



# Simple Knifemaking: A Beginner's Guide To Building Knives With Basic Tools

*Nicholas Tomihama*

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Simple Knife making

Welcome to Simple Knife Making! I'm Nick, and I'll be your guide as we jump into some of the basics of making your own knives. Before we get started, here's a little bit about myself and how to get the most out of this book.

I built my first knife over nine years ago. It was crude and extremely ugly, cut and ground from an old rusted butcher's knife. That knife was a bit of a stepping stone for me, a pivotal moment in my life. I had always loved the idea of building things with my hands, of creating beautiful and functional works of art.

Yet I always felt as if it was out of my reach. I couldn't afford the right tools or find the right steel. I really felt like I didn't have the right anything. It was at that point I decided to make do with what I had, even though I didn't have any experience. It wasn't a beautiful or graceful start, but it was a start.

Even as I built it, I knew that first knife was poor for many reasons. I had read several books, watched countless videos, watched many great knife makers at work. I had even handled lots of knives.

The problem was that while I knew all these things, I had no idea how to translate that to making a knife. I had never done it before and didn't really know how to put everything I had learned into practice. It wasn't until I had finished that knife that it all clicked, like somebody turning on a light.

The next day I set to work with the same meager set of files, a drill, and an angle grinder. With a better understanding of what I was doing, I built my second knife. This one looked and performed much better than the last one. It was a knife to be proud of. It felt good in the hand and worked well.

After that, I was hooked. Soon I started making more knives, eventually working with stainless steel and having it sent out for heat treating. I began selling my work and kept improving. I had amassed quite a few tools and was all set up to start production. But after a big move, I had to give it up and start over again.

I went back to the basic tools I had started out with and learned how to forge knives using a hammer and anvil. I also began building archery bows and other primitive tools and weapons. I enjoy these simpler things and it's the idea of starting out simple that is the core of this book.

The information in this book is broken up into two different types. The first is mostly words with a smattering of pictures and diagrams. In these, I'll be explaining aspects of making knives in detail as well as giving examples and suggestions not covered in the main build-alongs.

The build-alongs are mostly pictures of the steps I've taken to build something in particular. If you follow along, you should be able to build something very similar to what I've done. It's a great way to get started with a first knife or for trying out something you haven't done before.

The three main knife builds each go over different knife styles, shapes, handle materials, and tools used. That way you get a good idea of what some of the different methods and styles look like in use so that you can mix and match parts from the different builds when coming up with your own designs or finding what style you like best. You can also take the information from this chapter and the intro sections of each knife build as inspiration for trying out other design options.

There are many ways to make a knife and as many different approaches as there are knife makers. I believe the best way to try something for the first time is in the simplest way possible. In this book, I'll show you how to use inexpensive tools to make a few knives in different styles. While using such tools can make the work more time-consuming and difficult, the reward and lessons learned make it all worth it.

Everyone has to start somewhere. Starting out with a minimal investment can really help you get going quickly and working with basic tools will teach you the fundamentals.

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