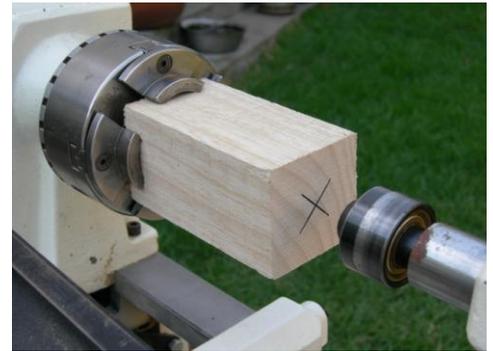


Spin Top Project

By Pete Carta

Spin tops are fun to make and help develop good tool control skills. Tops are turned as spindles with the grain running parallel to the lathe bed. The entire project can be completed with only a spindle (or detail) gouge. There are many options that can be used to turn and then decorate the tops. The completed tops can be a great gift for a youngster or for the youngster in each of us.

1. **Select a blank** that is about two inches by two inches by four inches long. Straight-grained hard maple would be a good choice for this project. Avoid blanks that have cracks or checks. Use a rule to mark the center on one end of the block.



2. **Mount the blank in a scroll chuck.** Use the tailstock and the marked center to align the block in the chuck before tightening the jaws. *An alternate method would be to use a faceplate and glue block if a chuck is not available.*

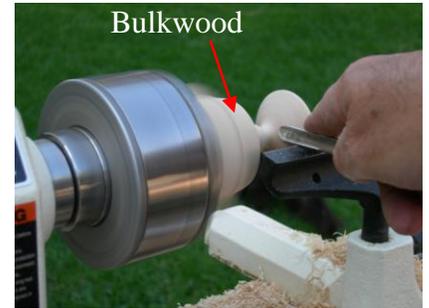
3. **Turn the outside** to form a cylinder at least three inches long and the maximum diameter possible. A spindle or detail gouge can be used for this step. *A spindle-roughing gouge could also be used. (New turners may want to use a parting tool near the chuck.)*



4. **Form the bottom** of the spin top. Low profile tops seem to spin longer. Start the cut about 3/8 of an inch from the face. Slowly cut down to the center. Do not force the gouge into the wood. At this point, decoration in the form of “chatter-work” or colored pens can be used to enhance the look of the top. This would be a good time to sand and finish this surface. Do not sand the tip.

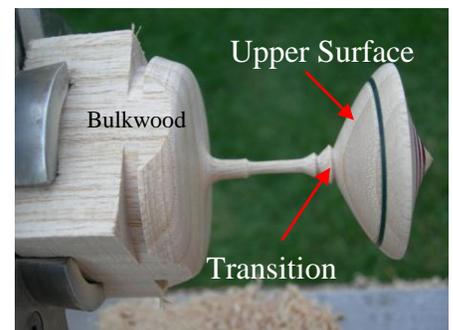


5. **Form the upper surface** with the spindle gouge. Additional detail (chatter-work, colored markers) may be added to this surface. *Cut away more of the bulkwood on the left side as you proceed, to **AVOID A CATCH**.* This would be a good time to sand and finish this surface



6. **Turn the transition** between the upper surface and the stem. *(Small beads look good). Keep cutting away some of the bulkwood on the left side as you proceed to **AVOID A CATCH**.*

7. **Reduce the diameter of the stem** in gradual steps. The bevel of the gouge should **lightly** rest on the stem. *Cut away some of the bulkwood as you proceed to **AVOID A CATCH**.* This would be a good time to sand and finish the stem.



8. **Part off the top** with the tip of the spindle gouge. **AVOID A CATCH.**

Supplies:

Top Blank (2x2x4)
Sand paper
Sealer (finish)
Pencil

Tools:

3/8 Spindle Gouge
Parting Tool (Optional)
Spindle roughing gouge (Optional)
Chatter Tool (Optional)

Enjoy the beauty of your creation and use this experience as a foundation to create more tops for all of the “young” people in your life.

Pete Carta

Is a member and past president of the
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