

# KNIFECRAFT

## GRIPS · STROKES · HOLDING POSITIONS · CUTS

*Watts and Wescott, 2016*

*I have come to recognize that there is an enormous lack of understanding and skill in using hand tools – knives and axes in particular... The use of the knife, ax and other hand tools, an important part of our cultural heritage, is about to be lost in only two generations. Wille Sundqvist, 1999*

### BASIC TERMINOLOGY

- **Grip** is how you hold the knife and the orientation of the blade.
- **Stroke** is how the blade is moved/controlled in relation to the project.
- **Holding Position** is how the project is stabilized in relation to the stroke.
- **Cuts** are what you want to accomplish with the application of the other terms.

### GRIPS

- **Power Grips** –
  - Forehand Grip** – Blade away
  - Reverse or Backhand Grip** – Blade towards
  - Side Grip** – For Squeeze or Chest-Lever strokes
  - Dagger Grip** – Reverse grip with tip pointed down
  - Plane Grip** – Used for scraping as edge is held perpendicular
- **Finger or Squeeze Grip** –
- **Blade Grip** –
- **Reinforced Grip** –

### STROKES

- **Push Stroke** – Using the Power Grip
- **Pull Stroke** – Using the Backhand or Reverse Power Grip
- **Chest Lever or Scissor Stroke** – (NOT A GRIP) Using the Reverse Power Grip
- **Reinforced Strokes** – Finer strokes used with both hands close to the project –
  - Away**
    - Reinforced Push – Thumb Push
  - Towards**
    - Reinforced Pull – the hand moves
    - Squeeze Strokes – Straight and Rolling
- **Shaping/Smoothing/Finishing Stokes** – Thin shavings or shear cuts used to thin or shape the final project –finger or thumb supported.
- **Splitting and Drilling Maneuvers** – Refer to Northern Bushcraft as Mors gives an excellent description of both skills.
- **Stop Cuts (Latch Notch)** – Actually a cut, but a rocking motion is applied or multiple small cuts are made.

## HOLDING POSITIONS

- **Fist Hold** - Held like an axe handle or baseball bat.
- **Body Holds** - Under arm, behind the knee for long sticks.
- **Chest Hold** - Held between the chest and the holding hand.
- **Thumb Hold** - or Thumb-Joint Grip
- **Reinforced Holds** - Modified/Reinforced Thumb-Joint Grip - also an Opposing thumb grip.
- **Levers**
  - Knee** - The knife hand is held against the knee and the material is pulled into it, allowing for greater force for those with less strength.
  - Stump** - (drive tip into stump and pull project) - same as above, but the knife is driven into a stump and the material is pulled into it.
- **Mechanical Clamps and Wedges** - hands free vices, shaving horses, etc.

## CUTS

- **Peel**
- **Slice** - waste or shave
- **Pare**
- **Stop**
- **Split**
- **Drill**
- **Scrape**
- **Plane**
- **Chisel/Mortise**

## SAFETY PRINCIPLES - Things We Should Teach and Do

- **Knife Etiquette**
  - Removing Knife from Sheath
  - Passing a Knife
- **Safe Stop or Follow-thru**
  - Carving To The Block
  - Stacked stop cuts
  - Prepared Stop Cuts Batoning - 90 degree stop cuts
- **Inside-Outside - Beyond the Knees, Please**
  - Carve Off The Thigh
  - Carve Beyond The Knees
- **Where's My Thumb?**
  - Position of the Opposing Thumb