

EDGE & WAX STEP BY STEP GUIDES

2. BASE AND SIDE EDGE



The side edge

SKI AND SNOWBOARD EDGES - AN OVERVIEW

There are two sides of the edge that you can see, and that you can therefore tune or service. Look at the images on the left. The side of the edge I have coloured with red permanent pen is called the side edge. At 90 degrees to this, facing the snow (and shown by my blue arrow) is the base edge.

Edges are set at various angles by the manufacturer, depending on the intended purpose and the design of the ski. These angles can sometimes be difficult to obtain. (Please contact me if you need the angle of your skis). One constant is that there should be a bevel or angle on the base edge, so that it is angled slightly away from the snow when you are gliding along. This is normally about 1°.

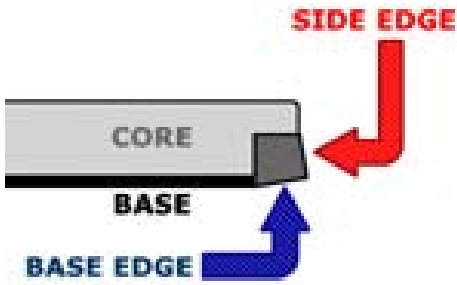
For the side edge there is an angle to compliment the base edge. As 90° produces the strongest edge, most manufacturers will use a 1° angle here too. This is sometimes referred to as 89° on a side edge tool, but the result is the same. If you know the edge angles for your equipment, we suggest sticking to them, as that's how the manufacturer intended the ski to be tuned to. Advanced skiers and riders will adjust angles with experience.

For boards, normally a 1° base and 1° angle that is used. Some riders will change the side angle to 2° or 3° if they are riding in a park situation or in aggressive conditions. A 90° edge is always strongest though.

BASE EDGE

First lets look at the base edge. PLEASE NOTE here. If you make substantial changes to the base edge, and remove a lot of edge, you can end up with the actual base sitting high of the edge. This is less than ideal. If you need to make serious adjustments to the base angle then it is best to have the base sanded down to ensure an even surface, by a local repair shop.

For the home DIY ski tech, the key is to remove nicks from the base edge, and to ensure that rust is removed. In addition we are looking for 'case hardening'. This is where an object has hit the edge, and in effect overheated it, causing it to harden. Sounds stronger? No, what we want is a consistent, smooth edge. If there is a hard spot, then another rock coming up against this spot can spell big problems. Case hardening can be identified by the file suddenly skipping past a section (its too hard to cut) or by its appearance, a different colour sometimes with a glossy film-like appearance.



Cutaway of a ski or board



A base edge with nicks and rust

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2. BASE EDGE & SIDE EDGE



Gummi Stone to remove rust

For a more serious tuner, who wants to ensure the base angle is consistent, then you can invest in a base file which allows you to perfectly set the angle you need for your model of ski or board.

So to tune up your base edges, first take a gummi stone, and gently rub out any signs of rust along the base edge. This cleans the area, and allows you to more easily identify areas needing more work.

Now take a small single cut file (or if you are lucky enough to have one a diamond file) and gently take out any nicks along the edge. If you do not have a base file guide, then a good tip is to wrap a couple of layers of masking tape round the end of the file, and rest this on the base of the ski/board as you work along the edge. This will protect the base, and also give the slight angle that you require for the base edge.

If your single cut file skips, then this is a sure sign of case hardening. You may be able to gently work the area with your file, but in these instances a diamond file is the easiest way to take away any burring and damage.

TIP: To protect bases while working on the base edge, run lengths of masking tape along the ski base.



Using a diamond file to remove nicks

SIDE EDGE

Now lets look at the side edge. As before for the home DIY ski tech, the key is to remove nicks from the base edge, and to ensure that rust is removed. In addition we are looking for 'case hardening' once again.

For the serious tuner, who wants to ensure that the side edge is consistent, or wants to try different side edge angles to tune the board or ski's performance, a side edge file guide is a must.

So to start on these side edges, first take a gummi stone, and gently rub out any signs of rust along the side edge. This cleans the area, and allows you to more easily identify areas needing more work. Where there are nicks, you can take a single cut file or diamond file and gently remove these nicks first.

Now take a permanent pen like a Sharpie pen. Run this along the side edge 5 inches from either tip, covering the whole edge. This will indicate to you easily where you have not worked the file, and also ensures you only remove the minimum of material from the side edge, to prolong the life of your skis or board.



A typical side edge file guide with file



Marking the side edge with a pen

NOTE: These guides are intended to be a suggestion on the process for servicing your equipment. They are not set in stone, and we can't take any responsibility for the results of following these instructions, but we hope that these assist you with your interest in ski and snowboard tuning.

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Using the side edge file guide

If you have a side edge file guide the next bit is easy. Set your file guide to the angle recommended by the manufacturer of your winter sports equipment (If you do not know get in touch and I usually have this information available). Pop a single cut file into the guide, and run it along the edge in long, steady, even strokes to remove your permanent marker colour along the length of the edge.

If you do not have a file edge guide, you can touch up a side edge without the guide, and this is normal in resort, but to do a consistent angled finish a file guide is really the best way, and a worthwhile investment.



Diamond file for a final edge polish

Now, if you have a diamond file, you can place this in your file guide, and give your side edge a nice high polished finish for even better performance.

Once you have consistently removed the permanent pen colour, you will have a consistent side edge, nicely sharpened. In fact, it will be a little too sharp as you will have created a bit of an 'overhang' now that you have worked the side edge. To complete the tune, and remove this overhang, get your Gummi stone. Do a long pass up and back down the side edge with your gummi stone gently held at 45 degrees (don't need to push down) and this will remove the overhang and give you a beautiful edge.



Detuning the edge with a Gummi stone

Finally we want to de-tune the tip and tail of the board or skis, so that the edge doesn't try to engage too early in a turn or hold in a turn for too long. So grab that gummi stone again, and again, hold at 45 degrees and pass backwards and forwards a few passes 5 inches from either end of your board or ski, or where the 'shovel' and 'tip' of your skis ends and the main edge begins. Push down a bit harder this time, you are just looking to blunt the tips and tails a little here.

That's it. You now have a nice, sharp and consistent edge on you board or ski. Now you can wax!