



Pop-up Toothpick Dispenser

Even the humble toothpick can have an exotic holder. While turning this clever container you'll learn an ingenious technique for making a box with an inset lid.



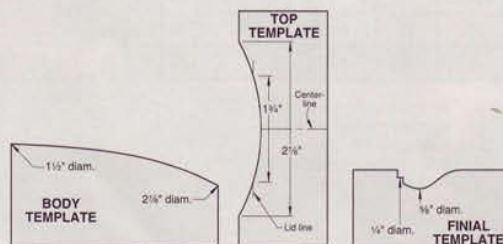
Watch a FREE 3-part video on turning this project at woodmagazine.com/tpickvid

1 Gather the materials

You'll need a 3×3×6" hardwood blank for the body; a contrasting-color 1¾×1¾×4" blank for the finial and cup; a 4"-long piece of ¼" hardwood dowel for the shaft; 1¼", 1¼", and ¼" Forstner bits; and medium-viscosity cyanoacrylate (CA) glue. The blanks should be straight-grained, dry, and free of cracks. (We used olive for the body and walnut for the finial and cup. You can use any highly figured wood or laminate a body blank from two or more species.)

Trim the body blank to 5" long, squaring both ends. Find the centers of the ends by drawing diagonals, and mark the

diagonal intersections with a center punch or awl. To make turning templates, photocopy the three **Toothpick Dispenser** patterns on the *WOOD Patterns*® insert. Adhere the pattern copies to cardboard with spray adhesive, and cut them to shape with a crafts knife.

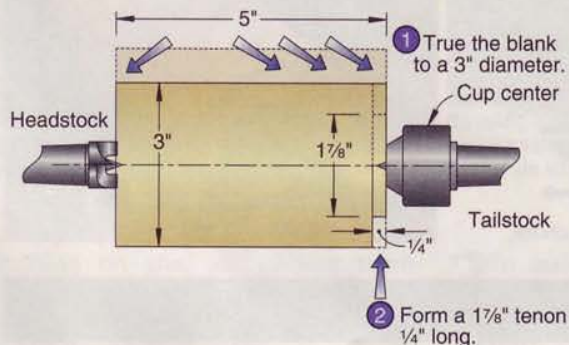


2 Turn the blank into a cylinder and form a tenon

Tools: 1/4" spindle roughing gouge, 3/8" parting tool.

Tool rest: Center.

Speed: 1,800 rpm.



Mount the body blank between centers. Use a spindle roughing gouge to turn it into a 3" cylinder. Then use a parting tool to form a 1 7/8" tenon 1/4" long on the end as shown at right. (This end becomes the bottom of the dispenser.) Next remove the blank from the lathe and the drive center from the headstock. Install a four-jaw chuck onto the headstock spindle. Now mount the blank into the chuck by gripping the tenon with the chuck jaws.



3 Form the lid

Tools: 3/8" spindle gouge, 3/8" and 1/16" parting tools, 1/4" Forstner bit.

Tool rest: Spindle gouge, slightly below center; parting tools, center.

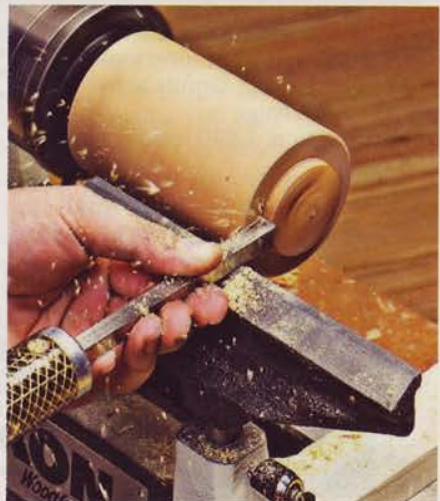
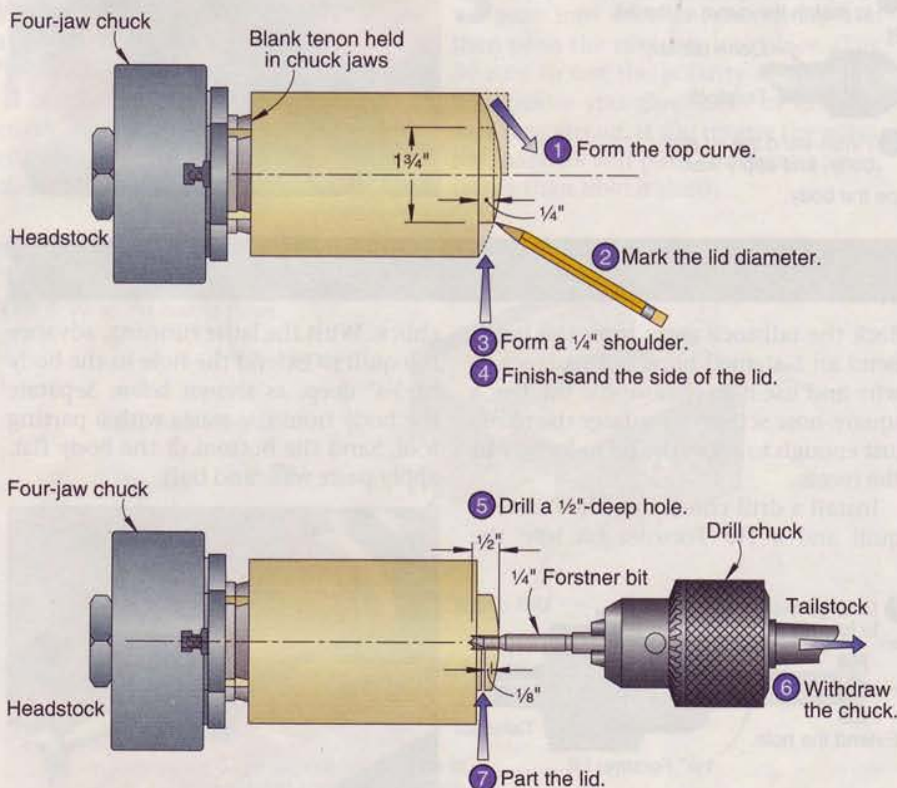
Speed: Turning, 1,800 rpm; drilling, 500 rpm.

Form the top curve on the end of the blank with a spindle gouge, checking the profile with the top template. Then mark the 1 3/4" lid diameter on the curved surface. Now "raise" the lid with a 3/8" parting tool by cutting from the edge of the blank to the marked lid diameter,

forming a 1/4" shoulder as shown below. Finish-sand the side of the lid to 320 grit. With the lathe turning, apply paste wax to the lid side and buff with a paper towel. (We used Briwax.)

Install a drill chuck into the tailstock quill and a 1/4" Forstner bit into the chuck. With the lathe running, advance the tailstock quill and drill a 1/2"-deep hole into the lid.

Part the lid from the blank with a 1/16" parting tool, making the lid 1/8" thick at the edge, and leaving a short stub on the remaining blank. Adhere sandpaper to a flat surface, and finish-sand the bottom of the lid. Apply paste wax to the lid bottom and buff. Avoid getting wax into the center hole.



4 Fit the lid and finish the top

Tools: 1/4" Forstner bit, 3/8" square-nose scraper.

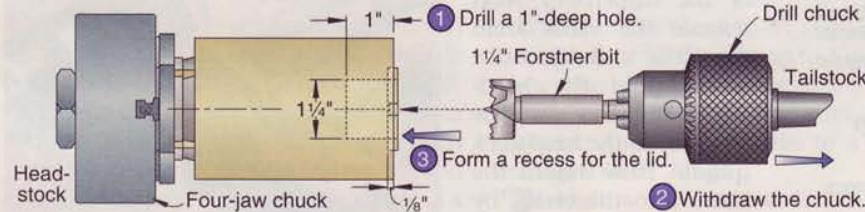
Tool rest: Slightly above center.

Speed: Drilling, 500 rpm; turning, 1,800 rpm.

Install a 1/4" Forstner bit into the drill chuck mounted in the tailstock. With

the lathe running, advance the tailstock quill and drill a 1"-deep hole. Then use a square-nose scraper to form a rabbet at the edge of the hole slightly larger than the diameter of the lid and slightly deeper than the thickness of the lid edge. Use the edge of the protruding lid stub on the body blank as a guide to the

proper diameter, as shown *below*. Make very small cuts with the scraper, testing the fit with the lid until it fits snugly into the recess.



5 Complete the top and shape the body

Tools: 3/8" spindle gouge, 1/8" parting tool, 1/4" spindle roughing gouge.

Tool rest: Spindle gouge, slightly above center; spindle roughing gouge and parting tool, center.

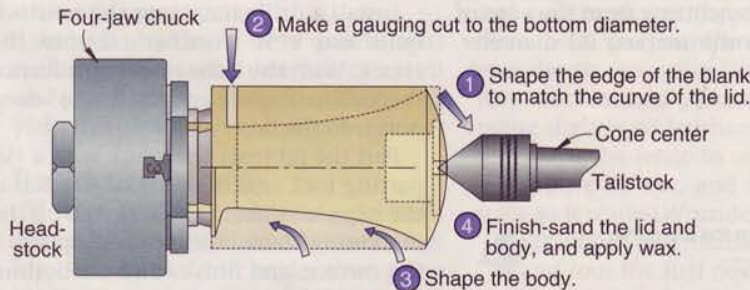
Speed: 1,800 rpm.

Install a cone live center into the tailstock. Press the lid into the body recess, advance the cone center into the lid

hole, and apply light pressure. Now, making light cuts, use a spindle gouge to shape the edge of the blank, matching the curve of the lid.

Using the body template as a guide, mark the body length. Then make a gauging cut to the bottom diameter with a parting tool. Now use a spindle roughing gouge to shape the body, as shown

below, checking your progress with the template. Finish-sand the body and lid, apply paste wax, and buff.



6 Hollow the body

Tools: 3/8" square-nose scraper, 1/4" Forstner bit, 1/8" parting tool.

Tool rest: Scraper, slightly above center; parting tool, center.

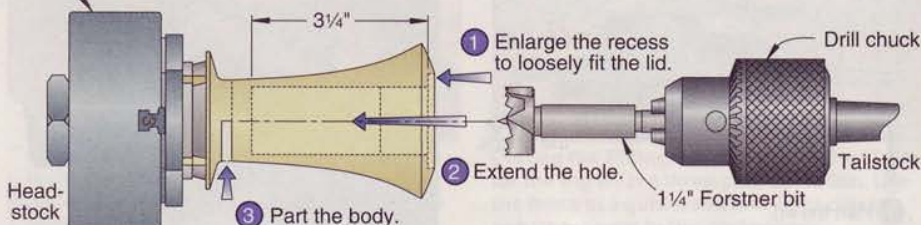
Speed: Turning, 1,800 rpm; drilling, 500 rpm.

Four-jaw chuck

Back the tailstock away from the body. Bend an L-shaped hook onto a piece of wire and use it to remove the lid. Use a square-nose scraper to enlarge the recess just enough to allow the lid to loosely fit the recess.

Install a drill chuck into the tailstock quill and a 1/4" Forstner bit into the

chuck. With the lathe running, advance the quill to extend the hole in the body to 3/4" deep, as shown *below*. Separate the body from the waste with a parting tool. Sand the bottom of the body flat, apply paste wax, and buff.



7 Shape the finial

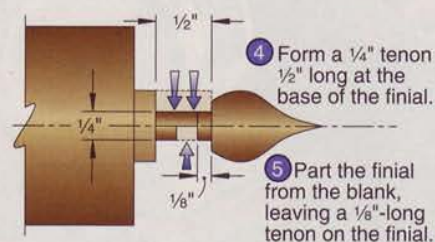
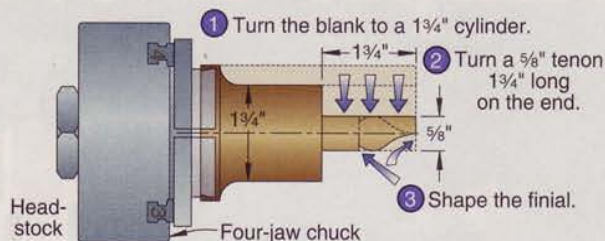
Tools: 1/4" spindle roughing gouge, 1/8" and 3/8" parting tools, 3/8" spindle gouge.

Tool rest: Roughing gouge and parting tool, center; spindle gouge, slightly above center.

Speed: 2,500 rpm.



Mount the 1 3/4 x 1 3/4 x 4" finial and cup blank in the four-jaw chuck. Use a spindle roughing gouge to turn the blank into a 1 3/4" cylinder up to the chuck jaws. Then use a 3/8" parting tool to turn a 5/8" tenon 1 3/4" long on the end. Using the finial template as a guide, shape the finial with a spindle gouge, as shown at left. Now switch to a 3/8" parting tool and form a 1/4"-diameter tenon 1/2" long at the base of the finial. Finish-sand the finial, apply paste wax, and buff. Part the finial from the blank with a 1/8" parting tool, leaving a 1/8"-long tenon on the finial.



8 Make the cup

Tools: 1/4" spindle roughing gouge, skew chisel, 1 1/16" and 1/4" Forstner bits, 1/8" parting tool.

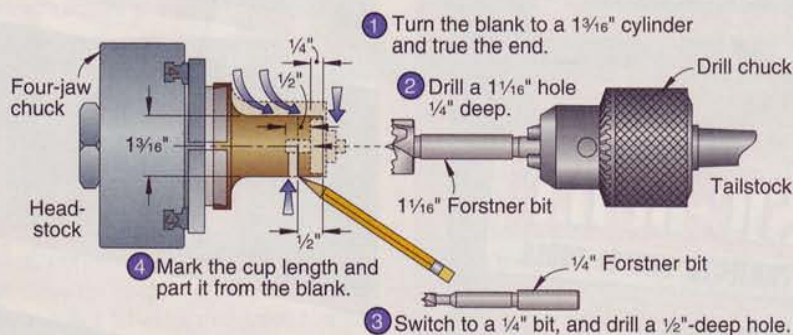
Tool rest: Roughing gouge and parting tool, center; skew, slightly above center.

Speed: Turning, 2,500 rpm; drilling, 500 rpm.



Use a spindle roughing gouge to reduce the remaining cylinder to 1 3/16" in diameter. Smooth the cylinder with a skew chisel, and true the end. Install a 1 1/16" Forstner bit into the tailstock-mounted drill chuck, and drill a 1/4"-deep hole in

the end of the cylinder, as shown at left. Switch to a 1/4" Forstner bit, and drill a 1/2"-deep hole centered in the 1 1/16" hole. Finish-sand and wax the cup, keeping the wax out of the 1/4" hole. Mark the cup length, and part it from the blank.

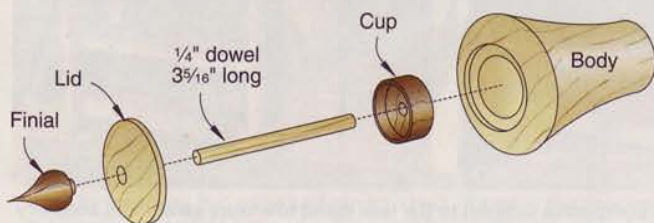


9 Assemble the dispenser

Glue the finial into the 1/4" lid hole with medium-viscosity cyanoacrylate (CA) glue, and let it cure. Then cut a piece of 1/4" hardwood dowel 3 5/16" long for the shaft. Dry-fit one end of the shaft into

the lid and the other end into the cup. Test the fit of the cup assembly into the body, trimming the shaft length if necessary. Remove and disassemble the cup assembly. To keep glue from leaking,

adhere a piece of masking tape to the cup bottom, covering the 1/4" hole. Glue the shaft into the lid and cup holes with CA glue. Reinsert the cup assembly, align the lid grain with the body grain, and let the glue cure. Remove the cup assembly and remove the masking tape. Lower the cup assembly halfway into the body, and loosely fill the dispenser with toothpicks. To close the dispenser, nest the lid into the body rabbet, aligning the grain. Dispense toothpicks by raising the cup about halfway. The toothpicks splay outward, making them easy to grasp. 🌿



Remove and disassemble the cup assembly. To keep glue from leaking, adhere a piece of masking tape to the cup bottom, covering the 1/4" hole. Glue the shaft into the lid and cup holes with CA glue. Reinsert the cup assembly, align

Written by Jan Svec with Brian Simmons
Project design: Brian Simmons
Illustrations: Roxanne LeMoine; Lorna Johnson