

PEN MAKING

Needed stuff:

1. Lathe – A great big lathe works just as well as a little lathe.
2. Lathe tools that you are comfortable using to turn a spindle – A spindle gouge, a skew chisel, or even a roughing gouge can work. You DON'T need to buy mini tools.
3. Multiple sandpaper grits – Plan to use at least 150 to 600 grit or much higher if you are using acrylic blanks.
4. Pen mandrel with a Morse taper (usually a #1 or #2) that fits the headstock on your lathe.
5. Pen kit – It includes all the metal parts for the style of pen you are making.
6. Pen bushings for the style of pen you are making -- These may not be included in the kit above.
7. A brad point drill bit for the size pen tube you are using, e.g., 7mm works for the Slimline, Comfort, or European/Designer style.
8. Barrel trimmer for size pen tube you are using -- Multi-sized ones are available
9. CA glue – Medium works well.
10. Nail set or similarly shaped tool to insert the pen tubes when gluing.
11. Jacobs chuck for your lathe or, preferably, a drill press -- A good table top drill press works fine. If you use a drill press you will need a clamping devise to hold the pen blank vertical for drilling.
12. Woodworking vise or some sort of home-made assembly press.
13. A small hand saw or a power saw to cut your pen blanks to size
14. Pen blanks -- You can buy them from the usual woodturning vendors (Craft Supplies, Penn State Industries, Packard Woodworks, etc.), or you can make them from standard 1” (4/4) lumber or from logs or branches if you have the ability to saw small pieces safely. Hardwoods are recommended. The fancier the better.
15. Finish – Your choice. Sanding sealer (thinned lacquer) followed by friction polish (shellac and wax) works well and is done very quickly. You can buy these premixed from the usual woodturning vendors.

Steps:

1. Make or buy a pen blank. Blanks are approximately 6" by 3/4" square. This may vary depending on the type of pen you are making.
2. Saw it to the appropriate size for the kit you are making. Before sawing, mark the center of one side of the blank with a line so that you can match grain when you mount it on the lathe
3. Drill holes for the pen tubes. Carefully center the drill holes
4. Sand the outside of the pen tubes with coarse grit sandpaper to enable the glue to grip. This is easy to forget!
5. Coat the bottom half of the pen tubes with CA glue and insert them in the drilled blanks. Use the nail set to align them before the glue sets. You may use a spray activator to speed the glue setting, but it is not really necessary.
6. Allow the glue to set. One hour minimum. Overnight is best.
7. Use the barrel trimmer bit in a hand drill or drill press to square the end of the pen blanks. Stop when you see a shiny brass circle on the end of the tubes
8. Mount the blanks and bushings on the pen mandrel in the lathe. Be sure to follow the directions that came with your pen kit when mounting these.
9. Turn the blank to the desired shape.
10. Sand the turned blank. Be sure to stop the lathe and sand parallel to the blanks before changing grits to get rid of sanding rings. It is important to try to match the blank very closely with the bushing that corresponds to the writing tip because it is easy to feel a slight variation.
11. Apply finish to the pen pieces while on the lathe.
12. When the finish is dry, assemble the pen following VERY closely the instructions that came with your kit. Disassembly tools are available for some pen kits, if you make a mistake.