

Teaching Knife Skills

Knife safety tips

Share these tips with your participants to help reduce knife accidents:

- Hold the knife firmly with your dominant hand.
- Keep your other hand out of the way. Use 'the claw' – make a claw shape with your fingers with the hand holding the food.
- Concentrate on your task while a knife is in your hand. Keep your eyes on what you are cutting.
- Never point your knife at someone or in a general direction.
- Always use a cutting board. Put a clean, damp cloth under the cutting board to keep it from sliding around.
- Never put knives in a sink full of water. Always keep your hand on the handle; wash, dry and then put away immediately.
- Keep your knives sharp. Sharp knives are safer than dull ones. They require less pressure and force to make cuts, which reduces slipping.
- Cut round or uneven foods in half first to create a flat surface to rest against the cutting board.



Cutting techniques

- Chop: to cut into large irregularly shaped pieces
- Dice: to cut into square pieces
- Slice: to cut into thin slices
- Mince: to chop into very fine pieces
- Shred: to cut into thin strips, using the coarse blade of a grater, a vegetable peeler or sharp knife.



Try your best to cut ingredients into equal sized portions no matter what technique you are using. This will ensure even cooking and make the dish more visually appealing.

Types of knives

Three basic knives will cover most cutting techniques. Choose the knife you are most comfortable with, and use the right knife for the right job. The knife should be bigger than the food you are going to cut.



1. Chef's knife:

- Larger and heavier than other knives; curved shape allows for a rocking motion for smooth chopping.
- For the greatest control, grasp the blade with the thumb and forefinger.
- Point the tip of the knife to the cutting board and gently roll your wrist forward until the base of the knife is through the food.



2. Paring knife:

- Used for more delicate work such as peeling, coring, trimming, hulling vegetables and fruit, or removing small bones or tissue from fish and meat.



3. Serrated knife:

- Ideal for cutting foods with hard surfaces and a soft interior such as crusty bread, pizza crust and cakes.
- Can be used in the place of a sharp chef's knife for citrus fruit or ripe tomatoes to reduce damage to appearance or shape.

