

HOW TO MAKE AN OFF-CENTER PENDANT

by Steve Cassidy

PART I

Using a 2" x 2" block of wood, anchor it in the chuck and smooth one side. Trim off a piece 1/2" thick and mark its center.

From scrap wood, make two 3" x 3/4" discs, each with a tenon on the bottom to fit your chuck. Find the center on each disc and drill a 1/2" hole 1/2" deep on one Disc B. Put it aside for now.

Next, using a 3/32" bit, drill a hole 1/4" deep into the center of Disc A. Drill another 3/32" hole right through the center of the 2" pendant blank .

Cut a similar diameter finishing nail 1/2" long and taper the ends with a metal file. Press the post into the center hole of Disc A. Center a 2" x 2" wide piece of double stick tape over the post and press down to the wood evenly. Trim the excess tape from around the post so there is no bulge. Remove the tape cover and place the disc into your chuck jaws, tighten & check for trueness at low speed.

Place the pendant blank smooth side out onto the post, squaring it with the tape. It should feel very tight and flush with the tape. Bring up the tailstock using a cone center and press against the blank for support. Turn on the lathe and crank it up to 1500 - 2000 RPM's. Is it true? Trim the blank to a circle, soften the outer edge and create a profile. Pull back the tail stock, sand, add 1-2 coats of finish, then buff w/ rag.

Turn off lathe, remove blank, turn it over & press onto the post/tape. Bring up tailstock for support, turn on lathe and starting with the top edge of the bottom profile, round the blank into a low dome shape. Sand and repeat the finish for the top. Take off the blank/pendant.

PART II

Take Disc A and make a pencil mark about 1/4" - 3/8" above the 1/2" hole. Place the edge of a new piece of tape on that mark & center over the hole. Choose which part of the pendant will be the top and place the top of the pendant on the pencil mark, centered over tape. Press firmly. Put the disc tenon into the chuck, tighten, check for true and lower the speed to about 450 rpms. Turn off lathe.

Mount a 1/2" Forstner bit into a jamb chuck and place in the tailstock.

Move tool rest out of the way and bring the bit up to the pendant, but not quite touching and lock it to the bed. Turn on the lathe and using the wheel, slowly push the bit into the wood until you hear it clear the tape. Pull back the bit past the wood and remove from tailstock.

PART III

Now it's time to shape the pendant bearing in mind that it's off center and being held by a piece of tape. Put the tool rest in front of the pendant and at center. I like to use a swept back bowl gouge for this part. You use a scraping cut into the center of the hole from the thick edge.

Check the spin on the lathe for clearance and go back up to 1500-2000. Gently slice into the wood, stopping periodically to check for shape and to make sure you're not removing too much from the top. If you have a nice grain design on the bottom, don't lose it. Shape the cut to suit yourself. It can be a severe slope or more straight - up to you.

Once the inside of the hole is cleanly cut and you have the shape you want, lightly sand the inside letting only the sandpaper touch the wood. This is not the time to get heavy handed with your fingers. I like to cup the paper and go through the grits: 150/220/320/400/600. Just a few seconds each. Apply the finish like before, wrap the cloth around your finger and buff. Use a light but firm pressure in the recess. Remove and sand the inside of the hole and add the finish by hand. Loop a cord through it and voila!