

TURNING AND DETAILING PLATTER BASES

INTRODUCTION

Platters offer an excellent opportunity to express yourself creatively and to use an infinite number of designs and detailing. I have found that designing and detailing the bases on my platters is as enjoyable as detailing the front of the platter. There are two types of bases that I use most frequently: a three-footed base and a multi-centered base. I was introduced to the latter base type by its creator, John Uteck of the North Carolina Woodturning Association, (*North Carolina Woodturner*, February, 2004, Vol. 14, No. 2). The following are the steps that I use to create and detail each of these base types.

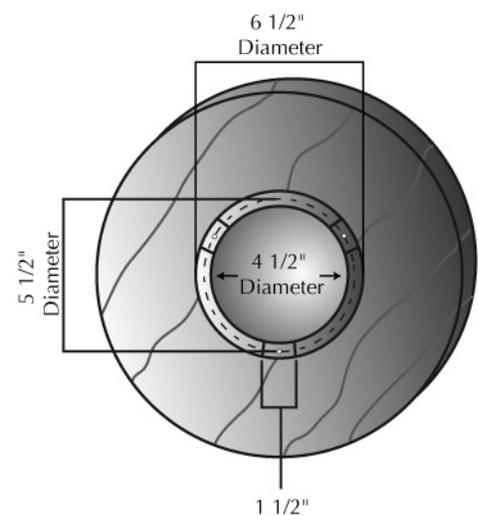
THREE-FOOTED BASE WITH DETAILING

Once you have selected and prepared the platter blank and mounted a faceplate or screw chuck, you are ready for the first steps in turning the base. This will involve preparing the recess and foot, turning the foot and base of the platter, and then detailing the base.

Preparing the Recess and Foot

1. Draw $4\frac{1}{2}$ " and $6\frac{1}{2}$ " circles in the center of the face of the blank to create a 1" wide band.
2. Then draw a $5\frac{1}{2}$ " dotted circle in the center of the 1" band.
3. Use the radius of the $5\frac{1}{2}$ " dotted circle to divide the 1" band into thirds.
4. Mark a line $\frac{3}{4}$ " on both sides of the three points on the band.

The radius of a circle is equal to about $\frac{1}{6}$ th the circumference.

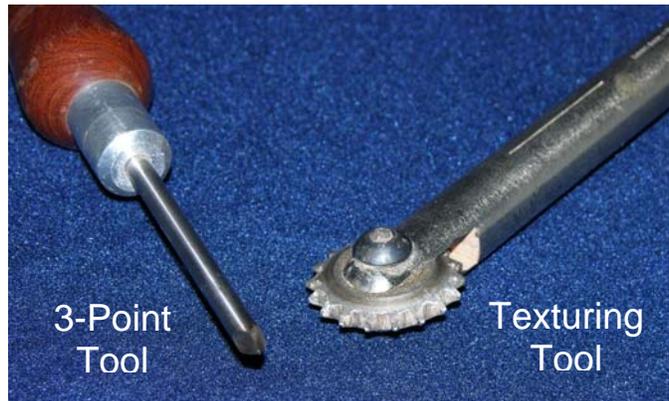


5. Mount the platter blank on the lathe and true it up.

Turning the Foot and Base of the Platter

I like to use a 3/8" bowl gouge with a fingernail grind using a pulling and slicing cut to shape the back of the platter. I find I get less tear-out this way. I use a 3/8" bowl gouge with an English grind for my finishing cuts.

1. Recess the 4½" diameter circle to a depth of 3/16". This will be used for expansion chucking the blank.
2. Rough turn the shape of the rest of the base of the platter from the 6½" circle to the edge of the blank. I like to create a slight ogee near the edge of the blank.
3. Carve the three feet in the base of the platter in the 1" band. I use a reciprocating carver and a 1" drum sander to carve the feet.
4. Refine the shape of the platter base.
5. Sand the recess foot and base of the platter to 400 grit.
6. At this point, I detail the foot, base, and recess of the platter. I use a three-point tool to turn beads and a texturing tool to texture between the beads.



7. Carefully fine sand (600 grit) the completed detailing.
8. Remove the blank from the lathe.
9. Remove the faceplate from the blank. You are now ready to work on the front of the platter.

MULTI-CENTERED BASE WITH DETAILING

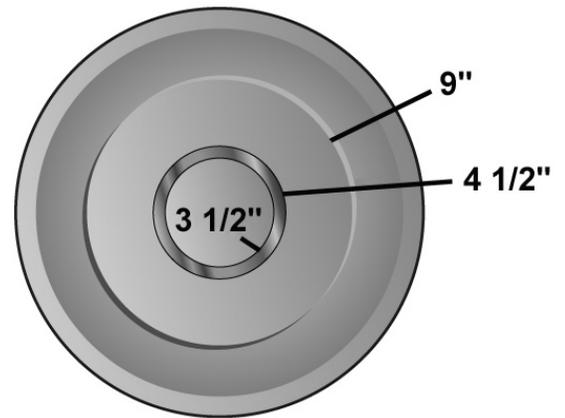
Preparing the Platter Front to Turn a Multi-centered Foot

1. Draw a 2" circle in the center of the platter front.
2. Divide the circumference of the circle into thirds.
3. Drill holes for your screw chuck in the center of the platter and at each of the three points on the circle and number them 1, 2 and 3.
4. Use a screw chuck in the center hole to mount the platter blank on the lathe and true it up.



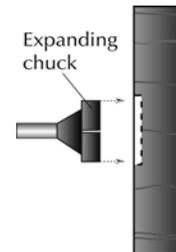
Turning the Foot and Base of the Platter

1. Draw a 9" circle on the base of the platter.
2. Turn the shape of the rest of the base and sand from the 9" circle to the edge of the blank, leaving the 9" circle $\frac{1}{2}$ " higher than the rest of the base.
3. Draw a 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " circle and a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " circle on the base.
4. Turn a channel $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep between the 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " circles.
5. Sand and texture the $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep channel.
6. Remount the platter blank in hole #1.
7. With a live center in the tailstock, mark a new center on the base.
8. Draw 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " circles around this new center.
9. Turn a channel $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep between these circles.
10. Sand and texture the $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep channel. The new channel should coincide with the first channel where they overlap.
11. Repeat steps 7-10 with holes #2 and #3.
12. Remount the blank in the primary center hole and turn away the marks made with the live center on the base.



Expansion Chucking the Platter

With your three-footed or multi-centered base completed and detailed you can now proceed to turn the front of the platter as desired. You can remount the blank on the lathe by expanding the chuck jaws into the recess in the foot of the platter.



Finishing the Platter

No matter which of the bases you have used, proper finishing will preserve and enhance both the base and the completed platter. When adding color, I use water based metalized dyes, inks, and transparent acrylics before the finish. I use both an oil/varnish mix and a lacquer finish on my platters, depending on the wood. I prefer oil/varnish on dark woods and lacquer on light woods. The oil/varnish mix consists of 1/3 pure tung oil, 1/3 polyurethane and 1/3 mineral spirits.

Note: The most important part of finishing is a thorough and careful sanding job.



Multi-centered Base



Three-footed Base