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How to Hold a Knife

Basic culinary skills are not learned through osmosis but through practice. It's important to spend a little time on the basics so you can keep improving. Let's get an edge on knife safety and learn how to make your food presentation look sharp.

It is essential to use the right knife to produce the desired cut. The knife should be held firmly in your hand. Always cut away from your body. A wood or polyethylene cutting board improves knife control and reduces the wear on your knife blade. A sharp knife requires less pressure, decreasing the likelihood of slippage and a tired hand.

Top View



Side View



Note the position of finger behind the blade for support.

The correct way to hold a French or chef knife requires you to hold the knife handle behind the blade while curling your fingers in and around the handle. It's perfect for chopping, slicing, and dicing because the blade is wide at the heel and tapers to a point. The knife actually acts as your guide. Keeping the tip of your knife on the cutting board and slicing down with a rocking motion gives you more control and reduces the risk of cuts.

Illustrations from *Cooking a World of New Tastes*, Segment 1
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/worldtastes02Seg1.pdf>

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