Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

I find that I am very fatigued after any extended turning sessions. I am not aware of physical issues that should cause this. Any suggestions on how to minimise this problem?

I share your extended turning issues. I do have some physical issues that impact my turning sessions. I suggest you consult your medical professionals if you think you may have any conditions – they can offer advice and assistance. Barring those, if you are solely being fatigued because of your lathe set-up and working conditions, I can give you some ideas on where to start. While I have never used one, I have many friends who wear a waist/back support brace to reduce their fatigue. This wide support belt seems to reduce the muscle needs, reducing tiredness. They use the brace whenever they will be doing physical work that might stress them or if they have extended standing or working sessions of any kind. I have nothing other than their positive opinions.

As for work area set-up, my suggestions are anti-fatigue mats, proper lathe height, and good turning techniques. Anti-fatigue mats are a personal choice. I've had many types over the years and have changed based on the belief that the 'new and improved' will help. I've used (and discarded) the standard foam mats from the various stores made for turners, cashiers, or others who spend much of their time standing. Did they work? Yes but... I found that the food service mats were an improvement. These heavy-duty mats made for extended standing support were better but not the total answer.

My most recent mats are closed-cell blown foam with hard shell top surfaces. These mats are made from the material used for packing and shipping high value fragile items such as optics, electronics, and spinning items (disc and optical drives, etc.). I have had these for several years now and use them stacked double. For my 6ft, 200lb. size, two of these mats on top of each other feel comfortable. Of course, the nearly 2in or so lift from the floor level needs to be comprehended in the lathe height to get my preferred centreline height. These mats don't solve everything but are the most helpful so far. Don't be afraid to try out different mats. Don't be stuck with what are professed to be woodturning mats. Look around, try out your fellow turners' mats, go afield and try things that other industries or professions use. There are many people in different industries in need of anti-fatigue products.

The other suggestion I can make to help your situation is the lathe set-up itself. The height


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of the lathe can influence your stature as you turn. Too high and you will be reaching. Too low and you will likely be leaning forward. Either situation can have a dramatic tiring effect on you, especially with extended turning sessions. Using muscles to support your leaning one way or the other contributes to the tiring. The more you can use your skeleton being upright and supported by the bone structure, the less you'll tire your muscles. The best starting point for lathe height is to have the spindle centreline at the same height as your elbow when you are standing with your arms hanging down. Be certain you are on the mat(s) you intend to use so it is an accurate use situation. With that starting point, you can move the centreline slightly up or down in small increments until you arrive at the best height for you. Something as small as a ¼in can make the difference. I suggest you zero in on this over time. You'll know when you find the best set-up for you. Your fatigue will be reduced although you may never eliminate it. I've tried but still find longer turning sessions somewhat tiring. My column in *Woodturning 254* deals with lathe set-up in your workshop. There are suggestions on floor mats, lighting, lathe height and more.

1 A good starting point for lathe height is when the elbow joint is at the same height as the centreline of the spindle. Be certain you are standing on your anti-fatigue mat(s) **2** I find that I need two mats to provide the necessary support. Notice that the 2X4 height shims are lagged only to the lathe. Nothing is attached directly to the floor **3** Take your time creeping up or down on the correct height. Once found, you may be able to spend more time at the lathe with less aches and pains

Do you keep a reference library to help answer your questions? If so, what do you keep and any tips on locating specific materials?

When I added woodturning to my woodworking interests, I consumed as much of the available books and videos created by the professionals of those days that I could find. Most of the books and videos were purchased and added to my collection.

Over the years, I've continued to add those materials to my library. In addition, I've kept a collection of all the magazines, books, and other materials that contained content that I had created. The magazine collection contains every *Woodturning Design* magazine published and every *Woodturning* magazine beginning with *WT235* when I began writing for GMC. The wealth of information in all these issues is a resource that I draw upon in addition to fellow turners who have special expertise they are willing to share.

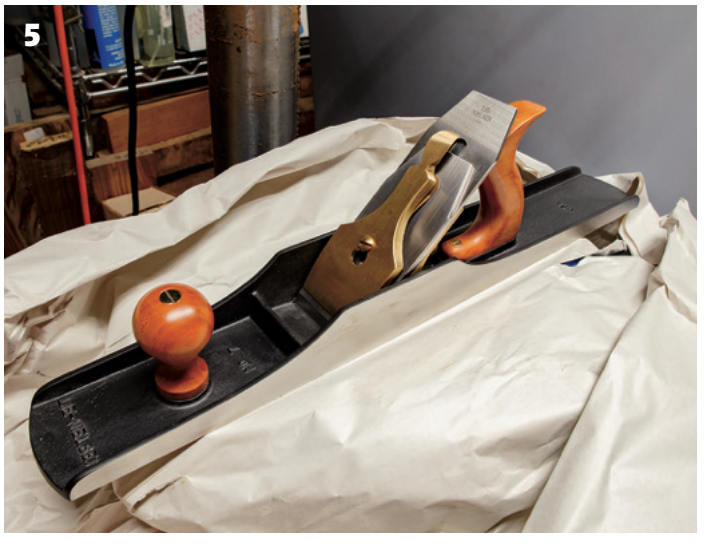
Another great source of turning information is the AAW archives. AAW members have access to the entire back catalogue of the *American Woodturner* journal. The nearly 40 years of that publication is searchable and available online.

My membership in four different AAW turning chapters also gives me a wealth of experienced fellow turners to query, learn from, and tap for information of areas they are specialists in. Finding materials on various topics among the nearly 250 articles I've had published is quite easy with a search of my own digital archives. It isn't as easy with other topics by other authors. I keep all the books, magazines, and an extensive video library handy for my research on Q&As. I wish I had a better way to recommend finding specific materials in other locations, but I don't have anything of value to offer.

I'm moving to a higher humidity climate soon. I'm concerned about my lathes and tools becoming corroded even though I plan to dehumidify and air-condition my workshop. Suggestions on rust prevention?

Even though I live in a relatively moderate humidity climate, I have the same potential corrosion issues. With whole house HVAC and dehumidification of my workshop, I still must take precautions to minimise rust. Cast iron, such as the tables in all the workshop equipment such as the tablesaw, bandsaws, drill presses, and the like, as well as many hand tools, are very susceptible to corrosion. On all my lathes with cast iron beds, I intentionally slightly corrode the cast iron ways to assist with tailstock lockup. All the other cast iron and any tools that need rust prevention are protected with a product called Boeshield T9. Boeshield T9 was developed by the Boeing Company many years ago as a rust preventative for its internal use. It has been offered commercially since. Available at most turning retailers, big box stores, and via the internet, it works well providing many years of protection.

When I have an item needing some rust removal, I use Naval Jelly. After rust has been removed as well as possible, I apply T9 as directed to provide ongoing protection. There may be other products that will perform these tasks, but these work well for me. All my woodworking tools, such as chisels, planes, plane irons, carving tools, and others are coated with T9, stored with desiccants, wrapped in Cortex or Anox VCI paper, or they are packed in original factory preventative wrappings. For my intermittently used planes, I use them and then wrap them back up in the factory wrapping so they can be stored in the original box. The factory folks have things figured out to safely preserve their products during transit and storage before the sale. I figure since they know how to pack, ship, and store things safely, I return the planes to the original wrapping and boxes. I haven't had any issues with my woodturning tools, so they just live in the dehumidified environment with no apparent problems.



4 I use Naval Jelly to remove any rust that has already occurred and use Boeshield T9 as the rust preventative for cast iron and steels in the shop that are susceptible **5** I use T9 on the woodworking tools in my shop. Planes and in particular the irons need protection in my shop **6** I return my less frequently used planes to their original box. I find it helps provide protection from rust, nicks and dings, and helps them being easily found