

Learning Skew Presentation

How I learned (I'm learning) the Skew

How I learned, Harbor Freight skew, planing all spindles, planing around the end of a spindle
Nothing to be afraid of. Catches happen with gouges too. They can be scary though
Learn how it works
Learn what causes catches. Then, don't do that
Practice catches to understand what causes them

What is a skew?

A simple shape
Primarily used for spindle turning
Has to be deliberately used, or it will let you know
Very versatile tool, used by production turners worldwide daily
Easy to sharpen, must be kept sharp
Sharpening is not really grinding, just cleaning the bevel (Findley)
It is easier to touch up the edge (hone) on a skew with a flat edge than it is to touch up a curved gouge edge

Different types of skews, (Gray props & my skews)

Types (Shapes) of Skews
Beading and parting tools
Cross section of skews, Square cornered, Rolled edge, Oval, Round, Beading tools
Parting Tool as a small skew (Beading and Parting tool)
Richard Findley's Signature Tool

Parts of a Skew – Skew Anatomy (Large Prop)

Shank, Bevel, Toe, Heel, Heel edge, Cutting edge, Skew angle, bevel angle, bevel length etc.

Terminology

Skew angle, relative to a perpendicular to tool axis
Bevel angle (included angle is 2 times the bevel angle (each side)
A little pointier can make finer cuts, sharper, but requires precise control
For harder woods, can be less pointy, more strength and durability of edge
15° - 20° per side is a good all-around angle for soft and hard wood
Presentation angle
Around 45° is optimal. May be different in tight spaces.
Riding the Bevel (gliding the bevel)

Catches

The skew will let you know if you are not using it correctly
Nothing to be afraid of. Catches happen with gouges too. They can be scary though.
Learn how it works
Learn what causes catches. Then, don't do that.
Practice catches to understand what causes them.
Inattentiveness... (Story)
Dig in of tip (planing too high on edge)
Bigger skew, less chance of dig in, use in planing, especially larger diameters.
Less chance with Lacer style skew where Toe is ground back.
Edge slips out of its bevel cut (bead rolling). (Sharper tools have fewer catches)
Run back (edge before bevel)
Skating when planing, or starting V cuts (losing the bevel)
Planing on upper half, can grab, because it can flatten onto rest
Note point of contact in line with tool rest contact

A, B, C, D of turning

Anchor, Bevel, Cut, Direction...

Don't skip a step

Types of Cuts with a Skew

Planing – shear cuts

Tool rest higher than typical. Contact with spindle about 11:00 position

Tool on rest (Anchor), Bevel on wood (Bevel), Raise the handle (Cut/Contact), then Direction of cut

Holding tool in cutting position, let your body sway or glide sideways, don't move the tool with your arm.

This is the dance of the wood turner.

Skew Rides on its corner, lower half of cutting edge (center to heel)

On rest about in line with wood contacting cutting edge

Bevel in contact almost burnishes the wood, making an exceptionally smooth surface

Too steep an angle can leave an unsmooth, wavy cut, chatter if bevel isn't rubbing/gliding leaving ridges.

Large diameter vs. small diameter difference.

Wider skew vs. narrow skew and difference.

When Planing...

Less than 45° cutting angle removes more quickly but can be catchy, closer to peeling.

Larger than 45° is less efficient, removes less wood and is therefore less smooth.

Peeling – just like parting tool

Beading and parting tool

With a skew, take small amount at a time

Easy to make a tenon, or a tapered tenon

Roughing a spindle can be done this way

V-cuts (paring)

Ever try to begin this cut with a spindle gouge and it skates away?

Tip must engage first so bevel immediately has something to ride on.

Firm control of the tool. Lift the tip in.

Line bevel up with cut direction you want to make

Alternate sides, because of bevel, don't actually have to rotate too far.

Thumb stop, hand under rest as kind of fulcrum

Tipping/lifting in, creates support for the bevel immediately

Pushing in, if unaligned get a skate right away.

Practice v-cut catches, Skating

Tip must be sharp

If it doesn't feel easy, or needs excessive force, probably not sharp enough

V cuts are a nice decorative or separating element.

Paring – end grain (V cut with straight side)

Skew naturally keeps top edge away.

Beading and parting tool, be careful paring end grain, where skew is backed away naturally.

Paring end grain is like a straight walled V-cut

Tip must be sharp

If it doesn't feel easy, or needs excessive force, probably not sharp enough

Turning beads

Turning beads, use heel, bevel must be in contact

I started planing around the corner. However, it is easier to use the heel point

Begin that planing with the heel engaged, then go around the corner.

Jones uses a planing cut, but that is an advanced cut, needs more control. Catchy

Beginners should stay with the heel cut.

A little at a time, keep the bevel in place, plow a groove and have a feathered edge

Don't lose the edge

Reach under, palm up holding tool to start a bead rolling left. RH, opposite if LH

Hand on top of tool to start bead rolling right, RH, opposite if LH

Roll with hand on tool handle. Other hand holds tool to rest, doesn't do control.

Each pass is a practice run as you round out your bead.

You still have to swing the handle around just like on the end with the spindle gouge.

But the edge is in line with the tool handle.

Can use heel or toe. (visibility) Turn over if you can't see at the end.

Straight skew, beading and parting tool, has two points the same. Findley's tool.

Don't rush it, you can go slow.

Spiral on a bead is loss of bevel contact.

Turning shallow coves

Kind of just like a gouge with a straight edge.

Spindle gouge works nicest for tight coves.

On tight coves, may use another part of the skew for support. (Spindle ornament)

Spindle roughing gouge works great to rough out the spindle or make large sweeping coves.

Finish or clean them up with your skew.

Scraping cuts – end grain grooves, center point for drilling

Grooves on end grain is an example of a scraping cut.

I use my skew to make starting points for end grain drilling.

I also use my skew to make tapered inside mortices for chucking.

Turning Speed - Affects how fast you can move tool horizontally.

Move tool slower, if lathe is turning slower

If you move tool too fast; you may get a ridged surface.

Too steep of cutting angle can also give you a wavy surface.

Other Items

Note different issues with large diameter spindles

Note different issues with wide vs. narrow skews

Note issues with real tiny skews

Using parting tool as a tiny skew