

## Turning a Snowman Ornament



### INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, I started turning ornaments for my friends' grandchildren and the neighborhood kids for Christmas. As the number of request grew, I needed to come up with a new and quicker idea for Christmas ornaments, thus the Snowman ornament.

Since snowmen are white, I like to use holly for my snowmen. Holly, if cut and dried properly can be very white with no stains or knots making it the perfect candidate for this project.

### Turning the Head

First, place a blank 2" x 2" x 6" between centers and turn it to a cylinder. Then turn a tenon on one end for chucking.



The next step is to chuck up the cylinder and turn a 2" globe. To do this I use a 1/2 "spindle gouge. *Over time, I have discovered that the best shape for a snowman's head is not a round sphere but a slightly oblong globe.*



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Hollow the globe with the oblong end toward the tailstock.

*To establish the depth for hollowing, place a drill chuck in the tailstock and drill a 7/8" hole with a Fostner bit into the globe to a depth approximately 3/16" from the bottom of the globe. After drilling, hollow the globe. I like to use the toe of a 1/4" round skew with the tool rest just above center and placed as close as possible without hitting the globe. I usually leave the wall thickness about 1/8". It is okay to be thicker at the bottom when hollowing as this is an ornament and you want it to hang down.*

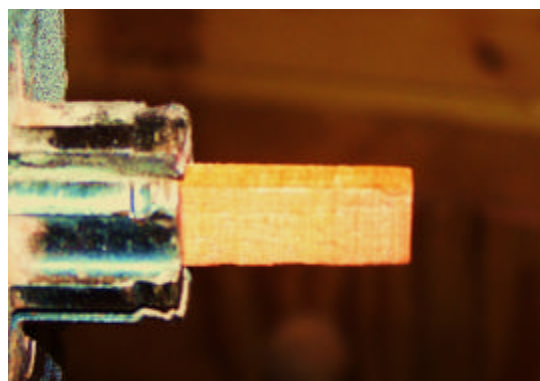


Once the globe is hollow, the exterior is sanded to 220, I wipe on poly/acrylic semi-gloss finish. After the finish dries, drill a 1/8" hole about two thirds of the way up from the bottom of the globe for the snowman's nose.



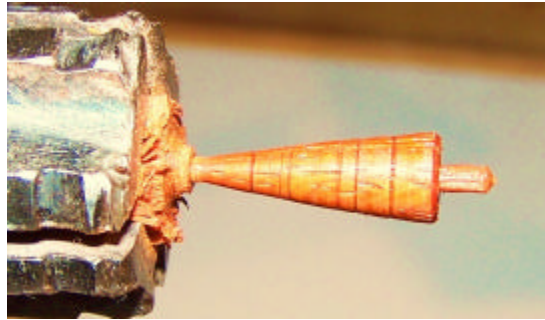
### **Turning the Carrot Nose**

Place a 3/16" square 1" long piece of padauk in a chuck and turn a cone about 1/2" long.



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*This cone will be the snowman's carrot nose. At the base of the cone I undercut to give the nose a close fit on the snowman's curved face. Before parting the nose off, turn a 1/8" diameter tenon about 1/4" long. I like to finish the nose with a quick spray of lacquer.*



*Once the lacquered nose is dry glue it in place. Having the nose glued in place is important because it will act as a reference when placing the eyes and mouth.*



Now is the best time to place the eyes and mouth on the snowman.

*Hold the snowman globe in your hand. Using a hard lead pencil draw two small circles about 1/4" above the nose and about 1/2" apart. These circle marks will be where you place the eyes. If the eyes are not where you want them erase them and draw the small circles where you want them.*

Next, draw circles for the mouth.

*This is done by dropping down about 1/4" below the nose and making a small circle. Use this circle as the middle of the mouth and space 3 or more small circles spaced evenly apart on either side of the first circle. I like to curve the line of circles to make the snowman smile. It is a good idea to practice this on some scrap to decide how you would like the mouth to look.*



Once the eyes and mouth are penciled in, use a fabric texturing pen to fill in the pencil circles. *A fabric texturing pen will give the eyes and mouth the appearance of coal. I like to use the smallest tip black fabric texturing pen for the eyes and mouth.*



### **Turning the Top Hat**



Now it is time to turn a hat for your snowman.

*Any style hat will do. Hats may be dyed, painted, texture, or left the natural color of the wood. Each hat gives the snowman a different “personality”. I like to use black walnut to turn top hats.*

You will need a blank about 3-4” long and about 2” in diameter.

First, turn the blank to a cylinder with a tenon on one end.

Mount the tenon in a chuck.

Drill a ½ “hole in the blank about 1” deep.



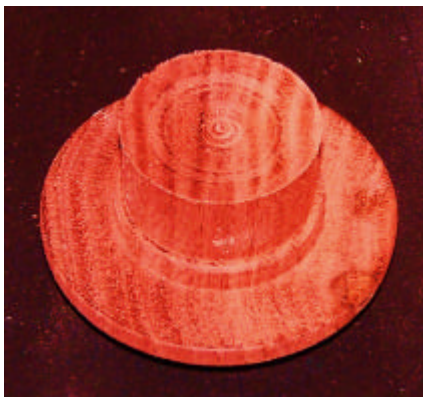
Then make a tenon  $\frac{1}{4}$ " long and  $\frac{7}{8}$ " in diameter so that it fits the hole in the top of the snowman's head. *Check the fit of the hat tenon to the snowman's head.* Turn the brim of the hat by making two straight cuts. The bottom cut will stop at the top of the hat tenon.



The top of the brim cut will stop leaving a 1" - 1  $\frac{1}{4}$ " inch cylinder for the top of the top hat. I like to measure up the top of the hat  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and take the top of the hat cylinder down another  $\frac{1}{16}$  -  $\frac{1}{8}$ " leaving a hat band above the hat brim.



*You may at this point sand and smooth the hat or leave the hat rough to look like a fur hat. I now paint the band on the hat. The band may be any color you like. For authenticity I paint the band black. Once the band dries I like to finish the hat with a spray lacquer.*





## Turning the Santa Hat



I use a blank about 3-4" long and about 1 1/2" in diameter.  
First, turn the blank to a cylinder with a tenon on one end.  
Mount the tenon in a chuck.

Drill a 1/2" hole in the blank about 3/4" deep. Create a tenon 1/4" long and 7/8" in diameter so that it fits the hole in the top of the snowman's head. *Check the fit of the hat tenon to the snowman's head.*



Make the fur trim of the hat by making two straight cuts. The bottom cut will stop at the top of the hat tenon. The top of the fur trim cut will stop leaving a 1" - 1 1/4" inch cylinder for the top of the hat.



I like to measure up the top of the hat  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and form a rounded over fur trim. Now turn a cone leaving about  $\frac{3}{8}$ " at the top of the cone to turn a fur ball. After turning the hat, part it off. Color the hat and lacquer it.



### Turning the Straw Hat



I like to use a Rhododendron blank about 3-4" long and about 3" in diameter.

First, turn the blank to a cylinder with a tenon on one end.

Mount the tenon in a chuck.

Drill a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " hole in the blank about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep. Next, turn a tenon  $\frac{1}{4}$ " long and  $\frac{7}{8}$ " in diameter so that it fits the hole in the top of the snowman's head. *Check the fit of the hat tenon to the snowman's head.*



Make the curved wide brim of the hat by making a slightly curved under cut. This underside of the brim cut will stop at the top of the hat tenon. Texture the “straw” of the underside of the hat brim. *This is done by tilting a texturing tool to one side and drawing it across the brim toward you.* Next, tilt the texturing tool in the opposite direction and again draw it toward you. *Turn the lathe off and see if you are getting the effect you want. If the texturing is not deep enough, repeat the previous two tilting draws of the texturing tool while pressing slightly more on the tool.*



Next, cut the top of the brim following the same shape as the underside. The brim should be at least 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch thick.

Then texture the top of the straw hat brim using the same process as used to texture the underside of the brim. *This step is a little tricky because while you are texturing the brim you will need to carefully support the hat brim with your fingers. Be aware of the spinning wood and the texturing tool.*



I like to leave a band around the top of the hat above the brim. *The top of the hat will need to have a slight taper and round over for a woman’s hat. It should have straight sides for a man’s straw hat.*

Once you have turned the sides of the hat, texture it.

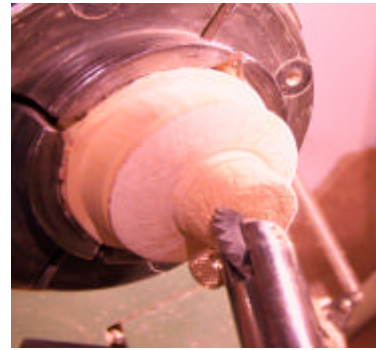




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Now, finish turning the top of the hat and part it off.

In order to texture the very top of the hat you will need to put it in a jam chuck. Make a jam chuck that will hold the hat tightly. You can bring up the tail stock for support. Texture the top of the hat the same way as you did the brim.



Color the band a bright color for a woman's hat and a dark color for a man's.

Once the hat band is dry, you can finish the hat with lacquer. Rhododendron will appear as a straw color with lacquer.



A snowman community