

TURNING PENS



By Bill Magee

I bought my first lathe in 2000 (now I have 4) but what I was doing amounted to making hamster bedding, not turning. I joined the Michigan Association of Woodturners shortly after and was amazed at the creative ability of the members and their willingness to share their techniques. I attended a demonstration on pen making at one of the meetings, and I was hooked. The rest is history. Hopefully, with this “*How To*”, I can give a little something back for all who have shared their knowledge with me. Turn Safe! And have fun.



Before leaving the store, website, or catalog, make sure you have ordered the proper bushings, drill bit, instructions, and correct size pen blank for the pen kit you are buying.

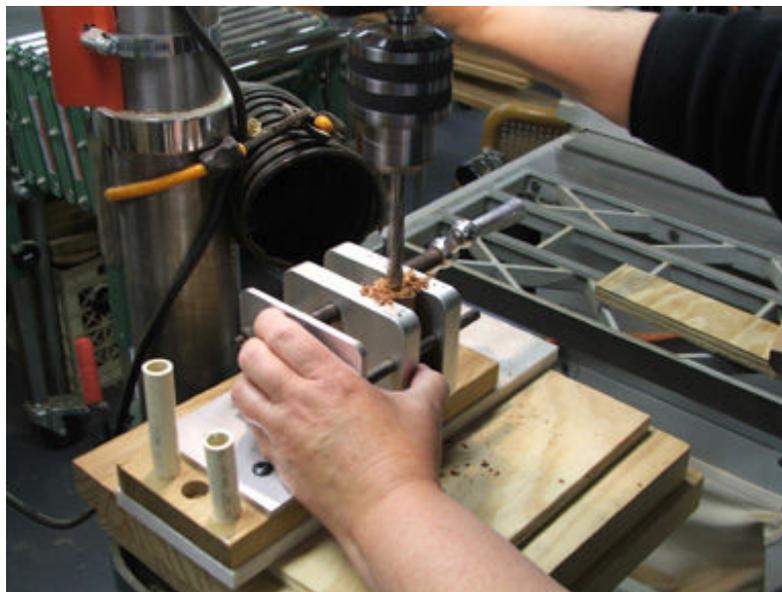
Read your instructions! When you are done...**Read them again!**



Following your instructions, mark your pen blank for cutting to the correct size. Most kits require the wood blank to be 1/8" or so longer than the brass tube for squaring up later. Read the instruction sheet to make sure.



Cut the pen blank to size with a band saw, scroll saw, chop saw, table saw, or a hand saw for that matter....use what you are comfortable with.



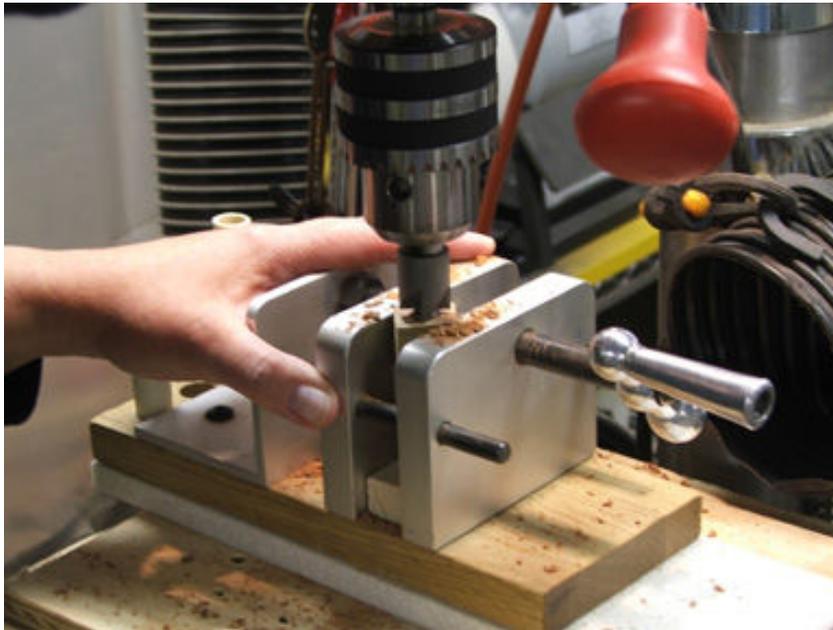
Find the center of your pen blank and drill it out with the appropriate bit called for in your instruction sheet. Use a vise to insure you drill the hole straight. Make sure you only drill 1/2" at a time before clearing chips from the hole. Continue this until you drill completely through the blank.



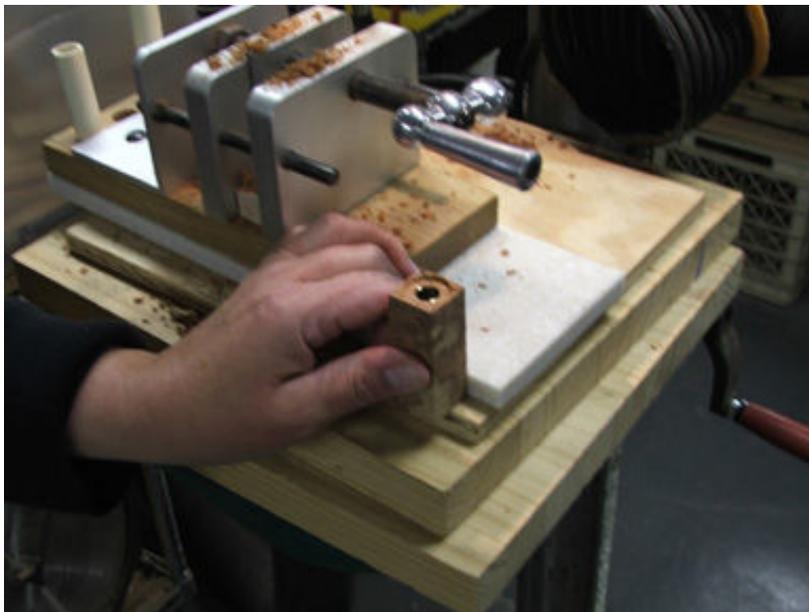
Using a coarse grit sand paper (80 will do) to sand the brass tube. The Small grooves the sanding leaves will give the glue something to bond to.



.After pre-fitting the brass tube (to make sure it fits), apply a generous portion of 5-minute epoxy to your tube. Insert the tube into your wood pen blank twisting as you go in to help spread the glue evenly. Try to make sure no excess glue gets inside the brass tube.



After the glue dries, trim the pen blank (if instructions require it) until the brass shows. Using a barrel trimmer and vise will insure the best results.



.What the blank will look like after trimming with the barrel trimmer.



Mount your pen blank on the mandrel according to your instruction sheet.



.Rough your pen blank to a cylinder using a tool you feel comfortable with. Gouges work best for this purpose.



Turn the blank down to the bushing. **REMEMBER**, you can always sand a little more off, but you can't put it back on! Shape the pen barrel to your liking.



.Sand the pen barrel going through the grits. In between grits wipe away any excess sawdust and check for sand paper "rings". If they appear, sand horizontally (with the lathe off) before proceeding onto the next grit.



If you are happy with your sanding, apply 2 coats of friction sanding sealer with a small lint free rag. This will raise the grain and remove any fine saw-dust in the pores of the wood.



Sand again with a white 3-m abrasive pad or the last (highest) grit paper you used before the sealer.



Apply 3 coats of friction polish with a small lint free rag. Make sure your fingers get **Hot—Hot!** That's why it's called *friction polish*!



.Apply 3-4 coats of carnuba wax. Constant horizontal movement of bar will help prevent wax ridge buildup.



Use a buffing pad between coats. If wax ridges appear, try buffing pad to remove. If not successful, you may have to use the white 3-m pad which will require you to reapply the polish and wax again..



TADA! Your finished !



Assemble according to your instructions.



Great Job! But now everybody will want one....get busy and enjoy!