

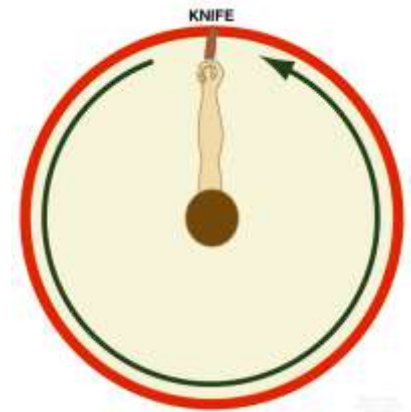
Camping Knife Skills

Introduction

Your jackknife is an important tool. You can do many useful things with its blades, but must be very careful and alert when you whittle or carve. Take good care of your knife and always remember that a **knife is a tool, not a toy. Use it with care so that you don't hurt yourself or ruin what you are carving.**

Safety Rules

- Before you pick up your knife, establish a safety circle. To **establish a "Safety circle", grasp a closed pocket knife in your hand.** Extend your arm with the closed knife straight in front of you. Rotate your body to either side while continuing to extend the closed knife arm. No one or thing should be in the imaginary circle that you have created. Also check your overhead clearance as this is part of your safety circle. If someone enters the circle, the knife should be closed up and laid down.
- Hold knife by its handle. Do not place your thumb or finger on the blade.
- Always cut by pushing the knife away from you. Be sure your hands and body are out of the way.
- Never carry an open pocketknife
- Before walking or running, put your knife down or close it and put it away.
- Do not throw your knife.
- **A sharp knife is safer because it's less likely to slip and cut you. A sharp knife will "bite" the wood.** Know how to sharpen your knife.
- When you are not using your knife, close it and put it away.



Passing a knife:

When passing a knife, you always close the knife first. If the knife does not close (like a kitchen knife), hold the dull edge of the blade with the sharp edge facing the ground. Offer the handle to the person receiving the knife. Before you let go of any knife, the person receiving the knife must acknowledge and **indicate that they are ready by saying "thank you"**.

Opening & Closing Knives

- Always use both hands to open a folding knife.
- Keep fingers on the sides of the knife.
- When closing, keep fingers to the side and refrain from wrapping fingers around the handle into which the blade will be inserted.
- Always open and close a knife slowly and intentionally.
- Keep the knife closed when not in use or when being carried.
- Close the knife before passing it to someone.






Caring for Knives

- A knife is a tool, not a toy.
- Keep knives dry and off the ground
- Keep knives away from dirt and sand
- Keep knives away from open flames and extreme heat
- **Do not use your knife to pry things open, to hammer, or to “chop” on wood**
- Use your knife appropriately to cut, scrape, or whittle wood, food, or rope and not on rocks or metal.
- **Carefully clean your knife when you’re done using it.**
- Keep your knife dry and keep the blade clean. Wipe the blade before closing it.
- Clean your knife by hand; the heat and steam of the dishwasher can dull and damage the knife

Sharpening a knife:

1. If the stone is large enough, place it on a level surface. Placing the stone on a dish towel may limit slipping.
2. Wet the stone with a little water.
3. Hold the handle of the knife in one hand and if the stone is on the table, place the fingers of your other hand on the flat of the blade as you lay the knife flat on the block with the blade facing away from you. Raise the knife slightly to bevel the edge of the blade for sharpening (about the width of the blade itself). Keep the knife at the same angle at all times.
4. Push the knife away from you, just like you are trying to carve a thin slice off the top of the stone, putting pressure on it as you slice. Repeat this PUSHING stroke 3 or 4 times. Try to keep the same sharpening angle all the time, since this is the key to obtaining the sharpest edge.
5. Turn the blade over. Place it at the far end of the stone and repeat the process on the other side an equal number of times by PULLING the knife toward you.
6. Wipe the blade off on a rag or towel. It will take 30 minutes to sharpen a dull knife, but once sharp, a minute a day will keep it in perfect shape.

Knife Etiquette

- Knives should not be used to deface or disfigure any property, plant, or animals.
 - Knives are not toys and should not be shown, waved, or thrown in jest or in a threatening manner.
 - Knives are usually used as tools, but they can be weapons too. Many places do not allow knives. Always keep your knife at home unless your adult tells you otherwise.
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Practice: Construct a Paper Jackknife

When working with younger Girl Scouts and with girls who are completely new to knife safety, it is highly recommended that you use “fake” knives for safety purposes. Use the pattern to construct your own paper or cardboard jackknives. Older girls can also make paper jackknives to use when teaching younger Scouts for a troop project.

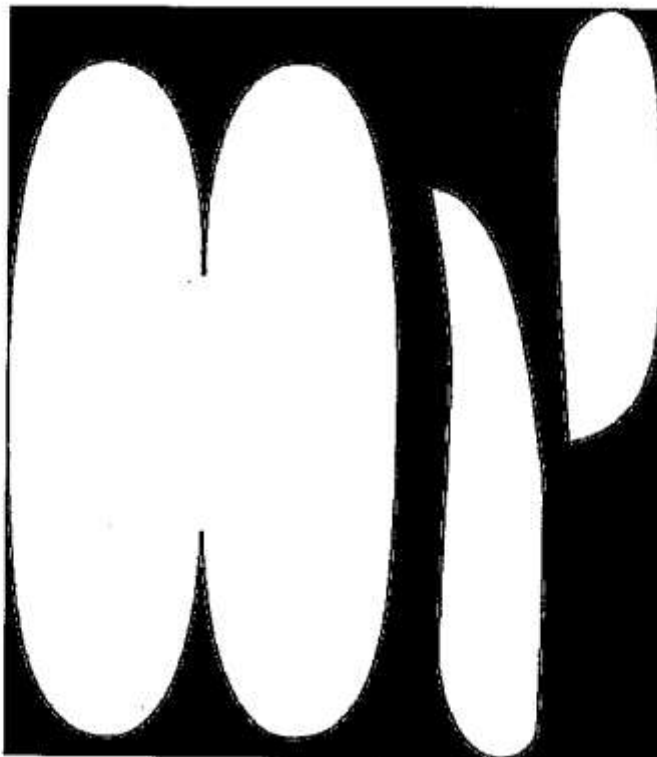
Materials:

- Construction paper, card stock, cardboard, or fun foam
- Two $\frac{3}{4}$ " brads
- Knife Pattern (see appendix)
- Scissors
- Hole punch

Directions:

1. Photocopy or trace the pattern onto the material
2. Cut out the three pieces
3. Fold the body of the knife in two
4. **Place the two knife “blades” into the knife body**
5. Use the hole punch or scissors to create small holes for the brads
6. Insert the brads and flatten the ends Use these paper jackknives when teaching the following topics. First show them with the paper knife, and then have them practice the same technique with their own paper knives.

Paper Knife Pattern





Practice: Soap Carving

If you have a clear mental picture of your idea or have carved before, you can begin by carving directly on the soap. Or, you can outline a rough sketch on each surface before you carve. Beginners may want to sketch or use a pre-existing pattern on paper and trace it onto the soap.


1. Begin with Rough Cuts

- The actual carvings begin with rough cuts that remove the large parts of the soap not necessary for your design.
- Place the soap on the table or tray.
- If you are right-handed, hold the soap with your left hand and start cutting at the upper right-hand corner. (If left-handed, use the opposite hand.)
- Leave about 1/4" margin beyond your outlined sketch to allow for mistakes and more detailed work later.
- Cut clear through the bar, removing excess soap all the way around.
- ALWAYS CUT AWAY ONLY SMALL PIECES OR SLICES. Soap often breaks if cut in big chunks.

2. Adding the Details

- After the first cuts, you may find it more comfortable to use the knife as if peeling a potato. Continue to stay 1/8" to 1/4" away from your sketch guidelines to allow for finer work later.
- As you work, keep turning the soap, always keeping the shape of the piece in mind. Step back from time to time to look at the entire piece.
- Watch your high points -- those that jut out farthest from the surface -- and your low points -- those farthest in.
- Carve gradually from the high points toward the deepest cuts. Your knife point is useful for this.
- Don't try to finish any one part in detail before another.
- **When the piece is almost finished, smooth rough edges with the knife's edge** and mark in details like eyes or ears with the knife tip or an orangewood stick.

3. Polishing

- Allow your sculpture to dry for a day or two.
 - Then, rub it with a soft paper napkin, being careful not to break off corners or high points.
 - Finish by rubbing it gently with finger tips or palm.
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Whittling Instructions

Whittling is a great pastime for anyone who wants to craft something. It's one of the cheapest and most accessible hobbies you can take up—all you need is a knife and some wood.


1. Pick Your Whittling Wood


- Softwoods are the best for whittling because they cut easily. After you've learned the basics of whittling, feel free to move on to harder woods. No matter which kind of wood you use, look for wood with a straight grain as it is easier to whittle than wood that has the grain going in multiple directions. Avoid wood with lots of knots—those are difficult to whittle.
- Check your local lumber yard or woodworking store for whittling wood. Craft stores often carry a variety of softwoods that are good for whittling. Some popular whittling woods are:
 - Basswood. **Basswood is a good wood to whittle with because it's soft and doesn't have much grain.** You can pick up basswood blocks in various sizes at your local craft store for a reasonable price.
 - Pine. **Pine is another traditional whittling wood. It's soft, cuts easily, and is readily available, but it has its drawbacks. Some whittlers think pine doesn't hold detail very well. And if you're using a fresh pine twig or branch, you'll have to regularly clean the sticky sap off your knife while you're whittling.**
 - Balsa. **Balsa wood is a soft, inexpensive, lightweight wood that's perfect for beginning whittlers.**
 - Random twigs and branches. **You don't need a pre-cut block of wood to whittle.** Twigs and branches from most kinds of trees make for great whittling.

2. Whittling Safety

- Take it slow. No need to rush! Whittling is supposed to be relaxing and meditative. When you get in a hurry with your cuts, that's when accidents happen. Make every cut slow and controlled.
- Keep your knife sharp. Instead of cutting, dull blades have a tendency to glance off the wood and head right towards your hand. While the blade might not be sharp enough to cut wood, **it's usually still sharp enough to cut human flesh.**
- Cover your fingertips, especially thumbs. Until you get comfortable with the different knife strokes, it is recommend to use duct tape. Before you start whittling, simply wrap your knife-holding thumb with duct tape. To avoid the tape sticking to your thumb, use this technique: Wrap one layer of duct tape around your thumb with the sticky side facing out. **Wrap it tight enough so it won't slip off, but not so tight that you lose circulation to your thumb.** Then wrap a couple of layers of duct tape around your thumb with the sticky side facing in. Four or five layers should do the trick.

3. Consider the Wood Grain

- **Sometimes it's easy to tell the direction of the grain on a piece of wood simply by looking at it. But oftentimes it's not that obvious. If you're having a hard time deciphering which way the grain is going, start making some small shallow cuts in your wood.** Cuts made with the grain will peel away smoothly; cuts made against the grain will give resistance and eventually split.
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- Generally, you want **most of your cuts to go with the wood's grain**. Cuts against the grain cause your wood to tear, split, etc. Plus, the resistance the wood gives when you cut against the grain makes whittling much more difficult.
 - **Don't get frustrated if you lose track of which way the grain runs while you're in the middle of the project. It happens to most people when they're first getting started with woodworking of any kind.**

4. Learn the Types of Whittling Cuts

- Several cutting styles exist in whittling, but we only suggest using cuts where the blade is **pointed away from the scout**. These directions assume you're right-handed. Simply flip them if you're a lefty.
 - Straightaway Rough Cutting
 - **Use this cut at the very beginning of your project to carve your project's general shape.** Hold the wood in your left hand and your knife firmly in your right. Make a long, sweeping cut with the grain and away from your body. **Don't cut too deep or you might split the wood. Make several, thin slices to reduce the wood to the desired size and shape.**
 - Push Stroke (Thumb Pushing)
 - Hold the wood in your left hand and the knife firmly in your right hand with the blade facing away from you. Place both your right and left thumbs on the back of the knife blade. Push the blade forward with your left thumb while your right thumb and fingers guide the blade through the wood.

5. Get started!

- Like with the soap carving, you should determine your design, then begin with rough cuts and then move to the push stroke for other details. Many further resources can be found online should you wish for more specific templates.

