

This is an attempt to objectively summarize, compare and contrast the different **Wicked Edge Precision Sharpeners (WEPS)** that are available to purchase for the discerning knife sharpening enthusiast. Though I have not used each and every model that I'll showcase here, I have years of personal knife sharpening experience with each of the different clamping systems offered. I am familiar and well enough versed in the use of these devices to feel comfortable authoring this **Wicked Edge Shopper's and Buyer's Guide**.

Just to be clear, I have not been selected, assigned or requested to take on this task. I have no affiliation or connection to Wicked Edge, USA. I am strictly a satisfied buyer and experienced user of three different WEPS devices and various upgrades over the past five years, or so. I'm undertaking this task only as an active knife sharpener, Wicked Edge Forum participant and contributor who has attempted to help countless interested knife sharpeners and hobbyist decide which unit is the best WEPS device for their needs. Hopefully this guide will meet that goal.

All eight WEPS models in the current Wicked Edge product lineup utilize one of two types of clamping systems. All the WEPS Models are designed, machined, manufactured, and assembled in the USA. Wicked Edge, USA, has continued to plan and produce fully compatible and backward compatible precision mechanical products. This has insured that all units, no matter when they were produced or put into service, have not been made obsolete by newer innovations.

Three of the WEPS models are also offered in what are called "Pro Packs". These are sharpeners bundled with sharpening stones, tools and accessories that were found to be commonly purchased in conjunction with the sharpeners, offered at a cost savings. These "Pro Packs" may include carry cases for ease of storage or transporting units otherwise intended for home-based use. Compatible accessories and upgrades are available as your skill set and sharpening needs expand for most of the WEPS models.

WEPS knife sharpeners are what's known as a "**Precision Fixed Angle Guided Sharpening System**". (There are several of these types of sharpeners in the marketplace, today). What sets the WEPS devices apart from the other clamping systems is it frees up *both* of your hands to do the knife sharpening while allowing you to sharpen either side individually or both sides of the knife simultaneously. Many of the other guided systems (i.e., Edge Pro type devices), require the user to hold the knife in place with one hand while sharpening the blade with the other hand, allowing work to be done exclusively on one side at a time. While other systems do offer clamped sharpening (e.g., Hapstone, KME, Lansky, TSProf), they are designed in such a way that only one side of the blade is accessible to the sharpening mediums at a time. Many of these other guided systems also produce good sharpening results. All in all, feature VS function, I believe the WEPS is the best fixed angle guided sharpener on the market.

All the WEPS devices will securely clamp, hold and sharpen knives (and some other cutting implements) precisely and reproducibly. Some models were designed as entry

level sharpeners and have very limited features and adjustability. Other models were designed with portability in mind and are easy to transport and set-up "on the fly". No matter which WEPS model you purchase, they are all manufactured with the same high-grade parts, precision fit and finish and attention to detail. All units carry a lifetime warranty. Wicked Edge offers customer service "second to none".

All the WEPS devices employ proprietary hand-held plastic paddles. A wide variety of sharpening and polishing mediums fitted in these plastic paddles are available to meet all your needs. These paddles can be used interchangeably, on *any and all* the WEPS devices. If you decide to upgrade or replace your sharpener all your paddles will still work with your new setup.

All the WEPS devices employ removable threaded steel guide rods. All models included basic guide rod can be substituted with longer WEPS guide rods to match your sharpening needs.

The ease of sharpening, the variety of knife types, shapes, sizes, styles, and profiles, you want to sharpen, and the initial cost are all factors that determine which device will best meet your requirements. In general, the more expensive models will be quicker and easier to use offering more adaptability, adjustability and variability in their functionality. These factors should be considered and weighed against the cost when choosing your first model.

Let me make this very clear. The Wicked Edge, as with all guided sharpening systems, requires a lot of practice and experience to unlock its potential. **Using any Wicked Edge Precision Sharpener is not hard. It is not simple, either.** It requires a level of physical coordination and manual dexterity not everyone has. It is a hand-held, hand-operated mechanical sharpening device. Some degree of mechanical aptitude is helpful. It is a precise and sophisticated vice and a guided rod system that holds your knife locked in a stable vertical position while you manually sharpen it with adjustable, guided abrasive sharpening stones. The knife blade is open and exposed. It can be dangerous, and you may cut yourself if care and safety are not exercised! There is a learning curve to get the hang of it. There is a break-in period before the stones will yield their optimal results. Some users "get it" right away. Others struggle and may never "get it". The Wicked Edge Precision Sharpener is not for everyone. Before you order a WEPS, reread and consider this paragraph. Be sure a WEPS is the right device for you.

It is my intention to explain and highlight the features and functions of the various Wicked Edge models for those interested in purchasing a WEPS. I will not go into details on how to use the clamping systems. There are plenty of posts and threads to read on the Wicked Edge Forum. There is also the "Wicked Edge Knowledge Base" and many excellent YouTube Videos worth viewing that will show you and help teach you how to use a WEPS. If you buy one. This Wicked Edge Forum is comprised of helpful experienced users, some, just waiting for the opportunity to answer your questions.

I'll try to give you some background or a summarized history of WEPS, to the best of my knowledge to illustrate the evolution of the Wicked Edge models available.

The Wicked Edge brand was originated in 2008. This utilized what I like to call the "screw wedge vice" clamping system. This unit is engineered with two solid right-angled triangular wedges, side by side, to clamp and hold the knife vertically, in the vertical open gap between them. The left side triangle is secured and fixed in place to the vice base mount. The right-side triangle floats and is drawn closer by a pair of perpendicular connecting hex screws used to hold and tighten the two right angled triangles together, while clamping a knife snugly in a precise position. An included, two pin "depth key" adapter is inserted through paired holes bisecting the two triangles to support the knife in a sharpening position with its edge at a height or level above the vice jaw line. This allows for easy sharpening and repeatable positioning of the knife in the clamp. Included "alignment guides" placed with the depth key adapter provide recordable positional references for repeatability. Through the combination of the tightening of the two hex screws the knife is clamped and held securely in place, knife edge up, centered in the mounted vice. A hex tool is included. The guide rods on the first introduced model were plastic and utilized hinged collar rotating joints. This very first model was considered the Generation 1 Sharpener.

About one year later in 2009 an upgraded model was introduced with steel guide rods paired with the hinged collar elbow joints. This is where the nickname Generation 2 Sharpener, began. This Generation 2 name sake has been loosely adopted and used over the years by many Wicked Edge users, although it really does not apply to any WEPS models. This 2009, second model, is the predecessor of the current **WE100** model vice system and has been refined and adapted with added functionality over the last 10 years. This has led to the design and production of additional models with improved features and capabilities. For simplicity in this "Shopper's and Buyer's Guide", I'll refer to all of these parallel triangle vice systems with the "screw wedge (type) vices" as the **Standard Vices**. To avoid confusion, **Standard Vices** is Wicked Edge, USA's preferred terminology or nomenclature for this group of WEPS models.

In 2012 the full featured, then, their top of the line model, **Pro Pack II** was released. It was the *only* purchase option for that well-equipped **Standard Vice** model with all the included tools and accessories. This model offered ball joint rotating rod arms with the micro-adjustment feature for ease of use and improved precision. This model has evolved to the current **WE120** model. The **WE120** is now available separately, also bundled in the **Pro Pack II**.

The "Award Winning" first Wicked Edge **Commercial Series** model was launched in 2014. That design concept was introduced to tap into that name sake commercial sharpening market. It featured a cabinet enclosed vice locking handle with a pin driven vice setup. This **Commercial Series** model would lead to the development of what would become Wicked Edge's second vice system.

The Wicked Edge team continued to innovate and improve upon their experience driven designs and products, culminating in the original version **Generation 3 vice** system introduced in 2015. It was devised to overcome some of the difficulties and shortcomings associated with the **Standard Vice** clamping system. The **Generation 3 vice** system utilizes a self-centering jaw set that are tightened to clamp and secure the knife with its blade aligned vertically by rotating a central lever to elevate and engage the floating cam action jaws. These first version **Generation 3 vice** systems were so well received that many of them remain in continued use today. *(These users have not found the need to upgrade to the newest version Generation 3 vices, satisfied with the current functionality of their equipment).*

Following the first **Generation 3 vice** system release, a vice upgrade option was also offered to convert the **Standard Vice** system utilized in the **Pro Pack II** into a **Generation 3 vice** system. This **Generation 3 vice** system upgrade to the **Pro Pack II, Standard Vice** system model, would later become available as the **WE130** model.

In 2017, a year or so after the release of the original, version, **Generation 3 vice** system, the current and latest version **Generation 3 vice** was introduced by Wicked Edge, USA. This new version, (now the only **Generation 3 vice** version made and available), addressed the minor shortcomings of the original **Generation 3** clamping system while adding new features boosting functionality. There are four WEPS models available boasting the same improved attributes with these **Generation 3 vices**. Depending upon the price point, different features, ease of adjustability and ease of use, are available here, also.

Both the **Standard Vice** and the **Generation 3 vice** systems accomplish the same goal. They both hold a knife securely, locked in the jaws with the knife "edge up" to allow a pair of preset, adjustable angled guide rods to sharpen the knife edge precisely, by hand, using a progression of finer grit diamond sharpening stones and other mediums, sliding up and down across the knife edges at these preset sharpening angles. Both the **Standard Vice** systems and the **Generation 3 vice** systems have the same capacity to sharpen a knife to the identical quality, precision, sharpness and polish, repeatedly, when operated correctly by an experienced user. The only difference is the ease or difficulty of achieving these results.

I will try to compare the differences in these two clamping systems currently offered by Wicked Edge highlighting their strong suits and weaknesses. These are my opinions. They are based on my personal sharpening experiences and the shared experiences of other users I have learned from, through direct conversations, emails, chats, the Wicked Edge Forum, other forums, the internet, and from watching YouTube videos. I will consider the **Standard Vice** setups as one clamping system and the **Generation 3** setups as the second clamping system.

The process of clamping the knife in the **Standard Vice** system is a slower process and is also more cumbersome. The knife clamped between the twin triangles can have an

inherent lean or minor blade cant to the left associated with the physics and design of this, one fixed side, "screw wedge vice" clamping system. This knife lean is associated with "Full Flat Ground" knives and not seen with the "Flat Parallel" ground blades. This lean doesn't interfere with resulting edge sharpness but can result in visibly uneven bevel heights from right to left knife sides. The blade lean can be offset or compensated for with corrections to the guide rod angle settings which can be determined using an angle gauge and a simple mathematical calculation. The knife bevel angles for *all* the **Standard Vice** systems are determined by how close or far from the vertical knife blade centerline the guide rods are positioned. The guide rods are individually positioned and locked manually. All the **Standard Vice** clamping systems boast the ability to accommodate any thickness knife blade simply by replacing the supplied vice screws with a longer pair of screws. Depending on the price point of the **Standard Vice** model, the angle range capabilities (i.e., narrow angle bevels to wide angle bevels) may vary. *All* guide rod arms, in *all* current **Standard Vice** models, *now* include ball bearing joints for ease of rotation and articulation and may or may not include micro-adjustable rod ends for more precise angle settings. The sharpening motion and processes are the same for all these **Standard Vice** models. Longer optional guide rods can be substituted to match your sharpening needs.

The **Generation 3** clamping systems centers and clamps knives securely by rotating a removable folding handled, centrally positioned lever arm, clockwise. The self-centering jaws of this clamping system eliminate the blade lean or canted blade seen in the **Standard Vice** systems. The **Generation 3** setups also employ the same depth key tool to help position the knives' height when clamped. The included "alignment guide" provides recordable position references for repeatability.

The newest version **Generation 3** model vices, (*these are the only version "Gen 3" vices currently manufactured*), also include a tension adjustment feature along with interchangeably sized split-jaw vices. By presetting a small lever located on the back side of the vice, the initial clamping grip will be tightened resulting in a tighter overall holding ability. The split jaws' flexibility facilitates this added grip strength and allows the jaws to bend and conform to distal taper ground knife blades and other irregular grinds shaping knife blades.

All the model **Generation 3** systems work on the same principle as the **Standard Vice** systems. The distance the guide rod are positioned from the vertical knife blade center line determines the bevel angle the knife can be sharpened to. *All* current **Generation 3** models offer ball bearing rotating guide rod arms for improved articulation, along with microfine-adjustable guide rod angle positioning for improved precision.

Next, I'll try to summarize the various models available in the two vice categories of these clamping systems and their features.

The **Standard Vice system** is utilized on the **WE GO, WE100, WE120, and Field and Sport** models.

Introduced in early 2018, the newest Wicked Edge Model, "**GO**" is aimed at Wicked Edge customers who prioritize portability, simplicity, and budget. Of all the models, it has the most basic feature set while still allowing the same repeatable sharp edge as any Wicked Edge model. It includes a two-grit combination set of sharpening stones capable of blade repair, profiling, and the application of a sharp, toothy edge suitable for a broad range of cutting tasks. The sharpener can be quickly disassembled and packed up in its compact carrying case for ease of storage and mobility. *(The **WE GO** is not upgradeable. It can be used with any length compatible W.E. guide rods).* A bundled **WE GO** package including an expanded collection of sharpening and polishing mediums in a *deluxe* carry case is available at a price savings for the 2018 Holiday Season.

The model **WE100** based on the original Wicked Edge entry level sharpener is designed for the home-based user. Again, this model is intended for those for whom price point is an important consideration. It is intended to be mounted on your own base or on one of the optional mounting bases sold by Wicked Edge. It has minimal features and limited adjustment capabilities. No bells and whistles. It is offered for the less discerning sharpener, with basic requirements, strictly looking for repeatable sharp edges without a lot of control or decision making. Sharp, toothy edges are easily attainable with the included basic complement of sharpening stones. Longer compatible Wicked Edge guide rods can be used when needed.

The **WE120** is the next step up both in features and price point. It is also designed for the home-based sharpener. It is intended to be mounted on a user supplied base or an optionally purchased base. This model includes microfine angle adjustability allowing for vastly improved user control over precise sharpening angles. The **WE120** model allows for a wider range of bevel angle settings relative to the **WE GO** and the **WE100** models. It includes a basic complement of sharpening stones to allow new users to gain experience without limiting their knife sharpening outcomes. This is a fully functional, fully adjustable, basic sharpener for the entry or mid-level sharpener willing and able to make the necessary adjustments and corrections associated with the **Standard Vice** clamping system. Longer compatible Wicked Edge guide rods can be used when needed.

The **Field and Sport** model is a **WE120** only with a compact, light-weight mounting platform for portability; it's intended to travel. It includes a "C" clamp to secure it down in place on a flat stable surface wherever you may sharpen. It is easily packed and carried in its included small carry case. It has the same basic complement of sharpening stones as included with the **WE120**. It is also designed with price point in mind for the entry or mid-level sharpener, willing and able to make the necessary adjustments and corrections associated with the **Standard Vice** clamping systems, while wanting a portable unit. Longer compatible Wicked Edge guide rods can be used when needed.

The **Generation 3 vice** is utilized in four of the eight model WEPS sharpeners available. These include the **WE130**, the **Field and Sport Pro**, the **Gen 3 Pro**, and the **Commercial Series** sharpeners.

The less expensive, less sophisticated **Generation 3** models, the **WE130** and the **Field and Sport Pro**, require that you set your left and right guide rod angles separately. This is a little more time consuming, and tedious. There are more adjustments to be made and more things to look after. On the positive side, this separate arm adjustment quality allows the user the ability to sharpen a wider variety of knives and grinds, including asymmetrically and uneven ground knives. For simplicity, all around ease of use, and variability, these two models excel. The **WE130** model is for the home-based sharpener. It can be mounted to a user supplied base or an optional purchased base. The **Field and Sport Pro** is a **WE130** with a compact, light-weight mounting platform for those sharpeners preferring portability while offering easy use of this sharpener on the road and out in the field. A securing "C" clamp is included in the compact carry case. Longer compatible Wicked Edge guide rods can be used when needed.

The most innovative **Generation 3** models the **Gen 3 Pro** and the **Commercial Series** have all the same features as the other **Generation 3** models. The innovative feature that sets these two sharpeners apart is their single lever actuated symmetrical angle adjustment mechanism. This feature requires that coarse angle changes to the left and right sides of the blade be made simultaneously by sliding a central lever arm through an arc of rotation as it positions and locks in detents at regulated angle increments. Microfine angle adjustments are included on each side guide rod brackets to allow for precise guide rod angle settings, individually, along with ball bearing rod ends for ease of articulation. A downside of the single lever angle adjustment feature of the **Gen 3 Pro** and the **Commercial Series** are that the gross bevel angles cannot be set independently. This limits the variety of knife grinds and knife edge profiles that can be sharpened with these two models. Additionally, the height of the guide rod attachment points in relation to the clamped knife edge height may sometimes limit the efficiency of utilizing the full length of the sharpening stones, (particularly with smaller knives). Longer compatible Wicked Edge guide rods can be used when needed.

The **Gen 3 Pro** is offered with an open shelf elevated base, with either two or three removable shelves, for storing various sharpening stones and strops, used. The **Commercial Series** has an enclosed storage cabinet with doors. This helps with sanitation in a kitchen environment. A back wall is in place to support resting sharpening stones. For the knife sharpener who sharpens exclusively symmetrically ground knives requiring a minimum amount of angle adjustment, quick and easy clamping, and repetitive sharpening technique, these models can't be beat.

The **Gen 3 Pro** model will allow for quick and easy results when sharpening convex bevels for the advanced user/sharpener with experience. The **Commercial Series** can achieve a wider range of bevel angle settings than the other **Generation 3** models.

Currently the **Gen 3 Pro** is sold, packed and shipped in the included hard carry case. It is not a "Pro Pack". Base options for the **Gen 3 Pro** set-up and a Pro Pack bundle are under consideration at Wicked Edge, USA; possibly available soon.

All eight Wicked Edge models whether the **Standard Vice** models or the **Generation 3** models have angle delineations inscribed on each device. These inscribed and labeled angle demarcations are only for approximation. They are there strictly as a relative or suggested angle setting guideline. These markings do match and coordinate with a standardized size and height knife; not every knife. For true relative angle determinations an angle measuring device is recommended.

Advanced Alignment Guides, (AAG) and Low Angle Adapters, (LAA) are just two of many optional accessories available to help improve recording references of knife sharpening positions for easier repeatability and to facilitate sharpening of a wider variety of knives and grinds.

Many first-time buyers underestimate the level of work it takes to achieve the edge they're looking for and expecting. They find they can't do it easily or effortlessly enough with the model they purchased and find that they are reluctantly forced to upgrade. Just as often, first time buyers are reluctant to invest in these innovative sharpening devices because they are afraid it won't do what they want. They under spend only to realize soon thereafter that they love knife sharpening with their Wicked Edge and are regretful that they didn't go "all-in" to start. These users often decide to purchase the accessories and upgrades. Some of us really get into sharpening as a hobby and love to try to achieve that "perfect knife edge." We're willing to spend the time and effort to do whatever it takes to get there. We get deep into the technical aspects including metallurgy, high powered microscopy, and the theory of polishing....it can be endless. We call this "going down the rabbit hole."

Wicked Edge has continued to improve their products and manufacturing processes to improve the fit and tolerance. In turn, this allows users to more easily achieve precision sharpening results. Many manufacturers find ways to make their products faster and more cheaply in efforts to improve their profit margins. Subsequently, many products decline in quality after their initial market successes. In contrast, Wicked Edge has improved their product's appearance, quality, consistency, and functionality while keeping their prices nearly the same. Wicked Edge stays closely aligned to their products users. They are constantly striving to simplify and streamline the buying process to provide better options and packages, to remove the ambiguity when shopping.

I strongly encourage you to carefully read the features of each WEPS model as you shop at the "Wicked Edge, USA" website. (There are also many licensed dealers and certified resellers where you can purchase a Wicked Edge System, and accessories. Beware, some of these resources offer and sell, not current year model products). If you try and go the cheap route, you'll likely be left wishing that you had invested in a full

featured model. With WEPS, you will get exactly what you pay for. A finely made precision machine with only the features afforded at that price point.

I started out with the **Pro Pack II** over five years ago. This was the best, most optioned package Wicked Edge offered at that time. Since then, I have purchased the **Gen 3 Pro** and the **WE130**. I have adapted, modified, accessorized and upgraded my systems with the newest available options offered, *along with some custom touches*, to have the best, most variable and adaptable systems I can use. Nothing has broken. I've had a few minor complaints. These were quickly addressed and remedied by Wicked Edge.

The Wicked Edge, USA owner, Clay Allison, is a regular participant and contributor on the Wicked Edge Forum. He is interested in helping, answering our questions and hearing our user feedback. Over the years, I have seen several suggestions come to fruition. Clay has produced many helpful You Tube videos on Wicked Edge sharpening instructions and techniques.

To reiterate, any and all sharpening stones or other mediums and *almost every* Wicked Edge accessory you purchase can be used interchangeably on any and all WEPS models. Almost everything is compatible. If you decide to go with a **Standard Vice System**, like the **WE120** for your first foray and find you want more or maybe need something a little easier to work with, there are upgrade kits available for purchase. To convert your **WE120** setup to a **Generation 3** setup it can be done simply by loosening and replacing a few screws. You can expand your sharpening ability on every model notwithstanding the price or it's features. Your ability and resourcefulness are the limiting factors. The model you use only dictates the ease and your level of control and adjustability you have. It does not limit the quality of your sharpening experience or results. Your results are solely based on your dedication; time, effort, technique employed and attention to detail.

I'd like to recognize and thank Kyle Kaplan, a long time dedicated and knowledgeable, Wicked Edge, USA, employee for his help, time and effort providing the details and history associated with Wicked Edge product evolution used in this Shopper's and Buyer's Guide and for helping me to fact check and recognize miss-used nomenclature and ambiguous terminology. Kyle with his sharpening experience and expertise can be viewed in various Wicked Edge, YouTube, instructional videos.

Thanks, to my peer, "Organic", a Wicked Edge active Forum member and frequent contributor, for this collaborative effort, as he helped me conceptualize, author, and edit this "**Wicked Edge Precision Sharpeners: Shopper's and Buyer's Guide**". We have included the "**Shopper's and Buyer's Guide Chart**" to list and compare features and current prices of all eight WEPS Models, Pro Packs, and options, concisely, in one place.