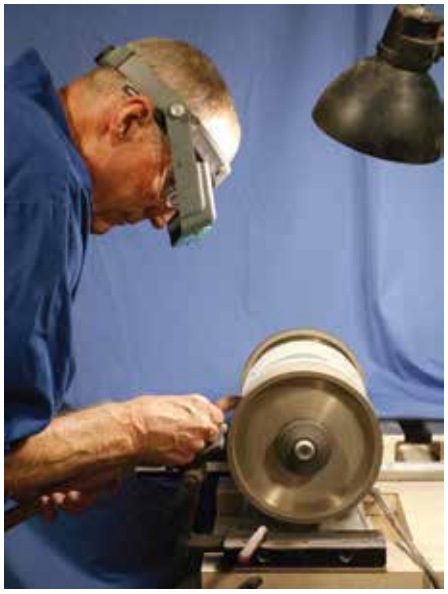
Tips

Sight assist



A headband magnifier has become an invaluable part of my turning kit. I often use it when turning small finials or making fine finish cuts. It is also extremely useful when sharpening. My headband magnifier is an OptiVISOR brand, and it comes with lenses in different focal lengths and magnification strengths.

Safety Note: While some models are advertised as a "high impact visor," this style of magnifier should not be considered a replacement for safety glasses. However, they can be worn over safety glasses, as illustrated in the accompanying photo.

—Bob Rosand, Pennsylvania

Share your turning ideas!

If we publish your tip, we'll pay you $35. Email your tips along with relevant photos or illustrations to editor@woodturner.org.

—Joshua Friend, Editor

Double-decker grinding station

When I upgraded my grinder, I thought of a way to eliminate the time I had been wasting resetting it for the jigs I use for various tools. Rather than dispose of the old grinder, I kept it and used it as part of an expanded, multi-use grinding station, with a grinding wheel dedicated to each of the categories of tools I normally use: bowl gouges, spindle gouges, coring tools, and scrapers.

In addition to having a dedicated setup for each grind, the stand I devised is at a height that doesn't require me to bend over when checking the setup, has storage for jigs, and is stable. A salient feature is the brass used in the depth jigs for each grinding setup. The brass ensures that the gouges don't dig farther and farther into the wood with each insertion.

—Dennis Belcher, North Carolina

The keys to attaining a sturdy upper level are solid supports in the back and cantilevered side brackets. These factors help achieve rigidity while still allowing access to the wheels for when they need to be removed for any reason.

Sanding stick for open-segmented projects

I turn a lot of open-segmented projects and have always had difficulty sanding the openings. It can be especially difficult to remove glue squeeze out. For my most recent project, I decided to solve the problem and made a tool that does the task quickly and easily. It is made from a scrap stick of wood, cut to fit inside the openings and about 12" (30cm) long. I cut a long strip of sandpaper just wide enough to wrap around the stick and attach it using double-sided tape. The sanding stick is long enough to extend through the bowl so that two openings can be sanded at the same time.

—Bill Wells, Washington

Magnetic chuck key holder

I keep my chuck's tightening key nearby—mounted on the lathe's headstock—so it's always in reach when I need it (and not in the shaving pile on the floor). I placed the magnet high and to the left to ensure the handle wouldn't get in the path of the spinning chuck. You could attach the magnet to the headstock with glue, but I haven't found it necessary.

I bought an inexpensive, heavy-duty magnet at Harbor Freight.

—Rick Erexson, North Carolina

Magnet shroud captures grinding dust from CBN wheels

Grinding dust is not good to breathe. I found I could capture most of the dust at the grinder by making custom magnet shrouds around my CBN (carbon boron nitride) wheels. The magnet shrouds naturally attract the powdery metal grinding dust.

I made the magnet shrouds from the bottoms of five-gallon paint buckets. The magnets I used came in a roll with sticky tape on the back. After applying the magnets to the plastic shroud, I put packing tape over them for easier removal of the grinding dust. You could also just mount magnets under or behind your grinder, but they might not be as effective as a shroud.

I screwed the shroud to a vertical piece of plywood just behind the grinding wheel. A little dust does get by, but the magnets capture most of it. I use a wooden stick to remove the dust from the packing-tape-covered magnets when it is time for cleaning. This system works well for me.

Editor's Safety Note: This Tip is intended for use with only CBN wheels, which don't run the same risk of flying apart as conventional stone wheels do. It seems to be common practice by users of CBN wheels to remove the grinder's side guards, and this would allow for the installation of a custom magnet shroud. Guards, or shrouds, help to contain sparks from grinding. These sparks are usually harmless from CBN wheels, but nonetheless you should take care that no flammable material is near the grinder. An example of this is wire wool (steel wool), which if left close enough to a grinder can catch fire from sparks and possibly ignite other materials such as wood dust or shavings.

—Curtis Myers, Virginia

A custom magnet shroud does a great job of capturing grinding dust from CBN wheels.

Flat-bottom bits for drilling a thin box lid

When I make a box lid with an attached knob, I drill a stopped (non-through) hole in the lid to accept a small tenon on the knob. Sometimes I turn the lid fairly thin and there isn't much material left for drilling a stopped hole. If I were to drill a stopped hole using a Forstner or bradpoint bit, the bit's centerpoint might poke through the bottom of the lid. My solution is to use milling cutters or router bits with a flat bottom and no centerpoint. This lets me drill deeper without poking through the lid, and the knob tenon can be a little longer.

—John Lucas, Tennessee

From left: router bit, Forstner bit, and milling cutter. The centerpoint on the Forstner bit effectively limits the potential depth of a stopped hole in thin wood.

Without the centerpoint of a Forstner or bradpoint bit, a milling cutter drills a deeper stopped hole with a flat bottom.

Extended life for a short gouge

When a gouge no longer clamps securely in a grinding jig, create a new flat at the end of the flute. An angle grinder does the job quickly with the turning tool clamped in a vise.

Gouges that have been ground and sharpened repeatedly over several years can begin to slip in holding jigs like the Oneway Vari-Grind. Naturally, your favorite gouge is the one sharpened most and is where you will find the problem first. Sharpening jigs require a flat spot on the gouge for firm clamping of the tool in place. As gouges become shorter from grinding, the clamping location moves from across the flatness of the flutes to the roundness of the bar stock. A round surface under the clamp will allow the tool to slip as it is sharpened, leading to nasty and potentially dangerous results.

To extend the life of a short gouge that no longer clamps securely in a grinding jig, simply grind a new flat spot on the round bar at the end of the flute. The flat can be ground easily with an angle grinder. ■

—Dennis Belcher, North Carolina