

# DEBITAGE

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

Volume I

Number 2



**“Core & Blades” By Percussion.**

## The "Core & Blades" Percussion Process.

In this edition we are exploring an efficient way to use a relatively small chunk of nice knapping stone to make an extensive assembly of razor sharp edged pieces which can be used "as is" in a camping or outdoor living environment or easily modified into various tools and hunting weapons.

We can quite literally create several feet of cutting edge from a single fist-sized piece of chert, flint or obsidian.

The basic piece which we are working with is known as a "core". It can be a fairly rough shaped chunk. The primary form which we need is an essentially flat or perhaps slightly concave face on one side.

This flat face of the stone is the main area where we use a "soft hammer" or "billet" to strike the stone.

### Each "Blade" Is A Potential Tool Or Hunting Weapon

Using a "core" and producing "blades" is an entirely different mind set compared to beginning with a nodule or chunk of stone and removing large chips to "reduce" the original piece to end up with a "bifacial preform" or a specific tool such as a knife or spear point.

### A Sequence Illustrates This

Instead, the stone "core" is the source for many similar and useful pieces, called "blades", which are removed by a planned process which continues until the "core" is exhausted. These "blades" have a unique and intended form: they are long, narrow, with a single or double ridge along the full length of the



At the flat end of a core, with a "copper bopper" positioned to indicate the striking point.



Two obsidian blades, repositioned to show the original sequential striking points on the core.





Flint from Texas, below, used as a core to make blades across the thickness of the nodule.



piece, and they are at least twice as long as they are wide. This form is known as a "*prismatic blade*", due to the shape of its cross section.

Two basic methods are shown here, depending on the original piece of stone.

First, a fairly cubic or round chunk can have blades removed from one working face, in sequence, gradually forming a round shaped, flat ended cone.

Or, second, beginning with a broken nodule ... fairly wide, flat and uniformly thick with a square-edged break across the middle ... we can work along the break to remove a sequence of blades from one side to the other, working back and forth to make a vast supply of "blades" which are quite uniform and as long as the nodule is thick.

In either situation, the work does not require a very large or heavy hammer stone or billet. A small to medium sized soft hammer will work just fine. Support the core stone on a leather pad draped over your thigh, with a flat or slightly concave end face of the core arranged at an angle so you can strike about 1/8" to 3/16" away from the edge.

You will need to experiment to find the best striking angle (about 20 degrees relative to the flat face) which will enable the cone of fracture to roughly parallel the side face of the stone.

As you get used to striking at the correct angle and learn to deliver the proper level of energy to your striking spot, you will develop a very satisfying ability to drive off nice long, useful blades which reach all the way to the opposite end of the core.



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From the flint knapping workshop of

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## DEBITAGE

**Why Do I Make Arrowheads?  
Can This Obsession & Passion Be Explained?**



Why do I spend so much time and effort making and writing about making arrowheads and teaching to others?

It dates all the way back to my first arrowhead found in northern California over 40 years ago.

Arrowheads like this are what drive me. I want to be able to make some projectile points like this.

With the same methods and tools as those which were used by an ancient "flint knapper" no long ago.

And, you know what else? This is just one of two teaching series points which were found... made from two different pieces of the same stone.

If you have the least bit of interest in learning how to make these arrowheads, this will inspire you. It will challenge you... it will drive you.

You know it's not easy. You know it takes patience. You know it takes effort and persistence. And you know it takes time.

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