

Thank you for your purchase of the Professional Stropping Kit (38A02.01). For best results, please review these usage instructions.

Every Kit comes with one rough leather-covered stropping plate (gold/brown) for use in initial stropping and with one premium-smooth plate for use in finish stropping. As options, an English Bridle leather-covered plate (38A02.02) is available the very finest of finishing on the very best cutters. The stropping leathers can be used with or without special stropping pastes as desired, but the use of a strop paste usually improves the function during initial stropping. For those who do not already possess their own stropping paste we suggest our Chromox Green Paste (38A02.03 – called “Strop Rouge”), a special fine formulation of Chromium Oxide to help you get a really fine edge.

The wooden Base of the Kit contains two embedded rare-earth magnets which securely grip small steel pieces on the underside of each interchangeable stropping plate. Changes in humidity can sometimes cause the wood of the interchangeable plates to swell, making it difficult to mount them or remove them from the Base. Should this occur, some hard wax (from a candle, for example) rubbed onto the wood at each end of the interchangeable plate will fix the problem. One can also choose to lightly sand the ends of the plates until they slide into place more easily.

The Base of the Kit has a comfortable handle to allow for hand-holding the strop while working. However, you may want both hands free while stropping in which case the strop may be secured to the workbench. There are several ways that this can be done: Use small clamps to secure it in place or secure the Base to the work surface by means of screws through the body located at the countersunk holes seen on the underside of the Base.

Basic Stropping Instructions

The action of stropping will remove or polish away the micro-burrs that remain along a cutting edge following any grinding or honing process. Also, stropping will also tend to polish away the large micro scratches or grooves that remain in the surface of the steel after the initial grinding. The stropping process will thus result in a more refined edge which will consequently cut more keenly and with much less resistance.

The action of stropping should always be done in such a manner that **always moves the blade in a direction away from its cutting edge** (sometimes called a “trailing” stroke), **pressing lightly against the strop leather (undue pressure is not necessary), and trying to always hold the blade at the same basic angle at which the edge was originally ground.** In this way one polishes or strops just the part of the edge that has been previously ground, thus refining the cutting edge.

Always try to make light smooth movements even if you have to go slowly. We suggest that you alternate stropping passes of the tool on each side edge being refined. After some strokes on the leather (say 20-25 strokes), you will notice that the cutting edge will start to be much brighter. (At the same time, you will see the rough leather of your strop becoming darker. This darkening being caused by tiny metal particles of the metal being stropped coloring the rough leather, and is completely normal.) Periodically during the stropping process you can stop and make test cuts with the tool being worked on to judge if there is sufficient improvement to your cutting edge.

When you feel that most initial burrs and scratches have been removed and you see a good blade edge polish, remove the rough leather plate from the Base and mount the premium finish leather plate in its place. You then will continue the same light and smooth stropping movements on the finish leather holding the blade at the same angle as during previous stropping, further refining your blade edge. Far fewer strokes are usually required on the final stropping leather, but it is still recommended that you test your work periodically by making test cuts on something that the blade will normally cut.

If you choose to use some pastes use some stropping pastes during the initial stropping, please note the following:

- A)** Use only a small amount of any given paste and be sure to work the paste well into the leather with your fingers or a cloth. An excessive application of paste will “gum up” the leather and actually slow down the stropping action. If you do put on too much paste, you can usually wipe off the excess using tissue paper or cloth.
- B)** It is very important to only use one type and grade of stropping paste on a given piece of rough leather. Paste grades other than that carried by Garrett Wade are available on the market. But once a particular grade of paste has been applied to a leather plate it will be impossible to completely remove that from the leather surface. If you wish to use of a series of different pastes, it is strongly recommended that you purchase an additional leather-covered initial stropping plate for each separate grade of paste. And always keep your plates and pastes from contaminating each other. Contact with pastes of a larger grit size will always contaminate and annul the proper stropping effects of leather surfaces already treated with finer grit pastes. Always be sure to wipe the surface of a stropped tool so as to prevent any leftovers of previous grades of stropping paste being transferred to the next stropping leather!

Stropping Hints For Some Common Tools

Plane and Chisel Blades Stropping chisel or plane blades should first be done on the back or flat side of these blades, which will result in a very nice flat polished surface intersecting the beveled part of the blade. Once the stropping has been finished on the flat side (make sure that you keep your stropping motion flat) than strop the beveled part of the blade and then alternatively strop the bevel and the flat resulting in a fine cutting edge. Always try to avoid “rocking” the blade during stropping, keeping the surfaces as flat as possible. In this way one avoids any rounding over of the cutting edge (which will be a detriment to the cut.)

Pocket, Table and other Knives Stropping should be done on both sides of the blade, again stropping the surface that has been ground, always stropping at the original ground angle of the knife as much as possible. Usually it is good policy to alternatively strop once on each side but to save time flipping the blade, a certain number of strokes can be done on one side before flipping over and doing the other side. The important thing to check is that the intersected angle that forms the cutting edge is not rounded over and is left sharp. Again, testing can be

done on different materials to check progress. If one side of the knife blade is flat, it can and should still be stropped; of course, because the intersection of the flat side with the beveled side is what will make the knife sharp and cut.

Please note that for knife blades (as for all cutting tools) stropping alone will never put an edge on a blunt knife. Stropping will refine the cutting edge and keep it cutting longer, but if the edge is too thick or blunt, stropping will not solve your cutting problems. Make certain that the initial grind and geometry are thin enough and at the right bevel angle to enable the blade to cut properly before any final stropping work is started.

Stropping of micro-toothed or scallop-toothed knives (example, steak knives or bread knives) can also be done using the same basic methods as for other cutting tools. Strop the flat toothless side of the blade first and then carefully strop the intersecting bevel (the opposite toothed side of the blade), taking care not to cut into your leather with the pointed scallop or micro-teeth.

Carving Tools Stropping your carving tools will give them a much finer cut and will make an important difference in the success and control of your carving work. Stropping will generally only work on the outside bevels of most rounded carving chisels. The inside bevels can then be polished by rolling up a bit of leather to the form of the inside bevel and using this piece to stroke on the inside bevel (with or without a bit of paste).

Other blades and cutting edges Most, if not all other blades or cutting edges, can be stropped in the same basic manner. Always examine the cutting edges and determine which side if any is flat and which side is beveled and to what angle. Then first strop the flat side keeping the cutting edge flat during stropping and follow by stropping the beveled side, always keeping the bevel at the original angle. The polished intersecting angle should become refined and sharp.

A few words about our Chromox Green Paste (38A02.03)

We highly recommend this paste for use on the initial rough leather surface of your Strop. Its very fine Chromium Oxide particles will greatly speed up all your stropping jobs. The special "mayonnaise" formula of our Chromium Oxide gives it a smooth, gel-like consistency which allows it to be easily applied to the stropping leather with a brush or a tiny piece of wood. Please note that it is completely normal, and a positive feature of this formulation, to find that the top layer of paste in the jar forms a thin surface layer or 'skin'. This thin hardened layer protects the rest of the jar's contents from solidifying and should not be removed. Just peel back this top layer, take out the amount of stropping paste that you need and then press the top layer back down in place to protect the remaining Chromox.

If you have questions or need clarification on this or any Garrett Wade product, please don't hesitate to contact our Technical Department at (800)-221-2942, or Tech@GarrettWade.com.