

## Scraping versus Cutting - continued

Cutting chisels are almost always preferable to use in forming wood. They are also more difficult to use. But once you start using these tools, you'll see that they leave a greater surface and are easier to cut a profile with less force. They are more finesse tools than are scrapers. For thin or small diameter work, they are a must! You'll get far fewer broken pieces with the use of cutting chisels because there is less force being applied to it. Cutting chisels allow you to quickly and quite effortlessly slice into the wood fibers instead of ripping them out with the scrapers. Slicing the wood fibers keeps the tool cooler as well. Less force is needed and there's only a very small edge actually doing the cutting so there is far less friction and heat generated. One key to successful cutting chisel use is making smooth movements. Plan out ahead of time where you're going to move and do it with your entire body instead of just moving your arms or hands or fingers. Having your entire body moving will make a smoother and even profile. If possible, anchor your tool handle against your arm and/or under it and against your body. It'll help I guarantee it.

Perhaps you've seen the phrase "riding the bevel"? The bevel on cutting chisels are important and perform a couple of different functions. These bevels determine how much is taken off with each cut by how long they are. The longer the bevel, in general, the more you can take off with each pass. They also act as a guide to ride along already cut areas. There's no need to control the cut directly on the cutting edge. In fact, doing so will often result in a catch. Let that bevel ride on the already cut area and you can leverage the tool against that bevel - wood contact area to increase or decrease your depth and direction of cut. The bevel on these tools also act as a stabilizing contact area. Imagine that you're extended way out over the toolrest and the forces of the wood spinning is making your tool bounce all over the place. Keeping that bevel firmly in contact with the wood will act as sort of a secondary toolrest giving greater stability to your tool. Lastly, the bevel can give your surface a burnished effect. Effectively, you'll cut with the very edge of the cutter chisel and as the bevel follows along after the edge, it slightly compresses those wood fibers creating an even smoother surface. Many times this is good and sometimes it isn't what you want. This is where technique comes in and you learn how hard to push that bevel depending on what you're after in a surface.

That brings us to the end of this article. I've only scratched the surface on the subject of woodturning tools. There's so much more to cover that I find it hard to focus on just one thing. Technology marches forward in the woodturning tool market and new things are developed all the time. It may be a new type of steel being used or some new kind of hollowing tool that offers "more, faster, cheaper, smoother" in some way.

The key thing that I think I want you to take away from my view of woodturning tools is this: Try it out. Use that tool. Practice with it and get to know it. Nothing replaces experience and practice with a woodturning tool. Each tool is so versatile that new uses can be discovered all the time. Be safe.

Perhaps someone can offer to write a small article (large would be fantastic too!) each month covering some aspect of the tools that we use. Maybe some reviews of particular tools that they have? Would you like to know more about a tool before you buy it? Just ask and we'll have our numerous researchers search out the answers for you.

## Member Gallery

