

Early Stone Age Tools

The earliest stone toolmaking developed by at least 2.6 million years ago. The Early Stone Age includes the most basic stone toolkits made by early humans. The Early Stone Age in Africa is equivalent to what is called the Lower Paleolithic in Europe and Asia.

The oldest stone tools, known as the Oldowan toolkit, consist of at least:

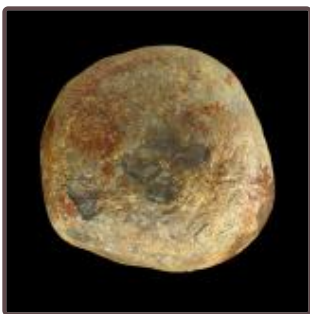
- Hammerstones that show battering on their surfaces
- Stone cores that show a series of flake scars along one or more edges
- Sharp stone flakes that were struck from the cores and offer useful cutting edges, along with lots of debris from the process of percussion flaking

By about 1.76 million years ago, early humans began to strike really large flakes and then continue to shape them by striking smaller flakes from around the edges. The resulting implements included a new kind of tool called a handaxe. These tools and other kinds of 'large cutting tools' characterize the Acheulean toolkit.

The basic toolkit, including a variety of novel forms of stone core, continued to be made. It and the Acheulean toolkit were made for an immense period of time – ending in different places by around 400,000 to 250,000 years ago.

Explore some examples of Early Stone Age tools.

Hammerstone



Hammerstone from
Majuangou, China

Core



Olduvai Chopper



Oldowan Tools from
Lokalalei, Kenya



Stone Tools from
Majuangou, China

Handaxe



Handaxe and Tektites
from Bose, China



Handaxe from India



Handaxe from Europe