

Culinary Medicine

Knife Skills

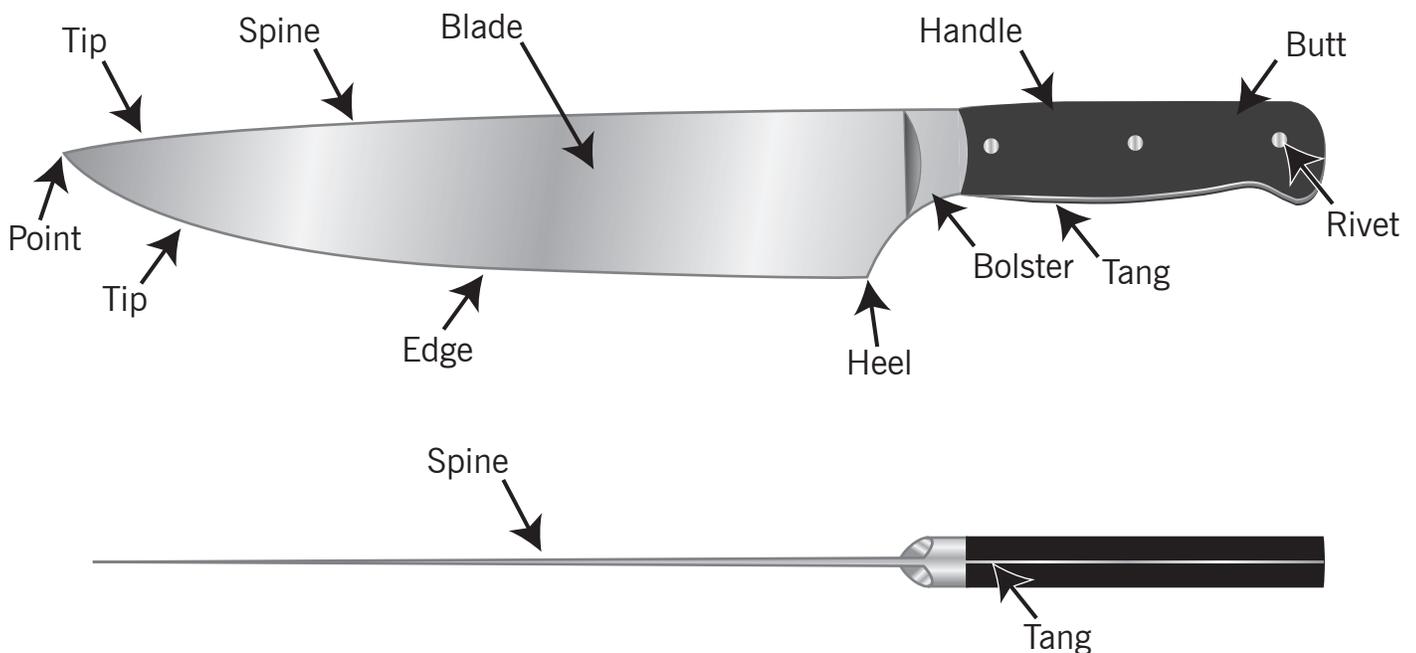


8-inch Chef's Knife



Knife skills are essential to helping people getting into the kitchen to cook. An 8-inch half bolster chef's knife is the essential kitchen knife we recommend everyone should have. The main parts are the blade and handle. A good knife also has a full tang, which is an extension of the blade, extending through the handle. This along with a half bolster (indicated in the illustration below) add to the strength and durability of the knife which is important when force is applied.

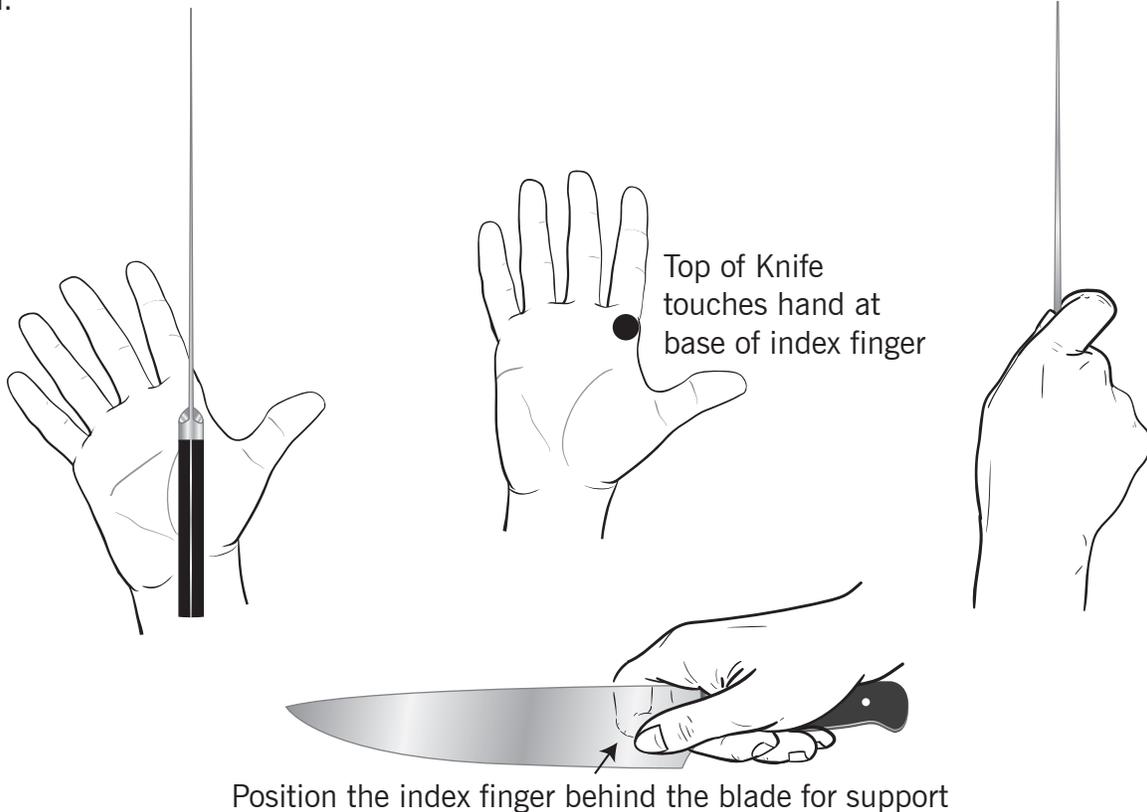
Parts of a Chef's Knife



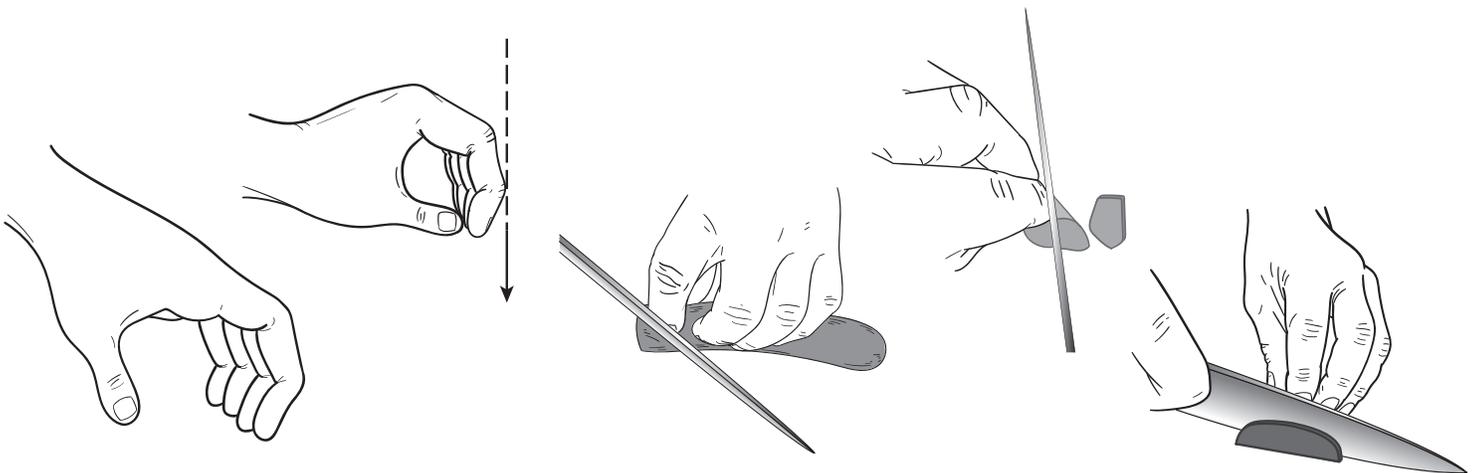
The main parts of a chef's knife are the tip, point, spine, cutting edge, heel, bolster and handle. Some handles will have rivets that attach the handle to the spine, others are encased around a full tang or a partial tang. The bolster is the junction where the blade meets the handle. Some knives have full bolsters from the spine to the blade. This adds strength and durability, but can be difficult to sharpen once the cutting edge near the bolster becomes worn. Since the bolster is much thicker than the cutting edge of the blade, it will need to be ground down even with the edge. It also makes the sharpening and honing the knife more difficult because it prevents the blade from moving evenly through a sharpener. The benefit of a half or tapered bolster knife is to give durability and make sharpen easy from the heel to the point of the knife.

Holding the Knife

Thumb and index finger on blade, three fingers on handle. This Provides increased dexterity, control and less wrist fatigue. The junction at the top of the blade that meets the bolster should touch the base of your index finger.



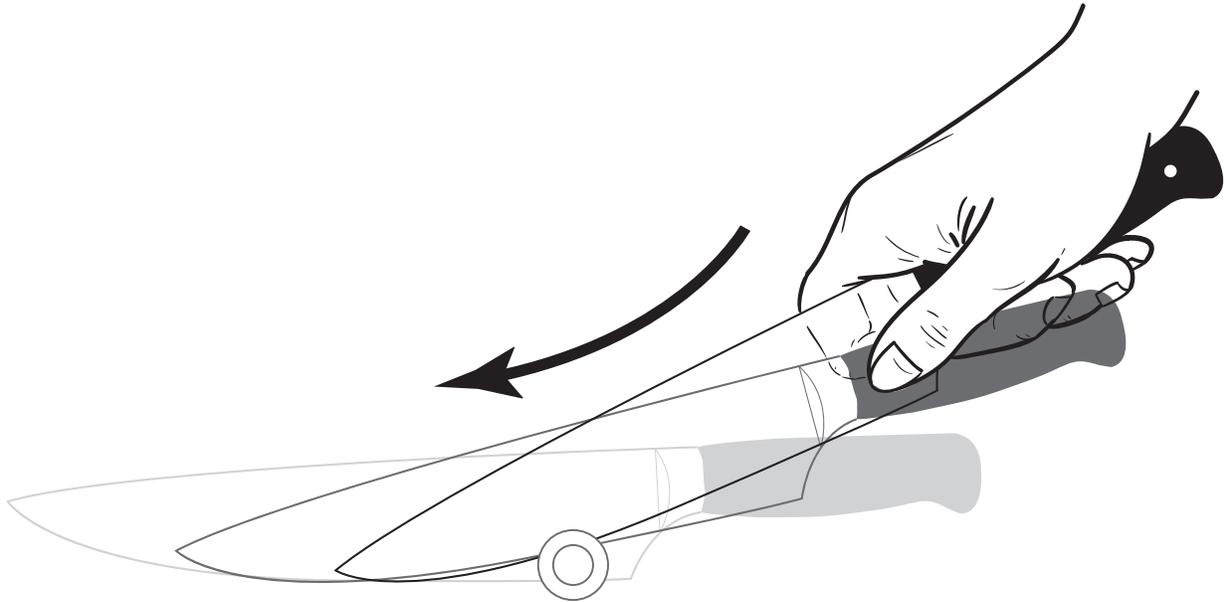
Holding the food Position of the guiding hand while cutting



The idea position for the guiding hand or the hand holding the food is when the fingers are slightly curled under the first knuckle joint to protect the fingertips while pressing down on the food ingredient to keep it from moving. The blade should be touching the first knuckle leaving a gap between the blade and your fingertips. The thumb and little finger behind the other fingers.

Ideally, while the hand that is holding the knife moves forward and back to cut, the guiding hand moves across the food accordingly and in sync with the speed of the cutting. This takes practice to master, but it is a skill that will serve you with every meal you prepare for the rest of your life!

Cutting with the Knife



- Cuts are made downward with a rocking motion from the tip to the end of the blade. The knife is not sawed back and forth through foods.
- Pivot technique; knife point keeps contact with cutting surface.
- Free pass technique; entire knife is lifted from cutting surface in up/down or back/forth motions.
- Chopping; fast pace up/down motion

Cutting Surface Sanitation

- Clean as you go.
- Wash cutting board with soap/hot water and rinse well.
- Can sanitize with one tablespoon chlorine bleach to one gallon water on clean surface, then rinse and dry.