Lee Valley

# Ceramic Rod Honing Kit 50K54.01

It is a simple matter to make an effective countertop honing system for your kitchen knives by drilling a few holes at an angle into a piece of wood and inserting a pair of ceramic rods into the holes. The hole angles should be suitable for the bevel angles on your kitchen knives. A good compromise is usually a 40° included angle (the angle between the honed surfaces) for slicing knives and 50° for chopping knives. These two bevel angles will be produced by drilling the rod holes at 70° and 65° from the surface, respectively.

***Note:*** *Safety rod shown for right-handed user.*

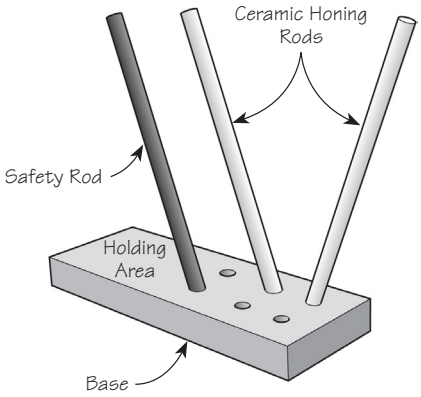


**Figure 1: A simple base.**

## Making a Simple Base (as shown in Figure 1)

1. Trim a piece of wood approximately 3 1/2″ wide by 9″ long and 3/4″ thick to make the base.
2. Lay out a pair of lines along the length, 1″ in from each edge. Mark rod locations across the workpiece, 1″, 2 1/4″ and 3 1/2″ from one end, as shown in **Figure 2** (the holes drilled at 3 1/2″ are for the safety rod).

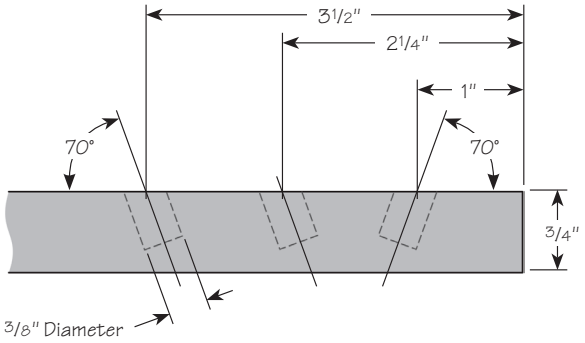


**Figure 2: Drilling diagram for 40° included angle holes.**

3. Set your drill-press table for the appropriate bevel angles. Drill 3/8″ dia. holes on one edge of your workpiece at one angle (as deep as possible without going through) in the base as shown in **Figure 2**, and drill the holes on the other edge at a different angle.

   ***Note:*** *If you do not have a drill press, angle templates are provided in* ***Figure 3*** *so that you may make guide blocks. Set a sliding bevel on the diagrams and transfer the angle onto a piece of scrap wood. Cut the wood on this line and then use the block as a visual angle guide when using a hand-held drill. Since you may have to start drilling vertically and gently angle the bit once it starts to cut, be sure to use a brad-point or Lee Valley Greenwood™ bit. The long center point on either of these bits makes this process easier to perform.*

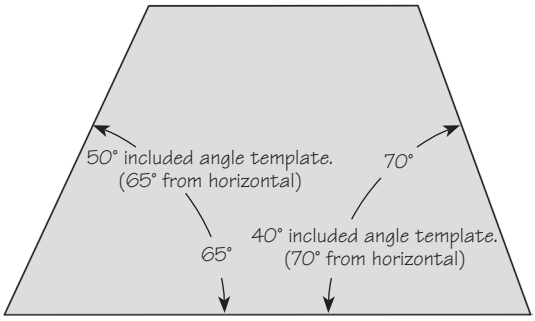


**Figure 3: Angle templates.**

4. Sand and finish the wood as desired.
5. To increase the honing guide's stability, apply four rubber feet under the base.
6. A cloth bag provides handy storage for your honing system.

   **Figures 4** to **8** offer ideas on how to make a base with integral storage space for the ceramic and safety rods.

## Using the System

1. Select the row that has the bevel angle most suitable for the knife to be sharpened. Since the diameter of the ceramic rods is slightly smaller than 3/8″, the included angles will be approximately 40° (for slicing) and 50° (for chopping). Insert the white ceramic honing rods into the first two holes of the row (see **Figure 1**).
2. Set the black safety rod into the third hole in the row closest to the user (see **Figure 1**). This safety rod will protect the user, should one of the ceramic honing rods happen to break during use. When holding the base, place one hand behind the safety rod. Keep the thumb of the hand that is holding the base tucked in behind the safety rod.

3. Hold the knife blade vertically and, starting at the top, draw it against one of the ceramic honing rods, then the other. Alternate rods with each pass, giving each side of the blade an equal number of passes. Be sure to slide the knife blade down while pulling it toward you, making sure to sharpen the entire blade edge.

4. Rotate the rods occasionally to ensure the rods wear evenly.

5. Wipe the rods off with a dry rag before storing them.

For in-depth information on sharpening procedures and bevel angles, please refer to Leonard Lee's book, *The Complete Guide to Sharpening* (published by Taunton Press).

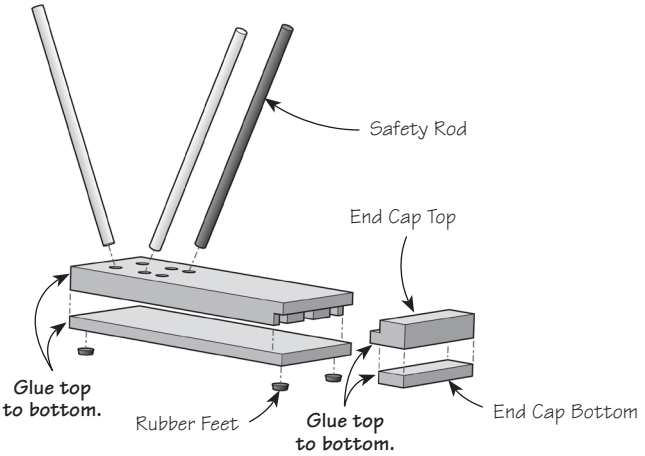


**Figure 4: Alternative base with rod storage.**

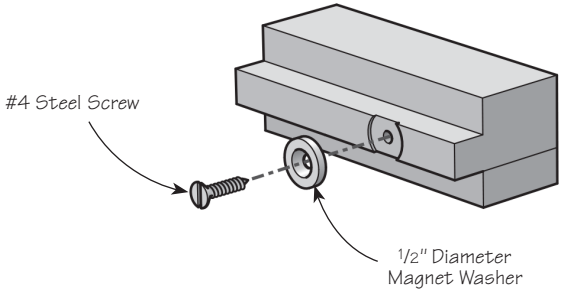


**Figure 5: End cap assembly.**

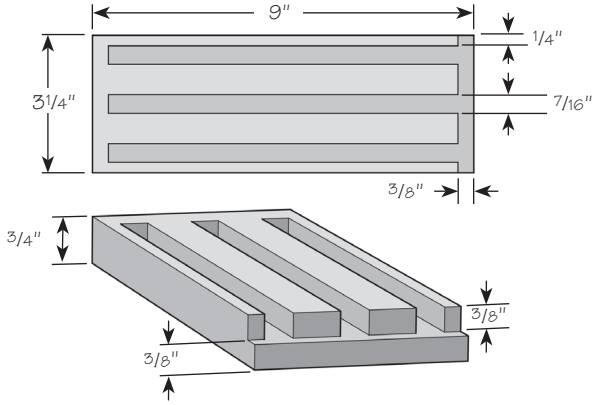


**Figure 6: Storage groove layout/dimensions.**

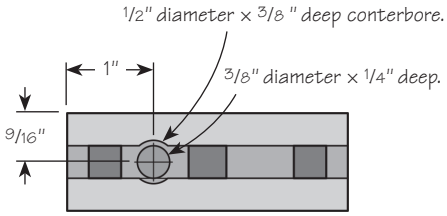


**Figure 7: Body end view/magnet cup holes.**

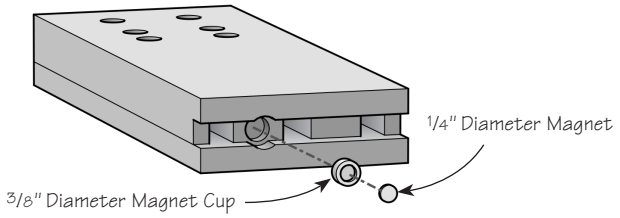


**Figure 8: Body/magnet cup assembly.**

## Accessories

**01Z10.43** #4 × 1/2″ Nickel-Plate Flat-Head Screw, bag of 100
**99K31.01** 1/4″ Diameter Rare-Earth Magnet
**99K32.51** 3/8″ Diameter Magnet Cup
**99K32.62** 1/2″ Diameter Magnet Washer