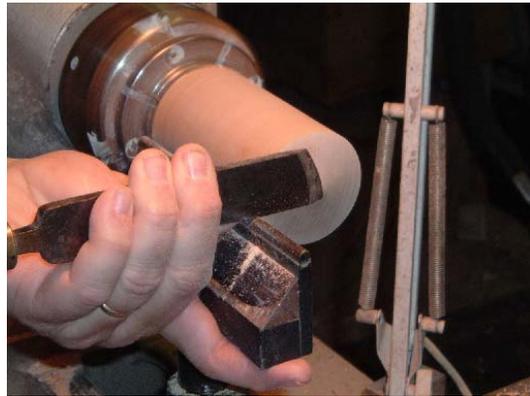


Two Piece Top

This is a set of instructions for how I make the tops in Alan Lacer's "Son of Skew" video. They are a two piece top, where the disk is made from an end grain blank and the stem is simple spindle turning.

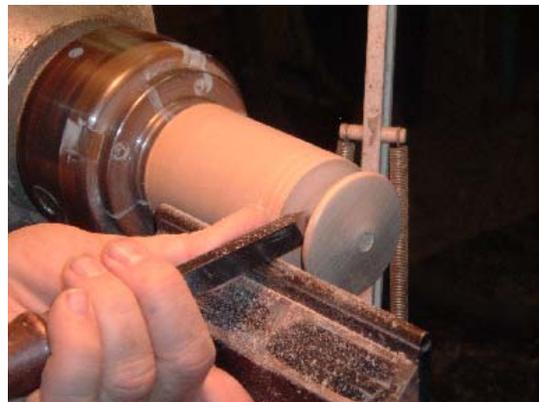
1. Start by facing the front of a 2" cylindrical blank with a skew or gouge. You can cut at an angle or create a slightly domed shape. This will be the top of the disk.



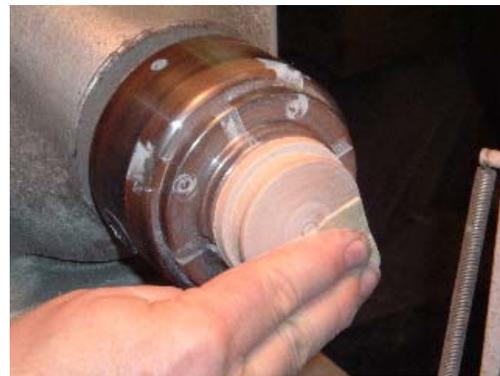
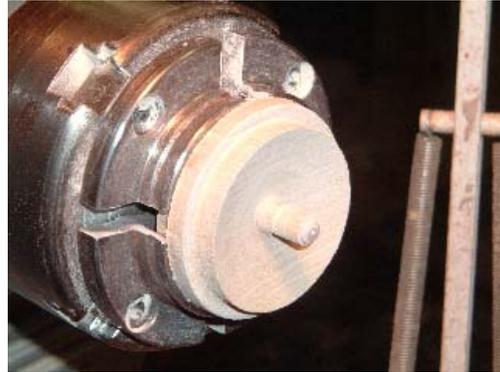
2. Create a dimple in the center and then drill a hole using a Jacob's chuck in the tailstock. I use a 5/16" drill. Drill the hole deep enough that it will extend through to the bottom side of the top. Sand the top of the top through the grits. You can do some chatterwork if you wish.



3. Start cutting the bottom of the top by cutting some relief area and then paring down with the skew. You can also use a parting tool to develop enough clearance, but remember there is a 5/16" hole drilled so don't go too deep. Finish forming the disk and part off the disk with the skew.



4. Out of a piece of scrap create a sanding jig for the bottom of the top. Cut the jig with a relief that will accommodate the bottom angle and leave a $5/16$ " tenon. If you cut from the blank used to turn the disk, cut the jig to a smaller diameter to make it easier to remove the disk after sanding. Mount the bottom of the disk and sand through the grits.



5. Mount the blank for the stem. The blank is around $3/4$ " square. You can make this of a contrasting wood if you are not planning to paint the disk. Turn the blank round and face off the end.



6. The stem has three sections. The top part is where you spin the top from. The second part is a $5/16$ " cylindrical section that fits tightly through the disk and the bottom section is the bottom of the top tapered to a fine point. Use a parting tool to establish the bottom of the second section and then use



a skew or gouge to turn the upper section, shaping it nicely.

Measure the thickness of the disk and make a mark on the 5/16" second section to define the top of this section. You can let the cylinder extend past the disk and then decorate with shallow v-grooves or cut some beads, etc. to transition to the thinner stem. Undercut the bottom of this section to accommodate the bottom angle and test fit the disk often to ensure that it sits tightly against the bottom section of the stem.



7. Form the bottom section. This should be the full 3/4" diameter and gently slope to a sharp point. This section shouldn't be too long, between 1/2" and 5/8", otherwise the top could be top-heavy. Take it very easy at the point and don't push too hard since you don't want to brake off the point. You need to cut as sharp a point as possible to maximize how well the top spins.



8. Finish the disk separately if you want to paint or marble the disk. Use CA glue to join to the stem and then apply finish to the completed top.

