

PENN STATE INDUSTRIES

Q&A

Do you have a question for "The Pencrafter"? Please write or Email us at Penn State Industries.

Question: After turning my pen, the wood is out of round around the tube and doesn't match up evenly with the band.

Answer: Chances are that your mandrel is somewhat bowed and is turning with a slight "whip" in the center. This frequently happens when the mandrel has been bent or the tailstock has been over tightened against it.

Question: What can I do if my mandrel is out of round?

Answer: Do not try to straighten it unless you have the specific equipment to do the job. The shaft is screwed into the mounting piece with a 1/4" x 28 thread screw. Penn State Industries sells replacement mandrel shafts for just this purpose.

Question: When I assemble my turned pen parts, the wooden parts do not meet cleanly with the metal parts, there are gaps and daylight is visible between the pieces. Help!

Answer: Parts which do not meet cleanly, indicate that the turned pieces are not squared to the gold fittings. This is usually caused by the turned pieces not being

properly trimmed. A barrel trimmer, such as PKTRIM, PKTRIM8 & PKTRIM10, is the solution. A barrel trimmer will not only assure a flush fit between parts but will also clean excess glue from inside the brass tube.

Question: What speed should I use when turning and finishing pen blanks?

Answer: The faster the better - and usually not a problem with darker woods, but be careful with lighter woods. Too fast a speed may cause a lighter wood to burn when turning or finishing.

Question: What type of wood should I use? I've got lots of wood available around my workshop.

Answer: Although domestic hardwoods make fine looking pens, the rich color and unusual grain of tropical hardwoods make exceptionally attractive and unusually appealing pens. Since these exotic woods are so much less common they generally make more interesting gifts and that translates into more sales.

Question: Why do different pens require different size tubes and refills?

Answer: Mini ball point refills are used in shorter 7mm pen styles like the Mini-pen and the Teacher's pen that uses two refills, one in either end. The standard "Cross" style refill is the most popular and is used in the thin 7mm "Slimline" pen and the standard "Designer" Mont Blanc® style pen. The "Parker®" style ballpoint refill is preferred by many people because of its larger ink capacity and

superior writing characteristics of its ballpoint. Since the refill is wider, it generally requires an 8mm tube style pen. Roller balls write with a heavy stripe of wet ink. Pens with these refills are considered premium writing



instruments and require larger 10mm tubes to accept the mechanism. Fountain pens also require a 10mm tube and are frequently paired with roller ball pens as sets.

**Pencrafting
Summer Sale
Special**

Offer expires 9/15/98

Order "Slimline" Pen Kits in any combination and SAVE!!*

Item #P-PK-PEN
24kt Pen Kit\$1.85/kit
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24kt Pen Kit\$2.30/kit

*Minimum order 50 total kits

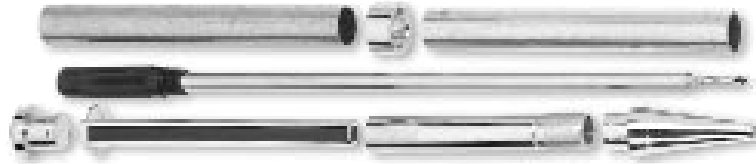
FEATURED PROJECT from page 1

After gluing the brass tubes into the wood blanks leave adequate time for drying. If the glue is not fully cured, you may end up with glue on the barrel trimmer or pen mandrel.

Also, the better the coverage of glue on the tube, the better the adhesion. This adds to the stability of the wood, and reduces the likelihood of the wood splitting while turning.

Square the ends of the blank to the brass tube using a sanding device or barrel trimmer prior to mounting it on the mandrel for turning.

Be careful not to over tighten the lock nut against your mounted pen blanks, the blank may split. If the tailstock is too tight the mandrel may bow from the pressure.



The most attractive pens have matching grain along the shaft. To get perfect grain match, always cut your top and bottom blanks from a continuous piece of wood.

After sanding, use Scotch Brite® or 0000 steel wool for final finishing. Avoid steel wool on porous woods since the steel residue may find its way into the pores and discolor the final finish. Be careful when using liquid final finish. You may accidentally adhere your blank to the mandrel or bushings.

Once you are comfortable with your basic skills, you can move on to other more elaborate projects. Your 7mm mandrel is an integral part of these projects with different bushings specific to each kit.

Selling your finished pens and pencils

So you've made some great looking projects and want to get them out in front of the buying public! Unfortunately you've got to clear two minor hurdles - presentation and salesmanship.



Without an attractive presentation your creations may fail to catch the prospect's eye. A good sales pitch will help you close the sale. Here are some ideas we've learned from our experience.

If you've got a table at a craft show, use a cover that is jewel-tone (i.e. royal blue or burgundy, black or a crisp white.) The color and texture should make your turnings stand out. Keep the cover clean and in good repair. Stay away from fabrics that wrinkle easily or have patterns with distracting designs. Cover your

table to the floor (providing you with extra storage space underneath.) Keep the table well lit to emphasize the grain and gold on your products.

Present your work in appropriate gift boxes on display stands or display trays. Though it looks cute, stay away from baskets, cups and bowls for your turnings. This limits the number of visible products and will do significant damage to the finish and the wood. Use risers to vary the level of the display and add more interest to the table. As your turnings are sorted through and sold, the reduced selection will make it harder to match pieces of similar species so have your matched sets displayed in a separate tray and labeled as matched sets.

Use "salesmanship" to close a sale. Be confident and helpful to the customer. Emphasize the special nature of the rare and exotic tropical woods adorning your items. Emphasize the quality of your gold plated products, your guarantee, and the fact that they are hand turned. One of our pen crafting customers adds interest to his products by placing a small label on the back of a business card

that he includes with his products. The label contains information of interest on the wood species, how to refill the pen, a description of the finish, and information on other items he sells.

We will discuss pricing and selling your items in more detail in future issues but here are some quick tips: Price your items to sell but don't give away the store. Emphasize that you are offering a unique and premium product. Offer special discounts for multiple purchases and build the sale by encouraging your customers to buy matching sets in gift boxes. Have fun and enjoy yourself when selling. Your customer will appreciate your enthusiasm and is more inclined to do business with you this time and in the future.



I've got a Bloodwood pen and pencil set that's perfect for you!

