

FOUR BASIC CUTS

Whittlin' Basics

Most whittling projects, with the exception of some of the more advanced projects which require gouge cuts, can be completed with four basic carving cuts. Mastering these four simple cuts will make your experience more rewarding and less frustrating.

Four Cuts

These four cuts include:

- **Pull Cut**

This cut is similar to the paring cut used to peel vegetables and will be used in most of your projects. This cut presents safety concerns as the knife blade is drawn **toward** the thumb on your knife hand. However, using thumb protection protects you from the blade.

AKA: Thumb cut, Paring cut, Cut Back

- **Push Cut**

There are times when you need to carve and that a Pull cut cannot reach. This cut, which is made by pushing the blade **away** from you, will accomplish this goal.

AKA: Levering cut, Push-Away cut

- **V-cut**

When whittling, you may need to make special cuts to show hair, fur, or distinct lines to distinguish particular features on a project. This V-shaped cut is based on the Pull and Push cuts.

- **Stop Cuts**

A Stop cut is very similar to a V-cut. This cut actually incorporates two cuts—the first cut is straight (perpendicular); the other cut slopes or slants into the first cut.

Practice

To develop these cuts, practice all four cuts on a practice block of wood. A good practice block measures: ½" x ½" x 5".

Practice the Push and Pull cuts at the opposite ends of the wood.

To practice the V-cuts and Stop cuts

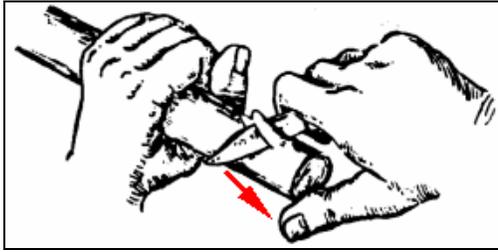
- Draw pencil lines in the middle of the block
- Draw some lines across the wood grain and some with the wood grain

Cut Details

Pull Cut

To make the Push cut:

- Wrap all four fingers around the handle so only the blade shows above the index finger
 - Place your thumb on the end of the wood
 - Sink the blade into the wood about one inch above your thumb
 - Carefully, and with a great amount of control, pull the knife **toward** you
- Warning- Do not try to cut too deep.
- Finish the cut against your thumb pad



Pull to the thumb

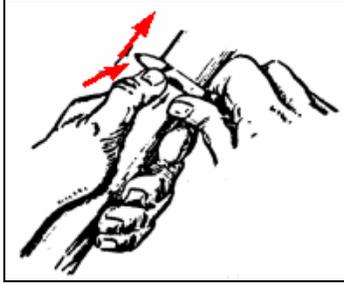
Push Cut

To make the Pull cut:

- Wrap all four fingers around the hand of the knife
- The thumb of your knife hand should be positioned on the handle just before the back of the blade
- Place the thumb of your holding hand on the back of the blade to guide your cut

Warning- Keep all the fingers of the holding hand together.

We all have a tendency to put the index finger up in front to keep the wood from moving forward. This makes this finger a target for the knife.

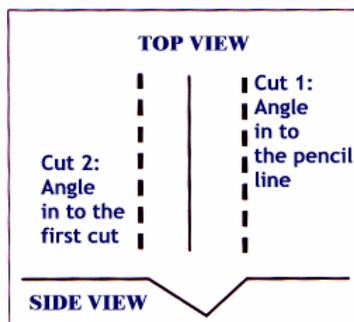


Push away from the thumb

- Apply steady pressure to the back of the blade to push the knife into the wood
- Carefully and with great control, continue to push the knife all the way through the complete cut

V-cut

The V-cut is a two-step cut.



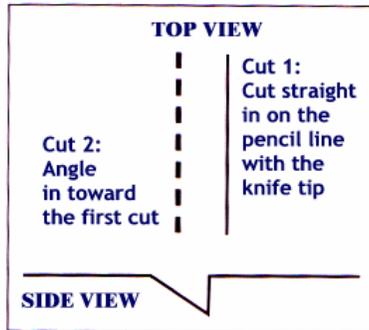
V-cuts side view

To make a V-cut:

- Using a Pull cut, place only the tip of the blade in the wood
- Angle the knife so you make a cut slightly to the right of the line
- Turn the wood and make a similar cut on the other side of the line
- When you finish, a V-shaped wood sliver should pop out of the cut

Stop Cut

Stop cuts are similar to V-cuts as two slices are required to complete the cut.



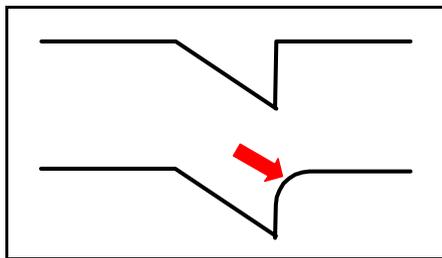
Stop cuts side view

To make the Stop cuts:

- Make the first cut straight into the wood directly on the line
- Turn the wood and angle the second cut to meet the first

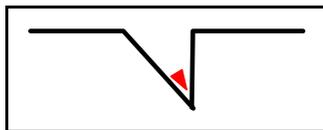
Tips

To soften a feature, round the sharp edge of the first cut your Stop cut or V-cut



Smoothing features

To keep color (washes) from running, drag your knife tip along the first cut of the stop cut



Slice cut to stop bleeding

This forms a trough that acts to stop the colors from overlapping.

Reference: *Carving Neckerchief Slides*, Reitmeyer, 2002

WHITTLE DESIGNS

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