

5 Knife Design Fails

with Buck Greene for www.ModernCombatAndSurvival.com

1. Handles With "Hot Spots"

To be comfortable, a handle can't have any protrusions or shapes that dig into your hand.

- A knife may seem comfortable at first; it's only after you use for a while that you'll start to feel the "hot spots" where the handle is rubbing your hand.
- In large knives, like machetes, this can be a HUGE problem. I had a replica "Book of Eli" machete that tore up my hand because the handle was so poorly shaped, and I owned a different machete that looked great but was unusable for this reason.
- The problem is still very much real in a knife. Unless you don't use your knife much, you WILL notice the handle digging into your hand.
- Form should follow function; you don't want a knife that is shaped weirdly just to look different.

2. Bad Sheaths

A good knife with a bad sheath is a knife you won't carry, so it's a bad knife.

- Some sheaths are just cheap Nylon blade covers that won't stop the knife from penetrating the material. If you drop it or fall on it, you're going to have a bad time.
- Other sheaths are just too big or clunky, or don't work well.
- Still other sheaths try to be all things to all people. Multi-purpose sheaths can be great, but a lot of them do everything poorly because of the design compromises that must happen.

3. Inappropriate Grinds

The way the edge is ground onto the blade matters.

- A knife with a complicated convex grind is one that will be difficult to resharpen.
- Much more commonly, a knife with a chisel grind can be an issue. There are some commercial knives on the market that are double-edged, but chisel-ground (ground only one one side) which makes no sense. These knives cut poorly and don't penetrate as well as a result.
- Chisel-grind Americanized tanto knives are pretty common, and okay as far as they go. These tend to be "sharpened prybar" knives anyway.

4. Solutions In Search Of Problems

This is where we find "gimmick knives."

- If the need the knife addresses isn't obvious, it probably wasn't something you needed.
- Knives that extend from the handles of AR15 foregrips, knives on the bottom of pistol magazines, tiny bayonets for pistols... these are all solutions in search of problems to solve.

5. Weird Blade Shapes

If it looks like a Klingon knife, it probably isn't very functional.

- Some blade shapes are so elaborate that they get in the way. Fantasy knives fall into this category.
- Again, form follows function. If it doesn't actually do anything, or if it interferes with the knife's operation, it's a bad design.

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