

How To Make A Knife With An Real Expert

Have you ever wanted to know how to make a knife from a hand saw? Or did you even know it could be done? I'm here to tell you it can. I've been doing it for over 20 years ever since I learned how one afternoon with an expert!

I had an interest in learning the traditional ways of learning things starting about 20 years ago. Living in Atlanta at the time someone passed along the name of a man they knew who made knives the way they used to. I just had to go see him.

Some people I knew also told me mountain folks had their own way of doing things. One of those things was to never throw anything away. And I realized what they were talking about as I drove past some of the homes up there.

I had been told the old man who was going to show me how to make a knife would likely be in his tool shed out behind his house when I got there. I walked around to the back when I arrived and found him already coming out of the shed with his tools: a cold chisel, a rusty hand saw and a sledgehammer.

The look on my face must have prompted him to say, "Don't look shocked young man, this here's just where we're gonna start." Then he set everything down on top of a stump near the shed.

"If ya wanna know how to make a knife, I'm about to show ya so watch close now", he grinned. He then struggled to find something in his pockets. What he finally found was a small piece of soapstone that he proceeded to use as a drawing instrument.

I had noticed earlier how weather-beaten his face was, but now concentrating on his hands as he drew, I decided they were an even match. He drew quickly and was done in under a minute.

"This here's one of my all-time favorites", he said pointing to the knife drawing and winking at me. He tossed the soapstone on the stump and grabbed the chisel with his left hand. Then he bent down to pick up the eight pound sledge hammer with his right hand.

Moving carefully he placed the chisel's tip on one of the soapstone lines. Choking up on the hammer's handle he lifted it above his shoulder and swung it down. It landed squarely on the end of the chisel with a loud bang. It made me jump.

When he moved the chisel along the soapstone line again to make his next cut, I examined the cut he had just made. It was a clean cut and exactly on the line of the drawing.

After arriving at his run-down house and seeing him come out with such primitive tools, I wondered if I shouldn't just go home. I was having a lot of doubt about his ability to teach me how to make a knife that would even be worth owning. But my confidence was rising as I watched him cut through that steel with such precision. In no time he produced what he referred to as a "blank" and I followed him to the shed for step number two.

I watched him for the next fifteen minutes slowly wear away the rough edges left by the chisel on an ancient grinder in his shed. He finished cleaning the surface rust off the blade with sandpaper.

He took down an old crank-style drill from a peg on the wall and more quickly than I imagined had three neat holes drilled into the handle area. He hung it back up and grabbed a coil of very thick copper wire off the peg next to it.

"Copper's real soft, ya know", he said. "Make good rivets 'cause ya can pound it down with a ball peen hammer".

For the next half-hour I watched intently as he silently worked. He not only made rivets, but used them to attach small pieces of walnut he called "slabs" to each side of the blade for a handle. The copper gleamed against the dark wood.

Back at the grinder for another ten minutes I watched as he expertly put an edge on the blade. Soon he was holding the finished knife up for our inspection in the sunlight outside. A little smile was on his face.

He held the knife in the air above his head and moved it all around in the sunlight. The newly ground steel shined brightly. Then he handed it to me handle first. "Do ya think you know how to make a knife after today", he asked as I took the knife.

I didn't know what to say but uttered, "I'm sure gonna try. I won't be as good as you for a long time but ya gotta start somewhere and I'd sure like to do this".

I must have said the right thing because a big smile broke out on his face and he blinked both eyes. He whirled around and started to walk away. He waved backwards without looking at me then yelled out, "You're as nice as they said you was. You come back now, hear me? Just anytime you feel like it, stop on by".

I'll always remember that day. In the deep woods of the Georgia mountains I learned how to make a knife and at the same time found a new respect for the simpler ways of doing things.

About the Author

Want to know [how to make a knife](#) from an antique hand saw? It's interesting, fun and a great hobby! Go to <http://www.how-to-make-a-knife.com> to get the low-down on it! You'll find great instruction and insight on the craft. It can be profitable too!

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