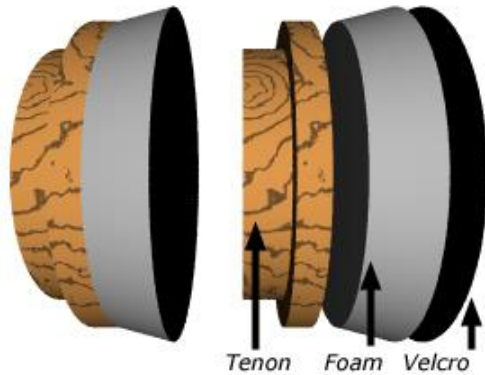


Making A Lathe Sanding Block

Used for quickly sanding the bottoms of finished pieces

By Matt Harber

I use a sanding block to sand the simple bottom of my pieces. The block fits my scroll chuck and is constructed out of leftover scrap wood, foam, and Velcro. The foam allows the block and sandpaper to conform to the slight concavity of the work piece (vase, bowl, candlestick, goblet, etc.) bottom.



- “Simple bottom” means that the bottom is simple, slightly concave, and without adornment (grooves, feet, etc).
- The foam was purchased in a three-foot square sheet, one inch thick, from “Foam ‘N More”, at 1925 Maple Road (15 Mile) in Troy, Michigan (guess: \$18).
- The Velcro (industrial strength) was purchased as a roll from my local hardware store.
- The wood base with its tenon is turned from waste stock, usually left over from turning a vase or bowl.
- I have a block for several of my jaw sizes – so that I don’t have to change jaws to use the block.
- The foam piece is cut out from the foam sheet with a utility knife, glued to the wood block with E6000 craft glue. I also use the E6000 to glue the Velcro to the foam - I’ve had the Velcro come off.
- The Velcro is shaped (after being glued) by using 80-grit (or 100-grit) sandpaper. I’ve tried my turning tools and they tend to shred/tear the foam unsatisfactorily. Also, before gluing, rough up the foam surface a bit with sandpaper, to give the glue better purchase.
- Glues that I have tried and been unhappy/unsuccessful with: CA (superglue), 2-part epoxy (standard hardware store, Systems 3), Gorilla glue, Elmer’s glue. Rubber cement might work, too. The glue appears to need to be slightly flexible and able to take the stress.
- Make sure to use the hook part of the Velcro. The goal is to be able to use circular cutouts of sandpaper on the block.

How it works: Cut out circular sections of graduating grits of sheet cloth-backed sandpaper. I use 100, 150, 220, 320, and 400. I cut them out by using the sanding block

as a template, drawing a circle on the sandpaper, then using shop scissors to cut the sandpaper. To sand, put the block in your scroll chuck, put the circular piece of sandpaper on it, turn on your lathe, hold your work piece firmly, and gently advance it into the sandpaper. If you push too hard you may burn your piece or sandpaper, break the sandpaper loose from the Velcro, or possible lose control of your work piece. Then just go through the grits.

Happy sanding!