



Flint & Steel  
IS0005 9/7/24

*If you are new to primitive fire making, please be aware that flint & steel will produce very small sparks and the technique takes some time to master. Flint & Steel should not be confused with a more modern technology Ferro Rod which will provide showers of larger sparks and is generally much easier to use. The following basic techniques should help you get started using your new flint & steel. This is truly is a challenging skill so don't be discouraged if it takes a little time for you to get the hang of it.*

### **Bed Method**

1. Begin by holding the flint in your dominant hand between the index, middle finger, and thumb. You need a good grip on it.
2. Grip the steel striker in your non-dominant hand so the flat edge is facing the stone.
3. In a quick movement, strike downward with the flint to achieve a glancing blow off the edge of the steel. The goal is to just catch the edge, thereby shaving off tiny bits of the steel. These tiny bits of steel will ignite into sparks when they are exposed to the air through a reaction known as *pyrophoricity*.
4. Once you begin successfully creating sparks, find a dry, flat and non-combustible surface, and lay out a small piece of charcloth (or a tinderbox, filled with charred organics). We'll call this the char bed.
5. Position your flint & steel a few inches above the char bed so that any sparks created will fall down onto the char bed.
6. Following each strike, look closely at the char bed material. Once you catch a spark, you will see a small orange glowing ember. If you gently blow on that ember you will see it expand.
7. This ember you've created on the charcloth can then be carefully and delicately be placed into a bird's nest or tinder bundle of dry grasses or other light tinder which should ignite after some careful blowing and manipulation.

### **Hold Method**

1. In this case you will reverse the positions of the flint & steel in your hands. Hold the steel striker in your dominant hand, and the flint in the other.
2. Take a small piece of charcloth (a 2" square is a good size to start with) and press it against the top side of your flint under your thumb. You want it to lay right on the flat edge that is close to the sharp edge you'll be striking.
3. In a quick movement, strike downward with the steel to achieve a glancing blow off the edge of the stone. Again, the goal is to just catch an edge of the flint and shave off tiny bits of steel from the striker. Following each strike, look closely at the charcloth. Once you catch a spark, you will see a small orange glowing ember that can then be used to ignite your larger tinder bundle

We recommend practicing at home (outside of course) before you head out into the field. This sheet is only intended to introduce you with the basics. There are a ton of good YouTube videos available on the use of flint & steel that can provide more detailed/visual guidance.