

Taping the spine has a long and sordid history ever since it was first conceived. I am not going to go into the history of taping or the debate whether or not to tape. In this guide I will merely explain the benefits and potential drawbacks of taping the spine.

Taping the spine raises the angle of the bevel by a very small degree, making it more obtuse. The actual degree change is somewhere between .5 to 2 degrees (too small to really make a difference). The benefits of using tape on the spine include: protecting the spamework, eliminating further spine wear, makes a wedge easier to hone, less wear & tear on your hones, etc. By raising the spine off the hone, you no longer need to grind away at the spine in order to grind the bevel. Consequently, your hone is "used" less. By making the bevel angle more obtuse, less metal needs to be removed from the bevel when resetting, thus reducing the time needed for a bevel reset. (Not an issue with hollow ground blades, but it certainly reduces time spent honing wedges)



The cons to using tape are more long term. By not removing metal from the spine and removing metal from the edge, you are slowly increasing the bevel angle with each honing session. Eventually, your razor's bevel angle will become too obtuse to be comfortable. How long this will take depends upon several factors. However, it is unlikely this will happen within 10-20 years. Other people think tape on the spine cheats future buyers because they don't know how much actual honing the razor has received.

In the end, you must decide for yourself whether you want to tape or not. There is no majority opinion among honemeisters.