

DEBITAGE

Bits & Pieces ... Remnants Left Behind ... By & For Flint Knappers

Volume I

Number 7A



“Isolated Platforms” For Percussion.

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Moving forward into the later stages of making finished tools by percussion with a *“soft hammer”* requires an understanding of *“edge preparation”* and *“isolated platforms”*.

Using these advanced techniques makes it possible to produce wide, thin, straight and sharp stone tools by percussion alone.

Preparing For Percussion

In reducing this percussion core which was made from a nodule of gray Texas flint, I have *“prepared the edge”* and prepared an *“isolated platform”* to use a soft hammer to remove more large chips.

As is my practice, the edge has been ground from side to side with carborundum to roughen the edge and help the copper percussion tool get a grip at the edge. This grinding also creates tiny scratches which make it a little easier for a solid strike to initiate the fracture which will remove the chip which I want.

A closer look at the edge of the pre-form will let you see that several previous chip removals along the edge have served to create an *“isolated platform”* at the left end of the *“prepared edge”*.

The prepared striking platform is at the left end of a thicker edge, which has been ground and is visible.

An *“isolated platform”* will typically be a somewhat narrow, protruding area of the stone edge; usually a bit thicker and hanging down from the mid-line along the edge. It is prepared so that you can strike it without



Above: A gray Texas Flint percussion pre-form. The edge is ground with carborundum.



The “soft hammer” aligned with the “isolated platform” to measure the striking blow.





Above: Immediately after striking the "isolated platform" with my soft hammer.



Above: The new chip, successfully removed by firmly striking the "isolated platform".

hitting the rest of the edge ... isolated. Sometimes I remove a couple of small flakes on each side to further add to the definition of the isolated striking platform and make it easier for the new chip to initiate when the platform is struck, so that the fracture has a place to begin and a direction to proceed.

The intended hit will strike the thick, ground part. The new chip to be removed will follow along a ridge which remains at the left edge of the thick part, created by the removal of the previous chip.

Now, holding the core firmly and solidly in place against the protective thick leather pad on my thigh, I strike the "isolated platform". I hit firmly, with power, at the correct angle, and the resulting chip removal happens instantly, with a satisfying "crack!"

When I tilt the edge of the flint core up I can see the fine new chip laying below on the lap pad; and, as I tilt the core even more, I can see the full extent of the effective percussion blow ... the large new flake scar leaves a broad, flat surface on my percussion preform.

The next step will be to trim the small "delta" remaining just to the left of the new flake scar, and the larger "delta" just to the right.

Removing these remnants will clean up the edge, and serve to isolate the next platform to the right as I continue to work my way along this edge of the preform.

Then a new "isolated platform" will present me with the next striking position in this knapping project.

