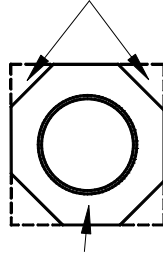


Tropical Pen Blank Turning Instructions

Always use eye protection and a dust mask while turning!

Note: These blanks are more difficult to turn when compared to wood or regular acrylic. Failure to follow these directions can result in the failure of the blank(s). Sharp tools and light cuts are absolutely necessary. We recommend that only experienced turners attempt these blanks.

Trimmed Edges



Pen Blank

1. Carefully trim the edges of the blanks lengthwise using a belt or disc sander in order to reduce the stresses encountered when turning the blanks. Insert a wooden dowel that fits snugly inside the pen tube and sand the blanks close to their required dimensions while keeping the blanks as round as possible. Sand each blank individually.
2. Using a pen mill or disc sander (recommended) and being very careful, trim the ends of the blanks as per the pen kit instructions. Chamfer the inside mouth of the brass tube.
3. Mount the blanks on a pen mandrel with the appropriate bushings and begin turning but **DO NOT TURN THE MATERIAL ALL THE WAY TO THE BUSHINGS!** Leave a small amount of material above the bushings for finishing (about .05" to .07"). The snake skins add about .07" to the diameter of the barrels. If you turn the acrylic down to the bushings, you can easily ruin the blank by exposing the exotic material.

Some kits have the necessary "extra diameter" to accommodate the extra diameter need for the exotic blanks but, until you are absolutely sure that turning down to the bushings will not expose the exotic material, we suggest that you err on the side of caution. If the finished acrylic material is larger than the nib, a center band, finials, etc. round off the sharp edge of the acrylic so as to blend in with the metal parts.

4. Finish these blanks as you would be any acrylic blank. If an air bubble is exposed while turning use a tiny drop of CA glue to fill it **BEFORE** you begin the sanding/polishing process. We recommend sanding to 600 grit using regular sandpaper. Then use Micro-Mesh (2400 through 12000). Finally, buff using White Diamond buffing compound or with liquid plastic polish.

5. Ensure that the inside of the tubes are free of any glue and chamfer all tubes prior to assembly to avoid cracking the blanks.

Another option:

The following is a message I received from a customer who was having difficulties turning the snake skin blanks in the 'normal' manner as described above. I applaud Barry in developing a solution for a problem he was having instead of just complaining about the product. This is what separates a craftsman from a hobbyist. These are his words:

I'm posting this note to hopefully help other turners. I bought a rattlesnake blank from you and followed the instructions to the letter. No matter how careful I was the blank still shattered and broke apart exposing the skin below. I was able to refill the voids with CA glue but then tried to think how to continue.

This is what I did: I took a medium grade bastard file (new) and at a slow speed worked it back and forth making light cuts with the file. I worked slow so as not to heat up the blank with friction. I worked at it until I got the shape that I wanted. Then I sanded it through the stated way and puffed it out and the blanks came out perfectly. Would have never thought of using a file to turn these blanks. Try it yourself and I think you will be surprised at how well it turns out.

Please share this with others because these blanks are very fragile. Thank you for your time and I will be back buying more blanks.

Barry N. in Kalamazoo, MI