

Mingurngasqanek Ipegyanek Aulutalilita – **LET'S MAKE GROUND SLATE TOOLS**

Slate is a plentiful raw material in the Kodiak Archipelago and can be fashioned into a variety of tools. In addition to the ulus and double-edged knives used to process subsistence foods, Alutiiq/Sugpiaq people ground lances, bayonets, and arrows for hunting, and fashioned beads and labrets from slate. Try your skill at slate grinding. Here are the basic steps.

STEP ONE - Select a piece of slate. Kodiak beaches have many different types—but not all slate is suitable for tool production. The ideal material is hard with few visible layers. A good way to test slate is to break it into pieces and observe how they fall apart. Choose a thin, sturdy fragment, that is internally cohesive.

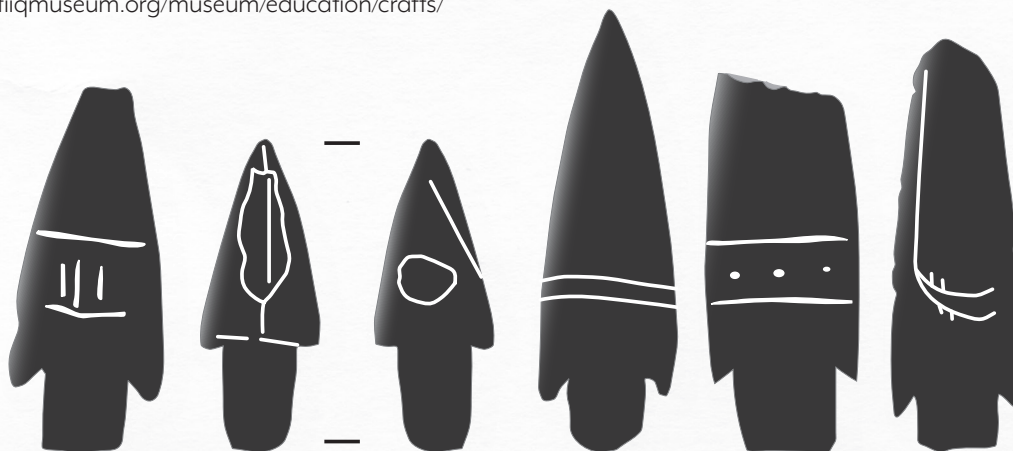
STEP TWO - Use a hard beach cobble (a water-rounded rock) to chip your thin leaf of slate into a rough tool shape—working along the edges. Another way of creating a rough tool, particularly if you wish to make a lance, is to saw the slate with a hard, sharp rock. A flake from a beach cobble works well as a saw. With the flake, wear grooves into the slate from both sides and then gently snap the pieces apart along the groove.

STEP THREE - Use a hard, flat beach rock to grind a smooth surface on both faces of your tool. Keep the tool flat as you grind. Water and a small amount of sand make a good lubricant and will speed the grinding process. Keep grinding until you have a smooth, flat surface. Try to remove any nicks or indentations in the slate.

STEP FOUR - Sharpen the edges of your tool by grinding at an angle. Turn the tool over to grind both sides of each edge. This will create a bevel (a v-shaped edge) that can be resharpened.

LEARN MORE:

Video Tutorial - Patrick Saltonstall demonstrates slate grinding.
<https://alutiiqmuseum.org/museum/education/crafts/>



Ground slate points with makers marks from Late Kachemak tradition sites.