“Isolated Platforms” For Percussion.
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Moving forward into the later stages of making finished tools by percussion with a "soft hammer" requires an understanding of "edge preparation" and "isolated platforms".

Using these advanced techniques makes it possible to produce wide, thin, straight and sharp stone tools by percussion alone.

Preparing For Percussion

In reducing this percussion core which was made from a nodule of gray Texas flint, I have "prepared the edge" and prepared an "isolated platform" to use a soft hammer to remove more large chips.

As is my practice, the edge has been ground from side to side with carborundum to roughen the edge and help the copper percussion tool get a grip at the edge. This grinding also creates tiny scratches which make it a little easier for a solid strike to initiate the fracture which will remove the chip which I want.

A closer look at the edge of the pre-form will let you see that several previous chip removals along the edge have served to create an "isolated platform" at the left end of the "prepared edge".

The prepared striking platform is at the left end of a thicker edge, which has been ground and is visible.

An "isolated platform" will typically be a somewhat narrow, protruding area of the stone edge; usually a bit thicker and hanging down from the mid-line along the edge. It is prepared so that you can strike it without...
hitting the rest of the edge ... isolated. Sometimes I re-
move a couple of small
flakes on each side to further
add to the definition of the
isolated striking platform
and make it easier for the
new chip to initiate when the
platform is struck, so that the
fracture has a place to begin
and a direction to proceed.

The intended hit will strike
the thick, ground part. The
new chip to be removed will
follow along a ridge which
remains at the left edge of
the thick part, created by the
removal of the previous chip.

Now, holding the core firmly
and solidly in place against
the protective thick leather
pad on my thigh, I strike the
“isolated platform”. I hit
firmly, with power, at the
correct angle, and the result-
ing chip removal happens
instantly, with a satisfying
“crack!”

When I tilt the edge of the
flint core up I can see the fine
new chip laying below on
the lap pad; and, as I tilt the
core even more, I can see the
full extent of the effective
percussion blow ... the large
new flake scar leaves a
broad, flat surface on my
percussion preform.

The next step will be to trim
the small “delta” remaining
just to the left of the new
flake scar, and the larger
“delta” just to the right.

Removing these remnants
will clean up the edge, and
serve to isolate the next
platform to the right as I
continue to work my way
along this edge of the pre-
form.

Then a new “isolated plat-
form” will present me with
the next striking position in
this knapping project.
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From the flint knapping workshop of

F. Scott Crawford
Carrollton, TX  75010

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