

Knives: Essential equipment for healthy food prep

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(HealthDay)—Every home chef will find that cooking healthfully is

easier with a well-made set of knives. When shopping, let quality, not quantity, be your guide.

You can master most any cutting task with just three knives. The workhorse is the chef's [knife](#), about eight to 10 inches long. It's the all-purpose knife you'll use every day for chopping, slicing and dicing.

Next is a serrated knife, eight to 10 inches long. It's handy for slicing bread and roasts, and cutting hard foods like squash and [root vegetables](#).

Third is a paring knife, about three to four inches long. Use it for peeling, coring and slicing small foods like citrus, Brussels sprouts and nuts.

When shopping, look for a heavy, strong handle and an extended metal "tang"—this is the section of steel that goes all the way through to the end of the handle.

When it comes to size, don't be wowed by the big, shiny models. Think about comfort. How does the handle feel in your hand? Is it too big or are you concerned about cutting yourself? Shop in a brick-and-mortar store so you can hold the floor models. A knife should feel comfortable in your hand. Take note of the weight and size. Smaller 6-inch long models can be better for beginner cooks.

At home, safeguard your knives with a few key care tips. It's tempting, but don't put your knives in the dishwasher—that can damage the handle, loosen the tang and warp the blade. Resist tossing them into the sink—this can damage the edge, point and blade. A quick hand-washing, regular sharpening and storing them in a block or on a magnetic strip will keep them looking like new for a lifetime.

More information: Consumer Reports has more tips on [buying](#) and

storing knives.

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