

Selecting Tools

What tools do I need?

Prior to purchasing tools, it is important to determine what types of turning you want to be able to do. If turning bowls is your primary interest you will want to choose only tools necessary for turning bowls and similar projects. Likewise, if you want a set of tools that will cover both spindle and bowl turning, it will require more tools and a slightly larger budget. In order to make it easier to choose the correct tools for the job, we have listed the types of available tools below and a description of how they are used. This does not mean you need each of the tools listed below, it is simply a description of the tool and its use. Among the many brands of tools we offer, you will find recommended sets.

What steels are tools made from?

Today's woodturning tools are produced primarily from two types of tool steel, M2 and ASP series. M2 High Speed steel is the industry standard and holds an edge 6 times longer than carbon steel tools. Unlike carbon steel, M2 High Speed steel maintains its edge holding ability even when "bluing" the edge during grinding. Tools manufactured from M2 are relatively inexpensive and offer good value. ASP series steel is a relative newcomer to the woodturning industry. The edge holding ability of tools manufactured from ASP series steel is 3 to 4.5 times that of M2 High Speed steel. Although ASP series tools can be expensive, these tools last many times longer than M2 and are an excellent investment.

How are gouges measured?

Spindle Gouges- are measured by the diameter of the round stock.

Bowl Gouges- are measured by the width of the flute. Add 1/8" diameter to the flute size and you will have the diameter of the round stock.

Exceptions- Oneway Mastercut tools are measured by the diameter of the round stock.



Bowl Gouges

Deep fluted gouges are easier to control and will remove wood faster than shallow, spindle type gouges when turning bowls. We recommend a 1/2" Bowl Gouge as the first choice when getting started turning bowls. Use the same gouge for rough turning the bowl as well as finish turning. We highly recommend a good scraper to "clean-up" the interior surface after you're finished with the gouge. You can add other sizes of bowl gouges to your collection as needed.



Spindle Gouges

Although shallow fluted gouges are generally referred to as "spindle" gouges, they are also used for general purpose turning including twig pots, shallow bowls or boxes, detail work, pens, and other smaller work. We recommend a 1/2" Spindle Gouge as the first choice with the 3/8" the next. You can add other sizes and variations of spindle gouges depending on your needs.



Detail Gouges

A very popular tool today, the detail gouge features a long, fingernail point with a shallow flute and heavy cross section that allows turners to reach well beyond the tool rest without the associated vibration caused by thinner tools. It is used for cutting fine detail on beads, decorative grooves and other detail work on bowls and spindles. A 3/8" or 7/16" size is preferred by most turners.



Roughing Gouges

Designed primarily for taking square spindle stock down to round. The deep, wide flute of the tool allows rapid removal of stock and allows heavy cuts. Recommended primarily for spindle turning. In most cases, a 3/4" roughing gouge is the recommended first choice.



Scrapers

At times, scrapers are essential, particularly for interior clean-up work after the gouge work has been completed. Most bowls, boxes, goblets and scoops benefit from light scraping cuts completing the final shaping and improving the surface. Scrapers vary widely in shape and size. Many are ground to unusual shapes to aid in specific types of work such as reaching inside the narrow opening of a hollow form. "Shear" scraping can provide a smoother than normal surface by tilting the scraper on its edge to create a "shearing" cut. All scrapers require a burr edge to do the cutting similar to a cabinet scraper used on cabinetry. When the burr is gone, it needs to be re-sharpened. For a first scraper, we recommend a thick scraper (preferably 1" wide by 3/8" thick) with a "french curve" or radius shape on the end.



Parting Tools

A parting tool is a must for most woodturners. It is used to part off the waste, establish diameter or cut small flat areas. We recommend the Diamond Parting Tool, as the side clearance permits deep cuts with a minimal amount of drag on the tool. A thin kerf parting tool is recommended for box turning.

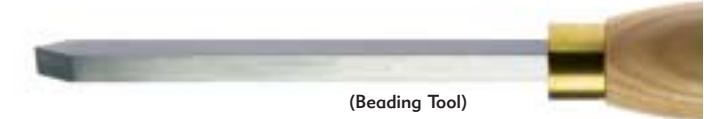


Skew Chisels

The skew is essential for cutting beads and round areas on spindle work. Properly used, the skew will produce smooth surfaces on boxes, goblets, scoops, etc. Skews with a rounded top and bottom edge are recommended. We recommend a 1/2" or 3/4" skew chisel for your first skew.



(Formed Beading Tool)



(Beading Tool)



(Fluted Beading Tool)

Bead Forming Tools

There are several variations of tools made specifically for cutting beads. Formed beading tools are ground to cut a specific size of bead when used. Fluted beading tools are used with the fluted section of the flute in the downward position with the tool tilted downward from the work piece. Beading tools that do not cut a pre-determined bead size are a rectangular shape tool with a long bevel on the end. This is a shearing tool and is used in a similar manner to a skew. If you find yourself frequently cutting beads, you may want consider one of these types of tools.