

**Willowcreek
Custom Knives**



Caring for Your Custom Knife

“A bad knife cuts one’s finger instead of the stick.”

(Portuguese proverb)

Willowcreek Custom Knives

www.willowcreekcustomknives.com

Your custom made knife is not just a handy tool; it is an investment and a work of art. If cared for properly, it should give you many years of service.

Whether you are a collector who purchases unique knives to display, a gourmet chef (or a weekend wannabe), or an outdoorsman who depends on a good knife for hunting, fishing or even survival, it is important to take care of your cutlery.

Caring for your knife isn't difficult. You basically just need to keep it sharp and clean. However, a lack of attention or improper handling can result in stained, dulled or nicked blades or damaged handles. Whether you need to care for stainless, high carbon or Damascus steel, this guide will explain some simple steps to ensure you will enjoy your knife for many years to come.

Cleaning Your Stainless, High Carbon or Damascus Steel Blades

1. Wash with hot, soapy water and a soft cloth or sponge upon purchase. Dry immediately with a soft towel.

2. After each use, wash immediately with hot, soapy water and a soft cloth or sponge.
 - It is important to wash your knife *immediately* after use to prevent staining or damage to your blade. High carbon and Damascus steel especially need to be cleaned right after use as they tend to stain and corrode more easily and quickly.
 - If you are not able to do a full cleaning right away, at least wipe off food and other particles with water. Salty and acidic foods are especially dangerous for your knife.
 -
 - Do not use steel wool or any rough cleaning materials. Soft cloths, sponges or mesh are best.
 - Do not leave your knife soaking in water. Not only does the salt in your tap water eat at your blade, the water will damage your wooden handle.
 - Never pour detergent directly on your knife. Always dissolve in water first.
 - Avoid using chemicals to clean your knife. Only use products made specifically for stainless steel cutlery or natural home products. Never use chlorine bleach, alcohol or oven cleaners.
 - Special notes about using a dishwasher

- **Stainless Steel:** It is NOT recommended that you place your stainless steel knife in the dishwasher. Hand washing is ALWAYS the best way to care for your knife. If you do decide to place it in the dishwasher, do not wash it with sterling silver and take it out before the dry cycle. Dry with a soft cloth immediately.
 - **Damascus and High Carbon:** NEVER put your high carbon or Damascus knife in the dishwasher. This will damage it quickly. Hand washing is the absolute best way to clean your knife.
 - Placing your knife in the dishwasher can damage both your blade and the handle.
3. After washing, immediately dry your knife with a soft towel. Do not let it air dry.
- Long exposure to wet environments will rust your knife. Again, this is especially important for high carbon and Damascus steel.
4. Polishing, Removing Rust and Stains in Your Stainless Steel Knife
- Inspect your knife often and clean stains and rust with hot, soapy water and a soft cloth or sponge. Remember sometimes it takes some time working the stain or rust out.
 - You can polish stainless steel with apple cider vinegar or undiluted white vinegar.
 - If you are unable to clean the knife using this method, one of the below should do the trick:
 - Olive Oil
 - Club Soda
 - Lemon Juice
 - Baking Soda Paste
 - Stainless Steel Cleaning Products
5. Special Instructions for High Carbon and Damascus Steel
- As noted above, ALWAYS wash and dry your knives immediately after use. Some will even have a damp cloth near to wipe off their knife after every few slices of acidic foods like citrus, onions, tomatoes, etc.
 - NEVER put your high carbon or Damascus knife in the dishwasher.
 - Do not leave your knife sitting wet or with food on your cutting boards. The moisture and salty and acidic foods will rust and corrode your blades. It is important to wipe it immediately after exposing them to acidic foods.

- After each wash and dry, rub your knife with mineral oil (food safe) using a soft cloth. This will help prevent discoloration and rust and keep your knife shining. Another alternative is using a wax like Renaissance Wax.
- Sharpening your knife will help remove rust. You can also use a rust eraser.
- High carbon and Damascus knives will eventually develop a patina. This is where the blade greys or blackens. A patina protects the knife from rust.
 - Some allow the patina to develop naturally, just using mineral oil after each use to help smooth the patina as it develops.
 - Some force the patina using acidic substances.
 - Though the patina is a natural, harmless and beneficial process, some prefer to try to prevent or remove the patina to keep the look of the knife by using all of the precautions outlined in this guide as well as using Barkeeper's Friend or Flitz. You should realize that the use of these products does not protect from rust and can possibly damage the etching in your knife.

Storing Your Knife

6. Store your knife properly.
 - Properly store your knife in a dry environment away from the stove or sink.
 - It is preferable to store it in a kitchen block or wooden box.
 - Never store your knife in the sheath for long periods of time.
 - Do not allow knives to bang or touch one another. This will cause the blade to dull and scratch.

Caring for Your Knife Handles

7. Take into consideration the type of handle on your blade when cleaning and caring for your knife. All types of handles should be hand washed and dried immediately. When using any product on your blade, make sure it isn't harmful to your handle and vice versa.
8. Special Instructions for handles
 - Wooden
 - Do not leave your knife exposed to direct sunlight. This will dry out the wood and cause it to crack.
 - Store in cool and dry areas.

- Use Danish wood, teak, linseed, or rosewood oil often to maintain the wooden handle. Some recommend doing this monthly while others recommend yearly. You can also use mineral, canola or olive oil. When applying, let it soak in for a while before wiping off the oil.
- Bone and Antler Handles
 - Use mineral or lemon oil to maintain the handles.
 - If you start to see the handles drying or shrinking (or every 3 months),
 - Clean with a soft cloth.
 - Soak the handle in mineral oil for 24 hours. Handle should be down in the oil, and the knife blade should be out of the oil.
 - After 24 hours, inspect the handle to make sure it is rehydrated well. If not, soak for an additional 1-2 days.
 - Wipe off excess oil, then seal with Renaissance Wax.

Sharpening Your Knife

Besides properly cleaning your knife, keeping it properly sharpened is the most important thing you can do to maintain it. A dull blade is more dangerous than a sharp one.

It is highly recommended that you have a professional sharpen your custom knife unless you already have experience with proper sharpening techniques. It is easy to damage a blade if you do not know what you are doing. If you prefer to do it yourself, it is a good idea to have someone experienced teach you how and practice on a couple of other blades first. Learning to sharpen your knife well takes practice, but over time your skills will improve.

Using the proper equipment for sharpening is important. The best tools for your custom knife are whet and water stones. Avoid dry grinding wheels, domestic knife sharpeners or electric sharpeners.

Caring for Your Sheath

A well fitting sheath will keep your knife handy and protected. All sheaths (synthetic and leather) should be kept clean dry and in good working order.

. Leather sheaths should be cleaned and oiled regularly. You can use any good leather care product, but some good choices are mink oil or neatsfoot oil. If your sheath is extremely dirty, you may rinse it off with water, but be sure to dry and oil it well immediately.

Keep leather sheaths stored in a clean dry location out of direct sunlight. Avoid temperature extremes.

Do not use shoe polish to touch up scuff marks on your sheath as it will rub off on your clothes. You can try leather dye if necessary.

Final Notes

Be sure to respect your blade. In case you haven't noticed, it is sharp. Please practice safe handling techniques when using your knife.

Use your knife as it is intended to be used. Don't throw it or jam it into tree trunks, tables, walls or any other hard surfaces. You can break your blade.

Keep your knife out of reach of children and pets. You may not realize it, but your dog may think your antler handle is a great bone to chew! Keep your knife secure when you are not using it.

.....

Thank you for reading our Knife Care Guide! We are pleased to provide you with the information you need to properly care for your knife so you can enjoy it for many years. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us through our website, <http://www.willowcreekcustomknives.com>.

We appreciate you!

Michael Brown

Willowcreek Custom Knives