

Scientists Invent Knives Made from Wood

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. somewhat /'səm,(h)wät, 'səm,(h)wət/ to a moderate extent or by a moderate amount.
Example: The resort has changed somewhat over the last few years.
2. counter-intuitive /,koun(t)ərin't(y)ooədɪv/ does not happen in the way you would expect it to
Example: The direction we had to follow was counterintuitive—we had to go north first before we went south.
3. ratio /'rāSHē,ō/ the quantitative relation between two amounts showing the number of times one value contains or is contained within the other.
Example: The ratio of men's jobs to women's is 8 to 1.
4. density /'densədē/ defined as how tightly or loosely packed a substance is
Example: The region has a very high population density.
5. rust /rəst/ a reddish- or yellowish-brown flaky coating of iron oxide that is formed on iron or steel by oxidation, especially in the presence of moisture.
Example: Paint protects your car from rust.



In the near future, the world's top chefs may be using knives made from wood. This may seem **somewhat counter-intuitive**, but materials scientists have created a wooden knife that is three times sharper than the stainless steel knives we use for dinner. The scientists are from the University of Maryland in the USA.

Researcher Teng Li said wooden knives would go with the variety of wooden utensils currently found in kitchens across the world. He said: "In our kitchen, we have many wooden things that we use for a very long time, like a cutting board, chopsticks, or a rolling pin. These

new knives can also be used many times if you display them, sharpen them and perform the same regular care."

Traditionally, knives have been made of steel or ceramics. The scientists improved the strength of the wood in their knives by increasing the cellulose it contains. Cellulose is the main constituent of wood. It has a higher **ratio** of strength to **density** than most artificial materials, like steel and ceramics. Teng Li said the new cutting material is hardened to the extent that it can effortlessly slice through the toughest steak.

There is an added advantage of wooden knives – they are environmentally friendly. They could end our dependence on plastic cutlery. The scientists have also developed wooden nails, which could be a benefit to the building industry as they will not **rust** and weaken like regular nails.

DISCUSSION

1. What do you think of wooden knives?
2. What do you think of wooden knives being sharper than steel ones?
3. How important is a sharp kitchen knife?
4. Are wooden knives environmentally friendly?
5. Do you need a very sharp knife when you eat?
6. Would you trust wooden nails?