



Flint

Wessex Archaeology

2005

Knapping flint produces piles of waste flakes. Archaeologists examine them to see what sort of tools were being made.

Stone hammers were made from very strong stone, and antlers were used to shape the flint.



Wessex Archaeology 

Mesolithic 8500-4000 BC



Scraping Tool

Microliths

Axe

'Lithic' means 'Stone'

Stone tools are the oldest technology; first used in Africa 2.5 million years ago. Until metal was discovered, stone was the primary resource for making tools.

Early Neolithic 4000-3000 BC



Scraping Tool

Arrowhead

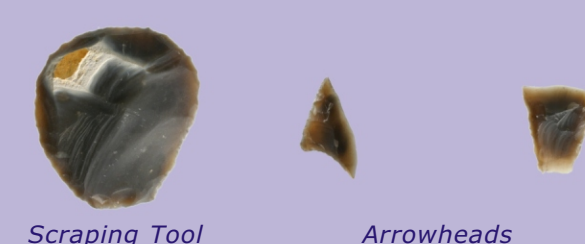
Knife Blade



Axe

In southern Britain flint was used. Some was found in river gravels, some was mined from deep underground using antler picks and shovels made from cattle shoulder-blades.

Late Neolithic 3000-2400 BC



Scraping Tool

Arrowheads



Knife Discoidal

Axe

Fabricator

Early Bronze Age 2400-1800 BC



Scraping Tool

Arrowhead

Plano Convex

In places where there was no flint, other stones could be used instead.

Palaeolithic 500,000-10,000 BC



Axe

Late Bronze Age 1200-700 BC



Scraping Tools

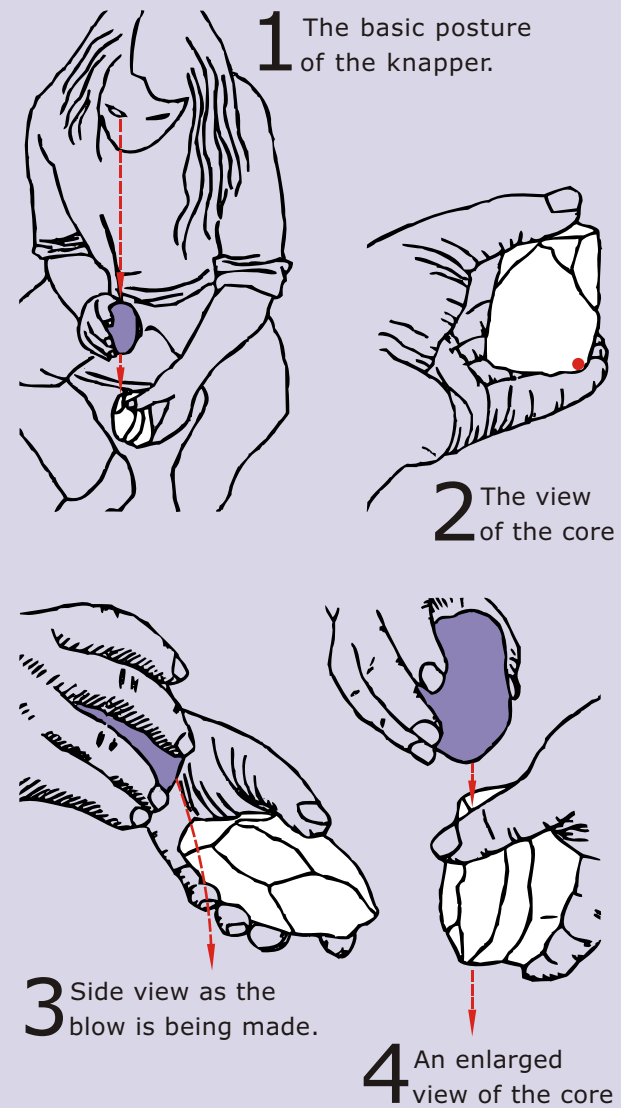
Piercer

Stone axes from Cumbria and Cornwall are found in southern England. By analysing these it is possible to tell where they came from. Flint and stone tools were being traded from as early as 4000 BC.



The following notes and diagrams explain the technique used by expert flint knappers of striking the core to remove a flake. In this way flakes can be removed; however no two flakes are the same and modifications to the way in which the core is held and its angle vary to achieve success. As a knapper becomes more competent, he or she develops modifications to this scheme.

Flint Knapping is dangerous and can result in serious injury.



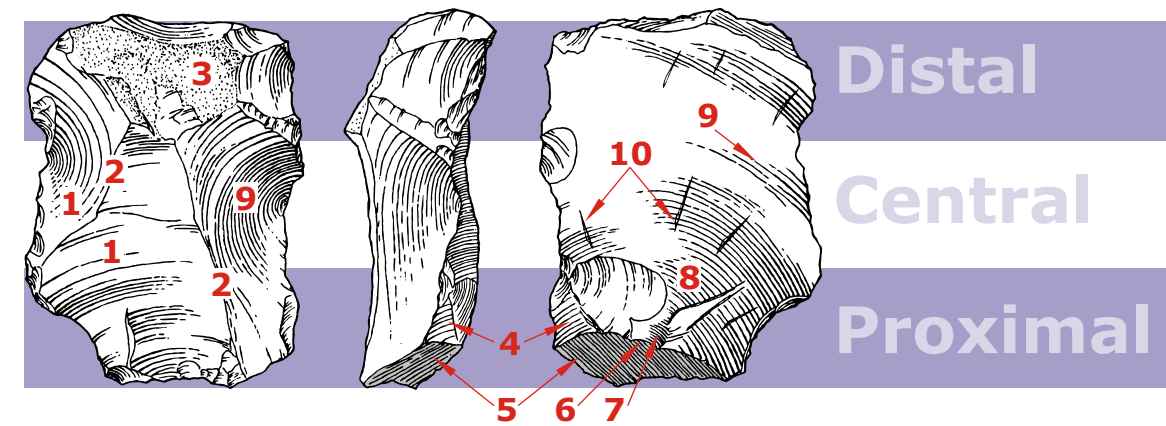
1 The head is more or less directly above the core to allow a good view of the striking platform and the point of percussion. The diagram shows the basic movement of the hammer, pivoting from the elbow, swinging directly downwards through the line of aim to the point of percussion on the striking platform.

2 As seen by the knapper, before the flake is removed. The red dot marks the point of percussion. It can be seen that the core is held in the fingers with the tips aligned down the axis of the flake. This means that when the flake is removed it will be held by the fingers. The point of percussion is directly above the tip of the little finger, which acts as a point of aim.

3 The fingers of the left hand are aligned down the front of the core to catch the flake as it is removed. The tip of the little finger acts as a point of aim for the downward arc of the hammer as it strikes the platform and follows through. This is essential to successful knapping. The left hand may have to be rotated clockwise or anticlockwise to achieve the correct angle of the striking platform to remove the flake.

4 View of the core as seen in 1. This shows the downward movement of the hammer with its follow through. The hammer too is held in the fingers rather than in the hand.

Dorsal Side Ventral Know Your Flint



- 1.** Negative Flake Scars
- 2.** Ridges
- 3.** Cortex
- 4.** Bulb Scar
- 5.** Butt
- 6.** Point of Percussion
- 7.** Cone of Percussion
- 8.** Bulb of Percussion
- 9.** Conical Ripples
- 10.** Fissures

Two examples of how flint tools are made

