

# Basic Knife Techniques



## KNIFE GRIPS

### HANDLE GRIP

The handle grip is often favored by cooks with smaller hands. This grip also causes fewer calluses for cooks who spend a lot of time working with knives.



1. Letting the knife rest in your open hand, hold your four fingers together perpendicular to the knife. Your thumb should be relaxed and positioned parallel to the knife.



2. Fold your fingers over the handle and, at the same time, tighten the grasp of your palm. Your thumb should remain in its relaxed position.



3. Turn the knife so that it is now at a right angle to the cutting surface. Then rest your thumb on the side of the handle, opposite the index finger, and you are ready to begin.

### BLADE GRIP

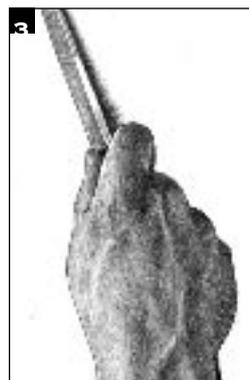
This grip is often used by cooks with larger hands, who find it difficult to comfortably fit four fingers under the knife handle. This grip requires a bit more strength in the wrists and fingers. Because the hand is moved slightly forward, this grip can also provide somewhat more control over the blade.



1. Let the knife rest in your open hand, with the index finger on the blade and your other three fingers perpendicular to the knife. Fold your fingers and tighten the grasp of your palm. The tip of the index finger should now be touching the bolster (the metal shank between the blade and the handle) and the index finger itself should rest flat against the blade.



2. Now place your thumb on the blade. The tip of the thumb should be on the opposite side of the blade from the second joint of the index finger.



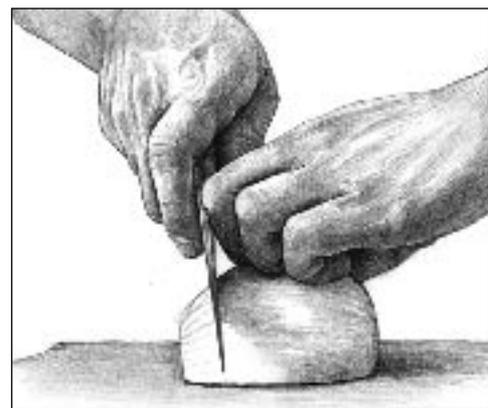
3. Turn the knife so that it is now at a right angle to the cutting surface, and you are ready to begin cutting.

## GUIDING HAND

There are two ways to position the hand that is not holding the knife. Both are designed to prevent slippage, to control the size of the cut, and to protect the hand holding the item being cut. The one you use is simply a matter of which feels most comfortable and natural.

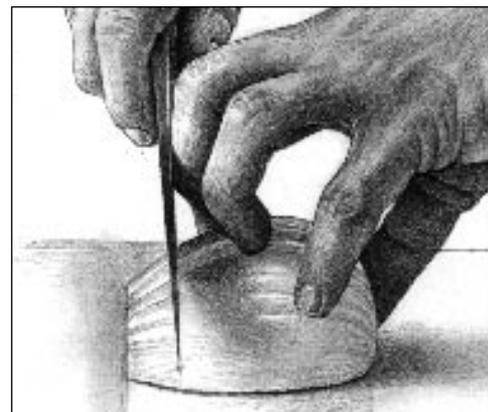
### THE CLAW METHOD

In this method, the first joints of the fingers of the noncutting hand actually rest on the item being cut. The thumb and little finger should be parallel to each other and the three other fingers fairly close together. The blade should rest against the knuckle, which provides guidance but is in no danger of being cut.



### THE PARALLEL FINGER METHOD

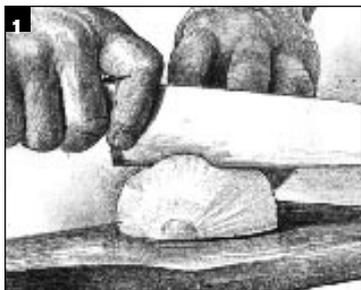
In this method, the thumb and little finger are placed parallel to each other on the item being cut, the middle finger at the summit, and the other two fingers evenly spaced between them. The fingers remain bent so the blade can rest against the knuckle, providing guidance with no danger of being cut.



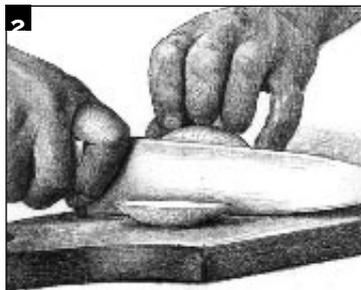
## CUTTING TECHNIQUES

For best results with all of the cutting methods illustrated below, move the guiding hand and the knife instead of the item being cut.

### USING THE HEEL END AS THE CUTTING EDGE



1. Position the knife with the tip pointing slightly upward. The cut begins with a downward motion that also moves the knife into a more horizontal position.

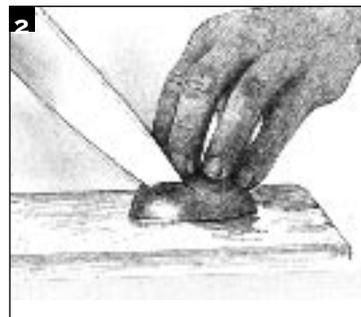


2. The cut ends as the blade reaches the cutting board. Note the area of the blade that is used and that horizontal as well as vertical movement is employed.

### USING THE TIP OF THE KNIFE FOR CUTTING

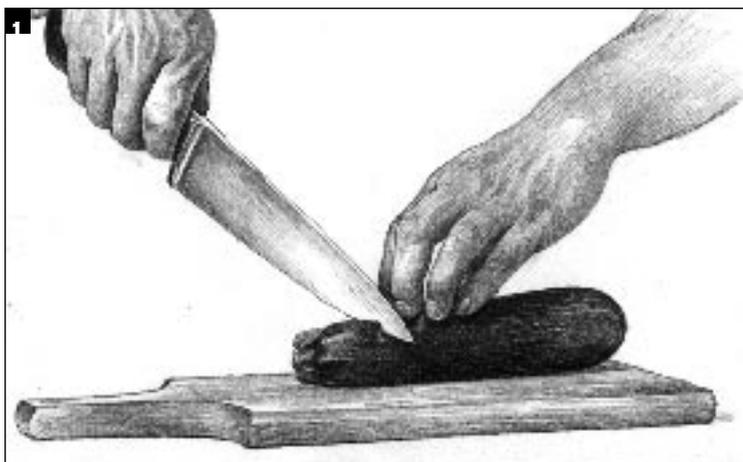


1. For objects with a skin that must be punctured, such as a tomato, it sometimes works best to use the tip of the knife to begin the cut.

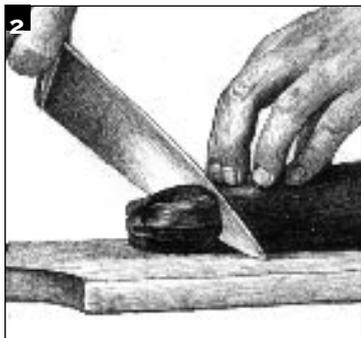


2. Continue the cut by drawing the tip of the knife through the item being cut, maintaining the angle of the knife to the cutting board.

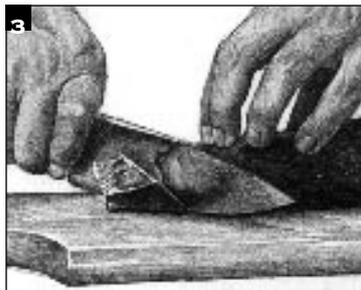
### USING THE MAIN CUTTING EDGE



1. Hold the knife at about a 45-degree angle to the cutting board, touching the item being cut, which should be securely held with the other hand.

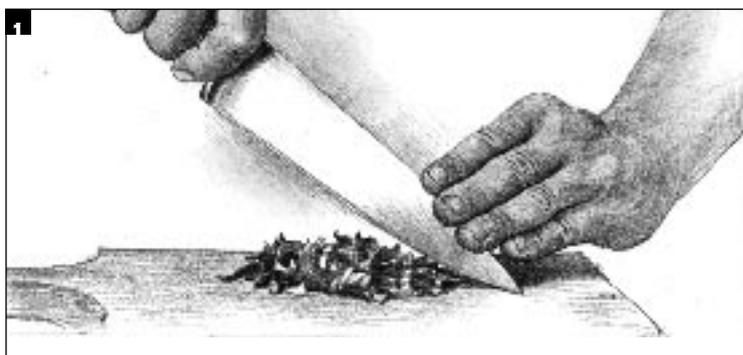


2. Cut the item by bringing the knife forward and downward with a smooth motion, simultaneously letting it become more horizontal. The cut continues in a smooth motion. The tip of the blade should remain in contact with the cutting board.



3. When the blade reaches the cutting board, it should be horizontal. To make the second cut using this technique, lift the knife to its position in step 1, keeping it constantly in contact with the cutting board. During the upward motion, move the guiding hand to determine the size of the next cut.

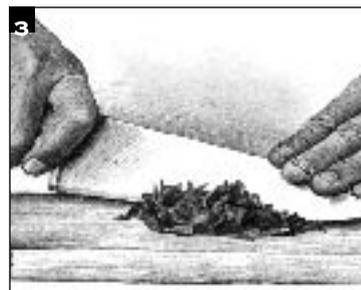
### CHOPPING



1. This continuous, fast motion begins with the knife held high and the guiding hand held gently on top of the end of the blade. The guiding hand should provide just enough pressure to keep the blade in control and always in contact with the cutting board. Begin the chopping motion by lowering the knife, looking ahead to anticipate where you want to cut.



2. Continue the motion, bringing the curved edge of the blade into contact with the board.



3. The motion ends with the heel of the knife in contact with the board. Repeat this three-part motion rapidly, keeping the tip of the knife in contact with the board but moving the knife handle back and forth and redistributing the product on the cutting board, if necessary, until the food is as finely chopped as you would like. ■