

# Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog gives some answers to readers' questions

## Grinding wheel

**Question:** My grinder has 60-grit wheels. My friends in the club say that is too coarse and that I should get finer wheels. What is the best wheel grit for sharpening woodturning tools?

**Answer:** There really isn't a 'best' grit for grinding. Your grit selection for your grinder is always a balance of coarseness for shaping and fineness for sharpening. The coarser-grit wheels allow for steel removal quickly and with less heat build-up when shaping a tool is required. Sixty grit is certainly an acceptable choice for this purpose. Sharpening of a your previously and properly shaped tools can be effectively done with any grit up to 1000 or more. The finer the grit wheel, the finer the pitch of the 'serrated edge' that every tool cutting edge takes on when ground. If all of your tools are already shaped, you can pick any grit finer than 60 that suits you. Depending on what you

turn and your techniques, the finer-grit ground tools can give you a better surface finish right off the tool. My grinder has 60 grit wheels and serves me well for shaping and sharpening. If you need to shape and sharpen, use your 60-grit wheels or perhaps bump up to 80 or 100. If you don't have much need to shape tools and use the grinder almost exclusively for sharpening, change the grit to as fine as you wish. Using 200 or 300 grit would probably serve you well, although you can go as fine as you want. All the information on grit selection holds true regardless of the grinding wheel composition, whether traditional aluminium oxide wheels or CBN.



The grit of the wheel used for sharpening will be imparted to the tool edge as it is sharpened. For finer striations, use a finer-grit wheel



You can see the difference in the grit patterns imparted on the faces of these scrapers between the 60-grit and 200-grit wheels used to sharpen them

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT HERTZOG

## Workshop equipment

**Question:** I just picked up a 355m Powermatic bandsaw with a 150mm riser 1½hp to replace my ¾hp Delta. I was going to sell the Delta to a small shop. Now I'm wondering if I should just keep it and put a 3mm or 6mm blade on it for small things and curves and use the PM for re-sawing and bowl blanks. Any suggestions?

**Answer:** If you have the space for both saws, I'd suggest you keep them. Since they are both on site and you don't need to sell the old one, your idea is great. Set up the Powermatic to do the heavier work on bowl blanks and re-sawing. The smaller, lower-horsepower saw with a more delicate blade will work great for the lighter precision work. The beauty of this is the availability of either saw for the task at hand. You'll have the right blade for your needs and use it. Often, I make cuts with the saw using the installed blade, even though it isn't the best choice, because I'm too lazy to change the blade to the proper one for one or two quick cuts. Not ideal, but I find myself doing it for expediency. With your saws already set up, you'll simply use the one best suited. Congratulations on a great situation.



Once a re-sawing blade is installed and tracking, slicing veneer and steambending stock or trim is a breeze. It's nice to leave it set up and ready

## Workshop equipment

**Question:** I'm new to woodturning and need to equip my shop. What should I be getting and in what order? What is the absolute minimum of must-have stuff and what is nice-to-have stuff?

**Answer:** As a new woodturner, you'll have the opportunity to start fresh and tailor your shop to your needs. Obviously you'll need your lathe, basic lathe accessories (drive centre, revolving tail centre, etc.), turning tools, a sharpening system, along with the support lighting and personal and respiratory equipment such as a suitable faceshield and dust mask/respirator. After those core must-have items, which are all needed to begin, you can start adding other items. A must for the workshop is a dust-collection vacuum unit. This can be used to clean up the shop as well as to remove dust as close to source as possible. Some also add an overhead air filter system. You'll want to consider additional lathe accessories such as faceplates, a chuck and appropriate jaws, chuck drive screw and optional tailstock items such as taper cones and the like. These can be tailored to what kind of turning you do and your preferred work-holding methods. Don't

forget a quality anti-fatigue mat for your standing location(s).

Depending on what you'll be turning, for your next equipment you'll want stock-preparation equipment. For most turners that is a bandsaw. If you purchase your stock and rarely need to cut things, you may be able to live nicely without one. However, even if you only turn pens and bottle stoppers, buying ready-to-turn materials, you'll find a bandsaw is a very handy shop addition. If you need to cut spindle stock, cut bowl blanks, or prep other materials, you'll find a bandsaw absolutely critical. Depending on your space and budget, get the biggest and best bandsaw you can afford. It's far easier to cut small things on a large saw than large things on a small saw. Over time, I think you'll find your bandsaw as valuable to you as your lathe. Assuming you have been getting by with a pistol drill and drill index for your drilling needs, the next logical addition is a drill

press. Depending on your workspace, you can easily do most anything with a bench-mounted drill press rather than a floor mount. The only disadvantage of a bench mount is the size of the work that can be presented for drilling. I've given up my floor-mounted drill presses in favour of bench-mounted and have had no issues. Another piece of equipment that most shops find valuable is a compressor. It be used to clean out chips, blow off equipment, and power pneumatic tools with sufficient cubic-feet-per-minute capacity. By the time you get to this point there is a huge array of niceties that you can consider, especially if you do woodworking as well as woodturning. A belt or disc sander is useful. Of course, a tablesaw, scrollsaw, and thickness sander will flesh out a very well-equipped woodworking workshop. Niceties in the shop include a Forstner bit set, measuring equipment such as dial callipers, and circle compasses.



Depending on your workholding techniques and needs, many times chucks, jaws and dust extraction take precedence over other added equipment

Send in your questions to Kurt's email: [kurt@kurthertzog.com](mailto:kurt@kurthertzog.com)