How to Hold a Chef’s Knife

This is the proper chef’s knife grip as seen from the thumb-side of the cutting hand. The thumb grips the knife around the top of the blade, with the hand wrapped around the bolster of the knife.

Here we see the same grip as to the left, from the opposite side. Note how the index finger is wrapped fully around the blade. The index finger and thumb should be opposite each other on either side of the blade, while the remaining three fingers are loosely curled around the handle.

Your non-knife hand is called your guiding hand. Its job is to hold food steady on the cutting board and prevent injury! Keep your fingertips tucked safely away, while still firmly holding the food.

The grip shown here is called the claw grip. The side of the knife blade actually rests against the first knuckle of the guiding hand, which helps keep the blade perpendicular to the cutting board.

In this modified version of the claw grip, the first knuckle of the guiding hand rests flat on the food, with fingertips again safely curled inward. This time, the knife rests against the second knuckle rather than the first. Both of these claw grips is acceptable, so use whichever one you feel comfortable with.