

Teaching Wood Lathes

Before securing wood on a lathe, have students check the wood for defects that could result in breaking or splintering. They should securely tighten all adjusting levers and locks, too, before turning on the machine. Instruct students to always stand to one side as they switch on the power, and to be sure the motor suits the lathe in both horsepower and RPMs.

Refer To...

- [Safety is Specific, Section on Wood Lathes.](#)

...for references to the safe use of wood lathes.

Lesson Suggestion... Don't Wing It

Objective: To teach students that trusting yourself to figure out how to use a power tool without having received proper instruction is a very bad idea.

Materials/Requirements: Students and a lathe — unplugged.

What to Do: Present your class with an assignment that involves using the lathe. Suggest to them that the owner's manual is lost and time is short, and you're wondering if anyone can figure out how to use the lathe without the benefit of the manual or any instruction in the tool.

Have a student volunteer or volunteers show the class how they would proceed to do the assignment. (Make sure the lathe is unplugged while students handle it.) Keep a list of all the student suggestions that are dangerous or ill-advised. When all the students have offered their suggestions, address each of them, explaining why it is dangerous or unacceptable.

Discuss with the students the possible consequences of trying to figure out a machine like the lathe on their own.

Finally, retrieve the manual and explain the proper way to use the tool. Based on your discussion, have the students create a list of warnings or "Do Nots" for the lathe, as well as a list of "Things to Do."