

There are certain rules you should follow when wielding a knife. Not only will this keep your kitchen safe, but it will give you more control over the products you are cutting.

Sharp & honed – You should always keep a knife sharp and honed. Dull cutting edges require more force and have a tendency to slip or bounce off objects. This forced, jerky, unpredictable movement could direct the blade towards your hand.

Grip – Grip the spine of the blade, just above the heel nearest the bolster, between your thumb and forefinger, wrapping your hand around the handle. This technique, called the pinch, will give you precise control over the blade and keep your fingers out of harm's way.

Chopping, Slicing, Dicing – Guide the knife with your other hand, **keeping your fingers curled in**. The blade of your knife should rest and slide against your knuckles (take care not to lift the cutting edge higher than your knuckles). This will give you precise control over the size of the cut and by curling your fingers in, it will keep them out of harm's way.

Instead pushing straight down into an object, slide the knife towards or away from you. This delicate sawing motion will let the knife do all the work – a good knife will naturally “fall” into an item with little effort.

Peeling – Hold the bottom of the fruit with one hand. Wrap your other hand around the handle of the paring knife, placing the thumb on the bottom of the fruit – at the point closest to you. Guide the blade carefully and slowly towards your thumb, keeping the cutting edge just below the layer requiring removal. Take care using this technique. You can also cut the bottom of produce so it will sit flat on a cutting board, then hold the top of the item and slide the knife down from top to bottom to peel.

Cutting Breads & Cakes – When cutting horizontally through breads and especially cake layers, it is tempting to put your hand on the side of the product and cut towards it. This is dangerous. It is best to place your hand flat on the top of the product and move the knife through the product in a slow back and forth sawing motion. When cutting vertically, keep your hand on top of the object, next to where you're cutting, making sure to keep your fingers out of harm's way.

The key to all cutting methods is to know where your hands and fingers are at all times (making sure to keep them out of the way) and to keep your eyes on the object you are cutting. Also, take your time. There is no need to speed through any cutting task – no matter how “cool” it may look or feel.

Washing – Knives should be washed by hand with mildly soapy water. Avoid letting a knife sit in water and never wash a knife in the dishwasher. This can dull and damage a blade.

Storing – Knives should be stored in a knife block or knife roll, somewhere where the blades will be protected. Never store knives haphazardly in a drawer. This can dull and damage the blades.

types of knives

