

“Roll yer Own” Tool Rests

Ray Lanham 6/8/08

Dissatisfied with your current tool rest? Wish you had a longer or shorter one? Help is on the way with a limited bit of foresight, ingenuity and money you can make all the tool rests that you'll ever need. Not a welder? No problem, just take the pieces to a welding or muffler shop and they'll help you out very inexpensively.

One of the secrets to these new tool rests is a clever concept now being marketed by the Robust Lathe company http://www.turnrobust.com/Comfort_Tool_Rests.html. Aside from the curved steel shape to support your hand, they epoxy a hardened steel ¼” dia. steel rod to the top edge of the steel to provide a surface that won't ever ding, nick or need to be filed flat.

You can adapt this new “low-tech” solution to your own lathe needs with some 1½ x 1½ steel angle cut to the sizes you need. Also purchase some ¼” drill rod or cold rolled steel to epoxy to the top of the angle iron. You'll also need a length of 1” dia. cold rolled steel rod for the posts. Since these pieces of steel are usually sold in 20' and 10' lengths, this would make an ideal project for your turning club so many others could enjoy the camaraderie of making these tool rests together at a much lower cost.



After welding the posts to the steel angle which had already been cut to size, all that remained was to epoxy the ¼” rod to the top edge and paint them. I wanted a small tool rest for pen turning., a longer then standard tool rest (16”) for reaching into deep bowls and a 90 degree corner tool rest.



Make certain that you use 5 min. epoxy and do one side at a time. Remember, “Less is More” so wait 10 minutes or more before turning the tool rest over and gluing the other side. The epoxy creates a “filet” between the angle iron and the rod which is more than enough to keep it in place.

PM tool rests.....not available.

Robust Tool Rests.....\$50 each

Doing it myself.....priceless!