

Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

How long should I expect my turning tools to last?

Unless you are a professional turning extensively or are very poor at sharpening, you can expect a quality new tool to last for your entire lifetime. I have tools that I bought when I started turning over 25 years ago that are still serviceable. I use my tools extensively, as do my students. With the use I give them, including the abuse my students sometimes give them, they are all holding up well. I expect them to be fully functional at my demise.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT HERTZOG



1 The best investment in turning tools serviceability and longevity is a quality sharpening system and the skills to use it



2 Most of the tools in my 'everyday' rack are well over 20 years old. Quality tools and proper sharpening will make or break the usable lifetime

3 Keeping a tool sharp, i.e. freshening the edge to keep it cutting properly, is far better than letting it get dull, cut poorly, and then needing to grind it extensively

I'm selling off some of my excess turning tools and materials. Any suggestions on a reasonable price for used but well-kept tools?

Depending on the brand, condition, location market, and the needs of the potential buyer, you can ask about 50% of retail. Most people never pay full retail for most of their purchases, but that number is easily available and, in my opinion, a fair starting point. Obviously, what your local market will bear can vary, but start there and negotiate as needed.

I'm getting ready to add a dust collector to my workshop. What is your advice on selection, location, size, and what to watch out for throughout the process?

Adding a dust collector to your work area is a great idea. You need to be realistic about what it can do for you and what it can't. When you get into the nitty gritty of dust collecting, there are sizes, shapes, horsepower, airflow, particle filtration sizes, noise levels, power needs/consumption, and more to consider. First and foremost, a dust collector by design can usually do one of two things well. There are two major families of dust collectors. One can be a 'vacuum' that aids in shop clean-up and chip/dust collection at the machine source. You plumb the collector via hose or ductwork to the various pieces of equipment generating chips and dust. The beauty of this is that the collection system sucks up debris at the source as generated. I often position a 4in hose from my dust collector right behind my work on the lathe to try to collect the sanding dust as I generate it. These dust collectors are usually located

out of the way based on power source, noise generated, and ductwork routing situation. The amount and size of the ductwork that is needed varies considerably by shop, size, and equipment, but suffice to say that the dust collector is just the beginning of the expense and installation effort.

The other type of dust collector is basically an air filter. Usually mounted overhead, these dust collector units filter the air without the ability to pick up chips or be connected directly to equipment. Often, woodworkers and woodturners mistakenly believe these are an important part of their dust PPE. Yes and no. Regardless of the particle filtration size and air flow capacity, these units are only filtering the dust already airborne. The real problem is you've already been breathing this air laden with dust before the filter can provide your lungs with any amount of protection. Regardless of any overhead dust filters (collectors) you have in the shop, you're wise to continue to provide adequate protection for yourself in the form of a dust mask, air helmet, or the like. One important issue with overhead



4 One of my overhead air filters is located at the far end of my main lathe. Head high and running as needed, it helps clear the air but dust PPE is wise as well



5 Many times the dust collector is in another room, sound deadened closet, or outside to reduce the noise in the shop

6 You can always leave the dust collector as a mobile unit and wheel to where it is needed to connect it



7 Plumbing your dust collector hose to the location where you are generating the dust is an effective way to reduce what is thrown in the air to ultimately get breathed
8 Regardless of your dust collector and shop system, never ignore the fact that effective PPE on your head or face is a wise idea

air filters is the airflow in the shop and the size – all has an impact on effectiveness. Size, shape, equipment layout, HVAC flow, opening of large doors – all can mess with effectiveness. Overhead units won't help with dust that has settled between the source and the filter. It can only collect the dust that is airborne as the filter pulls in shop air to be filtered. It helps but not too much cleaning the air you breathe.

Decide whether you are buying a clean-up vacuum or an air filtering system. With selection, location, and operation, you can address both needs but usually not well with just one type. It often is better to let each type of machine excel in its own arena. The vacuum is plumbed directly to various pieces of equipment using blastgates to open and close airflow as needed. There are a lot of parameters you can look at and study, but for most of us, the vacuum and chip collection equipment are selected by voltage, cfm, and hose sizing. An air filtering system spec'd out as a 220 or 120-volt system is easily dealt with so usually isn't a big issue. Hose/duct sizing is mostly 'as large as possible' using straight runs as much as possible. Setting up a cyclone separator on your dust collection can help with the separation

of the dust and chips. Certainly, some help with disposal and maintenance. When shopping for an overhead unit, you may want to get one with a remote control, handy for turning on/off and setting speeds from floor level.

As for brand, you can buy virtually anything from a quality supplier and expect it to probably last a lifetime. There is little to go wrong. Sure, motors go bad, or impellers/bearings have issues, but for most of us running dust collectors on an intermittent basis, they are very reliable and durable. There isn't any reason not to consider used equipment if it comes from a decent source that has maintained the equipment. On size, cfm, filters, etc., you'll need to sort that out based on your wallet, shop size, and overall needs. There are many online programmes that will help you size dust systems as well as plan for ductwork selection and mounting options. I'd suggest you do some homework and get some additional advice from your turning mates and local retailer. In my main shop, I use a multi-horse cyclone as my chip collector through the shop and two overhead filter units placed specifically on need. One is in the bandsaw area and one is directly at the tailstock end of my main lathe.