

Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

When grinding tools, do you advocate spraying to cool or dunking? I've read that dunking changes the structure of the metal. Your thoughts, please.

Regarding cooling during sharpening – I don't quench any steel while sharpening. I know machinists have the water reservoir on their grinders to quench tool bits, etc., while grinding them. I am a fan of never getting the steel that hot. The process for hardening steel is to get it to the critical temperature, varying by the alloy and individual chemistry, and then rapidly cooling it by quenching in water or oil. I'm told by the metallurgists I've worked with for many years that grinding steel on a grinding wheel doesn't get the temperature high enough, even though it appears very hot. Even with that about hardening, I don't want to mess with the temper that the tool has after the hardening process. That said, I make it a habit to 'freshen' up edges rather than grinding them extensively. By making a couple of passes on the grinder, the steel never gets that hot. I hold my tools to the tool rest with my fingers able to feel the temperature. If the tool gets so hot I'm unable to hold it bare-handed, I give the grinding a rest. No cooling sprays or quenching. Could you spray it or dunk it? From what I've been told, yes, but I don't. When I have extensive grinding to do, for example, grinding a flat, square scraper into a skew chisel. I cool the steel before grinding. I take a large plastic drink cup and fill it with ice and then some water. I cool the tool in the ice bath before grinding. As before, when the tool becomes uncomfortable to hold on the platen of the grinder, I return it to the ice bath to chill down again and give me more time on the grinding wheel. There is no real quenching taking place because the steel was never that hot – only too hot for me to comfortably hold a few inches back from the grinding area. That is the process that allows me to get back to doing some serious metal removal again within a few minutes. A side note about grinders. I am a fan of relatively coarse wheels. I favour 60 or 100. You can use finer wheels, but any grinding that needs to remove much stock will not only eat up a lot of wheel (AlO2) but also impart a lot of heat to the steel.

Perhaps a bit too cautious but, as noted, I can 'refresh' and edge in one to two passes on the grinder. I find that it keeps my tools sharp and is so quick that it hardly interrupts my turning.

1 If you don't dull your tools, you can simply touch them up to get them back to top performance. Note the anchor of the knuckle to the rest 2 Because my fingers are controlling the tool and are in intimate contact, any excessive heating is felt quickly and the tool is allowed to cool



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KURT HERTZOG

I am planning on getting into craft shows and fairs. Never having done one, any advice for a beginner?

I am not a huge fan of the traditional trade show or craft fair booths. My experience is mainly as a helper for others in their booth. Some advice on the mechanics of shows. You usually must register ahead, select the number of tables, and sometimes get to pick the location in the show layout. You can arrange for utilities if you are doing any demos to attract folks or need power for your computer, displays or cash system. Nearly all commercial shows provide the tables and a few chairs based on your reservation. Most shows have a 10ft booth size with end caps and multiples of the 10ft if you reserve larger booth space.

Several things you should plan on for your booth. The tables will be provided, unless it is a church or club operation, but the coverings are usually your responsibility. They may cover the tables with a plain plastic sheet to hide the damage to the tables. Plan on your own coverings since you want to present a more professional environment. Fabric stores will have many colours to choose from as well as the fabric type. Personally, I'm a fan of darker-coloured felt. You can buy it on the roll making it easy to carry, store and cover the tables. Darker colours don't show the dirt or spills as easily. Be certain that if your cash system needs Internet, the show has it available or you can provide your own through your phone. The show may provide it for free or at an added booth cost.

Regardless, I suggest that you have a back-up plan if theirs doesn't provide reliable service at your booth location. For your displays, practise setting them up prior to the event so you can tweak the position, density and visual attractiveness. You can often get

advice on the appearance from friends or family. The eye appeal will make or break you. Too much just overwhelms the passerby. Too little doesn't show the depth and breadth of your offerings. Plan on keeping extra stock underneath the tables to replenish and maintain the interesting appearance as items get sold.

For the most part, there is little shrinkage, depending on the show, its clientele and your offerings. Small items such as pens tend to disappear more than bowls and hollow forms. Do plan on keeping an eye on folks just to keep the honest folks honest. You'll do well to have a helper or helpers with the sales, cash-out and packing if appropriate. If you use a cash box, keep it away from the customer area as best you can – on the back table, underneath a table, or in an area where only you or your helpers can access it. It is sad to say, but even in the best of areas and shows, things like the cash box or smaller products go missing on occasion.

Set-up to take credit cards. While you can have a cash box, you'll find that customers will spend more and more easily if they can use a card. Not only is it quick and easy but you also don't have cash in a box to keep tabs on. There are many no-cost merchant accounts you can set up and link to your bank account. These companies will take a percentage of your sales as they process the credit card charges and deposit the rest into your bank account. Many offer the credit card readers and wireless system for a modest cost and have no monthly fee. Beware of



8 Be cautious of too much product on display. Too much fosters the cluttered look and makes selection more difficult. Keep things simple 9 Shelving and hanging arrangements for product. Notice the fabric (carpeting) that provides hanging capability and visual contrast.



3 Depending on your show, its location and rules, you may be able to have live demos. They are great for attracting customers 4 If you get serious about shows, you may want to build (buy) shelving to display items. Eye-catching, showing product without clutter 5 Be personable and interact with potential customers. Tell them more about the items they show interest in. Share your skills knowledge 6 Setting up and tearing down your booth can take some time. Find a system of packing that protects items but unloads/loads easily 7 Outdoor shows are a lot of fun. Usually big crowds and much activity. Have a booth layout and signage that draws attention.

companies that have an ongoing monthly charge or high percentage on your sales amounts. In addition to your table coverings, price-marking methods, display paraphernalia and credit card set-up, you'll need bags for the customers to carry away their purchases.

You can buy the T-shirt-style plastic bags by the case for a very reasonable price. I also recommend that you have plenty of business cards. Keep them on the table for the passersby to take if they are curious about your offerings. Also, put a card in every bag along with the purchase. That will let the customer find you later for additional products, problems should they have any, or seeking commission works. Many shows are multiple days so plan on covering your display with additional table material when you close for the day in that case. Depending on the show and location, they offer security overnight to keep all the vendors' booths secure.

Some vendors put their stock below the tables for the overnight rather than a simple cover – it's your choice based on the types, value and size of your offerings and the show location/situation. Don't forget to get some booth signage, there are many types available at nominal cost. Bring along your own drinks, snacks and even lunch if you can. You may not have the opportunity to go and purchase drinks and snack. If you have them at your booth, you'll have a choice and the convenience of eating when there is a lull in the action.

There are four things I'll share that I feel are the keys to success. Obviously, your products, quality and pricing are the first and probably the most important things. Second is the attraction of the booth based on its eye appeal. Your signage, table coverings and product display, as well as your personal appearance, have a big effect. Plan for the event ambience. A higher-end show may not require a shirt and tie, but shorts, T-shirt, and Crocs could be out of order. Dress comfortably but appropriate for the show situation, location and clientele.

Put on your smiling face and socialise with the customer. Sitting in the back of the booth and waiting for them to wait on themselves certainly will hurt sales. Be up in the front of the booth and conversational with the customers. Strike up a conversation, offer suggestions or information as they browse your products. Sell. Don't sit back and ignore folks.

If the customer doesn't buy, don't be disappointed. Give them your well wishes and a business card. Many will be back later once they've had a chance to review the entire show. Your offering(s) may be the best solution for them, and they often will be back for them. The impression you give them initially may make or break their desire to return. Smile, be sociable, helpful and friendly, but most of all, enjoy yourself. This is supposed to be fun. It's not a root canal.



10 Nicely done booth. Neutral grey backdrop with a pleasing display. Eye-level displays work extremely well. Nice display of products 11 High-value items need to be closely monitored. The maker is attending to the booth ready to show and explain the product 12 A different display concept – very dense yet not with a cluttered feel. Easy to monitor and keep fully stocked 13 One of the high-density displays with plenty of product to choose from. The display knocks down for storage and transit 14 Great booth with room to examine the furniture. Can sit and try the furniture out. Notice the carpet on the ground which visually sets the furniture off