

## For Turning Pleasure, Keep Your Lathe in Tip –Top Shape!

It may seem self evident that we should keep our lathes in good condition to insure long machine life and smooth operation. Yet, nearly all of us are guilty of neglecting or infrequently performing basic maintenance. It's a good idea to develop a regular routine that becomes second nature. It takes relatively little time, which is well spent.

These basic operations will help keep the machine in good operating condition:

### ***Cleaning and Lubrication***

### ***Security of Fasteners***

### ***Belt Alignment***

#### ***1. Cleaning and Lubrication:***

##### ***Dust and chips:***

If you have an electronic drive, keep cooling fins of the control unit free of debris. When done for the day, turn off the power to the unit. The components have a finite life under power, even though it is long. *Frequency: At least each day of use.*

Headstock drive chamber should be kept clear of dust and debris on sheaves and belts. *Frequency: Inspect each day of use; clean as necessary.*

Top and under lathe bed – clear chips and dust regularly as you work. When turning green wood, get wet material off the lathe bed, headstock and tailstock pronto.

##### ***Exposed Metal Surfaces:***

The lathe bed should be kept shiny and clean by coating either with WD-40 or a light oil, rubbed in with 0000 steel wool and then wiped off. If any discolored areas remain, scrub clear with the lubricant and 400 or 600 grit sandpaper. A thin coat of wax applied thereafter will be even more helpful. *Frequency: After each day of use, or monthly in summertime.*

The underside of the sliding tool support collects dust, and should also be cleaned off with lubricant and 0000 steel wool, and wiped off, to keep it sliding easily. Clean out and lubricate hole for tool rest. *Frequency: After each day of use, or monthly in summertime.*

Exposed metal on the headstock, and the tailstock quill, inspected when extended fully, should also be cleaned similarly. *Frequency: After each day of use, or monthly in summertime.*

Regularly inspect, oil, and clean out tapered holes in head and tailstock when exposed to dust and debris.

The tool rest surface will develop nicks and scratches in time. Smooth these out with a fine flat file when necessary. Rubbing this surface with paraffin or an old candle regularly will keep your tool sliding smoothly along this surface.

#### ***2. Security of Fasteners:***

The lathe is subject to some vibration when turning irregular objects. Even a small amount may eventually cause set screws on the drive sheaves to loosen. Lathe bed support bolts, if any, may also loosen. These should be checked for tightness two or three times a year.

#### ***3. Belt alignment:***

To insure long belt life, the drive sheaves should be lined up so that there is no sideways pull causing the belt to rub. Check sheave faces with a straight edge to insure they are in line. If not, loosen set screws and realign. Check two or three times a year.