

Hey there, it's Jodi with Create Kid's Club. Here today to talk to you all about knife skills for kids. We are going to talk and learn at the same time while building a salad. The first thing I would do when I'm starting cooking in the kitchen is to make sure that I'm properly prepared, I'm at the right height. And for a kid or a child, you'd want to go get a stool and make sure it's properly secured on the floor below you, that you can safely be at the counter height chopping and cutting comfortably.

Second, you want to make sure that you have your hands washed and you have your produce washed. All right, so now that you're back with clean hands, you're properly situated at your cooking station, we're going to get out a cutting board that is nice and firm on your counter. And you're going to get out the knife of choice, like a butter knife for the youngest of chefs, lettuce knives, which are plastic knives that work real well, into a larger chef knife. Now, every knife has two sides, a dull side and a sharp side. When you're carrying your knife, you want to make sure that it is always pointed down. So you don't accidentally poke anybody else or yourself. Whenever your knife is moving your eyes are on your knife. So you don't want to be looking around and chopping as we go through this. You want to always watch to make sure you know where the blade of that knife is, so you don't accidentally cut yourself.

So today we're going to make that salad. And there's three different chopping methods that we're going to talk about. Keeping your tip of your knife down against the cutting board. We're going to talk about rocking and we're going to talk about tunnels. How all of these things, keep our fingers nice and safe while you're cutting in the kitchen. We're first going to have to learn how to hold your knife. So what you're going to do is reach down, grab the knife that you have and grab it comfortably. If you're unsure how to hold it, think about how you hold your bike handle because that's how we want to hold the blade of a knife. You want to have your knuckles up and your fingers tucked under.

Now, sometimes we have the tendency to hold your knife with your finger pointed out, but we don't want to do that. We want to have all the control on the handle of your knife. You want to pretend the tip of your knife is glued to the board of your cutting board, that your fingers are always made like a claw. So tuck those fingers under and don't forget your thumb. You want to keep them tucked under as you hold the food and move it back. And you kind of use them to push the food towards the knife while you're rocking. Now, this is not something that you're going to learn overnight. It does require practice. Even your adults in your family are going to notice that they require practice too. We all do. Everybody can improve on their knife skills.

So we're going to use that rocking motion. And we're just going to slice through the end of the lettuce. Moving your fingers back as the knife blade gets closer. For our salad, we're also going to put some celery. Now, celery rocks around a little bit, and we want to make sure that you always have your food flat. So celery is easy. I can just flip it over and now it doesn't rock like it did before. So we do the exact same motion for this one. You want to curve your fingers under. You're going to glue your tip of your knife down, and you're going to just work your way down the celery, pushing and moving your fingers back as needed.

Okay, now we have some celery and we have some lettuce. How about we put some apples in our salad? Because I like some sweet mixed in with the vegetables. We can have your helper help you cut that core out. And now you have some flat apples to work with. We're going to start by carefully watching where our fingers are and we'll cut them that way. Then we're going to turn them this way and start cutting them the opposite way to get a dice.

Let's add a cucumber to our salad. Now a cucumber is all around wiggly. So we really want to make this flatter. So this one, we're going to use what I call a tunnel. We're going to hold it through a tunnel so we can cut it safely in half, so it's flat. So you can just put your knife through the tunnel, making sure you know where all of your fingers are and you're going to make sure your grip on your knife is proper. And

you're going to just start pushing downward to cut that cucumber in half. Now we have a flat surface to work with and we can cut that cucumber up.

And you know what I really like in my salad? I like adding a few fresh herbs if I have them on hand. You might be surprised by how much flavor it adds to a salad. So I have a little fresh cilantro here we're going to add. We're going to start just by giving it a rough cut through. Carefully, watching your fingers, moving down the line. And once you have it cut up into smaller pieces where you can kind of put it in a little pile, you're going to hold your knife down and you're going to put your hand on top of the knife. You're going to use the top hand to push down. It gives it a little more pressure to cut through. You're going to try to keep the end of your knife still kind of glued to the cutting board. But you're going to hold your knife in your bicycle hands, pushing down, watching those fingers. You want to make sure that you're not cutting your fingers. So once we have that, you can see that we have nice little pieces that we can sprinkle on top of our salad.

Let's review what we learned today. You always want to start by washing your hands and preparing your cooking space. Pick out a size knife that's appropriate for you, or get a helper to watch over while you practice. Please remember your grip and your claw to protect, to be in control of your knife and to watch your fingers. Always make sure your eyes are on the knife and when they're not on the knife, your knife is not moving. So there we have it. You have a nice salad to serve for your family for dinner. Make sure to join Create Kid's Club for more tutorials on kids cooking. I'd love to see what you've been cooking. So make sure to tag Create Kid's Club on all your creations so we can have a look and see what you're doing.