Hipwood's Pen Making Guide Feb. 2023

Plus bottle stoppers and openers

Fellow turners there are a many options for pen turning equipment and kits. I was a production pen turner and I will attempt to suggest equipment/vendors. There are levels of equipment to fit every budget. Do shop all the vendors for best value and price.

Pen Turning equipment by vendor:

Penn State Industries

-Mandrel Saver Tailstock Center-Pick #1MT or #2MT mandrel saver package 39.95.

-Chamfering tool # BGCAM- $?

-Pen Drilling Center Vise-#DRILLCENT3 $64.95

OR 2 ½" Capacity Large Blank Drilling Chuck #CSCPENCHK2 $110

OR drill on lathe with #1 jaws to your chuck

OR use wood clamps

-Pen Presses-most vendor carry –you choose. The cheapest and works fine are fiberglass inserts on your lathe. Some use vices and wood clamps.

Woodcraft

I quote CVW first President Bert Smith "Life is too short to turn junk wood!" I feel the same is true about cheap/junk pen kits. Suit yourself.

-I have only ever used Wall Street II Twist pen kits and the 2 piece Navigator Roller ball kits. Always order extra tubes and bushings for each.

-Pen makers drill bits by Woodriver and order ONLY the size(s) you need. Many other vendors here too.

-Pen Mills are recommended. I use Whiteside brand mills and choose your size with trimmer head. Available in 6 sets too.

Craft Supply

-Pen/other tube insertion tool #979-569 $8 Shop other vendors too.

-Pen Disassembly punch set 104-133 $21 OR use and old screw driver.

-Velvet pen bags for gifting- 10 pack #104-119 $8 Pick your color others carry same.

Pen mandrel sanding & finishing: Includes most spindle made items I make.

-Sand paper for wood-I usually use grits 150(if needed)-600 paper. Use any sand paper you have, but 400 and 600 are hard to find.

I order all my hand sandpaper from Klingspor in yellow 3" wide rolls. www.woodworkingshop.com

I use Scotchbrit (fiber wool) equivalent grits 800 (gray), 1200 (tan) and 2000 (white) to burnish before finish applications.

Scotchbrit is sold at Club Store for $2 a sheet (bargain)

Mandrel/other spindle turning finishing,

I almost always use Doctor's Woodshop PENS PLUS friction polish with at least 4 passes. www.doctorswoodshop.com

Quart will finish about 350+ items. OR ask me for a sample bottle.

Again suit yourself.

Other Items:

-I use only thick super glue to glue tubes into wood. Suggest to let set up overnight. Club Store sells this to.

-An old round file is handy to do cleanout of tubes if pen kit is too snug.

-An old knife is needed sometimes to push tube off of insert tool.

Pen mandrel woods are everywhere and caution you about buying online and do not buy ¾" diameter square blanks.

The club wood store has a mass of blanks as do most of us pen makers. Just ask.

PLEASE NOTE IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE ACYRLICS- this a different process start to finish. PLUS a mess in your shop. I can consult.

Guide for Bottle stoppers and openers:

-Best tool for threaded stopper/openers is Penn State Bottle stopper/opener screw chuck (1" X 8TPI)

PK-BS1-MJ

-Tips-make sure the hole is drilled into wood with a flat surface is a must. Use your tailstock with golf ball cushion while rough turning.

What Turning Tool(s) to use making pens/other on a Pen Mandrel?

This topic is really up to each turner with many choosing the tool(s) they feel most comfortable with. For beginners and intermediate level turners I suggest you use a basic roughing gouge start to finish. You must become proficient with this tool in order to help learning the next chosen spindle tool.

Suggested lathe speed for pen mandrel works is 2200-2300RPM.