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Making a Handle for your Turning Tool Hardware by Dennis W. Montville

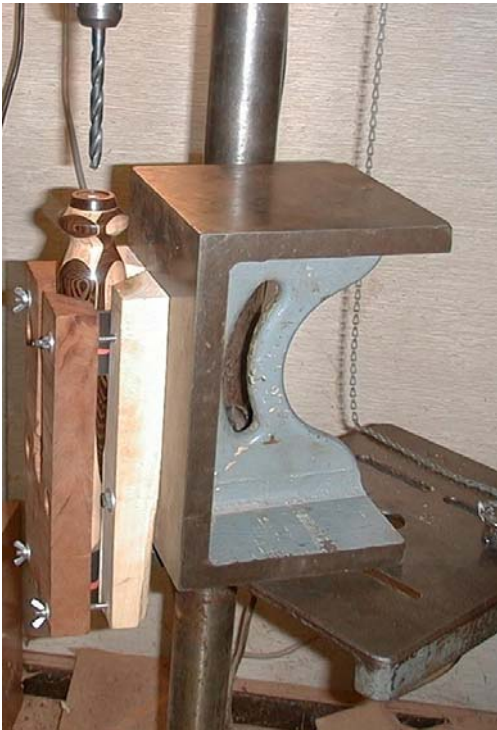
There are several ways to make a handle for your turning tool hardware. One way is to assemble it using segmented turning methods such that you end up with a colorful layered handle like the ones shown in the photos below. The other method uses a solid construction handle which can result in equally stunning results. Both handle construction methods are equally valid. It just depends on what look you want for the finished tool.



No matter which method you want, the process should be obvious to the experienced turner. If you're purchasing this hardware it's assumed that you have experience in turning and likely don't need any instruction regarding the process to make the handle blank or to turn it. I will offer some pointers though on things that may trip you up.



First, make it large enough to be comfortable. I've found that the handles on most commercially available tools are too small in diameter, since I have fairly large hands. You should also think about the length, since when you make your own tool you have control over that too. Think of other tools you've used and what you like or dislike about the fit of the tool in your hands. Making the grip area too small can cause cramping during long turning sessions and also reduces the overall control you have on the tool, especially when the cut produces some torque on the tool. This is your opportunity to finally get a turning tool to fit **YOU** and not something generic that is made with the hope that "one size fits all".



Holding the handle while you drill the hole to accept the tool body can be challenging. Don't be afraid to make a holding fixture to do it. The one I use is shown at left. It will be well worth the time spent to make the fixture to be safe and get a hole that's centered and straight. Drilling by hand is not advised. If you must drill by hand it is extremely important that you don't try to hold the tool handle with one hand while drilling with the other. I can almost guarantee disaster. If you must use a hand drill for the tool body hole, hold the tool handle by some clamping means on a bench. It is best to use a drill press, even if you have to borrow time on someone else's. **The hole must be 7/16" diameter and about 3 1/4" deep. (5/16 diameter and 2 1/4" deep for the small tool hardware).** This is very difficult to



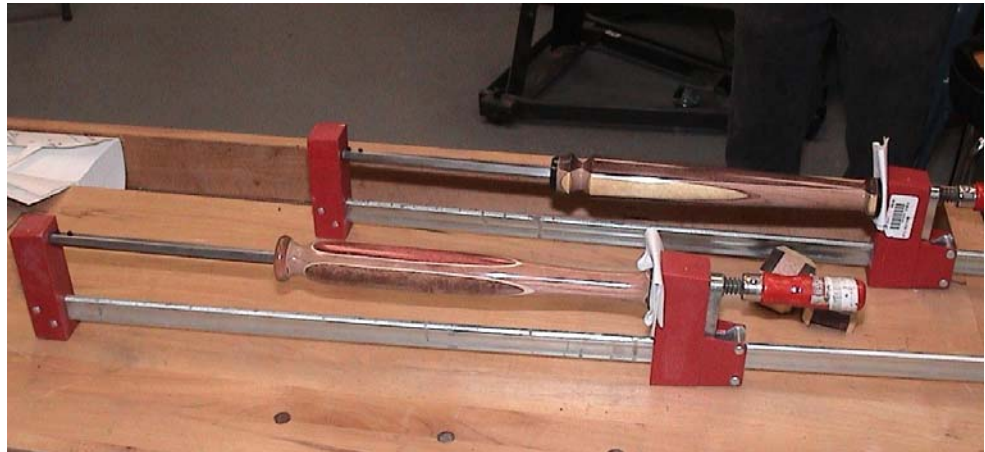
do with a hand-held drill.

On the larger tool hardware you can either use the washer for an attractive finishing detail or leave it off. If you use the washer and want it flush with the surface of the handle you'll have to drill a recess for the washer **BEFORE** you drill the 7/16^{ths} diameter hole. You can see this in the close-up in the photo to the right. The recess is in place before I drill the tool body hole. Once the tool body is secured with the epoxy it will be very solid. Don't be too generous with the epoxy as it will just create a mess as you slide the tool body into the handle. You may have to clamp the tool body into the handle as the epoxy cures. Otherwise the trapped air may try to force the tool body out before the epoxy cures. A photo of one way to clamp the tool body into the handle as the epoxy cures is shown on the following page.

The shape is up to you. That's one of the advantages of making your own tool handle. It can be very simple and straight, or have several interesting details. If you want to make a storage place for the Allen wrench like I make in my complete tools, you'll need to drill a **1/8" hole about 2 1/2" deep**. This can be done with a hand-held drill. Be careful about the diameter of the handle and the angle of the drill as you don't want to have the drilled hole poke through the



side. One interesting idea I've seen is to put the Allen wrench at the head of the tool handle instead of the tail.



Below are two photos showing the detail of the Allen wrench storage in the end of the handle. Carving the shape is something that can't be easily taught without simply practicing it. I'd suggest drilling the hole into a scrap piece of wood and working with it so that you can get it right when it's time to do the work on your finished handle. Just make sure that the hole is drilled deep enough and then make sure that you carve a generous radius on the hole so that the inside curve of the Allen wrench doesn't stop it from going fully into the hole. The Neodymium magnet can be seen in the second photo. It is recessed into a small pocket that is carved into the slot for the Allen wrench and held in place with some Super Glue. You can use any type of adhesive you wish that will stick metal to wood, but Super Glue works well. That's not supplied with the tool hardware.



Hopefully I've provided enough information for you to properly complete your turning tool. If you have any questions you can always contact me at Dennis@DWMontville.com. I'll be happy to give you any assistance you may need.