

Turning a Penn State Industries pizza cutter handle

The Penn State pizza cutters are, in my mind over embellished and more work than they should be. The instructions just don't make a lot of sense. It comes with the cutter assembly, a threaded insert (goes in the handle) Three brass plated rings (embellishment) an end plug. In these instructions, I have eliminated the end plug and two of the rings.

Tools needed

Roughing gouge
Spindle gouge
Skew
15/32" drill bit

1. You will need a turning blank. I cut mine 6 1/4" long by 1 5/8" in diameter. I cut the blanks a little longer and wider than I want for a finished project to allow repositioning the blank after I drill the hole for the cutter.
2. Turn the blank to a cylinder using the roughing gouge.
3. Secure the blank in the pin jaws and bring up the tail center to center the blank and tighten the pin jaws. Drill a 15/32" hole 2" deep in the tail stock end.
4. Put a small drive center in the headstock of the lathe and a cone center in the tailstock of the lathe. Secure the handle stock in the lathe and true up the handle blank. (This is why I oversize the blank. Every time you reposition something and re true it, you loose a little diameter).
5. After the handle stock is trued up, use the skew to peel a 1/4" tenon at the butt end of the handle stock. This just keeps you away from the drive center when you eventually part the handle from the lathe.
6. Turn to the desired shape. The handle shape featured here is very popular. Where the pizza cutter wheel will attach, I use a spindle gouge to turn half of a cove, and bring that diameter down to about 13/16 inches. The rest of the handle is turned using the spindle gouge and the roughing gouge. The skew is used after sanding to part the handle from the lathe. (That's also why I turned the tenon on the handle).
7. At this point, you need to sand the butt end of the cutter handle. I put a piece of scrap wood in the pin jaws and using a skew turn a tenon that will fit into the 15"/32" hole in the handle, allowing you to sand the end of the handle (at slow speed!)

8. At this point, I spray a finish in the handle. Personally, I like semi gloss and something that can take a little moisture without spotting. Krylon satin acrylic (????) works pretty well and is cheap.
9. Once dry, assembly is next. We need to insert the threaded insert into the handle. If you just screw the insert in, you may very well crack the handle. I ream out the hole in the handle a bit with a rotary burr, then screw in the insert. I use a nut and bolt and a socket wrench. Don't screw it in too far, the brass ring will fit on the end. Screw the pizza cutter into the handle and you're done.