



~The Spear Point Scraper~

-Eric Lofstrom-

Do you drool over fine curves? Are you sanding out ridges & transitions in your turnings?



Photo 1: Side Profile. 1" wide x 0.25" thick, Bevel angle ~45 degrees

Many turners have difficulty blending curves together, so they resort to sandpaper to refine their form. Sanding takes care of the problem, but also creates some of its own. Cut or cleanly sheared wood offers an optical delight, clean-cut grain shows off the three dimensional illusion known as chatoyance.

While some swear that using a scraping tool on the outside of a bowl is an accident waiting to happen, those who know the technique of *shear scraping* argue otherwise.

When I need to finesse a curve, my *spear-point scraper* (above & Photo 1) can help smooth the shape; I use it to refine convex curves in faceplate work & on the outside of all my hollow-forms. This tool is simple to sharpen & easy to use. With a little shear scraping practice, wispy shavings will fly off the tool & you'll be creating the curves of your dreams.

This tool is one of my favorites for smoothing ridges & bumps (Photo 2) out of the profile, gently blending one curve into another. While you can use any portion of the edge, the center produces a sweet spot which shaves like a razor. The point can even be used for fine detailing in face, spindle, & even endgrain, however the spear-point scraper is not intended to remove torn grain. Avoiding torn grain is best accomplished with a sharp tool (such as a bowl gouge) & riding the bevel.

If done correctly, shear scraping (Photo 3) will produce very fine, angel-hair shavings (Photo 4). The key is to lightly "kiss" the surface, shearing the fibers with the sharp burr. A cleanly raised burr is not what you get right off the grinder. A grinder burr will work, but for

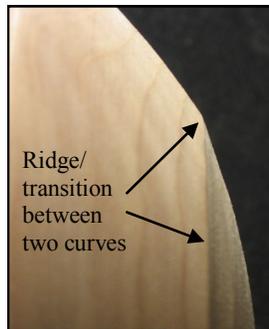


Photo 2: Close-up of a ridge separating two curves.

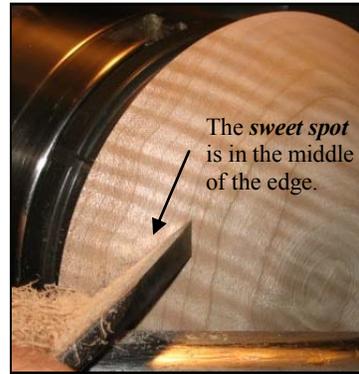


Photo 3: Action! In shear scraping, the edge is angled up (shearing angle), the handle lowered, & the burr is rotated in-line with the wood's movement (NO BEVEL CONTACT)

the cleanest surface polish the top first with a diamond hone, then gently draw your hone or carbide rod along the edge. Be careful not to cut yourself!

The best thing about the spear-point is its versatility. It works well on wet, dry, soft or hardwoods. Just tune the burr; coarse/ large= more aggressive shearing, fine/ small= more subtle refinement. One of the best features of

this technique is the ability to skate across the surface, pushing & pulling, to finesse the curve you are after. Whether shear-scraping from left *or* right, or creating details on faceplate or spindle work, this tool will soon earn its place in your turning arsenal!

You can buy a spear-point scraper from a supplier such as the Woodturner's Catalog for \$50. However, you can easily make your own from an extra square or round-nose scraper, just make sure to round the bottom edges so they glide across your tool rest without micking. Many dimensions will work; I have even made this tool using 1/2" round bar, similar to a *pyramid point tool* with a longer point. This round version works great for smaller turnings, but lacks the edge width needed for refining larger bowls and vessels.

The spear-point has long been one of my favorites, take it for a spin around the block and you'll see why!



Photo 4: Angel-hair shavings!

Please email me with any comments or questions:
Eric@EricLofstrom.com

-Eric Lofstrom