

# Knife Skills

**Confidence can be achieved in the kitchen through good knife skills. Using the proper tools will make the job easier and the end result more rewarding. Like anything we do developing good knife skills requires a correct introduction and lots of practice.**

## **Identifying the right knife to use is the first step;**

In the He Cooks Course we take you through the basic elements of finding the right knife for the job at hand. Most cutting techniques are similar the only thing that changes is the size of the job. When deciding on a knife, consider what you are going to be cutting.

Trimming a strawberry would require a smaller knife, known as a paring knife, whilst peeling and slicing pumpkin would require a larger knife, known as a chef or cook's knife. For portioning fish we would use a filleting knife a long thin blade that has a flexible bend and so on.

## **The next step is holding your knife correctly.**

Beginning with a chef's knife, hold your knife properly. Grasp the handle with three fingers and put your forefinger and thumb on opposite sides of the blade. With a rocking motion, keeping the tip of the knife on the chopping board, slice down through the food at regular intervals. There should be no starting or stopping. Try to achieve one continuous motion. Use your other hand to feed the item toward the knife. To do this safely, curl your fingers in and use your knuckles as a guard by pressing them against the side of the blade. Use your thumb (which is well behind the edge of the blade) to move the item. As this is a new exercise, take your time and go slowly. Patience is the key to getting it right, and getting it safe.



## **Ok, we are armed with our proper knives and the correct techniques...what next?**

To slice food, start with a sharp knife. A sharp knife is a safer knife as it requires less effort and the knife goes precisely where you want it. A cut from a sharp knife will heal quicker as well. Also, remember to put a damp folded Chux under your cutting board, so the board won't move around on the bench.

## **In the He Cooks Course we develop the student's knife skills each week.**

In the He Cooks Lesson One, we start with a general introduction that covers the steps above, and then we get down to business. The chef demonstrates, then the students slice their way through an avocado, thinly chop shallots and intricately segment an orange.

In Lesson 2 we get straight into trimming and peeling pumpkin, dicing chorizo and finely slicing onions. In Lesson 3 we focus on what we have covered and reaffirm the student's skills, and we emphasize how different cuts such as julienne are used to gain the maximum taste, texture and presentation in our dishes.

Lesson 4 is all about honing these presentation skills, finely dicing onions, garlic, fresh herbs and slicing mushrooms, and learning the correct way to cut and portion bread.

In Lesson 5 we take the team through Meat Game and Poultry, using our knife skills to remove excess skin, tendon and fat from raw food, then portioning correctly the cooked product.

In the final lesson – Seafood, we identify the correct cutting techniques for scoring and portioning squid as well as utilizing all the knife skills that we have we picked up along the way to create a three course meal, all done the student's own hands.

As with everything we do here at He Cooks, the primary focus is for the student to be confident in the domestic kitchen. A little bit of knowledge goes a long way, by providing basic knife skills and great tips in a fun, stress free environment.

By the end of the course a student will be ready to take on any job. Happy cooking!