

# Kurt's clinic

## Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

### What is the advantage of hand chasing threads? Is it just bragging like using a skew to create beads?

Being able to hand-chase threads is a valuable skill to expand your turning horizons. Not critical to know if you are content with your current repertoire but, like the skew, it does open new techniques. Lidded boxes, for example, are certainly an accomplishment with a nice suction fit or snap-lock lid. Once you can do that reliably, how about threaded lids? Because taps and dies don't lend themselves to the woodturning arena because of cost and infinitely varying dimensions of use, hand chasing fits perfectly. Once you have become proficient with creating nicely fitting threaded components, you can worry about

grain matching when the lid is threaded closed. From the smallest turnings to the largest, threading can be employed as you see fit. Do you need to learn it? Certainly not my call. You be the judge. There are plenty of excellent videos on YouTube by accomplished turners and teachers on hand chasing. Should you decide to give hand chasing a try, get some advice on thread pitch before you buy. Some pitches are better suited to different species. Depending on your plans, you may be better equipped with one pitch vs another. Of course, you always have the option of buying the available threading attachments for a pretty penny if you want threads without learning the hand-chasing process. By the way, when looking at a properly rolled and tucked bead, it is almost impossible to tell if a skew was used or not.



**1** Matched sets, male and female, are available in a variety of thread pitches. With those two tools, you can cut threads. **2** Learning to chase threads is a great skill to develop. Not a necessary skill but certainly expands your repertoire. **3a & 3b** Tapered threads, insertable thread pairs, standard mating threads, in wood and plastic. Pair diameters limited only by your lathe.

### When I'm shopping for drills, I see 118° and 135° nose angle choices. Which angle should I be buying and using?

Depending on who you ask, most folks will say 118° drills are best for wood and aluminium with 135° suited for harder materials such as steels. Without going down the rabbit hole discussing nose angle shape,

aggressiveness, pitch and more, I don't think it really matters. I use both in my shop without paying too much attention. For the average woodworker (that's us too), you'll likely never know the difference in use unless you also drill a lot of steel. Until you need to set the adjustments on a Drill Doctor or the like for sharpening, you'll probably never know or care which angle you have and use.

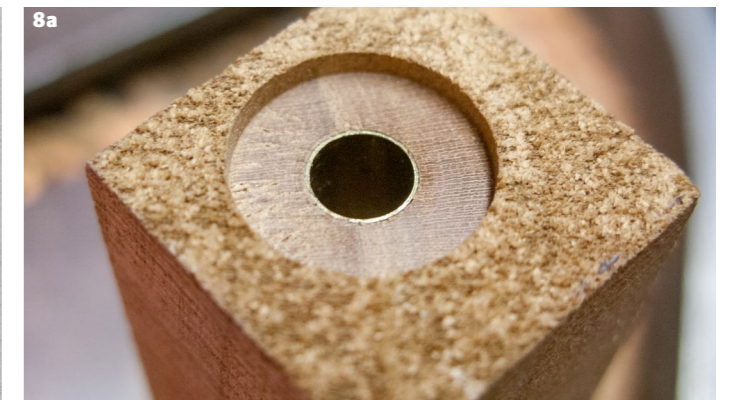


PHOTOGRAPH BY KURT HERTZOG

### I have terrible difficulties drilling my pen blanks straight. I have tried a drill press, a hand drill, and my lathe. I still have uneven holes. How do I fix this?

I am guessing you mean uneven positions of the entrance and exit holes on the blank with respect to some surface. There are many possible causes for this, from the platen of your drill press not properly perpendicular with respect to the quill travel to variations in the raw stock affecting the workholding positioning. Drilling a pen blank really doesn't need to be as accurate as you think. We aren't making rocket parts. There are only two items important to any pen blank drilling other than a quality, properly sized hole for a good adhesive bond to the brass tube. Those two items are: preserving potential grain match at the interface whether centrebanded or centrebandedless, and maintaining sufficient wall thickness at the interface location, nib, and clip ends. If you successfully accomplish that, you have succeeded with your drilling requirements. Other than trying to put a 7mm hole in a 1/2in square blank, you shouldn't run into many issues. Any savings obtained by cutting blanks so small is usually offset by the number of blanks ruined during drilling. When planning a grain match, the way to ensure you have the best grain match at the interface is to always

mark and know the interface ends through the process. I mark my blank appropriately when planning my cut at the bandsaw. After cutting, mark your best centre point of the interface ends for drilling. Always drill from the interface end on both blanks. You can be very accurate with a decent centre mark. Regardless of your drilling process, always have this end being presented to the drilling process. When you fixture your blanks in a vice, clamp, drilling fixture or other, you'll only need to be reasonably perpendicular to the axis of drilling with a reasonably sized blank. Any off axis, whether your pistol drilling accuracy or drill press table lack of perpendicularity, can be accommodated provided your exit location leaves sufficient wall thickness for turning. There is no grain to match at the exit ends so who cares if your exit point has wandered off true perpendicularity? You only need enough wall thickness to turn your desired shape and match up properly with the hardware. Don't be sloppy but pay attention to the two key points. If grain match or featuring any specific area of the blank isn't required based on your material, your positioning at both ends is totally unimportant provided you leave sufficient wall for turning to the shape you wish. Your drillings may not look like rocket parts when doing this, but you'll be much quicker in the shop and the result will never indicate your errant ways.



**4** Planning your cut location for best appearance and marking the interface ends for processing is a good routine. **5** Drilling and inserting from the interface ends only as much as needed minimises facing loss, maintains best grain match. **6** Grossly exaggerated to make the point. Always drill well centred from the interface end needing only sufficient wall thickness at the other. **7** One of the great things about a simple 7mm kit is the 'pick the best fit' end prior to assembly. The nib end requires the best match. **8a & 8b** I value my time far more than wood cost. Being generous with blank dimensions reduces drilling accuracy needs. **9** Only pens that will have an interface grain match need a lot of drilling attention. The rest only reasonable technique.