

# Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

## Do you have problems with adhesives curing in the bottle long before they are used up? Do you have brand preferences? Do you have glue storage suggestions?

You are not alone with the premature curing issues of adhesives. This is also an issue with finishes and other chemicals in my shop. I follow three rules to help extend the shelf life of my adhesives. First and foremost, don't buy the large quantity size unless you are a big user. The economies of scale will certainly be lost if you only get use of a third of the bottle of glue. Don't buy more than you will use in a short period of time. Having glue sitting on your shelves is the same as it ageing on the retailer's shelves. I find this particularly troublesome with my polyurethane adhesives.

I buy the large bottles trying to economise, only to lose quite a bit that hardens before I use it. The solution... buy the smaller sizes so they get used up in a reasonable amount of time. One of the techniques I use to help minimise loss is to store the bottles upside down. That lets the air trapped in the container rise to the bottom. Any curing or thickening now occurs at the bottom of the bottle, leaving the upper portions to remain useable. I often leave the bottle in the packaging, flip it over with the bottom up, and store it hanging in the original package. On the buying side, purchase your adhesives from a shop that moves the product

quickly. Adhesives sitting on the shelf gather dust which is taking away from your end-user shelf life. The fresher your product is when you get it, the longer it should last in your shop. I don't flip over CA adhesives unless they are unopened. Once the seal is broken on those, I simply use them promptly and pitch any that thicken or harden up. I've seen information to the contrary, but I still find that CA adhesives keep just as well uncapped as they do capped. Not certain how they fare in your shop. Over the years, I've rarely had an CA adhesive go bad, whether capped or not. Although I've had bottles that were unopened turn into rocks. In a nutshell, buy small, fresh quantities and use it promptly.

I've never personally seen any life extensions by refrigerating the adhesives, but there are folks who follow that practice. Let me speak to finishes also. The key to keeping most chemicals from curing is to prevent, or at least minimise, air (with its oxygen) contact. While I haven't any first-hand knowledge, there is a product available called Bloxygen. It is argon product that is dispensed into the containers with your finishes, or the like, to put an air protecting 'cover' over the product. Argon is inert and heavier than air, so adding it to your container lets it settle over the top of the chemicals, sealing them from the atmosphere. While it isn't inexpensive, it works well according to my friends who have used it, making it cost-effective when it helps you save a quantity of expensive finish or other chemical.



1 When I get a bottle of adhesive, I flip the bottle over while its being stored. The trapped air bubble going to the bottom of the bottle

2 Reports from friends are that this works well. I haven't had personal experience but the heavier-than-air argon shielding the chemicals surface makes sense



PHOTOGRAPH BY KURT HERZOG

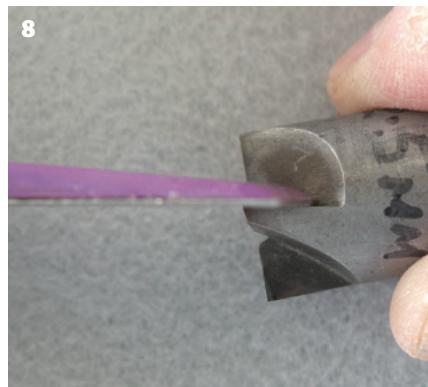
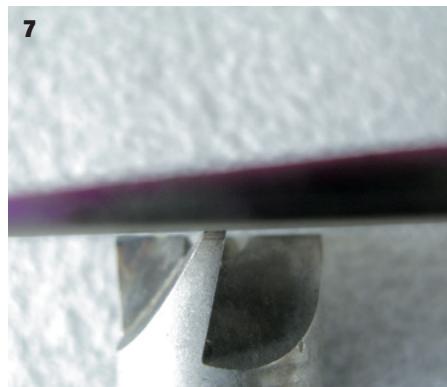
**I'm having difficulties with barrel trimmers. There are many to choose from. Recommendations are welcome. Mine dull fast and I'm having breakages.**

There are two techniques for bringing the pen blank flush to the brass tube. You can sand it on a disc or belt sander either by hand or using a fixture. The other method, per your question, is to use a barrel trimmer. I use both as follows. I use barrel trimmers for all pen blanks except laser cut kits. For laser cut kits, I exclusively use a belt sander with a fixture. There are those who freehand on a belt or disc sander. Piloting on the tube ID along with truly perpendicular platen and fence, gives me a flush, perpendicular to the tube surface for my parts interface.

I don't believe I've ever owned a carbide barrel trimmer. I tried them when I had a chance to use one from a friend, but didn't find a reason to change from my norm. I buy the standard issue steel versions.

While I can't give advice on the carbide trimmers, I can tell you what will kill a standard trimmer fast. Trimmers are much like Forstner bits. Too much speed and too much pressure heats them to death. Slow down. Present the cutter and let it do the cutting. Forcing things or running it so fast that it polishes rather than cuts will turn a standard trimmer into garbage in moments.

I do a 'good, better, best' system with the trimmers. If I want the best cut, I use a brand-new trimmer. I never use that trimmer for the heavy material trimming. Once a new trimmer gets some use and doesn't cut superbly even with a diamond hone touch-up, it gets relegated to the better category where it is a general use trimmer. Used properly, low speeds and proper feeds, it will be used for trimming when there isn't a huge amount of material to remove. After the better category use has made the trimmer less useful even with touch-ups, it gets put into the good category. It is used there until even touching it up with a hone doesn't help. At that point, it hits the bin.



**3** Part of my stable of barrel trimmers. I modify them based on my needs and often use tape to create a low-tech bushing for a good fit inside the brass tube **4** Reasonable speeds and feeds will help maintain the life of a barrel trimmer. It is easy to overheat them and ruin any finer cutting capabilities **5** The goal of a barrel trimmer is to trim the wood flush with the brass tube. Good placement and gluing will help to minimise the amount needing to be trimmed **6** If you don't have a set of modestly priced diamond hones in your kit, I suggest you add them. Ideal for touching up barrel trimmers, skewes, parting tools, bedans, and others **7** Exactly the WRONG way to touch up a barrel trimmer. Do you think you can touch up all four edges remaining at the correct angle and keep all edges coplanar? **8** Far easier to touch up the cutting edges, remaining in contact, and maintaining coplanarity of the cutters. Like tools, keeping them sharp is easier than sharpening **9** A recently released barrel trimmer family. A single cutter head with two carbide cutters mounted accepts any one of the pilot diameters available in the kit **10** My favourite feature is the amount of 'overhang' the cutter has with the brass tube. This prevents the brass tube from creeping between the cutter and the pilot **11** If you trim laser cut kits, a barrel trimmer usually breaks things. Having a fixture to pilot the blank on the brass tube ID works great, whether homemade or store bought

◀ 12



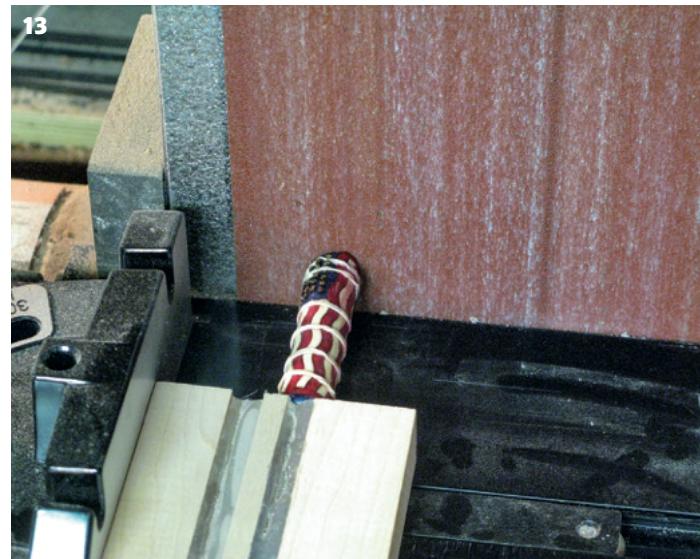
12 Getting good results, the face of trimmed wood and brass tube perpendicular to the tube ID requires that the platen and fence be trued perpendicular to the belt

13 Jointed and grooves cut accurately, pilots of aluminium rod fixed in place with the proper extension provide support while sanding of the faces is done

As far as breakages, if you are using a barrel trimmer on laser cut assemblies, you will almost always damage them. Regardless of every trick I've tried, I always break or fracture the laser cut kit when using anything but a sander. If you are having issues with any solid body pen blank, you may have a dull trimmer that you are trying to make work. Dull trimmers will only heat up and polish. If they are made to cut, it is usually under duress and results in a burned or otherwise compromised poorly cut surface.

I have recently been using the barrel trimmers designed with the replaceable carbide cutters. While more costly than the traditional barrel trimmers, whether steel or carbide, they work superbly. I'm extremely impressed with the family of interchangeable pilots that allow the trimmer to be used on just about any tube diameter available. The replaceable cutters allow you to rotate a virgin edge into place whenever the need arises.

13



**I'm trying to expand my turning expertise into other projects. So far, I've been doing pens, bottle stoppers, and other smaller turnings. I want to add other items. Your suggestions?**

I'm not certain of your experience and expertise levels, but expanding your horizons is a natural progression. My learning process was not only classes, videos, and articles, but mostly from friends in the several AAW chapters I joined. Watching the show and tell portions of the meeting allowed me to identify members with the skills at various projects. My first foray from the simpler was into bowls. Seemingly easy, turning a well-shaped and nicely balanced bowl is a challenge some turners never manage. I was fortunate enough to ask one of our club's premier bowl turners to coach me with expanding my turning education into bowls. He willingly spent a few hours each week with me.

As a relative newbie, I learned a lot about tools, sharpening, workholding, material selection, processing, shape and balance, sanding, and finishing. While always in furtherance of bowl turning, everything applied directly to turning of all types

and were skills I desperately needed. Whether your next area of interest is bowls, hollow forms, lidded boxes, ornaments, or other, either take a class on the subject or find a fellow member willing to tutor you

on their methods. You can continue to add new items to your repertoire as you go. If you aren't a member of a local turning club, I suggest you join. The benefits will far outweigh any costs of membership.

15



15 One of the only shots I could find of my first 'good' bowl. A walnut bowl done back in '01 under the tutelage of my bowl mentor from my club.