

WHITTLING



Safety first should be your first consideration

Before opening and using a folding knife, you should learn to become aware of your surroundings in order to prevent injuring to others.

Creating an imaginary safety circle ensures that you do not hurt yourself or others when using your knife. Keep the knife closed and grasp it firmly in one hand. Extend your arm in front of you and turn slowly in a circle keeping your arm extended. As long as no one or nothing is in the imaginary circle you have created, it is safe to use your knife. (By ensuring a clear area around you it can prevent accidents if you choose to turn around while completing your task)

A penknife or folding knife is designed to be unfolded – used in a task and closed again. Use this method every time and do not pass around an open knife. Close it first and pass it safely to another person.

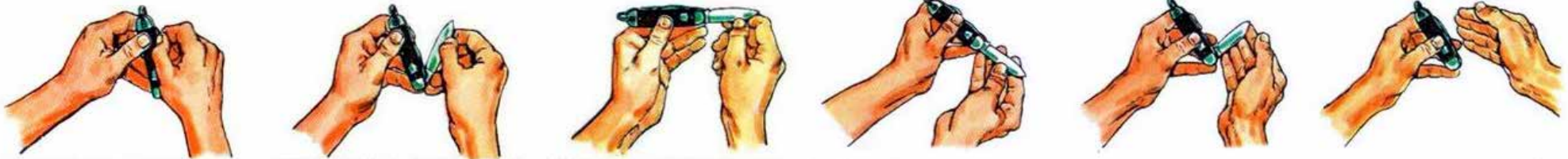
Opening and closing the blade.

A new knife will be a bit stiff and sometimes difficult to open so - be careful. With use it will become easier.

Grip the handle firmly and use your thumbnail and forefinger in a pinching action to open the blade at its widest point using the groove in the blade to assist you.

Pull the blade out as far as possible so that it will not snap back into the body of the knife.

Reposition your hand and then pull the blade to its open position.



“A knife is a tool, not a toy.”

To close the blade do so by first closing the blade to a halfway position with the palm of your hand on the back of the blade and then allowing it to snap easily into the handle in a guarded hand action.

Cutting action

Be sure that the blade is fully open and in the locked open position.

Grip the knife firmly

Always cut away from your body.

If your blade is sharp you will not need to use too much force.

Keep your knife sharp; as a dull knife blade will not cut easily and you will have to use more force which will cause the knife to slip and make cutting difficult.

Look after your knife – oil the moving parts regularly and keep your knife free of dirt inside the handle.



Be responsible – a knife is a tool

Keep your knife in your pocket or suitable pouch

Don't throw your knife around and certainly not when the blade is open

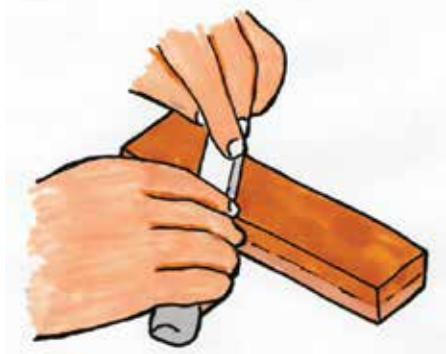
There are many other tools on your knife and they should all be treated in the same way...with care.

Your knife is a tool and while you can use it for cooking tasks it is often better to use a cook's knife that is designed for that purpose.

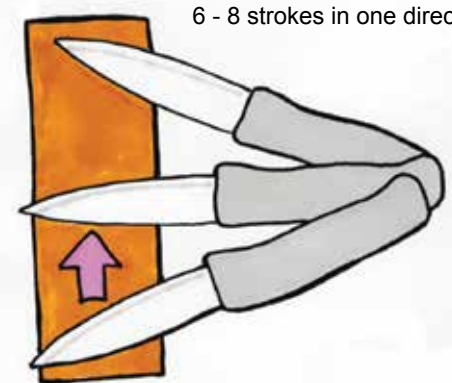
Sharpening a knife

Use a carborundum or other sharpening stone. It is best used dry without the use of oil. Lay the knife on its back flat to the stone. This will give a fine edge for carving. You can obtain a more durable edge by raising the back of the blade to about 15 to 20 degrees.

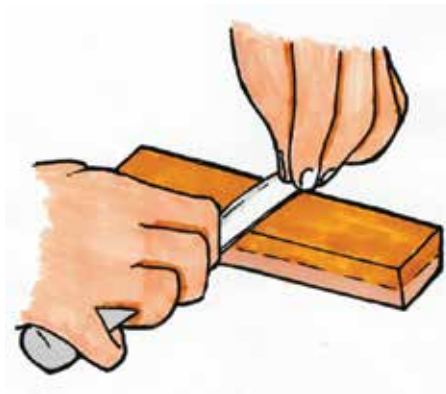
Forward stroke



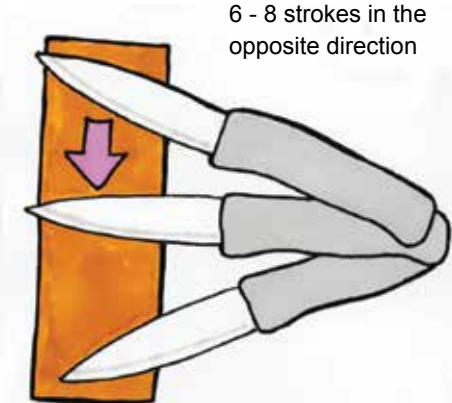
6 - 8 strokes in one direction



Backwards stroke

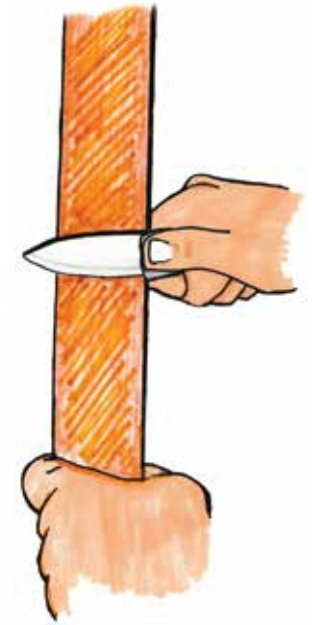


6 - 8 strokes in the opposite direction



Finish off your edge on a small piece of fine grade wet and dry sandpaper and strop the blade on a stropping board or leather belt.

Stropping board (piece of leather glued to wooden board)



Whittling

Keep your knife sharp.

To undertake any type of cutting, but particularly whittling and wood carving your knife needs to be sharp.

Whenever you feel the wood getting harder to cut, Stop and sharpen my knife.

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.

Obeying the first rule of whittling will not only ensure better cuts, it will also ensure that you keep all your fingers. 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.

Sit down on a small log or bench where you can rest your hands on your knees as you carve. This is a comfortable and safe whittling position.

Wear gloves when you first start. Until you get comfortable with the different knife strokes, Another option that works just as well is duct tape. Before you start whittling, simply wrap your knife-holding thumb with duct tape. Four or five layers should do the trick.

Hold the knife in your right hand and the wood in your left (if you're left-handed, reverse this).

Begin gradually shaving away the wood. Take your time. Do not try to cut too deeply.

The fundamental rule when it comes to whittling is to be aware not only of where the blade is, but where the blade could go.



Wood Grain

You can discover the direction of the grain on a piece of wood simply by looking at it. Cuts made with the grain will peel away smoothly; cuts made against the grain will give resistance and eventually split.

Generally, you want most of your cuts to go with the wood's grain. Cuts against the grain cause your wood to tear, split, and chip.

Sometimes it's easy to tell the direction of the grain on a piece of wood simply by looking at it. Cuts made with the grain will peel away smoothly; cuts made against the grain will give resistance and eventually split.

Generally, you want most of your cuts to go with the wood's grain. Cuts against the grain cause your wood to tear, split and chip. Plus, the resistance the wood gives when you cut against the grain makes whittling much more difficult.

Never push hard on the blade. If it gets stuck (because you carved too deep into the wood or the grain orientation changed), stop and backtrack. If you try to force the blade, it could slip and cut your finger.

There's no need to go fast... Speed doesn't help you carve better. Take your time, at least until you feel comfortable carving.

Straightaway rough cut

Use this cut to get a basic outline for your project. Make long sweeping cuts with the grain that go away from your body. Don't be tempted to cut too deeply, just gradually remove the wood you don't want.

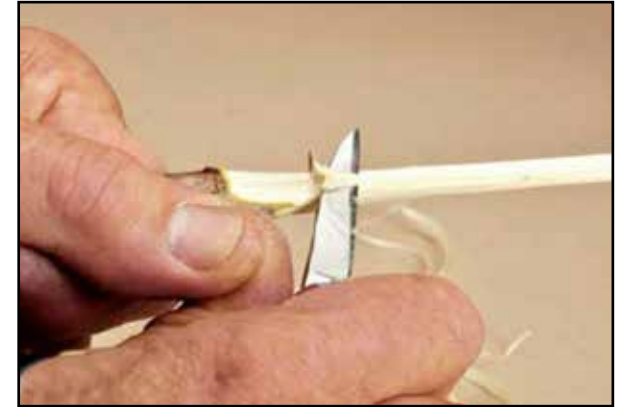
The push stroke (thumb push)

This stroke is used when you want to start shaping your project. You have a high level of control over the knife, which you push away from you. The thumb of your non-cutting hand provides the power to push on the back of the knife or thumb of your cutting hand. The cutting hand then steers the knife to create small and smooth cuts.

The pull stroke (paring cut)

Used in a similar way to the push stroke – for control and detail. Draw the knife towards you, with the grain, with the thumb of your cutting hand acting as a clamp at the end of the wood. With some pull strokes the thumb will stop the knife so this is a good time to wear a thumb guard.

A good way to practice these strokes is to start your first whittling project by carving a small figure using a bar of soap.



Simple whittling projects

Ogham sticks



Spreader

Fork





Letter opener

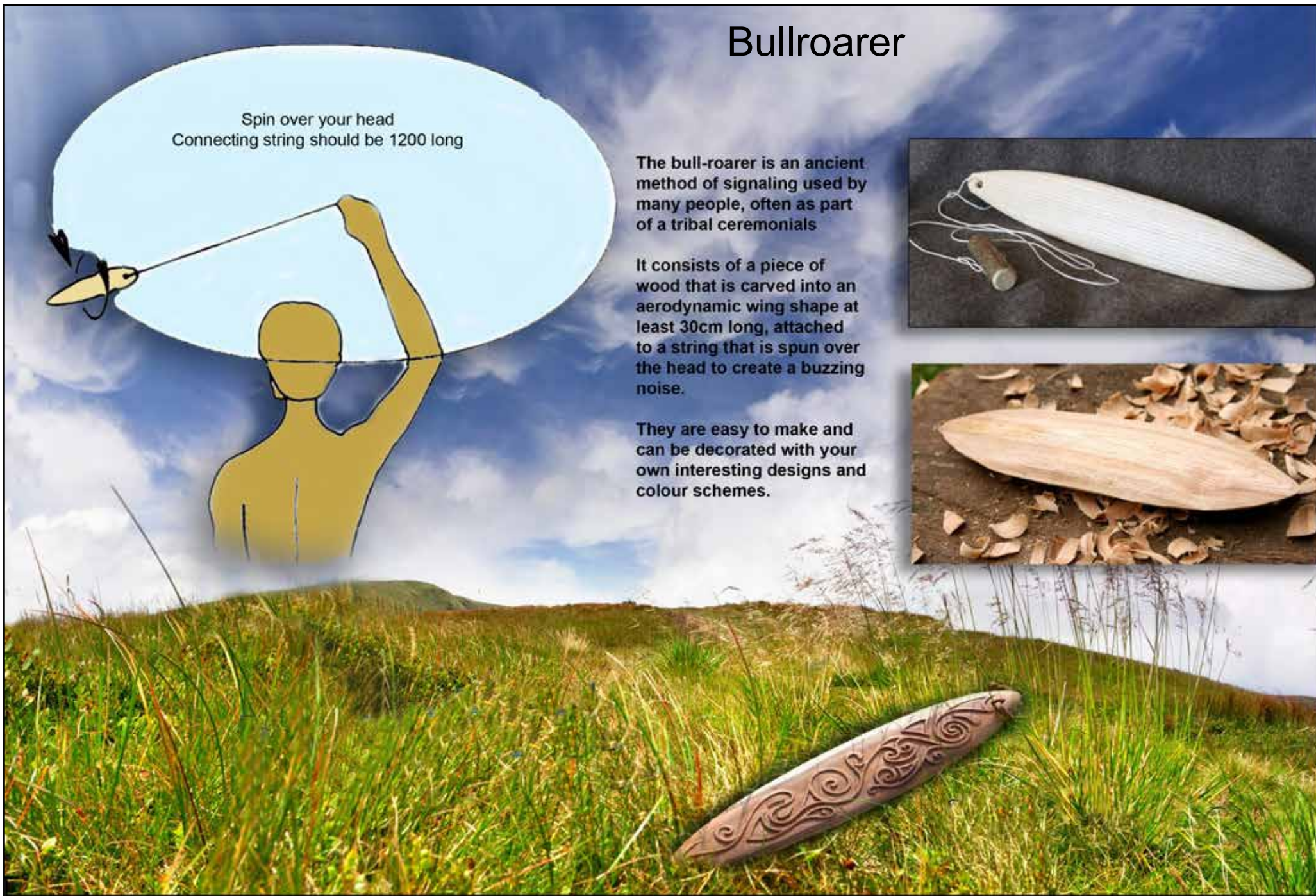
Bullroarer

Spin over your head
Connecting string should be 1200 long

The bull-roarer is an ancient method of signaling used by many people, often as part of a tribal ceremonials

It consists of a piece of wood that is carved into an aerodynamic wing shape at least 30cm long, attached to a string that is spun over the head to create a buzzing noise.

They are easy to make and can be decorated with your own interesting designs and colour schemes.



Eating Utensils



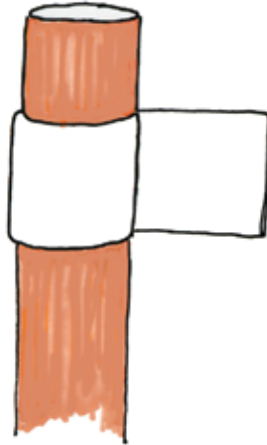


A dog

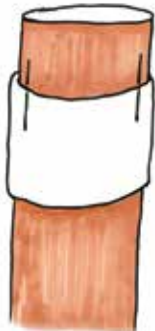


Carve a rope effect

1. Start by wrapping a strip of paper around the stick to determine its size.



2. Stretch out the strip of paper and divide in three using pencil marks.



3. Wrap the strip around the stick again and mark lines on stick as shown. There will be three marks roughly 120 degrees apart.

Thumb
Stick



Decorate your stick with fancy ropework or branding.



4. Create further marks by placing the strip of paper down the length of the stick, at least twice so giving 6 marks. Join the marks by pencil lines so as to create a grid diagonally around the pole. Cut into the diagonal lines lightly with a knife or small saw to make spiral lines around your stick.

5. Cut into the spiral cuts from top and bottom to create a smooth rope effect. Use a small wood file or sandpaper to finish.

