

Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

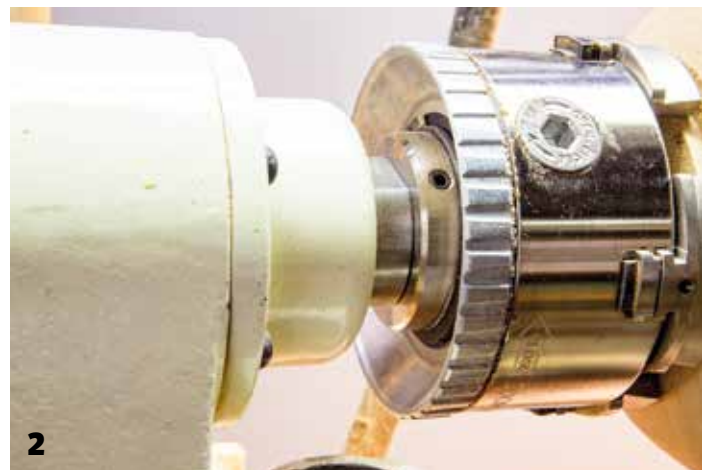


PHOTOGRAPHY BY KURT HERTZOG

1 All my lathes, including minis (with some rewiring), have reverse capability. I find it helpful when power sanding turning. I change direction with each grit change **2** Be certain you have tightened down the grub screws on your workholding device if you have any intention of running your lathe in reverse

What is the benefit of a lathe running in reverse? Hope that isn't too foolish a question – I just can't wrap my mind around it.

There are advantages to having a lathe that will run in reverse. Caution up front! Be certain that the grub screws in your chuck collar or faceplate, if you are using one, are tightened or you risk having your workholding method unthread on power down or rapid significant speed change when running in reverse. On occasion, I enjoy using reverse when power sanding. Running the lathe in reverse will impart a different scratch pattern to the turning, as can a reversal of the drill direction. Switching from forwards to reverse when changing grits seems to help with the sanding process. While I don't use this technique, I've heard of turners, particularly left-handed turners, run the lathe in reverse while standing on the opposite side of the lathe. It presents the tool to the work properly and lets the turner be more comfortable in their hollowing or whatever. There may be other uses or advantages to reversing direction but these come to mind.



Just wondering if most people upgrade the Parker-style refills in their pens before they sell them, or do you just sell with the one that comes with the kit? Also, what is the best upgrade in your opinion? Thanks in advance.

The use or discarding of the factory-provided inkfill usually depends on the market. If you are giving away pens, selling them for virtually materials cost recovery, or are targeting the lower price end of the pen market, you usually can't or won't spend the additional money to replace the kit-provided inkfill with one of higher quality. If you are reaching for higher prices in the pen market, are giving a personal gift or special creation, or really care that the end user will enjoy the writing experience, replacing the inkfill with one of higher quality is a wise move. While you've asked about Parker style, I'd like my answer to be more general. The use of a Parker style or genuine Parker brand inkfill will rarely change the inkfill extension by much, if at all. However, in 7mm pens, the choice of inkfill will vary the inkfill extension from a little to a lot, depending on two things. First, how closely the Cross-style inkfill resembles a genuine Cross inkfill dimensionally. There are variations from a little to a lot in dimension between the various lookalikes and the genuine. Second, how you (or any other maker) set the inkfill extension based on your depth of

pressing in the transmission. If you used a kit-provided inkfill to press the transmission to a depth creating a pleasing inkfill extension, any changes in brand from that no-name inkfill will likely change the extension. This can occur when the owner replaces the inkfill since they will unlikely have access to the same no-name inkfill that came with the kit. This can vary considerably, creating dramatic changes in appearance and user writing experience. Personally, I always change the inkfill in any pen I make to the best writing one I can find. That has always been the genuine Cross, Parker, Sheaffer, or other top-shelf inkfill brands. Compared to the cost of materials and how I value my time invested in creating the pen, I find the few dollars additional invested in a quality writing inkfill is a minor cost and worthwhile investment. You need to make your own decision based on your end customer, whether purchasing or gifted. As to brands, you've already seen my choices but there are a few other top-shelf makers you can choose from. Usually comparing the various choices by writing a few sentences on a quality bond paper with each, side by side, will lead you to a good choice. You only need to do that one time to determine "your brand" of inkfill for each family of pen. BTW... When I replace the inkfill from the kit, usually black ink, I replace it with a blue ink inkfill. Even in the day of colour copiers, signing anything or writing anything with blue ink makes it quickly apparent which is the original document.



3 I find that buying smart and in quantity allows me to equip all my pens with a quality inkfill at a very modest cost **4** I am careful to set my 7mm inkfill extension to my liking using the genuine inkfill. An exact replacement, available anywhere in the world, will maintain this relationship **5** Examples of the variations that can occur with mixed use of available inkfills. Using the kit inkfill makes exact replacement by the end user nearly impossible



6 The ability to put a quality cutting edge quickly and efficiently on your tools is a skill that is key to your skills growth in woodturning **7** With some additional grinding skills, you'll be able to not only grind a well cutting edge on your tools but also be able to quickly determine its state with a look and feel **8** Your cuts will be better quality and require less effort with a properly sharpened tool. With experience, you'll be able to feel the need for a touch up as you cut

**Do companies typically ship new gouges sharpened?
I used a new one out of the package and it didn't seem
to be sharp enough. It's my first new gouge**

The workers in the various tool producers' factories are not necessarily turners. Nor are they typically given time or instruction to sharpen production line tools to perfection. They put a generic edge on the tools that can range from kind of shaped to serviceably sharp, based on the tool type, available time, skills of the individual, and their ambition. Since nearly all turners will tailor their new tools right out of the package to their own liking, the 'putting on a point' at the factory is only a starting point and necessary cosmetics for the visual appearance in the retail packaging. For the most part they are just saving the end user a bit of time grinding away a lot of extra steel to get to their new owner's desired end point. That said, the higher-end (read more costly) tool makers will usually provide a very serviceable tool right out of the package. Even with that nicety, nearly all woodturners take every new tool to the grinder to shape it and sharpen it to their specific liking.

With absolutely no intention of being demeaning or derogatory, I'm wondering about your sharpening abilities. This is based on your comment about the tool not cutting well as you took it from the

packaging. Opening a new tool from any manufacturer, most turners can determine if it is ground to anywhere near their desired angle/profile and if it is sharp or not. Even before putting the tool to wood, a look at the grind and a careful finger test of the edge should give you a good indication of the sharpness condition and suitability to cutting. If your current sharpening capability doesn't let you do this, perhaps you should work on your sharpening skills. Team up with a more experienced turning friend or club member to get some guidance and additional sharpening practice.

You say this is your first new gouge. How are you dealing with your other tools as you get and use them, new or used? All tools dull with use and need periodic 'refreshing', so how are you dealing with them? Are you able to get them to a sharp and functional state easily and repeatably? How do you determine that they are indeed sharp? My comments made here are geared to all. I believe that everyone can always improve in every aspect of their turning. Even the most accomplished and skilled are continually refining their craft, even if it is subconsciously. Work on your sharpening skills. I promise they will serve you well throughout your turning journey. In addition to learning from a turner with a more sharpening capabilities, you may wish to refer to *WT260*, *WT261*, and *WT263*. In those issues, my columns focused specifically on sharpening equipment, techniques, and tips. ●