



Hand washing and towel drying your knives is best, and is strongly recommended by knife manufacturers. Dishwashing knives dulls them, significantly shortens the life span of the blade, and destroys the handles. Here's why:

Dishwashers are harsh environments. They have to be. When dishes are hand washed, one uses a sponge, mild soap, and a little “elbow grease” to mechanically remove dirt. It takes less than a minute to wash and completely dry a knife this way. In a dishwasher, in contrast, very hot water is sprayed at high pressure for long cycles (about an hour in older dishwashers, two or more hours per cycle in newer models). Knives are knocked around in the process, banging their edges against one another, against other dishes, and against your dishwasher itself in the process. The mechanics of this alone will dull a knife, but the worst dulling is a result of dishwasher detergent.

Dishwasher detergents are abrasive, and very alkaline. Prolonged contact with detergents leads to pitting corrosion on metal blades. This is worst along the cutting edge, which can be as thin as a single micron. When the edge gets pitted by dishwashing, it dulls the knife significantly faster than standard use, and we observe that *significantly* more metal must be removed in sharpening to remake a smooth edge. This *appreciably* shortens the life span of the knife blade. This may not matter, as dishwashing is so brutal on handles, they may fall apart sooner still, rendering the remainder of the blade useless.

Dishwashing detergents contain very strong degreasers, which strip wooden handles of their natural oils, causing them to crack and split. This destroys the handle and the cracks and gaps that result in the meantime are difficult to keep clean, and a great place for contaminants to hide.

Riveted handles are especially susceptible to dishwasher damage: When rivets pierce a handle and hold it tightly against a blade, all three materials have varying coefficients of expansion. During prolonged exposure to a high heat environment, they expand and contract at different rates until the handle cracks and falls off.

In addition to dulling blades, shortening the usable life span of knives, and destroying handles the prolonged wet environment of dishwashing results in staining and rusting of blades—even “stainless steel” blades.

We do well over 22,000 sharpenings a year. As much as we love knives, we are not the “Knife Police.” We are not in charge of how people maintain their personal property, though we feel morally compelled to coax, guide, and hopefully, convince people to hand wash and towel dry their knives. It's safer, it better maintains sharpness, and it helps ensure your knives last years longer.