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Using a baton with a knife

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Description :

Splitting wood with a knife and a baton

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Cliff Stamp had asked about times to cut wood. Unfortunately it's been raining pretty drastically, so I used the little time we got. It's pretty tough to get around in the bush due to flooding, so I chose the one piece of hard wood that I could get photos of. It's a pretty hard alder log which is just under 6" diameter. I've used a Mora to split hard wood and to cut green trees but never this way. Same goes for the machete. Never having cut a horizontal hard log this way I wasn't even sure that it would work (the two rules are to cut from the sides which is tough with a machete or baton and knife - and to have the notch the same width as the tree diameter).. These are all of the pics I could get as I needed a couple of shots of the push knife and crooked knife - and the camera wasn't fully charged.

The log is just under 6" diameter though it appears smaller



I did a cut with a baton for 4 minutes to see how things would go.. At this point I knew that this was going to be a brute of a job since I'd chosen a piece of 2x2" hemlock which was way too light. I figured that if this would work that we'd have a standard baton. Big mistake. By the point of getting halfway through the log I was into 15 hits to get a notch-widening cut - that's each cut! Not hard work, but it is for sure time consuming.

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Next I did four minutes chopping with the machete - a heavy Barteaux. You can see that it's starting to have problems by the size of the chips. As you can see I'm also having trouble with accuracy.



Here's a close up to show the problems with getting cuts to go deep into the notch, to widen and deepen it.



Next came the axe and I had to cut down to a little over two minutes since I needed the log to stay intact. The axe is a re-handled junker and not the sharpest yet. Notice that what at first looks like a botched notch is my attempt to place the chips so that you can compare size to those thrown by machete and knife.



Next it was the turn of the Gransfors hatchet. The notch is too narrow - but you can see by cuts and chips that I'm having some problems widening it. The final time to cut through the log was about six minutes, so things weren't as bad as they look. The important point about the hatchet was that it's well balanced so I was able to get multiple hits into the same cut, to drive the cut down into the notch. It sure would have been interesting to try my cheap hatchet

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too. that one is thin bladed, but I'm not so sure about the balance and so the accuracy.



As you can see by the log end after finishing with the Gransfors, the cut isn't that botched. A piece of the hinge is bent over - it was cut from the top and sides only leaving a hinge thin enough to break off.



OK you guys - it took close to an hour to cut through with the knife and baton! I'll be back for a rematch with a bigger baton. The bottom line though is that cutting green wood with a knife and baton is one thing - cutting hard wood with a knife and light baton is quite another. It gets especially tough when you get into the harder heartwood. The axe was through in less than four minutes - and this is slow. I'd figure on much less with the Iltis and the Hults would have laughed at the wood. Such a large axe makes clean widening cuts and deepens the notch considerably at the same time. That's the axe I'd normally use to get that log cut and split after wet weather. The Gransfors hatchet did far better than I would have expected - maybe I had a good day with it. If I hadn't been able to re-hit cuts - well double or triple the time. The machete did very poorly after a good start. It wouldn't widen and deepen the notch properly from the top and once I had to start on the sides I had to use the tip. Things went very slowly after that and I was more than a quarter of an hour getting through the log. Despite the rust on the blade, it's pretty sharp.

What really would have been interesting would have been to test a cheap blunt axe and hatchet at the same time. I'd probably still be there!

A guy has to have some fun. Here I'm trying the Mora push knife - it works well pushed or pulled. It did well on soft wood, but I can see that it's going to be great when sharp!



And here's the crooked knife in action..



To be continued...

Post-scriptum :

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If you have questions, criticisms, or things to add - email me please.

Original article at [OldJimbo's site](#).