for the entire stroke
- ☐ **3. Push the edge away from you**
AKTI's rule for sharpening, same as cutting
- ☐ **4. Match the strokes on both sides**
Same count, same angle, same pressure
- ☐ **5. Feel for the burr, then switch to fine grit**
A full-length burr means it's time to polish

FIELD TOUCH-UPS

- ☐ **Small pocket stone or ceramic rod for mid-trip touch-ups**
Not a replacement for a full stone session at home
- ☐ **A handful of light passes per side, same angle, same direction**
- ☐ **Goal: keep working, not restore a fully dull edge**

CUT & SHARPEN SAFETY (AKTI)

- ☐ **Always cut and sharpen away from your body**
- ☐ **Secure what you're cutting on a firm surface**
Don't hold it in your hand
- ☐ **Keep fingers clear of a folding blade's closing arc**
- ☐ **Never use a knife as a hammer, screwdriver, or pry bar**
Twisting or striking can chip, bend, or snap the blade

AFTER USE: CLEAN, OIL, STORE

- ☐ **Wipe down after sweat, rain, food acid, or salt air**
High-carbon steel can flash-rust in 10–15 minutes left wet
- ☐ **Warm water + soft cloth; a toothpick for handle seams**
- ☐ **Dry fully, then a light coat of oil**
A basic mineral oil is food-safe, inert, and cheap
- ☐ **Store dry, not in a damp basement, garage, or long-term leather sheath**

Routine beats repair. Five minutes after use, plus a couple of minutes with a stone now and then, prevents most rust, dulling, and damage.

Last full sharpening: _____

Full guide: tacticalbox.com/blogs/tacticalbox-blog/knife-sharpening-and-field-maintenance-basics

Source: American Knife and Tool Institute, "Knife Safety, Sharpening and Maintenance."