



HANDLE MAKING: BENT AND STRAIGHT KNIVES

Knife handles, in the past, were made from different kind of materials like bone, ivory, and wood. Like many projects they were carved intricately with motifs or left plain. In this workshop the handles are made from red cedar and lashed with seine twine. The use of hand tools and power tools will be covered.

Materials

- Red cedar, Yellow cedar, or Yew Wood - 1" x 1" x 8"
- #12 seine twine
- Wood glue or epoxy glue
- Masking tape

Tools

- Bent knife
- ¼" chisel
- Handsaw or Bandsaw
- Sandpaper 150-grit (optional)
- Pencil

Safety

- Eye protection
- Ear protection
- Dust mask
- Safety boots

Procedure: Bent Knives

1. Select a piece of red cedar (approx. 8" in length).
2. Make a slight angle cut on the handle side of the blade, measuring 2-3" in length, from the tip of the handle. The length is determined by the length of the blade.
3. Trace the knife blade on the tapered surface. The angle the blade will be upright as shown in the photo below.
4. Using a straight blade, make a V-cut along the lines you have drawn. Cut on the inside of the line, where you will be removing the wood, to insert the knife blade.

Use a small chisel to remove the wood between the V-cuts. Check the depth of the cut (material to remove) to match the thickness of the blade. The blade should be inlaid

so that no more than 1/16" is sticking above flush. This will allow the seine twine to hold the blade in place, at a later stage.

TIP: A snug fit, where the blade does not move at all, will prevent it from loosening up with use.

5. Once the blade is inset, carve down the handle to fit your hand. Taper the handle, towards the end of the blade, from 1/8" to 1/4" on both sides and top. Round all the corners of the handle for comfort in your hand and a nice soft edge to wrap the seine twine, to secure the blade in place.
6. Using a straight knife, cut a small notch about 1/8" from the handle tip. This will help secure the twine on the end of the handle.

Tying the blade to the handle

7. To prepare for tying the blade on with the twine, hold the blade in place using epoxy or hot glue. Wrap with masking tape to hold it in place till the glue sets. Wrap the blade with a piece of cloth so it won't cut the twine as you wrap.

NOTE: Keep the twine attached to the spool.

Spacing off 8" of the twine and make a loop. Place the loop on the handle, about 1/2" past the end of the blade iron (which should be the same the masking tape) as shown on the diagram. Tape it in place. The loose end of the loop should be wrapped and tied around the cloth temporary.

9. Start wrapping the twine around the handle in the groove and continue until you are just past the bottom of the blade. *Keep the twine tight at all times.*
10. With your thumb, keep pressure on the last wrap of the twine. Cut the twine, from the spool, leaving about 6-8" in length and pass it through the loop near your thumb, as shown on the diagram. Tie a loop on the newly cut end of the twine.
11. Unravel the twine that is wrapped around the cloth. Place a screwdriver through that loop and pull the twine under the wrapped section to tighten and secure it. Do the same on opposite end. Trim the excess twine flush with each side of the wrap.





Procedure: Straight Knives

1. Measure and layout for a notch on the piece of wood. It should measure half the thickness of the wood and the length of the grip part of the blade. The blade will eventually be placed between the 2 pieces.
2. Cut out the block (as shown), by making two cuts on a bandsaw and set the piece of wood aside.
3. Trace the blade on the handle to determine where the insert will be located.
4. Make a V-Cut on the inside of the traced pencil lines. Be as accurate as possible.
5. Chisel out between the two v-grooves to create an inlay for the knife blade to sit in.
NOTE: The blade should **not** sit flush with the block of wood. Allow the blade to sit just above the surface to help secure it to the handle.
6. After creating the inlay, test to ensure the blade is a snug fit. Double check that the blade sticks up slightly above the wood.
7. Apply epoxy or hot glue to the blade and place it into the groove.
NOTE: Different types of glue require different times to cure.
8. Using wood glue, glue the block of wood back into place and wrap the handle with masking tape to catch any excess glue. Clamp the two piece and set aside for the glue to cure.
9. After the glue has cured, trim the end of the knife handle down and round the corners.
OPTIONAL: Tie the handle with #12 seine twine, like you did for the curved knife handle.