Sharpening the Pick

For pure ice climbing, modern picks do not need modification - brand new picks work best. Therefore, every time I feel compelled to sharpen a pick, I work to maintain the original configuration (i.e. angles)

On older picks or picks that have been hammered, it may be difficult to restore the original configuration

See the pick area highlighted in green? That's the beveled area you'll be working on

**NOTE:**
- Work both sides equally
- Maintain the original angle

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Sharpening the Pick

**Restoring the original pick configuration and performance:**
1. Use a new pick as a guide or observe the angles of the bevel you are about to file
2. Apply a couple of drops of oil to the file
3. I use a 16" file for sharpening at home. This allows me to grasp the file at both ends for stability
4. Use a vise, if possible
5. It may be helpful to remove the pick from the tool
6. Take care not to remove too much material from each bevel

**NOTE:**
- I always work to maintain the angle
- Avoid "rolling" the file
- Inspect and correct after each stroke
- File the whole surface of the bevel

"Basically, I want to avoid rounding the bevels"
Sharpening the Pick

Knocking down the edge
After I have restored the bevels and removed any dings, I pass the file over the very sharp edge removing a tiny bit of steal and creating a flat surface.

The resulting edge will achieve excellent penetration and will remain sharp after many pick placements.

NOTE:
Take care to remove material evenly
The flat surface is only a couple of thousands of an inch wide
Very light pressure is all that is required to "knock down" the sharp edge

Field Sharpening
It is more difficult but the same principals mentioned in modules 1, 2 and 3 apply.

Leave the pick on the tool and wedge it so the pick does not move around - try a crack, boulder or your thigh

NOTE:
Save major repairs for the vise and big file at home
Got oil? How about the vegi oil from a tin of fish?
Sharpening the Front Points

Modern crampons have front points very similar to ice tool picks so please refer to the pick sharpening modules 1, 2, and 3 for basic principals.

Secondary and bottom points will require sharpening - I use a big file and vise.

NOTE:
I remove the front points for major repairs.
Sharp bottom points are key to ice climbing success as are sharp front points.

Sharpening Ice Tool Picks 2003 Bryan Ferguson