

# GOOD, BETTER, BEST

## BOWL BASICS - PART 2



Good, Better, Best  
Don't let it rest, until your good is better and  
your better is best!



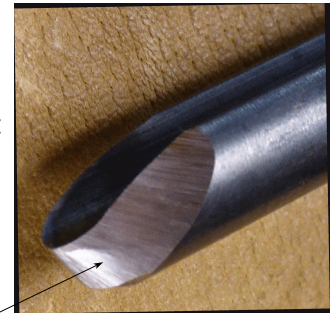
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# Shaping and Design

1. Looking at the piece of wood, determine the design you wish to turn. Several methods have been suggested by turners to determine a good design. You can use a chain - look to see how it naturally falls for a good shape. Some use a French Curve to determine a pleasing design while others have suggested using a football. Try to avoid flat spots using a smooth curve that flows from the base to the rim. You may want to look critically at glass bowls you have around the house or see in stores to provide inspiration. While turning you can step back away from the lathe, look at the shape as it takes form and make needed adjustments.
2. Suggestions for beginners: Don't make the bowl too deep or complicated. Keep it simple then gradually add more complexity.
3. Think about the rim, how it will be shaped, as well as the foot of the bowl.

## Turning the Bowl

1. Be sure your tools are sharp. Remember the ABCs of turning:
  - A - Anchor the tool on the tool rest before it touches the wood.
  - B - Bevel: The term is often used, "ride the bevel". Maintain contact with the bevel. Actually you can let the bevel ride on the wood and if you do not raise the handle it will not cut. You can let the bevel ride and then gently proceed to "C"
  - C. Cut: This is done by carefully raising the handle until the sharp edge engages the wood and begins to cut.



2. The direction the bevel is pointing determines the direction of the cut.
3. Begin shaping the predetermined outside shape of the bowl from the bottom of the bowl toward the top with the blank between centers. Cut a tenon on the bottom if using a chuck. (Look at #7 above regarding the size and shape of the tenon) Beginning at the bottom start working your way toward the top of the bowl. Create the shape you desire. With the bowl between centers you can basically shape the whole outside of the bowl, sand and finish everything on the outside except the foot.
4. Once the outside is finished, the bowl can be removed and put in a chuck if that is your method of holding it. You can also secure the bowl to a face plate for turning the inside of the bowl. When you mount the bowl be sure it is running true before turning the inside.

5. To turn the inside you want to work from top to bottom (reverse of what you did on the outside) this way you have supported fibers. You can drill a hole in the center as a depth gauge. Begin with sweeping cuts toward the center of the bowl. Gradually work toward the outside bringing each cut to the center. Follow the contour of the bowl's outside. Before the bowl gets too thin, be sure to complete the rim while you still have enough mass to support the rim. As the bowl gets thinner, work your way down toward the bottom. The thinner the bowl is, the more you may have to sand as you go. Keep your tools sharp for good cutting and less tear out.
6. Green wood rapidly warps, so if you stop for a short time (lunch) between turning the outside and inside, wrap it to reduce the amount warping.



## Sanding and Finish

1. Always use sharp sandpaper. Like any other tool it will work best when sharp. Throw old sand paper away! New turners often want to know what grit sand paper to use. Begin with the coarsest grit needed. The more you turn, the better your finished product will be off the gouge. You may need to start at 150 (or even courser). Don't skip grits. The general rule is jump about 50% from you previous paper. So from 150 you may go to 220, to 320, to 400, to 600, to 800, to 1200, to 2000. You may choose to stop any where along the way you wish. You may only want to go to 600 or 800 that's your choice.
2. Always remove the tool rest before starting to sand.
3. Sand slow and keep it moving. If the sanding gets hot on your hand - it's too hot for the wood. You can cut a sheet of sand paper into quarters. Then fold each quarter in thirds. Hold the sand paper so if there is any kind of a catch the paper will be pulled from your hand. Progressively move to smother grits until finished. Stop frequently to examine the finish you are getting. It is better to stop at 220 and see you have a scratch or tear-out that needs a coarser grit than to go all the way to 800 then have to go back to 150 and repeat all of the grits again.
4. Power sanding: Some turners like to power sand, especially the inside of a bowl, with a sander or drill, using small round sanding pads. Follow the same basic rules given above for this method of sanding as well. Sand at 3:00 or 9:00 and rotate the opposite direction the bowl is turning.



5. There are probably as many answers to what finish to use as there are turners. There really are a wide variety of finishes available. So to keep this simple, only a couple will be suggested, but feel free to decide what you like best. The following are simple basic finishes but more elaborate finishes can certainly be developed and used effectively.
- A. For food products: basic Walnut oil finish.
  - B. OB Shine juice: mix equal parts of shellac, denatured alcohol and boiled linseed oil. Apply with a paper towel, rub in thoroughly then buff.
  - C. Friction polish or tung oil can be used on bowls
  - D. Bri-wax can be added or Renaissance wax
  - E. Beall buffing system is beneficial on almost all turned projects

## Finishing the Foot

1. Once the inside is finished the last step may be to complete the foot of the bowl.
2. A jam chuck is the most basic way to complete the foot. There are other options, but to keep this in line with basics, let's consider the jam chuck.



Basically, the bowl is removed from the four-jaw chuck or face plate to finish the foot. A wood piece is turned that the bowl fits inside. This can be held by a faceplate or four-jaw chuck. Some kind of padding needs



to be placed inside (paper towel, leather rubber) the bowl or between the bowl and jam chuck, to protect the finish of the bowl. Bring the tail stock up applying pressure so the bowl is jammed into the jam chuck. Be sure it is centered, if not adjust until it is. Carefully, take small bites off the tenon until almost all of it is removed.

3. Make the foot slightly recessed so it will set flat on a shelf or table. Take time to finish this well as it shows you took time with the details. You may want to cut a few shallow rings for decoration. Be sure you know how much thickness you have so you don't end up making a funnel out of a beautiful bowl.
4. Sand through the same grits you did on the bowl. You may want to wait until you finish the next step to apply your finish.
5. Remove from the lathe. With a hand chisel or knife remove the remaining nub. Sand the nub

area. This can be done with sanding discs on a drill press or lathe again working through all the grits. Sign your piece. You may want to add the type of wood and either a date or a code. If you keep track of the pieces you make you can put a code on the bottom to help you locate it in your inventory. A code does not date a piece you may want to gift later. A simple code is two numbers for the year, month and item turned that month. If you turn more than 10 a month you may want to substitute a letter for the last 2 numbers. You can enter this information with a sharpie or engraver.

6. Apply finish on the bottom of the bowl.
7. Take a photo of your work and list it in your inventory.