

September-October 2015

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Would jumping to conclusions be considered exercise?

Check out my new YouTube video! After some difficulties it was finally loaded the first week of September. I did a calabash shaped bowl from a maple crotch. This is a follow-up on the previous video on capturing the crotch figure. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GK7mwZvcgfc> YouTube did not make notifications to my channel subscribers so I posted it a second time. YouTube has not been consistent in notifications and comments being posted or accepted. I hope to have more frequent postings so check with my channel every once in a while.

If you have not seen the new publication "More Woodturning" it is worth the look.

www.morewoodturningmagazine.com Dennis Daudelin the new owner/editor is starting to create a very good woodturning magazine. For you folks on my newsletter list that like my Q&A format, Dennis has asked me to comment on the topic of interest in each publication.

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FEEDBACK

CALENDAR

TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Topic of the Month: Turning large wood safely

(Please allow me to use a question as the topic this month.)

Mr. Jamieson,

I want to start out by saying your tutorial videos were a big help teaching me how to turn bowls. Many thanks!

Now for my dilemma! When chucking small bowls (up to 16 inches) I start out using a one way chuck with a spur center and tail stock with a live bearing. Once the outside is turned I normally rotate the piece, clamp it in the chuck then do my hollowing. This system works good for me. I built my own lathe which has the capability of turning bowls up to 40 inches. When I start a large bowl I use a faceplate and turn the outside, then turn it and attach the faceplate to the foot. I lose a lot of "meat" on the depth of the bowl because of the screws. I normally rough turn using green wood and don't want to use a glue block. Any suggestions?

Shane

Hi Shane location unknown,

Nice to hear from you, thanks for the question.

You say a 16 inch bowl is a small bowl, WOW! That is a big bowl to most in the turning world. You are set up to do very large bowls and the process you use is for small bowls. Let me explain. The forces involved in turning anything that big is enormous and you have several weaknesses at play here. First, you must eliminate the use of chucks. They are not a good way to hold wood on the lathe and will be a weak point. Use a faceplate only for anything of this scale. Use my methods for securing the wood. Have you seen my bowl basics DVD? The YouTube clips only give a small piece of the topic; the DVD gives you the entire process. With the exception, the glue block must be replaced with a faceplate and screws right into the wood. Are you selling your work? My process will save you time as well as make it safer and more fun and less hard work. How about less sanding?

You must change your goals to do the best turned piece from the wood blank not the biggest. Even the biggest bowls should be started between centers and on the balance point. Any other method will make the "tunka-tunka" sound and beat your body up terribly. Even pieces that scale are easy to turn. There is no need to work hard.

Your faceplates must reflect the scale of your work. The bigger the piece to be turned the bigger the faceplate needs to be. There is a 40 percent rule. A 10 inch bowl should use a 4 inch faceplate. A 20 inch bowl should use a 6-8 inch faceplate. When you have hundreds of pounds of wood spinning around it can become very dangerous. I routinely have had 200-250 pounds of tree on my lathe when turning my figurative sculptures. I have tested the limits.

Now back to your wasting wood with a faceplate thought. Your faceplates must have a large number of holes and screws in them. The screws only need to be 1 ¼ inch to 1 ½ inch long depending on the thickness of your faceplates. So the waste area is minimal but you have the strength from multiple screws. The heavy duty, 7 inch faceplate I use for my heavy work has 36/40 screw holes in it and I

use them all, all of the time. There is only a slight difference between the waste from screws and the tenon wasted with a chuck. The wasted wood for faceplates is a myth. The time needed to prepare for a faceplate or a chuck is the same also. So why deal with the limitations (and dangers) of a chuck?

I only rough out the turnings between centers. The roughing process is an information gathering method only. It gives me information to change the axis incrementally to get the best balanced grain, balanced color or deal with balancing natural edges faults or flaws. Once I have moved it from the balance point to the final perfect axis between centers than I put the concave surface on the blank for the faceplate. Now I do both the outside and inside the bowl on the same axis.

I worry about your safety. It is easy to exceed the limits of your lathe, your tailstock, your chucking method, your tool rest, your tools, or your live center. A weakness in any one element of turning at this scale can kill you. Everything must be beefed up and over-built to cover the stresses. Please think about all these things and be safe!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BODY POSITION FOR HOLLOWING



Lyle,

Attached is a picture of my wife using your system to finish the inside of a bowl for a gift she needs. I should mention she is 9 weeks post-op from neck surgery (disc replacement and fusion c4/c5). This is her first time back on the lathe in 2 years and no pain with the captured system. Thank you, Chuck

Hi Chuck from Michigan,

Nice to hear from you! Thanks for sharing the good news.

Please share with her some suggestions/observations from your photo.

Keep the tool rest close. As you finish the top stage inside and move down deeper in the vessel move the tool rest up incrementally too. This gives

more support and control. She appears to be looking in the mouth opening. This requires a bent over body position and leaning neck. Stand up straight at the side of the hollow form and watch the laser and keep an eye on the boring bar to see how far to extend it in the vessel for each pass. Advance into the entry hole about 1/16 to 1/8 inch and pull toward your tummy advance again and cut again. Fingertip movements are all that is needed. Just watch the laser not the wood in the hole. The old habits from hand hollowing are hard to break. With the laser system there is no need to look in the hole. This advice is for all turners not only those that have had neck surgery.

STARTUP TECHNIQUES FOR HOLLOWING SYSTEM

Lyle,

My wife (Marlene) recently purchased your boring bar system as a birthday gift.

I have it all set up and am ready to try hollowing my first piece.

But I do have a couple of questions:

1. Can you use a glue block rather than a faceplate for end grain vessel? What about side grain vessels?

2. In your videos, you use a carbide cutter. Do you recommend starting with that? Or the HSS tips and swivels that came with the system?

3. Any suggestions for a first (or second) pass project? Certainly your kitchen utensil caddy might work.

Thanks in advance. Peter

Hi Peter from Michigan,

The fun has just begun, enjoy the ride. The faceplate is preferable for end grain hollow forms. A glue block is good for face grain. The glue block can be used for any small items but the faceplate and screws are a stronger gripping method.

I would start with the HSS cutters. They have a very short learning curve. You will be amazed how easy it is. The carbide has advantages, it is nice to graduate up to. It has three different cuts to learn and understand a different set of rules. I always recommend starting with HSS because there are so many other things to learn in the beginning. Like doing vessels in stages, boring bar use, laser use, grain advantages, outside shapes and more if you are new to hollow forms.

Start with simple shapes relatively small projects first with large mouth openings. Get the process under your belt and then explore more complex shapes and projects. Hollowing is easy and fun but there are a lot of pieces to the puzzle.

HOLDING A VESSEL WITH VOIDS IN THE BASE

Lyle

Ran into this on my base? (See picture). I have a void on the edge of my bottom that I had planned on using a glue block on. Can I steal this void with something and use the block or is a face plate more in line? Good solid wood all around except this one spot. Any input would be appreciated and I will proceed relieving you of any liability. Thanks in advance for the advice.

Jerry



Hi Jerry from Ohio,

A glue block is the best method here. You have 344 degrees around the base, that's lots of support. I would worry more about the top of the bowl. Be careful, go in small stages and stop often to see if anything is weakened by your cuts. Stay out of the danger zone in front of the bowl in case something breaks loose. I love these kinds of bowls with voids in the bottom. It will be striking when done. There will be a lot of hand sanding but worth the extra work.

SANDING DISK BRANDS

Lyle,

Would you be able to tell me the name brand of the Roloc disc you use on your mandrel for sanding off the bowl foot and where you purchase them?

Thanks in advance.

Jerry

Hi Jerry from Michigan,

The Roloc disks I use are not available in most stores. You can try some industrial or auto repair type stores but I doubt if you will have a source. They are 3M and very expensive. Any Velcro or sticky back disks will work fine. Vince's Wood N Wonders is a specifically sand paper supplies source but Packard has a good selection. I only use the course grits on the drill all grits finer the 220 is only by hand.

HOW LONG DO THE CARBIDE CUTTERS LAST

Lyle,

My name is Ron and I purchased your hollowing system at the AAW Pittsburgh Symposium in June. I love the system and using it is fun with excellent results. Just did one piece and wanted you to see it. It was seasoned big leaf maple with cracks and I assumed that the "edges" would just break as I hollowed between air and wood, but as you can see the edge stayed intact.



Also, I thoroughly enjoyed your video and have watched many different ones as I am a novice (10 months) and trying to learn all I can. Without a doubt, I learned more from your video in the first 45 minutes (before you even get to the hollowing part) than in half the others combined.

How often should I expect to replace the carbide bit? How much are they? Also, what should I use the HSS bits for? Do they really have a good or other use compared to the carbide?

Looking forward to your answers,
Thank you,
Ron

Hi Ron from Pennsylvania,

Thanks for the feedback. You certainly took on a challenging piece to start and it looks great. It is a testament to your patience and tool control at this early stage of the learning curve.

The carbide replacements cost \$20.00. They will last a long time, many vessels, 25-30 times longer than HSS or longer depending on what you turn. Keep turning the carbide cutter to use 360 degrees as I talk about in the article. The HSS cutters are needed in some rare situations where you get in a confined spot that the carbide will not reach. I don't use the HSS much, but keep them around just in case.

You might want to get and watch my Bowl Basics DVD. It has a comprehensive explanation of the foundation elements of turning. I use the bowl format, but these elements are important and transferable to all turning. It gets into all the reasons why and how I do what I do, from start to finish.

SHEER SCRAPING AND TORN OUT GRAIN

Good morning Lyle,

I have attached a picture of a small bowl that I am turning. At the lower portion of the inside (5'o'clock) is a very light area that is end grain and I always wind up having to sand like crazy to remove as much as possible. So my question to you is: Do I need to do a better job with sheer scraping, or is it some other aspect of my tool use that needs work? Also, about sheer scraping, what lathe speed do you generally use for this? I am looking for the DVD on Bowl Basics, which might be the answer. If I cannot borrow a copy, I will be ordering it.

Thanks for any advice on this,
Ray



Hi Ray from Massachusetts,

Thanks for the photo; it helps me understand what you are dealing with. You have a common problem among many turners. I have developed a process that will prevent torn out grain, not try to fix it once it is torn up. It is very difficult to sand down through all the damage so the trick is not to tear out the grain in the first place.

I try never ever, to scrape or sheer scrape on the INSIDE of a bowl. I need all the help I can get to make a clean surface in there. When I sheer scrape on the OUTSIDE of the bowl I want the speed as fast as possible. Faster is better for all cuts. I will have more detailed explanations in my next newsletter about the cuts needed on the inside of bowls. The two things that you will need to keep in mind is using sharp tools and going the correct direction downhill to the grain. A third is the good tool control of a slicing cut not scraping inside bowls. All of the details are in my Bowl Basics DVD.

WHAT CAUSED SPALTING AND ROTTEN WOOD

Lyle,

Do you have any experience with ebony logs?

I brought some firewood lengths back from Texas in April and now I discovered that most of the inside of the black ebony wood has gone soft to where my headstock center sinks in and won't grip hard enough to hold for turning.

Do you know what caused that rot and how to prevent that from occurring?

Roger

Hi Roger from South Dakota,

Two things happen when wood is stored. Both are bad news. It will crack or it will rot. So first we need to think of wood as perishable. When it is cracked or rotten we need to throw it away.

The rotting or spalting process needs three things, the decay spores, moisture, and heat. In fresh cut wood, the spores and water are already there. In Texas you have high heat. This is a recipe for fast deterioration. In the log form, your chances of storage for long periods of time are limited. If you take one of the three factors out of the picture you can increase the storage success rate.

Heat: in Michigan in the winter the wood is out in the yard frozen. Little deterioration will occur.

Spores: they are always there so we cannot change Mother Nature.

Moisture: think of lumbering and slicing the logs into thin boards. This would allow the tree to dry, warp, and shrink without cracking. If we try to dry the tree in the log form the middle of the tree will take a long time to dry out. As the outer surface of the tree dries the stresses from the water evaporating will cause it to crack. If left long enough the center of the tree can rot as the outside of the tree cracks and checks. Not a pretty picture.

The key here is to get freshly cut wood and control the storage and use it as soon as possible. With this knowledge we realize it is useless to stockpile a bunch of wood for future use. Turning green wood is a whole lot easier and a lot more fun. There are new wood sources continuously crossing our paths. Just keep your eyes open and use the wood while it is fresh. Again realize that we need to throw away wood when it spoils. It may not smell like rotten eggs but it is spoiled just the same. More importantly it is not safe to turn at any speed. Throw it away or use it for firewood. It can hurt you. As John Jordan is known for saying "Life is too short to use crappy wood".

TIP ANGLE AND SETUP FOR BOWL GOUGE SHARPENING

Lyle,

I use a wolverine jig and a CBN wheel to sharpen my bowl gouges, 2" out and 50 degree angle set with one of those raptor devices. I am interested in buying your 5/8" bowl gouge and just wondered what angle you sharpen it at and does the 2" setting apply?

I have been turning for about a year and appreciate your YouTube videos, they have been really helpful for me as I am in a small town and have no mentors here.

Thanks,

Dan

Hi Dan location unknown,

Nice to hear from you, thanks for the inquiry. I have many resources to help you. My bowl gouge is ground to about 60-62 degree tip angle. I fine this the most versatile. 50 degrees works fine and 2 inch set back works fine. My Bowl Gouge is custom made to my specifications by Doug Thompson. The important thing that makes it different and more versatile is the internal flute configuration. It has a parabolic flute, but it is wider and deeper than any other gouge.

If you like the way my grind works, you can set the Wolverine jig with the CBN wheel to keep it that way, but if you want to sharpen it with your current jig setup that will work also. If you have seen many of my YouTube videos, you can see I do a large variety of turning techniques with my grind. My Bowl Basics DVD is a better way to learn the cuts and see the continuity of my process start to finish.

The raptor is not a very good method of setting up the angles of my grind the way I sharpen it. Look at my YouTube video <http://youtu.be/0zUph9zEjck> on setting up your grinding jig. This will allow you to do any angle and any grind you prefer. Discard the Wolverine directions, they are confusing at best.

Next time you get to TC stop in and see me or better yet plan a day or two of instruction to kick it up a notch and have more fun at the lathe. A large percentage of my classes are one-on-one.

DIFFERENT BACK RESTS

My backrest has rectangular stock on top and bottom and I saw on your video that your backrest is round stock. Can you explain the difference?

Regards,
Gary

Hi Gary from Colorado,

Very observant! They both work the same - - no difference. My lathe is a custom built lathe with a 26/44 inch swing and the back rest I use was built for that lathe. Not what is normally needed for the popular manufactured lathes. It was one of my very early prototypes when I was researching the manufacturing options for back rests. If I were to make one today for this lathe I would use the rectangular stock because it is stronger for bigger lathes.

WHAT DO YOU USE FOR GLUE BLOCKS?

Hi Lyle,

I just discovered your videos. What kind of wood do you generally use for your glue blocks? I have chunk of poplar that is between 1 ½ and 2 inches thick. Will that work? I also have a small piece 1 1/2 inch walnut that might work also.

Your thoughts,
Charlie

Hi Charlie, YouTube,

Welcome to my turning family. Don't forget to subscribe so you get emails when I post new videos. Any dry wood will do, but the harder and the tighter the grain the better. Poplar will work but it is on the soft side. I would prefer walnut to poplar. Hard maple is best. Either 1 ½ or 2 inch is OK. I would not use anything thicker than 2 inches.

FEEDBACK

Lyle,

I just completed reading your latest newsletter in which someone mentioned "further investment in sharpening equipment". This brings back memories of when I started turning, preferring to buy tools and DVD's to "just sharpening equipment".

After several years turning, attending your class, watching many DVD's and many, many YouTube videos, I finally learned that spending money on good sharpening equipment and learning how to properly sharpen my tool was at least as important as buying tools and DVD's.

Perhaps that is a normal reaction for a beginner and therefore needs more emphasis by the experts of the world of turning.

I really enjoy your newsletter and thank you for your advice.

Pottsy from Pennsylvania

Thanks Lyle,

I was hoping you would say that, I've really started enjoying using the glue block as opposed to the chuck. I have to say that since attending your class, I've cut my "bowl making" time in half due to improved cut techniques and less sanding. My sanding typically starts with 180-220 grit now as

versus 80-120 grit before attending the class. My torn grain I have to sand out is now limited to areas that are difficult for me to cut cleanly due to my skill level, but that is improving with the practice.

Thanks for the information and again thanks for the class.

Jerry from Michigan

Thanks Lyle,

I'm a new subscriber and a relative novice on the lathe. Having lectured for the last 8 years, I can appreciate the quality of your instruction and suspect that you teach/lecture for a living. If you don't, it would appear that you missed your calling. Anyway, great job and I'll be catching up on all your video classes and looking forward to whatever you put out.

Russel YouTube comment

Lyle,

Thanks for the personal "thank you" on the information that came with your bowl gouge. Very nice touch!

My friend here in Tampa, Rudy Lopez, highly recommended your signature gouge. I gave it a little workout yesterday when it arrived. VERY nice! I look forward to my next project with it.

Also I wanted to thank you for your YouTube videos. I have only been turning two years and your videos were a major source of good information to get started. Thank you for them!

I really enjoyed the class on Friday and Saturday. I feel honored to have been able to learn from you in a one-on-one setting in your shop. I hope to continue to hone my skills as a turner and get myself in a position to supplement my retirement income one day.

Scot from Texas

CALENDAR

Check out my website calendar for more specifics.

(<http://www.lylejamieson.com/information/calendar.asp>)

September, 2015 – Georgia

October, 2015 - Ohio

November, 2015 – North Carolina

June, 2016-Atlanta, Georgia

August, 2016- Texas

September, 2016-Pennsylvania

November, 2016-Virginia