

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

Was attempting to round off a rectangular piece of oak about 4x3x14 in my new lathe. I had set the lathe up using the only motor I had, which had too large a belt pulley on it. Checked clearances between the wood and the tool rest by rotating the piece slowly. However, when I started the lathe up, the vibration at the speed it was turning was so great that the piece hit the toolrest. As I was standing off to the side, the flying piece missed me...but flew through the air for about 8 feet, hitting the garage door hard enough to break the window (and send glass flying about 15 feet) and bounce back into the workshop.

Advice

Don't settle for "close enough" when setting up a new tool. Take the time to get the right stuff for a safe setup. Observe safety considerations.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

My son and I purchased a new lathe. The first project was to be a large wooden mallet for striking large chisels. We glued up a 16 x16 by 20 inch block of maple and mounted it in the lathe in the rectangular form. A friend of mine set the belts to run at 300RPM but had to go before we were ready to start the lathe. As I was reaching for the start button I told my son to get behind me since this was our first time to use the machine and the belt settings my friend set did not make sense to me. Anyway, it was 3500 RPM and the maple block spun up, flew off the spindle, broke off the tool rest and punched a fairly large hole in the side of my cinderblock garage. My son was greatly impressed and did not accompany me in the garage again to do woodworking, for about ten years. He is 26 now and he still questions everything I do with powertools.

Advice

Don't be in a rush to use new tools. If you are not sure about a tool and its use, STOP. That block would have decapitated my son and I still think about that every time I work with tools.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

As a teenager, I had just discovered that cutting with a skew chisel made a "much" nicer surface than scraping. I was using a 1.5" skew chisel to smooth a cylinder about four inches in diameter when the point of the chisel was grabbed by the work. The chisel was thrown past my ear and embedded itself in a 6 x 6 floor to ceiling post.

Advice

Be extremely careful when using any tool on a lathe, especially the point of the tool when cutting. Use as wide a tool as possible in relation to the diameter of the work. Do not stand directly in front of the part of the work that is being cut; move with the chisel. Maintain a FIRM grip on the chisel with both hands at all times.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was starting to round out a composite piece - you know, glued together. Well, I thought the glue had plenty of time to set, but a large piece flew off and glanced off my forehead and embedded itself in the wall behind me.

Advice

Make sure of the soundness of your assemblies and that all adhesives have cured thoroughly!

Tool Type

Experience

Injury Severity

Description

While practicing on my new wood lathe turning a simple spindle I failed to realize I was bringing my face close to the wood to see the detail. All of the sudden my hair fell in front of my face, wrapped around the wood and I felt my head getting pulled towards this spinning chunk of pine. Fortunately on high speed the lathe doesn't have a lot of torque and jammed up before my face made contact. Still I left very shaken and with one heck of a headache.

Advice

If you have hair long enough to tie back, tie it back. Hats are a good idea too. Always keep your safety glasses clean and clear so you don't need to get too close to see what you're working on.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

While turning a 10"x6" blank, it came off the lathe striking me in the forehead just above the left eye. I received a slight gash, swollen and black eye. Incident was probably due to running the lathe at too high of a speed.

Advice

When roughing a blank, use low speeds, sharp tools, and most important of all: wear a full face shield. Never stand directly in front of the turning.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

The chisel caught on the wood, and i had the lathe runnig too fast. I was working on a burl. When it blew up, half stuck in the ceiling, and the other half missed my head by a few inches. It just blew in my face!

Advice

You are taking a risk when you woodwork, and you can't prevent all accedents. So, PROTECT YOURSELF! Where a face shield. Even then, if that wood moved a few inces over, my dentist would love me. Sometimes, protection can't be adequate, but still use it. Sure it may not be correct, and you may be right, dead right.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

What seems to be the most causes of accidents is forgetfulness, in a club of seventy woodturners there are those who have forgotten the pry bar inside the lathe and started the lathe only to have a twirling piece of steel (used to remove morse taper drive), another is to forget to remove the tommy bars from a scroll chuck and start the lathe, another is not verifying the speed of the lathe and start the lathe with a large piece of wood between center, in both cases we had two different projectiles that were very dangerous fly off the lathes.

Advice

Always take the time to check your machine, do not leave it up to someone else or assume someone else has verified the machine for you. Always wear a face shield, a basic pair of safety glasses will not save your teeth should a piece of wood fly off. Never, I mean never sand with the tool rest on, remove it, it takes only a second either way, but the consequences of not removing one is broken fingers. Woodturning is a fun hobby, being safe is up to you, not someone else.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was trying to turn a wooden wheel for a wagon I was making. I screwed it to a faceplate so I could smooth out the side also. I heard it crack when I put the last screw in but didn't think anything of it. I had it rough rounded and stopped the lathe to move the belt to increase the speed. When I turned the lathe back on, as it was spinning up to speed the wood split into three pieces. One of these hit me across the face knocking the lens out of my glasses (not safety glasses like I wear now) and bruising my face making a slight cut. I didn't find the lens to the glasses until about 2 months after the accident.

Advice

If you hear it crack, it probably broke. Stand to the side when you are letting a machine run up to operating speed. Wear safety glasses or a face shield.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

One of my students, despite repeated warnings and discussions, put his hand on a spindle while the machine was still running and the toolrest was in place. The result was a pinched palm and a hunk of skin out of the heel his hand. Could have been worse.

Advice

Never put your hand on any project spinning in a wood lathe while the toolrest is in place. As a general rule I tell the students to never touch it while it's running. Pull up long sleeves and tie back long hair too.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

General 260 Lathe: while removing the drive center an experienced turner put the knock out bar into the head stock, through the hole, the bar being around 2 feet long is forgotten after chit chatting with other members of our club. The drive had been taken out, so the turner starts the lathe with the bar inside the headstock and instantly turns into a dangerous propeller, slapping around, everyone scambles out of the way, a near miss for all.

Advice

Always complete you steps in tuning, like removing the drive and remover bar immediately, there is always time later to talk to onlookers, tommy bars for (oneway chucks) are a constant danger of being forgotten, they become projectiles. Take the time, make it instinctive and safety come naturally after that.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

I was turning a piece of green Ash for a project and had rough turned it down. I got called away so I was unable to get back to it for several days. My shop is rather dry so the ash had a chance to season just a bit more while on the lathe. When I got back to it, got the safety equipment on, turned the lathe on and allowed to come up to speed, then took the gouge to start cutting, thinking I was still turning green wood. The piece grabbed the gouge, flipped it down then back up off of the toolrest and buried it about an inch and a half inch into wood wall behind the lathe.

Advice

When turning green wood and then letting it sit for a while be prepared for the piece to have seasoned some, especially if you have a dry shop and approach it carefully.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

First time on a lathe since high school, but wanted to give it a try since it's about the only major tool I don't own. I was working a bowl when the gouge slipped off the tool rest and slammed into the index finger on my left hand. Luckily, it was not the sharp part of the tool, but the force was hard enough to require eight stitches between the top knuckles. A year later, and I still have a rather ugly abraded scar, but no loss of function.

Advice

Keep an eye on where the tool is on the rest and don't let it wander. In this case, the rest had vibrated loose as well, so be sure to keep it tightened.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was just finishing up turning a small piece between centers and reached over the piece to sand it. My shirt sleeve caught on the spurs of the center and it quickly wound up the loose sleeve material. Luckily my lathe is not that powerful and wound up the loose material then stalled the motor long enough that I could hit the power switch. Damage: Small bruise on wrist, one torn shirt sleeve, small bruise on ego.

Advice

Watch the loose clothing. The shirt I was wearing was not even that loose - it was a long sleeved tee shirt. Also helps to have an easily accessible power switch.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I had read the manual on my new lathe and followed the instructions about marking the ends of the wood with a X and using a punch to make a punch mark on each end. I mounted the wood in the lathe and turned it on. The 4x4 flew out of the lathe and hit me in the upper lip and nose. The 4x4 split my upper lip all the way through to the teeth. I required 18 stiches and a visit to the dentist and another visit to the plastic surg. Almost made me want to give up on the lathe.

Advice

Always wear a face shield instead of goggles. When turning the lathe on, step to your left so if something does fly off it has a better chance of missing you.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

I bought an old rockwell lathe. Havent used a lathe since highschool. The faceplates are reasonably self explanatory, but the rather large and very heavy steel chuck that came with it wasn't that easy to figure out. I tried to mount too big a piece of wood into the chuck. I over " Opened" the jaws. But didnt know it. The piece seemed to be tightened, so I flipped it on. Major excitement as the 3 metal jaws left the chuck at highspeed and the blank flew across the shop.

Advice

This of coarse would almost certainly been a fatal accident if I had been standing in front of the lathe. I later learned the chuck wasnt even for woodturning. As mentioned in the reports, always stand to the side When mounting a new piece or remounting a piece. And please always wear a facemask. When in doubt stop and ask someone who knows. Every town has a wood club, or the internet.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I had just purchased my new lathe. I was mounting a large log of wet wood on the lathe between centres to find the best balance. Having heaved it up to the lathe and finally pinned it between centres, I turned it by hand to find the heaviest part and moved that to the top so I could let it drop a bit when removing the tailstock centre. I'd forgotten how heavy the piece was. It dropped and hammered my hand onto the banjo. It hurt, but could have been worse.

Advice

Don't work with heavy items or any tools, when you're tired.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was about to quit for the day but decided to install a glued block in the lathe that was to become a column 4" in diameter and 30" long. After the block was installed I decided to see if the block was relatively balanced and hit the switch. At the same time I turned the switch on I thought about what speed I had the belts on and instantly the lathe began to shudder and before I could even reach to turn it off the block flew off, glanced off my forearm, rolled up my arms, and struck me in the chin. I hit me in the face with such force that it felt like a sledge hammer. I fortunately was wearing a full facemask. Immediately I did the routine body checked to see if all parts were still there, then the blood began to run. The facemask held but the force against my jawbone split my chin open and I was off to the emergency room at 11:30 p.m. on Saturday night for a couple stitches (with the rest of the bar crowd).

Advice

First off always wear a full facemask, if I hadn't I'd be talking about all the plastic surgery I had to go through. Make sure your lathe is positioned so you can stand off to the side (mine wasn't). And if you can afford it buy a lathe with variable speed that can start extremely slowly.

Tool Type

Lathe

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

Back in the summer of 2007 I was given a log of english walnut, I thought that I should be able to turn some nice bowls from that. The log was duly chainsawn into lathe-able chunks and turning started, after a short while I noticed that the dark lines in the timber were not just the normal distinctive dark marking in walnut but were spalting lines. Now I've used spalted timber before so I was not unduly worried. The evening's woodturning had to come to an end [the dog needed walking and the wife insisted that it was way past bedtime [no not that !]]

Within a few short hours I started getting short of breath the penny started to drop! was it the spalted timber that was doing the damage? being unstabilised and presumably still live spores. Armed with a list of probable fungi I set off to see my Doctor who sent me off for blood tests and x rays. the results all came back normal, more tests followed, and yet more tests, but it's now January 2009, and I am still short of breath.

Advice

Don't expose yourself to the rest of your life in, at best, discomfort, at worst, a shortened life expectancy. Although I was using a paper dust mask, they may stop the dust, but as I found out in retrospect, the fungal spores may not be stopped. Perhaps I was a little naive in expecting a dust mask to provide protection against more than just dust.

So the lesson to be learned ;- EFFECTIVE dust control, I now have a two stage chip / dust extractor, waiting for me to be fit enough to install it, and I also have a Trend Airshield respirator for the very fine particles.

Take care to enjoy your woodworking SAFELY.