

Safety in the Workshop

This guidance should be reviewed prior to any North Wiltshire Woodturners Association training event with all participants. The form should be signed and dated by the instructors and retained for audit purposes.

While the woodturning lathe is arguably the safest of all woodworking machines, there have been instances of serious injury being caused to the operator. The reasons for this can invariably be put down to one of three things

1. Ignorance of the correct techniques (incorrect methods are nearly always dangerous) and safety measures.
2. Taking unnecessary risks.
3. Tiredness or lack of concentration. The well-known saying 'familiarity breeds contempt' is particularly relevant to all wood machinists. It must be remembered that all machines can 'bite', and most accidents occur through lack of concentration, carelessness, and towards the end of the working day when tiredness has set in. You are advised to stop when you feel tired, or if your mind is so engrossed in something else that it prevents you from applying maximum concentration. Do not operate machinery if under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

General Safety

1. Ensure that the lathe is securely bolted down to a good solid bench, in the case of a bench model, and check the tightness of the nuts, including any stand fixings.
2. Ensure the electrics are safe - the machine is properly earthed and installed in accordance with the maker's instructions. If a second hand lathe is acquired, obtain the services of a suitably qualified person to check it over. All appliances used in a public arena should be PAT tested by a suitably qualified person on a regular basis.
3. Ideally, rubber (electrical) plugs should be fitted to all woodworking machines.
4. Examine the electric cable from time to time to make sure it is in good order.
5. Isolate the lathe from the mains when changing speeds or applying the 'test of tightness'.

On the Lathe

1. Check the owner/ operator's manual for proper speed recommendations. Use slower speeds for larger diameter or rough pieces, and increase speed for smaller diameters and pieces that are balanced. If the lathe is shaking or vibrating, lower the speed. If the work piece vibrates, always stop the machine to check the reason and remedy the fault before continuing.
2. Make certain that the belt guard or cover is in place. Check that all clamping devices (locks), such as on the tailstock and tool rest are tight.
3. Hold turning tools securely on the tool rest, and hold the tool in a controlled but comfortable manner. Always use a slower speed when starting until the work piece is balanced - this helps to avoid the possibility of an unbalanced piece jumping out of the lathe and striking the operator.
4. Only run a lathe in reverse if the chuck / faceplate and the spindle have a locking system.
5. Know your capabilities and limits. An experienced woodturner may be capable of techniques and procedures not recommended for beginner turners.

6. When using a faceplate, be certain the work piece is solidly mounted.
7. When turning between centres, be certain the work piece is secure.
8. Do not overreach, keep proper footing and balance at all times.
9. Remove chuck keys and adjusting wrenches. Form a habit of checking for these before switching on lathe.
10. Make sure that there is at least 20 mm of tool rest protruding by the end of the wood on which you are working.
11. Stop the lathe when making adjustments to the tool rest.
12. Minimise the downward leverage on the tools by keeping the rest as close as possible to the work piece.
13. Never leave the lathe running unattended. Turn the power off. Do not leave the lathe until it comes to a complete stop.
14. Keep the lathe in good repair. Check for damaged parts, alignment, binding of moving parts and other conditions that may affect its operation.
15. Turn the workpiece by hand to ensure that it turns freely before turning on.
16. Always start the lathe at a low speed and increase the speed until it is comfortable to turn. If in doubt use a slower speed.
17. If using a naked flame such as a blowtorch ensure the workspace is clear of easily combustible items such as sealers, finishes, dust and shavings. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby. It is preferable to do this type of operation outside well away from anything that may catch fire.
18. If using any form of power carver always follow the manufacturer's instructions. DO NOT use with one hand – always use two hands. Power carvers are extremely dangerous and when misused can cause serious injury and/or death.
19. When turning thin walled items DO NOT use an unprotected 240V bulb inside the workpiece. Use a low voltage LED device or similar.

Dress

1. Sensible dress must be worn. Loose, dangling sleeves must be avoided at all costs.
2. Wear a smock, overalls or an apron. All should be high fitting at the neck to stop shavings and chippings from finding their way into uncomfortable places.
3. Good strong footwear is also very important. Tools are sometimes dropped or roll off the bench, and can cause nasty wounds if you are shod in trainers or similar footwear.
4. Tie back long hair; do not wear gloves, jewellery or any dangling objects that may catch in rotating parts or accessories.
5. Always use eye protection, preferably use a full face visor.
6. Protect yourself from dust using a mask, dust extraction etc.

Sharpening

1. Position your grinder at a suitable height to suit your stance. Make sure it is clear of all obstacles.
2. When sharpening - some form of eye protection must always be worn when using the grindstone.
3. Be aware that sparks are a fire risk. Keep combustible material, including wire wool, away from the grinder.

I/ We (the Instructors) confirm that we will review this guidance with the students
and I/ We agree to promote good working practices.

Instructor Name (Please Print)	Instructor Signature

Date:.....