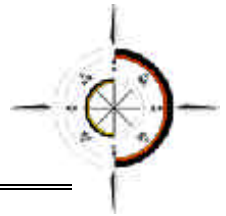


Crew Galley (Gallery)



Our Tools - Part II of Several

The Mad Woodturner

Woodturning tools can be roughly separated into two categories: Scrapers and Chisels (cutters). As you'll see, these categories are primarily based on how they are used and not in their shape or profiles. Many people separate them into Spindle and Bowl tools though.

Scrapers

Generally, scrapers have no flute running down the middle of the tool and have only a very slight bevel. The bevel is there only in order to get the lower part of the tool out of the way so that only the top edge can contact the wood. These tools are often used as a primary tool by beginning woodturners and as a finishing tool by experienced woodturners.

Common scraper tools include rounded edge, flat edge and some hollowing tools like those found in the Sorby Multi-tip Hollowing tool tips. It's pretty easy to change the profile or shape of scrapers to fit your need. If you do this, make sure you minimize sharp edges that might really bite into the wood. A nasty catch can happen. Of course, a straight-across flat edged scraper is great to flatten the inside of boxes but care must be taken to not catch that left edge against the wall of the box.

The key to scraper function is the rolled edge along the length of the edge of the tool. It's this rolled edge that actually does the work and must be refreshed periodically by either slight grinding to form that "lip" or by using a burnisher to form the edge after sharpening. A burnisher is just a very smooth round, oval or even triangular shaped 6" piece of very hard steel like HSS. If you don't have or can't find (I couldn't!) an actual burnisher, just use a screwdriver that has a relatively long, smooth, and large neck portion. I just use my big HSS roughing gouge's neck to do it. The HSS is hard enough that the scrapers don't even make a scratch! Run that screwdriver's steel along the edge of the scraper's edge at a slight angle. It just takes a couple of passes and you should feel a little "lip" on the top of the scraper. That's the rolled edge that you want. The bigger the rolled edge you have then the bigger "bite" it'll take. It'll also wear away quicker and need to be refreshed sooner too. New scrapers straight from the factory often don't include that rolled edge. You'll need to do that yourself first if you want a rolled edge. You don't **have** to have a rolled edge, mind you. Very light, fine cuts can be made with a scraper with no rolled edge. This is what I use for my finishing cuts.

Scrapers are mainly presented to the workpiece straight-in (90 degrees) to the spinning workpiece or having the tip slightly below the centerline of the spinning wood. Only slightly raising or lowering the tip of the scraper will cut into the wood much differently. Generally, the thicker and more mass (heavier) a scraper has, the better it will function due to the decreased vibration in a heavier tool. This is why you'll see scraper tools that are often large and heavy being used. Carefully raising one edge of the scraper off the toolrest and presenting the cutting edge to the workpiece at about a 45 degree angle gives you a "Shear Scraping" cut. It gives a nearly complete surface to the piece.