

CHUCKS, TURNING TOOLS

# LATHE ACCESSORIES FOR A NEW TURNER

FEBRUARY 5, 2019 | CARL FORD | LEAVE A COMMENT

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Here is some advice I wrote for a new turner who has just purchased a Powermatic 3520C lathe. He was looking for advice on chucks, faceplates and a drill chuck. A threw in a little extra stuff.

## Join the American Association of Turners (AAW)

You should join the AAW for there Journal magazine ASAP. The great mag easily pays for membership. It has lots of GOOD stuff for beginners and experience people. Go here: <https://www.woodturner.org/page/MemberBenefits>

You should also check out the AAW's Woodturning Fundamental magazine and other stuff for new people. Go here: <https://www.woodturner.org/page/FUNdamentals>



## Take A Class - Try before you buy!

You should take a class with a well known turner and/or a well known school. Try tools before you buy!

If you live in Colorado. Then take a class with Trent Bosch or a beginner class at Anderson Ranch. Or Google "woodturning classes".

## Turning Tools

I recommend taking a class and going with tool set used by your teacher/mentor. Otherwise my tool set is here: [http://www.carlford.info/pages/jigs\\_tools/modern\\_tool\\_set/modern\\_tool\\_set.pdf](http://www.carlford.info/pages/jigs_tools/modern_tool_set/modern_tool_set.pdf)



## Faceplates

Faceplates are a no brainer. The Oneway steel 4" faceplate is the best out there. You don't need stainless steel.

Note: Oneway is the manufacturer name.

Avoid the cast iron, thin steel ones and aluminum faceplates on the market. They are OK for making Jam Chucks, etc. But, not for everyday work where you "ride the plates hard and put them away wet".



The faceplate that comes with the Powermatic 3520C is an exception to the no cast iron rule. It is OK. But, to small. Only 3". Get a 4" one.

If you want to go big. I would wait and see. If you go there, I would go with a Oneway Versa Hub with a 6" Versa Plate. You could go the Versa Hub & Plate route for the 4" faceplate. However, removing the plate from the versa hub to put in screws tends to be to much trouble for a 4" plate.

The info here is out of date on the tools stuff. Use my new modern tool set stuff on my blog. But the screws and faceplate stuff is still good

here: [http://www.carlford.info/pages/demos\\_classes/natural\\_edge\\_bowls/My\\_Ellsworth\\_Class.pdf](http://www.carlford.info/pages/demos_classes/natural_edge_bowls/My_Ellsworth_Class.pdf)

## Drill Chuck (Jacobs Chuck)

Any of the "MT2 Drill Chuck" search results on Amazon will do. I would go with keyless. You don't need high quality.

Currently (2/2019) the "PSI Woodworking Products TM32KL Keyless 1/2-Inch Drill Chuck with a 2 MT Mount" looks good for \$38.

Look for a Rohm Supra chuck made in Germany if you want to waste some money on high quality you don't need. There are some nice Rohm MT2 chucks on eBay. I just purchased one for \$106 for my drill press.'



Note: Your Powermatic 3520C has a MT2 (Morse Taper #2) hole in the tailstock. The headstock is 1-1/4 by 8 threads with a MT2 hole.

## Woodturning Chuck

Now we get to the more controversial subject of chucks. I will try to stick to the middle of the road and be brief.

Wood Magazine has a good intro to how chucks work and terminology

here: <https://www.woodmagazine.com/woodworking-tips/techniques/woodturning/four-jaw-lathe-chucks>



### Think about Jaws First

Sooner or latter most people decide they need/want more than one set of chuck jaws. Different size jaws, different shape, etc. Thus you should look at the cost of extra jaw sets BEFORE you pick a manufacture. Because you can NOT interchange different brands of chuck bodies and jaws. Vicmarc jaws only fit on Vicmarc chucks, etc.

Note: Vicmarc, Oneway, and Nova are the names of well known manufactures.

In general, extra Oneway chuck jaw sets tend to be cheapest. Then Vicmarc, Nova and then Easy Wood is out of this world expensive!

Oneway has a good jaw size and shape table here: <https://oneway.ca/products-category/chucks>

### Chucks in a Nutshell

I agree with most of the professional turners that Vicmarc makes the best chuck bodies. The VM120 chuck is loved by many. However, all these people tend to be in the "dovetail jaws are best camp". They tend to turn mostly dry wood. They often expand the chuck jaws into a recess in the bottom of a piece. Making generalizations like this is obviously going to elicit negative responses from some people. **Go with a Vicmarc VM120 if you are in the dovetail jaws camp.**

I turn mostly green wood from FRESHLY cut logs from trees. Fresh cut wood is soft and cuts like butter. Thus, I am firmly in the "profiled serrated jaws are best camp". They work better on green wood. I ALWAYS clamp my jaws down on to the OUTSIDE of a tenon. Expanding into a recess in the bottom of a green wood piece almost always ends in disaster.

You can ONLY get serrated jaws from Oneway and they only fit on Oneway chucks. Thus I recommend the Oneway Stronghold chuck. It is also loved by many. I have 5 of them. I don't like the smaller Talon chuck by Oneway. **Go with a Oneway Stronghold if you are going to turn bowls or hollow forms out of green wood.**

You can get dovetail jaws for Oneway chucks and extra Oneway jaws are cheapest. So you can have the best of all worlds with a Oneway Stronghold.

### Dovetail Jaws verses Serrated Jaws

The advantage to dovetail jaws is you can removed a piece from a chuck and then remount it latter. It will still run almost dead true, with no wobble, etc. If and only if the wood has not warped. You can't do this with serrated jaws that are clamped down over a tenon. You can if you expand the serrated jaws into a recess. However, dovetail jaws expanded into a recess are better.

You have to cut a dovetail for dovetail jaws. This can be a huge source of pain for new people. They make dovetail scrapers that will cut a "perfect dovetail". However, they tend to catch. Then all hell brakes lose. **Serrated jaws use a simple straight tenon that is easier to create.**

### Other Chuck Manufactures

I started out with a Super Nova chuck. I still really hate that chuck. It's the chuck key that I really hate! The newer Nova chucks that use a simple Allen wrench key are OK. It's hard not to like the low price of the Nova SuperNova2 direct thread chuck bundles on ebay. But, extra Nova jaws tend to be expensive. Some people love Nova chucks. They are not going to agree with me here. Sorry, it's my blog.

The new kids on the block, like Hurricane chucks use to be cheap. No more! I see no reason to go with one of these new kids when the above well known manufactures are in the same price range.

Record brand chucks just splashed onto the scene in the US. They have existed for a long time in Europe where they are known for being made by Nova. Why not go with a cheap Nova on eBay?

Sorby and Axminster chucks are UK companies. They generally are not cheap in the US.

When it comes to chucks for Mini Lathes the field has gotten pretty muddy. I have not been keeping up. I still like the Barracuda2 Chuck by Penn State Industries. Mostly, I like the \$149 price. I don't know that it is any better than the look-a-likes by other manufactures.

There is no way on the face of the earth I want anything to do with these new "no jaw screws" chucks! Like, Easy Wood Tools, Easy Chuck, etc. Jaws need to be securely screwed on to a chuck! Otherwise they are just an accident waiting to happen. Sooner or latter jaws with out screws will come flying off and kill you.

### Chuck Size

Bigger is always better in the US. Thus sooner or latter someone was going to come out with chucks bigger than the Vicmarc VM120 (5") or Oneway Stronghold (4-1/2"). They are just trying to knock these chucks off their well earned thrones. You don't need any of the bigger chucks. The extra weight will just be a pain in the ass when you take them on/off the lathe. It is the chuck jaw size of work ranges that makes a difference. Not the chuck body size. Well, maybe if someone made an 8" chuck it would be better. But there is no real difference between a 4-1/2" chuck and a 5" or 6" chuck.

### Turning Smocks

Get yourself a turning smock before "he who must be obeyed" complains about wood shavings in the house. I like the AAW Turning Smock best. It'll make a good valentines day gift! 😊



◀ BEGINDER ◀ CHUCKS ◀ FACEPLATES ◀ TOOLS ◀ TURNING TOOLS