

Square Edge Bowl Turning Guide

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Overview

This guide outlines the process for turning a square edge bowl, emphasizing accuracy, safety, and craftsmanship.

Material Selection

- Choose **solid, tight-grained wood** free of knots, cracks, or defects.
- Size and thickness should match the turner's comfort level and skill.

Preparing the Blank



1. Square the material accurately.
2. Use a **center gauge**, marking from each side to ensure precise centering.
3. Identify the surface that will become the **top of the bowl**.
4. Using a Forstner bit, cut a recess deep enough (at least 1/4") to accept the chuck jaws.
5. Verify that the recess is centered. If not, trim the blank until alignment is correct. Proper centering ensures uniform wing tips.

Mounting and Forming the Bottom

1. Mount the blank on the chuck using the recess.
2. Determine the desired **foot diameter** (approximately 50% of the total width, but no less than one-third).
3. Face the bottom until flat, then remark the foot diameter.
4. Cut a new recess for remounting when shaping the top. Depth should be 1/4"–5/16" and sized for your chuck.



Turning the Wings

- Begin shaping the wings (square corners) from the outside toward the center.
- Create a gentle arc leading toward the bowl face.
- Stop when you reach the flat edges or slightly beyond.
- Take **light cuts**, always starting clear of the wing tips.
- **Keep hands safely away from the spinning corners; you will be cutting mostly air and relying on the shadow of the wings for guidance.**
- Continue until the wing tips sit about **1/4" above the foot.**



Shaping the Bottom Curve

- Turn from the foot line toward the previously shaped wing area.
- Blend the curves smoothly, forming a continuous arc.
- Typical depth is about **1/2" from the bottom of the foot.**
- Remove tool marks with a round-nose scraper if needed.
- Sand carefully, avoiding rounding over the crisp square edges.
- The bottom cannot be re-chucked after this stage—ensure the finish is final.

Remounting and Shaping the Top

1. Remount the piece using the bottom recess.
2. Confirm the blank runs true.
3. Mark the desired **rim diameter** (about two-thirds of the total width).
4. Mark the bowl recess diameter, leaving roughly 1/4" of rim thickness on each side.
5. Establish rim height—typically 1/8" to 3/16" above the top surface.
6. Shape the face from the wing tips inward toward the rim.



Turning the Bowl Interior

- Hollow the bowl to the desired depth.
- Monitor depth frequently with a gauge to avoid cutting through the bottom, accounting for the rear recess.
- Refine the interior shape and finish as desired.



Final Steps

- Sand and finish the piece, preserving the crisp square edges.
- Sign your completed bowl.