



WEAPONSPRO

THROWING KNIFE PRO



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Use Throwing Knives Like a Pro

As a knife lover, there's nothing more satisfying than hearing the resounding 'thump' as you launch knife after knife precisely into your target. After just a little practice you'll begin to start sticking more of your throws, and will rapidly become hooked on this sport that requires both a good technique, and a little skill. All it takes is a simple wooden target and a set of throwing knives, and you can start launching knife after knife through the air.

History of throwing knives

The earliest thrown weapons date back to prehistoric times where throwing sticks and spears were used to hunt animals. As metals were discovered it didn't take long for the throwing knife to evolve. The first to turn the act of throwing a knife into an art form were the ancient Japanese warriors, who called this practice shuriken-jitsu, the art of concealing a blade in their palm.

Shuriken-jitsu comprised two distinct techniques, primarily based on the blades which were used. The *shaken* are flat and round and what we know as the throwing star, while the *bo shuriken* evolved into the throwing knives we know today. There were three main types of bo shuriken, which were classified based on their original shape. *Hari-gata* were cylindrical and shaped like a needle,

kugi-gata were square sided, and *tanto-gata* were flatter and shaped like a knife. In all of these designs, the bo shuriken were constructed from a single piece of metal, and did not have any sharp edges - except for the point on the end. A critical piece of information here is that the bo shuriken were never considered to be a primary weapon for a Japanese warrior, but as a backup to launch as a distraction into the face of your enemy, causing a split-second break in concentration or a lapse in judgment allowing a more devastating attack to be made with the katana, the Japanese sword.

Throwing your knife at an opponent during combat increases your range, but comes with a laundry list of downsides which meant that this technique remained a skill primarily practiced as a diversionary tactic until the 19th and 20th centuries. Here the sport of throwing knives morphed into a popular entertainment trick, as knife throwers demonstrated their ability to hurl their blades at a human target with an extraordinary amount of accuracy. Today, the art is being revived by enthusiasts of Japanese martial arts as a recreational hobby that also teaches a valuable skill, you never know when you may need to use throwing knives to defend yourself.



Physics behind throwing a knife

The easiest way to throw a knife at a target and get it to 'stick' is to toss it in a motion that sends it rotating vertically towards your target. You want a thrown knife to spin end over end as it approaches the target. When your knife hits the target tip-first it will stick, and the first time you manage this feat you'll be over the moon. The key is to find a consistent throwing motion, let go of the knife at precisely the same instant during each throw, and position yourself at a consistent distance from the target. Once you begin sticking more knives than not, keep practicing until nearly every throw lands true.

The myth that your knives need to be perfectly balanced in order to throw them is just that, a myth, the professionals are able to throw everything from tomahawks to bowie knives, knitting needles and even ice picks and have them stick in a target. You just need to master your throwing technique, and with enough practice you'll be able to throw anything you like at your target with accuracy.

Throwing Knives today

Knife throwing is a competitive sport today, and much like archery there are groups across the United States and even internationally who get together to hone their skills. If you're interested in finding out about the competitions around the country, be sure to check out The American Knife Throwing Alliance (<http://www.akta-usa.com/>), and join an event. You'll meet people from all walks of life who share a similar passion for the blade.



Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Knife_throwing_competition.jpg

Using a throwing knife as a weapon

Unfortunately, real life is not like the movies. We all dream about being able to launch knife after knife at an attacker with deadly force, but you need to remember that the most important aspect of any weapon you carry - its stopping power.

In a self defense situation, any weapon you brandish needs to be able to stop your opponent's advances, and put them out of commission so you can escape the situation. Pepper spray does a great job of this, as the chemicals result in blindness and severe pain after just seconds. Other weapons like a firearm are capable of inflicting a massive amount of damage in seconds, making further attacks impossible as you take control.

For throwing knives, there are three elements missing for them to be capable of massive stopping power. This includes their mass, velocity and the accuracy with which you can throw them. The amount of force required to drive a knife through skin, flesh and bone is rather high, and there is only the weight of the knife to work with once you've thrown it. If you remember back to the example from Hollywood as the hero drives a knife deep into the chest of his opponent with a single throw, this situation could not happen in reality.



Thrown knives typically lack the force to strike and inflict this level of damage in real life. The real effectiveness of a knife in a combat situation is when you can put the weight of your body behind every attack, amplifying the force you use it to stab or slash.

But hang on, what about bullets - they're extremely light so how do they inflict so much damage? Bullets get to rely on another factor in the force equation, velocity. The speed with which they travel allows a much greater force to be delivered to a target, with the popular 9 mm cartridge firing at a speed over 1,000 miles an hour. To put this in perspective, most professional baseball pitchers struggle throwing a fastball over 100 miles an hour. The amateur knife thrower is likely to achieve much less velocity in their throw than a professional athlete can achieve, which is another factor that reduces the lethal ability of a thrown knife in a confrontation. Unfortunately for the throwing knife, it lacks many of the mechanical advantages other projectile weapons have. A bow transfers energy from the curve of its limbs into the flight of an arrow, gun's use the chemical energy from the ignition of the gunpowder to fire a bullet, and even a slingshot can use the elasticity of the sling to multiply the reach of the throwers arm and speed up the velocity of the stone it throws. A throwing knife relies solely on the speed your arm can put into it, which isn't usually enough to do significant damage.

The final concern you need to be aware of with throwing knives is their accuracy. Of course, if you land a hit on your target in just the right way it can be fatal, but this becomes difficult with a thrown knife thanks to the way they travel through the air. Most projectiles fly with the sharp end facing

forward, like a dart, arrow, bullet or a spear. This boosts the projectiles aerodynamics, and as they spin on their axis (imagine the spin on a nice long throw from a quarterback) this adds stability and accuracy in their trajectory. With a throwing knife, it hurtles towards its target spinning end over end, which causes it to lose velocity faster than other projectile weapons. Over a long range, a throwing knife will become ineffective. But this isn't the only problem with distance. Because the thrown knife is spinning end over end, there isn't a huge amount of time during the rotation where the sharp end of the knife is actually facing your attacker. In fact, in a melee situation where your attacker is racing towards you, even a professional knife thrower is more likely to hit them with the side or the butt of the knife instead of the sharpened tip. In this instance, you may be better served holding onto your knife and using it to stab directly into their face.

Does it ever make sense to throw a knife for self defense?

The key to being able to successfully defend yourself in any situation is to adapt to your surroundings, and being able to throw a knife with some level of accuracy can definitely come in handy. Of course, if you've only got one knife you probably shouldn't launch your last means of defense at your attacker, but there are times where you may need to do this.

Imagine you're in a scuffle where you and a friend are outnumbered, and you happen to look up and notice one of the attackers is aiming a gun at either yourself, or your friend. They're too far away for you to be able to close the gap before they fire, so you grab your knife and throw it towards their face, causing a distraction that enables you to get in close and finish your attack with a more devastating move. The only reason you should ever throw your knife in a fight is to create a distraction, buying yourself a little time to close the distance to your attacker and launch a more serious attack to end a confrontation.



Against a single enemy who does not have a firearm, our team of weapons experts do not recommend throwing your knife. No matter how accurate you are at home in your training pitch, if you miss the shot for any reason, you do not want to give your opponent a weapon they could easily retrieve and then use on you. Remember that knives were initially designed as a close range tool, and with the force of your body behind any stabs and slashes you make, you can inflict a massive amount of damage - much more than even a professional would expect from a single throw.

Remember, only ever throw your knife:

- If your own life, or someone else's depends on it
- If you need to strike from a distance in a situation that demands an aggressive attack
- If you need to divert the attention of your attacker, even for a split-second
- If you need to escape, continually throwing knives at your followers can deter the chase

When using a throwing knife in a fight, keep these three rules in mind:

- If you miss the fight will not stop for you to retrieve your knife. It's now gone.
- Once you throw your last knife, you're unarmed and much more vulnerable.
- Never rely on a successful throw. There are too many potential errors you can make.

That being said, developing the confidence to throw a knife accurately is a fun skill to practice, just in case you ever do need it. And if you don't, the practice is fun all the same. In addition, many professional throwers find their training to have a meditative quality, as the routine motions combined with the focus on technique actually has a relaxing effect, making it a great way to de-stress after a day in the office.

Types of throwing knives

The huge range of throwing knives available means beginners often have too many choices when they're looking for a set of knives to practice their new hobby. Of course in theory you could actually throw any type of knife you want, but for your training to be most effective, you want to purchase knives that have been specially manufactured to be thrown. Plus, throwing knives that are designed to be thrown are safer, and will stand up to the brutal effect of being slammed again and again into a hard target without shattering, unlike a typical kitchen knife. We also recommend avoiding cheap stainless steel throwing knives, as they tend to bend faster and the tips can crack off after just a few throws. A decent throwing knife for a beginner should cost around \$20 to \$25, and you're going to want one that's around 7 to 10 ounces, with a pointed tip but no sharp edges, and a smooth handle.



Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Throwing_knives.jpg

What to look for when buying throwing knives

Beginners who start shopping for throwing knives without knowing what to look for make a number of common mistakes. The main problem is they buy knives that are too ornate, with a design that has been done to look 'cool,' yet they actually perform very poorly when the knife is thrown. When you're just starting out, the more utilitarian the design the better. Simple designs reduce the chance you'll catch your finger or your palm on a sharp edge and slice it open, or disturb the trajectory of your knife as it is thrown.

Don't forget that you're putting your knives through a pretty brutal treatment with every throw. You're hurling a hard steel knife into a hard wooden target, which makes it understandable that even the best knives will not last forever - after continued use they will eventually break. The key though is that you get what you pay for, so steer clear of cheap knives that can be bought for a couple of dollars. These are not worth the trouble.

How heavy should my knife be?

Throwing knives vary in size, from small little versions that are just a couple of ounces, to big heavy blades over a foot in length and weighing 12 to 14 ounces. Knowing which to buy is critical, too light and they're too difficult for a beginner to throw, but too heavy means you'll only get a few practice throws in before your arm starts to tire and you lose your technique. For a beginner, we recommend finding throwing knives that weigh around 7 to 10 ounces. This will enable almost anyone to develop a great technique to throw these at your target.

To test if a knife is the right weight, hold the handle of the knife between your thumb and index finger, with the blade aimed at the ground. Now, jerk your arm in a different direction, and feel the knife in your hand. If the blade wobbles or you drop the knife, it's too heavy for you.

When beginners start using knives that are too light (just a few ounces), you'll find that nearly all of your throws will be bouncing off your target as it is very difficult to throw these with accuracy and force. The throwing technique that works best with a light knife is known as the snap, but beginners are not advised to try this because of the arm motion required. The snap is done to stop the blades wobbling during flight, but the fast and sudden movement places a huge amount of stress on the muscles and joints in your wrist and arms, and you'll begin to feel the burn after only a few throws.

Heavier knives are usually more stable as you throw them, but most beginners will not have the arm strength required to throw these with any accuracy if they're just learning the technique. Our team of weapons experts love throwing with heavy knives because you can really tell what is happening as you release it, as your fingers better register the motion of the knife with your brain. In addition, the sound a heavy knife makes when it sticks a target is surreal, but you have to know - no one in our team started practicing with heavy throwing knives on day one. Find a comfortable technique first, and then progress in the weight. You really want to pick a set of throwing knives you're comfortable throwing again and again, and only transition through to heavier knives once you are confident in your accuracy. The change will feel natural.

The metal of the knife

Another concern when you're just getting started is how expensive throwing knives actually are. The top tier models professionals use when they compete are hundreds of dollars apiece, and at this stage we tend to agree this is overkill. You do need to make an investment in quality knives, but the key is to find those constructed from the right materials.

Of course, if you buy the cheapest knives on the market for only a couple of dollars apiece, you can't be mad when they break, because they've been made from inferior metal, despite being marketed

as 'stainless steel.' I've personally seen brand new blades snap just two or three throws into a practice session, which is not what you're after. Find blades that have been constructed from a single piece of metal, and our experience has taught us that the cold steel throwing knives are some of the best out there. Now, these aren't as pretty as some of the stainless steel versions you'll find on the market, but the tips of cold steel are less prone to bending or breaking when you use them. Trust us. Once you've broken 2 or 3 cheap knives from Amazon, you'll be ready to invest in knives of a better quality. Cold steel knives are usually dark in color, and will set you back about \$20 to \$25 a knife. That's not much of an investment considering how many throws you'll be able to get out of each quality knife you buy. One of the best cold steel models is the Cold Steel True Flight, which is made from 1055 Carbon Steel.

The balance of the knife

One of the first things you will notice when you start investigating throwing knives is that there are three distinct categories of balance. Some knives have a very heavy blade, others a very heavy handle, and others are in perfect balance.

But which type of balance in the knives you buy is a point not all trainers agree on. Some believe weighted knives make it easier for beginners to stick their target, because the 'heft' you feel in the imbalance allows you to apply more force as you hurl the knife into the target. Most professional knife throwers opt for the balanced knives, and we agree wholeheartedly because the technique you develop will be able to quickly transfer to any balanced blade you pick up to throw, not just those knives you've been practicing with. This isn't the case for weighted knives, as it will take time and quite a few practice throws before you can develop a feel for the knife and throw it accurately.

Balanced knives mean that the center of gravity is aligned in the center of your knife. When you throw them, the balance causes the knife to spin in perfectly round circles, making it easier to predict the flight trajectory through the air. You can also practice throwing a balance knife from both the blade and the handle. Ultimately, throwing knives is a sport you are there to enjoy, and you should pick the knives with the balance 'you like the feel of' as you hold them in your hand.

Why isn't the blade sharp?

Sharp knives result in unnecessary risk, because you do not need a blade with a razor sharp edge to stick a target. Never sharpen your throwing knives to a cutting edge because it makes the knife too dangerous in your hand. One slip, and you'll slice your palm clean open. Sharp knives also make a blade grip throw almost impossible to achieve, all you really need to keep sharp is the pointed tip.

A comfortable handle

Over time, you'll develop a preference for the handle you prefer. Some knife throwers like their handles as utilitarian as possible, with no unnecessary ornamentation. Others prefer wooden handles, leather grips and even tape, but steer clear of rubber as it can make the release of the knife from your hand rather awkward as it tends to stick. The only downside with getting used to throwing blades with a handle is that they will eventually need to be replaced, as even wood with rivets will

wear out eventually. For your first set of knives, don't buy a set with fancy grips. Try to teach yourself to use the basic metal handle, but if you do find this too difficult, wrap a little tape or paracord around the handle so you have a little more to grip, without effecting your ability to release the knife.



Length of the knife

Beginners normally find the longer a knife is, the easier it is to watch the rotations and perfect their technique. Of course, you don't want to buy a 14 inch monstrosity that weighs over 14 ounces because you'll not be able to throw it more than a few times without hurting your arm. Likewise, shorter knives spin on a much tighter revolution, which makes it much harder to properly stick a target. Buy the longest set of throwing knives you can find, so long as the weight of each blade is about 7 to 10 ounces.

How many throwing knives do I need

Buying a set of throwing knives is a great idea to help your practice sessions. Having more than one knife lets you throw multiple knives at a target without breaking your position and moving your feet, making your training sessions more efficient and you'll quickly improve. Test the feel of a number of different knives before you make a purchase, but buy at least 3 knives of the same type so you can practice effectively when you get home. This helps you focus on your technique, as the balance and rotation of every knife you throw will be identical.

The only caveat to this rule is when you're practicing your throws in an area that has a dense undergrowth, or thick grass. If you overthrow and miss your target, immediate go and retrieve your knife. It's very easy to lose one of your favorite blades in the leaves on the ground, especially if you've thrown 3 or 4 more knives since your first miss, and "can't exactly remember" where the first miss landed. Don't make this mistake, and you won't lose your new knives in the grass.

Our pick of the best throwing knives

Cold Steel's G.I. Tanto

If you're looking for a knife that has a dual use, you can't go past this tactical beauty from Cold Steel. It's a bit of a beast at 10.6 ounces and 12 inches long, but it's also a great general purpose knife that's made from 1055 carbon steel, allowing it to hold an edge really well. Normally, we don't recommend keeping your throwing knives sharp, but this all purpose field



Source: <http://images.knifecenter.com/knifecenter/coldsteel/images/80pgt.jpg>

knife is a great buy that can be used in both hand to hand combat, as well as thrown.

Gil Hibben Cord-Grip Triple Throwers

If you want a set of throwers for under \$20 you have to remember you'll be losing out on the quality of the steel, but this options is far better than most. The set of three contains great throwing knives that are a little lighter at 5.5 ounces and 8 and 5/8" long, ideal if you lack upper body strength. For an inexpensive starter kit set this is a great buy, although you will find that the paracord handles may begin to fray, ours did just after a few uses.



Boker's Magnum Bailey Throwing Knife Set

Look closely the next time you watch the Hunger Games at the knife Clove presses to Katniss' neck and you'll find it's this beauty. Designed by the legendary knife thrower John Bailey, these knives are a great thrower and hold a great edge. Made out of 420J2 stainless steel they weigh in at a massive 11 and a half ounces and are 10 and 7/8" long.



Boker's Magnum Bailey Ziel 2

At a professional level, you'll find competitive knife throwers using a whole range of top-shelf knives as well as home-made blades they prefer over all else. If you're looking for a well balanced knife that puts you on par to what the pro's are using, this is the throwing knife for you. You can throw this one from either the blade or the handle, but be warned - they're extremely heavy at 14 ounces and 13 and 1/4" in length. When you're looking to compete, these knives meet the criteria the American Knife Throwers Alliance uses in their rules, and when well looked after these knives will serve you well for almost a lifetime of throwing.



Are throwing knives legal

The laws on knives vary widely from state to state, but in general it's forbidden to carry large knives in public, and in the very least there will be certain restrictions. Unfortunately there isn't a clear set of rules that are applied across the United States, so the best place to start is to talk to your local

police station. They'll be able to give you guidance on what is and is not allowed in your local area. Talk to an officer before you attempt to purchase what may be classified as a restricted or even illegal weapon in your state.



As an example, Texas has laws in place that make throwing knives outright illegal. In the Texas Penal Code § 46.01 clarifies an illegal knife to be any hand instrument that is designed to either cut or stab another person by being thrown. Knives are further defined as any hand instrument with a blade capable of inflicting serious damage, injury or death either through cutting or stabbing.

In other states, the law's aren't as strict on throwing knives in general, but there are limitations on what you can carry on your person. In Florida, the Statutes § 790.01 and § 790.001 do not allow you to carry a concealed weapon, with the only exception for "the common pocket knife."

Generally, you'll find a host of other restrictions placed on knives and their use. These can be on anything from the length of the blade, particular attributes of the knife, and even the persons age. The New York Penal Article 265.05 makes it illegal for anyone under the age of 16 to possess a "dangerous knife."

In a survival situation, there is not much that will serve you better than a good knife, but it's up to you to stay informed, and keep track of the relevant laws in both the state you live, as well as any states you plan to travel to while carrying your throwing knives. Make it easy on yourself, simply call the local police station and check, before you land yourself in any trouble.

Where to buy throwing knives

With throwing knives especially, the way it feels in your hands is one of the most important considerations when you're buying a set. Because of this, you should always check out the range of throwing knives available at your local gun shop or hardware store, so you can really get a feel for the knife you plan to buy. The ability to pick up and handle the range of options on offer can make a big difference on which knife you ultimately end up selecting. Hold each one in your hand, check the balance and ensure you're able to get a good grip on both the handle and the blade without it feeling awkward, or any sharp parts of the knife pressing into your hand.

When you find one that feels great in your hand, buy it!

Unfortunately not every city has a good range of local options to buy throwing knives, and if you really don't have a choice you can head to online retailers like Amazon and eBay. On here you'll find many manufacturers selling directly (in the U.S. you must be the manufacturer to ship throwing knives across state borders in eCommerce), which means you're likely going to be interacting with some of the best throwing knife manufacturers in the world as you buy their products. Ensure you

check out the reviews of a product before you order, and follow our guidelines on picking the right throwing knives.

Before using throwing knives

This almost goes without saying, but knives are not a toy. Never throw or aim a throwing knife at a target you are not intending to do serious damage to, and never, ever, throw a knife if there is someone closer to the target than you are standing. We mentioned earlier that a thrown knife will not do as much damage as one wielded in your hand, however accidents with ricochets and mis-throws are common, so be sure to use some sense as you practice with these dangerous weapons.

Find a suitable target

Never, ever use a live tree as your target. With enough strikes, you'll eventually kill the tree, which is totally unnecessary because it is so easy to make your own targets. If this doesn't concern you, you still should never throw your knives at a tree because:

- The trunk of a tree is usually quite hard, which means if you aren't getting your technique right on your first few throws you can damage and break even expensive knives very quickly as they wrap and bend around the shape of your tree. Your knives will break faster when thrown against a tree, so don't do it.
- The cylindrical face of a tree trunk causes ricochets in all directions when you throw your knife incorrectly and don't properly stick the target. If you don't want blades bouncing back in your face, don't use a tree, or any round target for that matter. Find a flat surface to practice on.

When selecting an area to practice, ensure you've got a clear view of your surroundings and have at least 10 to 15 meters of visibility around your target in all directions. You don't want one of your pets or your little brother running into your throwing zone without your knowledge. In a similar line of thinking, don't set up your target near a corner where someone may pop around unexpectedly, or against a wall or a fence that you may overthrow.

The actual target

The key to a great target for your practice session is to find something with a flat surface. Of course the more durable your target is, the longer it will stand up to the onslaught of throwing knives you plan to launch at it, but everything from bales of hay to planks of wood fashioned together all work really well. If you've got access to round slices of log these make excellent targets, and if you're just getting



started gluing layers of cardboard together can help you to stick more of your throws while you perfect your technique, and avoid causing any undue damage to your new set of throwing knives.

Our teams preference is to use heavy planks where the grain of the wood is running vertically. This is a trick to help you stick more of your throws, as the revolution of the blade will also be spinning vertically, making it easier for the knife to slide into the grains of the wood on impact. Keep this in mind as you build your target, and you'll also do less damage to your knives when you throw them. Look for the thickest planks you can find, at least an inch and a half thick to ensure they can take a good battering. If you've got a supply of round tree slices these are our favorite targets, just be sure you've got a backing in place to stop any knives making it through the gaps once you put three or four circular slices together as your target.

Your target should be about a meter wide, and stretch from the ground to just over your head height. A frame can help you to keep it supported upright, or you could also lash your target to a tree or pole for added stability. If supplies are hard to come by, the entire target doesn't need to be constructed from the thick wood. You can also use slightly thinner paneling for the outer reaches as the width of your target is primarily just to stop any wild throws that go off course, hopefully you're keeping the majority of your throws accurate and landing them in the thick inner region of your target. For cheap DIY ideas, an old door with a couple of thick planks to target in the center works well, in addition to old tables (with the legs still on) as they will help your target stand upright without needing any additional modifications on the frame.

Once you've got your target together, feel free to leave it out in the yard. If it gets a little wet this can actually help your knives stick, as the moisture makes the wood a little more pliable.

Learning to use throwing knives

The key to mastering the art of throwing a knife is finding a rhythm that allows you to hurl a knife with some finesse, in the exact same motion with every throw. It does take a massive amount of practice, but don't let this discourage you from getting started. It only takes a handful of sessions to start sticking more throws than you miss, and with practice you'll only improve more. Now let's get started.

Holding the knife

To throw a knife accurately, the first step you need to master is your grip. Go ahead and take out your new set of throwing knives, hopefully you've bought a balanced set that allows you to throw holding either the blade or the handle, but if you've gone ahead with a weighted version, you just need to remember this old saying. ***Grab the light end of your knife to throw it.*** This means that if you've got a blade-heavy knife, you should be holding the handle as you throw it, and vice versa if your knife is handle-heavy; you'll need to hold it by the blade to throw it effectively.

When you're learning the different grips you can use, there are two basic fundamental grip styles most knife throwers start from. Over time you'll find a particular grip will become your preference,

and you may even make a slight variation to the conventional methods in order to throw more accurately. But when you're just getting started, keep it simple, and practice using one of these two.

Before you pick up your knife, know your grip needs to be firm (yet delicate) when holding your knife. Squeezing the grip too tight will make it a clumsy release, while holding it too loose can cause the knife to fly out of your hand too early, and has the potential to injure someone who may be standing nearby. Try to find a good balance between too firm and too loose, regardless of the choice of grip you decide to start using.

Hammer Grip

The easiest grip for beginners is known as the hammer grip. There's not a lot to it, simply imagine how you would hold a hammer, and then grab either the handle or the blade of your knife in a similar technique. Remember to keep your fingers a little loose, and bring your thumb to rest on the flat side of the blade (don't wrap it around the handle). If you prefer, you can also press your thumb onto the edge of the knife (so long as you are using a non-sharpened throwing knife), in a grip the professionals have dubbed the modified hammer grip. Some knife throwers believe this position of the thumb leads to greater accuracy in their throws.



Once you've got hold of your knife, slide it up the inside of your palm until your little finger is resting at the end of the handle, or if you've got hold of the blade, ensure the sharpened tip is positioned about a half an inch below your little finger. Getting the knife at the right level within your palm will help you to stabilize its flight as you make your throw.

When you're practicing with a heavy knife the hammer grip is your best option, and if you're practicing with a knife that has been sharpened never use this grip on the blade - you will slice your palm to pieces. If you're throwing a sharp knife the only part of the knife you should be holding is the handle.

Pinch Grip

If you're wanting to learn using lighter throwing knives, the pinch grip will probably be your go-to method of choice. When you pinch the knife in this technique, you can flick it out a little faster than the hammer grip allows, giving lighter throwing knives a little more force. The pinch grip works by treating the knife as an extension of your arm to boost your throwing power, but at the expense of your arm. You'll get tired much quicker using this technique.

To form the grip hold your throwing hand in front of you. Move your thumb across your palm until it forms a crease in the fleshy meat of your palm, and then place the knife handle into the crease, or if you're using a single edged throwing knife you can also place the blunt edge into the crease you've just made. Position the knife so the base of the handle (or the tip of your knife) is sitting at the bottom of the crease in your palm by your wrist.



Source: http://knifethrowing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/grip_01-300x192.jpg

Press your thumb against the knife to form a pinch, locking the knife in place between your thumb and your fingers. From here, the blade should stay firmly in place, and there should be no sharpened parts of the knife anywhere near the palm of your hand.

If you're using a double edged knife and would like to hold the blade using the pinch grip technique it is possible, but requires a slight modification in order to keep your hands safe. Point the handle of the knife away from you and pinch the tip of the knife between your thumb and index finger. The blade should be locked flat between your thumb and index finger so you're not at risk from either the point or any sharpened edges of the blade. If the knife is a little heavier you can also use your middle finger to add stability to this grip. This modified hold is not strong enough to allow you to perform a throw with a great deal of force, so if you're a beginner who has purchased a double edged knife to throw we recommend you learn to use the hammer grip - it's a lot safer, and you'll be able to nail the technique that much faster with a little more power.

On either grip, your thumb or the index finger will guide the knife as it starts spinning on its trajectory to reach the target. Make sure you're using this digit to keep the knife in alignment, and you're getting perfectly vertical throws at your target.

Finding your throwing line

When you first start, one of the biggest factors that beginners struggle with is understanding the distances. Once you master the technique and can throw a knife in exactly the same motion again and again, the only variable in your ability to hit a target - is your distance to the target.

Starting from your target take five paces forward and draw a line in the dirt. This is your starting line, and from here there should be just enough room for your throwing knife to complete a full revolution and 'stick' into the target with a satisfying 'thump'.

Your stance

Holding your throwing knife in your dominant hand, face your target and place your opposite foot out in front. Line the toes of your back foot up with the line you've just drawn in the dirt, standing with your feet shoulder width apart in a classic martial arts position. The angle between your feet should form a 45° angle, bend your knees slightly and put the majority of your weight on your back

foot. Extend both of your arms in front of you with your elbows slightly bent, while keeping your entire body relaxed and loose. This is the starting position for your throw.

Taking aim

Look at the target you've constructed, and pick a particular point you want to aim for. You should never, ever, make a blind throw at your target without taking aim, so pick a knot in the wood, a particular irregularity, or even one of the markings you may have made with paint on your target. This is where you'll be focusing your throw, and the point you want your knives to land. Generally you're not going to stick it exactly in your target point on your first throw, but after a few you'll find there's a certain spot you continue to hit, that may be just an inch or two from where you're targeting. To increase your accuracy, all you need to do is shift the point you're targeting in your mind, and your knives will fly and land where you want them to.

The throwing motion

This next step takes a little getting used to, and is the most important part of learning to throw a knife correctly. You need to get used to performing the same throwing motion, exactly the same, again and again, for you to improve your knife throwing abilities.

Standing with your feet shoulder width apart, one foot slightly in front of the other, lift your arms to chest height and point them both towards the target, with your elbows slightly bent. Bring the hand holding the knife backwards and up, creating at most a 90° angle at your elbow, until you're holding the knife above your head. In one swift motion swing the knife down and forwards in an action that can be best described as "reaching out to slice off a tree branch that you just can't quite reach."

Stretch your entire body forward with this action until your arm reaches its full extension, and as you swing forward shift your bodyweight to your front leg and bring your chest slightly forward, to add additional power to the throw. One mistake many beginners make here is unintentionally moving the shoulder they are throwing with, this part of your body should not be moving at all, it should just be pivoting in place.

This motion is all you need to be able to throw a knife, so take yours in your hand and slowly move through the motion, at least 15 to 20 times until you get a feeling of how your body needs to flow. Do not let go of your knife at this stage.

Letting go of your knife

Once you've gotten comfortable with the throwing motion, the next step is to let the knife slide from your grip and sail towards the target.

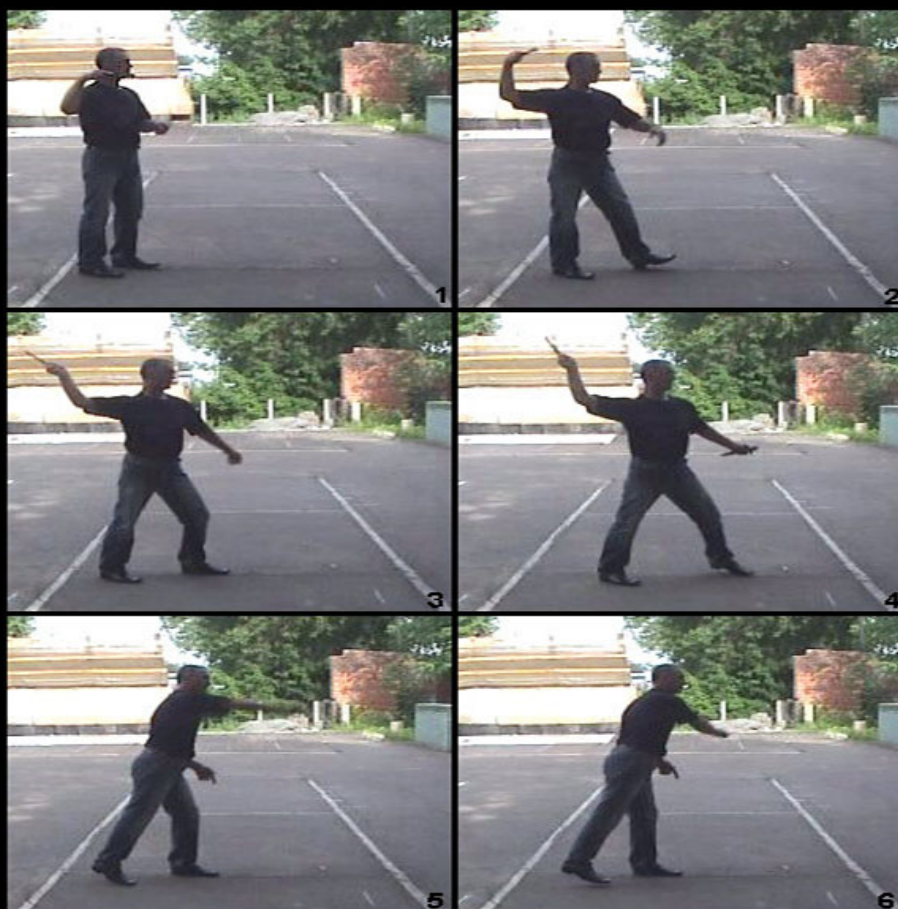
This can get a little tricky, as it seems every knife thrower recommends a different timing to accurately send the knife flying from their hand. What they all agree on is you need to perform your release quickly, letting the knife go and snapping your fingers back together as fast as you can manage. The controversy comes when trying to determine the position your arm should be in when

you let go of the knife. Some believe you should only let go of the knife when you're almost halfway through the throwing arc and your hand is pointing directly at the target, while others believe you need to release the knife much earlier than this.

Finally, it's important to never forcibly stop a throw once you let go of the knife. Following through and letting your arm continue the swing motion is important as it helps prevent you from damaging your arm with a sudden stop, and can also allow you to add more force to each throw.

At this point it's now time to start taking some practice throws. Set yourself up in position and follow the motions described. If you're lucky some of your throws may stick to the target and give you an initial boost of confidence, but that's not our goal at this stage. What we really want to be working on is teaching you a consistent throwing motion, which you can repeat again and again. Consistency is everything when learning to throw a knife, and once you get the motion right and you're confident releasing your knife at the same point of your arc each time, it's just a matter of finding the right distance to your target to start getting every single one of your throws to stick.

Our only recommendation now is to practice. See what works best for you, and once you start getting results, record what it is you're doing that is causing the knives to stick. Remember to record how far you are from the target, the position of your feet, the way you're gripping the knife, as well as the position of your arm when you released the knife. You simply need to replicate these variables to improve your ability to throw a knife, now it's just about getting the hang of it.



Source: <http://www.2-clicks-collectableknives.com/images/image/knife-throwing.jpg>

Take your time, and throw at least 50 practice shots until you're confident you can release the blade at the correct instant (or your arm gets tired and you're starting to lose your technique). If the latter, rest up and try to pick up your training again in a day or two - once you've had a chance to rest.

Perfecting your technique

Small incremental changes are what's needed to get your knives sticking properly. If you're constantly hitting the target with the handle of the knife, do not change your throwing technique or the force you put on each throw, adjust your distance to the target by coming either a little forward or moving a little back. You should never adjust more than 3 to 4 inches at a time. Changing the distance between you and the target allows for more rotation in the knife, without needing any modification to the throwing technique you've been practicing.

When you're trying to correct the distance to your target, you need to imagine how the knife you're throwing is rotating through the air. If you're holding the handle as you throw, the blade will spin downwards first. In this scenario, a hit to the target with the handle is pointing up to the sky means the knife has over-rotated, and you're standing too far from the target. Fix it by shuffling a little closer. Likewise, if the handle is pointing down the knife hasn't rotated enough, and you need to move back a tad in order to get your knife sticking correctly. A perfect throw will drive the knife into your target, leaving it projecting horizontally from the wood. While you are making these adjustments, remember to only change one thing at a time so you can see the effect of every small change on the throws you're making.

Being able to correctly throw a knife is more about finesse than brute strength, keeping your motions smooth and fluid, and only applying enough force as needed to get your blades sticking into the target. To build this level of finesse, the key is to practice, moving your body through the same motions, again and again until you've jammed them into your muscle memory and you now throw by reflex. It takes effort to reach this stage, but with continued practice you will be able to throw your knives accurately. The real secret to throwing knives well isn't sharpening your blades or throwing with every ounce of your strength - all you need is a little technique and a great deal of practice. Once you get the hang of it, you'll be amazed at how little force you really need.

Increasing the distance

Once you're confidently throwing and sticking your knives at five paces, it's time to start experimenting with different distances. 5 paces is roughly 12 feet, and using a standard throwing knife gripping the handle with a hammer grip, a typical throw from this distance will allow you to achieve one full rotation with your knife before it sticks the target. If you're slightly off, you can try adjusting slightly, but never move more than 3 to 4 inches at a time.

To up the ante, move back an additional 4 feet. This puts you at roughly 16 feet from your target, but more importantly, the distance allows for another half revolution in spin from your knives rotation. Without changing anything in your throw, grip the throwing knife by the blade and continue practicing. After a few throws and some minor adjustments, you should be able to start sticking the majority of your throws at this increased distance.

As your skills improve, master the art of knife throwing from distances of 12, 16, 20 and 24 feet from your target. When you're at 20 feet use the handle grip again, which will allow for two full rotations of your knife before it reaches your target. The most important tip to remember at this stage is to keep your throwing speed and technique exactly the same with every throw, you're simply moving the distance and letting the rotation of your knives do the work for you. If you want a goal to strive for, professional knife throwers can often get up to seven rotations of their knife in a single throw.

Once you start getting further from your target, you may need to add a little more power to each throw, to ensure it can cover the distance. The best way to do this is to twist your body and use the movement of your hips to provide strength via momentum into your throwing arm. This is much like how a boxer plants their feet and uses their entire body to deliver a stronger punch, only here, you're putting the additional power into the throw. A second way to counter the distance is to shift the target you are visualizing in your mind, moving it higher to compensate for the drop in trajectory that will come with your thrown blade over a larger distance.

Training sessions

I just want to touch on this one again in its own point, as it takes dedication to learn to accurately throw a knife, and requires both strength in your arms as well as your fingers. When you first start to practice your fingers are likely to be too weak to throw a knife effectively for any prolonged period of time, so keep your first training sessions short, not over 15 minutes. This enables you to stop while you're still having fun, allows you to rest your arm before you overuse it, and also helps you to keep technique in the forefront of your mind, helping you to avoid bad habits as you get tired and your throws become sloppy.



To get good at anything you need to put in the hours it takes to practice, and knife throwing is no different.

Caring for your knives

If you don't take care of your knives they will rapidly deteriorate, as the oil from your hands as well as contaminants from the environment will have them rusting faster than you would believe, especially if you're not using stainless steel knives.

After you finish up with a practice session, take a wet cloth and wipe off any grass or dirt stains from each knife, then rinse both the blade and handle with water. Dry each knife completely before you put them away, and they're best stored in a clean and dry place where you're kids can't get to them. Just this simple cleaning routine can add years of life to your throwing knives.

To protect your knives even further, you can use a weapons oil like Ballistol, to help keep any contaminants away from your knives. You'll be able to find this product (or a similar version) in your local gun shop, or sporting goods store. It's a simple process, just wipe down your throwing knives with a little of the oil after you've finished cleaning and drying each blade. It's also a good idea to get your knives out the following day and wipe off any oil that remains, otherwise you'll be left with slippery knives the next time you want to use them.

If you do happen to dent one of your knives, don't fret. It's rather common and you can repair it with a file before you put it away or use it to throw again. As you're filing the blade, be sure you don't add any sharpened edges to your throwing knives, and the tip doesn't have to taper into a fine needle point. It just needs to be sharp enough and solid enough to penetrate into your target. Sometimes, you'll find your knives have bent, and this is also an easy fix. Grab two bricks, and place your knife between them like a bridge. You can either tap the knife with your hammer, or gently use your weight to stand on the knife and straighten it back out again.

No-spin Throwing Knives

There is a growing movement of knife throwers who like to practice what is known as the no-spin technique. In general, when you throw a knife without any spin it will be less accurate, because the circular motion from the throw helps to stabilize the knife's trajectory in flight. Plus, when you try to throw a knife without spinning it, you're going to be much more focused on keeping the knife from spinning, you'll subconsciously put less thought on your actual target.

To perform a no spin throw:

- Place your index or middle finger along the spine of your knife
- Rest your thumb resting along the flat side of the handle
- Have a relaxed grip, holding your throwing with a firm but delicate grip
- Bring your hand up straight, keeping your elbow at a 90° angle and draw your hand back
- Swing your arm forward and release the knife in a single motion straight out at your target

This technique is really only suitable for heavier knives thrown at a distance of less than five meters, and works much the same way as a spear throw or a javelin.

Staying safe

Never forget that knives are a dangerous weapon, and there are a number of things to keep in mind when it comes to using your throwing knives safely.

- It's perfectly fine to invite your family and friends to watch you practice, but make sure they stay a safe distance back from the target, and they are also at least 3-4 meters behind you.
- The person throwing the knife should be the closest person to the target.

- If someone approaches the target area when you are throwing, stop throwing immediately.
- Never throw a knife if there is a person behind the throwing zone, just in case you miss or overthrow the target.
- Do not throw a non-locking folding knife as a beginner, there is too much danger you will injure your hands. Experiment and learn your technique with fixed blades to begin with.
- When throwing your knives with a group of friends, even if it's not your turn you should be keeping an eye on every knife that is thrown. Knives are known to bounce back if they don't correctly stick a target, and you don't want to unexpectedly catch a ricocheting knife if you can help it - so pay attention until the knives being thrown are safely at rest.
- Never throw your knives at other people or animals. Just like pointing a gun at someone, you should never take aim and throw your knife at a target you're not intending to do serious damage to. Just because a throwing knife isn't sharp, it doesn't mean they're not dangerous.
- Use common sense when throwing your set of knives, and if you're under the age of 18 always practice with supervision from your parents.
- Resist any urge you have to pitch throwing knives like a baseball. The best technique is a perfect vertical chop, so your knives spin vertically through the air in a perfect rotation. In a baseball throw your arm swings across your body which affects the trajectory of knife that's been thrown. This will result in your knives hitting your target at an angle, in a bad technique that can also damage the tips of your knives as they strike against the grain of the target.
- Do not use ordinary kitchen knives to practice throwing. They can seriously injure your hands if you throw with an incorrect technique because they usually have a razor sharp edge. In addition, kitchen knives have not been designed to withstand a forceful impact on the tip, which means that after just a couple of throws the knives will rapidly deteriorate, breaking off at the tip, bending, and will dull very fast.
- Never practice indoors. Even if you're throwing at half strength, a knife that bounces off the target can do lots of damage to the interior of your home, breaking windows, destroying walls and even ricocheting back to injure yourself when you don't have enough room to dodge. The best advice is to find a nice clear space outdoors, away from any windows.

Learning to throw a knife is a great way to practice primitive survival skills, and build your hand eye coordination. In a pinch you can use your knowledge to help you distract an attacker, but remember that in a self defense situation you should never rely on a thrown knife to incapacitate your opponent. There's just too many variables. Better to keep your knife with you, should the situation get too close for comfort move in for a slash or stabbing move. Throwing knives are best kept as a backup weapon, that you only bring out should the situation demand it.

