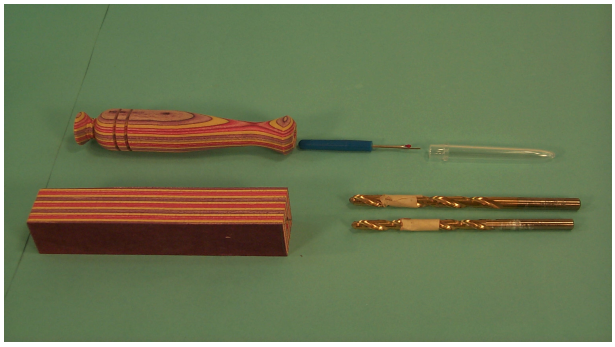
Seam Ripper Handles

Introduction & Thoughts on Design:

Turning a seam ripper handle is an excellent project for beginning turners to practice their spindle turning skills by making a useful gift for an avid sewer. This is another choice in a series of projects that are appropriate for Session 1 Part 2 projects. I like to turn a1" plus thick handle as it seems to be more ergonomic. Beads, Coves and various turned decorative elements can be added to the basic design to individualize each seam ripper handle. The handles can be made from salvaged timber or manufactured wood products such as Dymondwood, Colorply, Colorwood, Spectraply, exotic woods or left over scraps of wood from your last project. The seam ripper for this project is a blue seam ripper, with clear plastic top, available at most sewing centers for about $1.50 sometimes called a button hole ripper.



Note: Handle thickness can be varied to fit end users hands.

Materials:

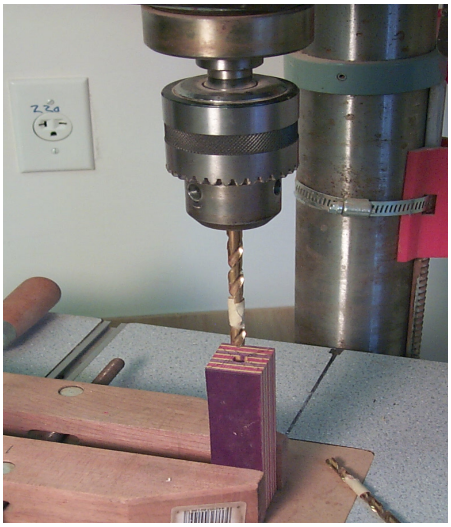
Faceshield	1: x 1" x 5" Wood Blank
9/32" drill bit	Bearing Cone Center
¼" Drill Bit	5/8" Steb Center or other Drive Center
1 ¼" Spindle Roughing Gouge	Seam Ripper
3/8" Spindle Gouge	

Note: I use a 5/16" spade bit that I have reground to match the taper of the Seam Ripper.

Procedure:

1. Start with a blank approximately 1" x 1" x 5" and mark the centers on both ends. Use a scratch awl or nail to make a dimple at the center points at each end.

2. Using a drill press, drill a tapered hole in the end that will hold the seam ripper. Start by using a 9/32” drill bit, to drill a hole ½” deep. Next install a ¼” drill bit in the drill press and drill a ¼” diameter hole in the center of the 9/32” hole to a depth of 7/8”. The final depth of the two holes combined will be 7/8”.



3. Mount the blank in the lathe using a ½ “ steb center, 4 prong center, or dead center in the head stock and a Bearing cone center in the tail stock, inserted into the tapered hole.

4. Turn the blank to a cylinder and then shape it into a comfortable handle, using a skew or 3/8” Spindle Gouge, turn some beads or coves for decoration or just turn a plain yet functional handle.

5. Sand the turned handle beginning with 100 grit sand paper and ending with 1500 grit.

6. If you choose to use a friction polish on the handle, apply it now and then part off the handle.

7. Hand sand the parted off end and apply finish to it.

Note: I like to apply my finish off the lathe. My favorite method for finishing my handles is to apply one or two coats of Zinger’s Sanding Sealer Finish and then several coats of Mohawk’s Gloss Lacquer.

8. Take off the cap of the seam ripper and carefully jam the blue seam ripper base into the tapered hole. Replace the cap and you are done. Do not glue the plastic insert into the handle for it may need to be replaced when it gets dull.

5/16” Spade Bit ground to match the taper of the seam ripper for a tight fit, with masking tape wrapped around bit to act as a depth stop