

{ELEGANT BUSINESS CARD HOLDER}

Mike Peace

You carefully choose the perfect business card design. Now, how best to display them? This easy turning project results in an elegant, practical item. It makes a nice gift, too. You basically turn a disk, embellish one side, and then cut the disk in half. The two half-disks sandwich a cylinder that is cut to serve as a tray for business cards.

Making a card holder provides a chance to use small pieces of exotic hardwoods. Pair woods for the tray that complement the disk or create a statement. Spalted wood goes well with ebony. The contrast of maple and walnut may provide just the touch needed for a particular color of card. The only requirement is that the wood be dry.

Turn a disk and cut in half

Select a piece of wood about 3¼" (83mm) square and at least 1¼" (31mm) long. Use a longer piece if you are making more than one card holder. Mount the wood between centers and use a spindle-roughing gouge to turn it to a cylinder, 3" to 3½" (76mm to 79mm) in diameter. Cut a tenon on one

end, reverse the cylinder, and mount the tenon into a four-jaw chuck (*Photo 1*).

Embellish the face of the cylinder by adding decorative beads with a spindle gouge. Then, carefully sand the disk, taking care not to sand away crisp edges and details. I generally sand to 400 grit.

You may want to use a texturing tool or a chatter tool to add additional embellishment. These tools work best on tight-grained endgrain, but I have had good luck with texturing the side grain of exotic woods, which tend to have harder, tighter grain (*Photo 2*).

Mark a line on the side of the cylinder ½" to ⅝" (13mm to 16mm) from

the end to establish the thickness of the disk. Begin a parting cut to the left of that line, using a sharp ¼" (6mm) parting tool to minimize tearout. Make the cut no more than ¾" (19mm) deep, and then finish turn the beaded edge (*Photo 3*).

Sand the edge, and then move the toolrest parallel with the face of the disk and adjust its height to align right at center. Rotate the disk so that the mark will be along the grain line. Using the toolrest as a ruler, draw a pencil line across the disk (*Photo 4*). This line will be used as a guide to cut the disk in half using a bandsaw or scroll saw.

The card holder on the left is turned from padauk and Bradford pear. The one on the right is cherry and spalted maple.



1 Turning an endgrain cylinder lets you make several card holders at once.



2 Embellish the disks with beads, texturing, or chatter marks.



3 Make a parting cut to define the thickness of the disk and allow clearance to finish turn the bead on the rim. Here, a disk is turned from a flat board (see sidebar).



4 Use the toolrest to draw a guideline across the exact centerline of the disk. After parting off, cut the disk in half along the guideline.

Carefully part off the disk—the parted-off side will probably require a little hand sanding, but make sure the back surface is flat to ensure a successful glue joint. Cut the disk in half.

The tray for cards

A basic tray for cards can be made from two pieces of flat stock glued into an L shape, but a turned tray is more visually interesting.

Mount a blank between centers and turn it to a cylinder about $3\frac{3}{16}$ " long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter (89mm by 38mm). This length is based on the length of a business card, plus a little extra space for clearance. For appearance's sake, the diameter of the cylinder for the tray should be somewhat less than half the diameter of the disk. In general, card holders with the cylinder tray rising above the sides are not attractive. If, however, you have turned the cylinder too large, no problem—simply flatten the bottom on a belt sander to lower its profile (Photo 5).

With the cylinder off the lathe, trim its ends flat and square—they are the surfaces that will be glued to the disk, so be as accurate as possible. You can do this using a bandsaw, but for safety, hold the cylinder in a clamp.

Reposition the cylinder in the screw clamp, and then make multiple cuts with the bandsaw to create a slot about $\frac{5}{16}$ " (8mm) wide. Clean up the bottom of the slot with a narrow chisel. The

large screw clamp keeps the cylinder secure and your fingers safely away from the blade (Photo 6). Or, instead of a slot, cut a notch: Make two bandsaw cuts that meet past the center so the angle is somewhat less than 90° (Photo 7).

Glue the tray between the two half disks with the notch (or slot) tilted back at about a 35° angle. Glue up on a sheet of wax paper on a tablesaw so that you can square things up against the fence. I use a scrap of wood as a spacer to align the cylinder with the half-disks (Photo 8). Clamp and then let the glue dry.

I have had success using regular yellow glue, but endgrain is not an ideal joint surface, so you may want to use thick CA glue or epoxy to ensure the glue joints will hold. Remove any excess glue and check the surfaces for final hand sanding. I use Minwax Antique Oil for most of my turning projects—the oil is simple to apply and wipe off. After applying and wiping off two coats, 24 hours apart, I let the piece dry for two or three days, and then buff it. ■

Mike Peace is a retired software projects manager and a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. He has been turning for six years and enjoys making a wide variety of projects. A member of the AAW, Mike is active in three woodturning chapters in the Atlanta area. He enjoys teaching turning and demonstrating. You can see Mike's work and previously published articles on his website, MikePeacewoodturning.blogspot.com.



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If necessary, sand the bottom of the center cylinder flat so it fits within the half-disks on the ends.



6

Hold the cylinder in a screw clamp and create a slot by making multiple bandsaw cuts.



7

Alternatively, cut out a V-shaped notch for holding the cards.



8

For glue-up, I register the disks against a tablesaw fence and use scrap wood as a spacer to help align the cylinder.

Disks from flat stock—use a glue block

I find it easiest to turn disks from a cylinder, but you can also turn them individually from a $\frac{3}{4}$ "-(20mm)-thick board, which may allow more wood choices and better use of grain patterns. For this, it is best to use a glue block to hold the wood, which will keep it free of chuck marks and screw holes and also allow you to use the full thickness of the wood.



Use the tailstock as a clamp when gluing the workpiece to a glue block. The glue block is held in a four-jaw chuck.



True the side of the disk and flatten the face to remove any marks left by the tailstock.

Make a glue block from a $\frac{3}{4}$ "-thick hardwood scrap; poplar is a good choice. The gluing surface should be side grain, not endgrain. Cut out a circle slightly smaller than the one you will turn for the card holder.

Place the glue block against the chuck jaws and use the tailstock to hold it in place. True up the circle and cut a tenon on the face. Reverse the block, and use the tenon to hold it in the chuck's jaws. True the face so it is flat to ensure a secure glue joint for the disk.

Spread glue over the entire face. Center the workpiece over the glue block and bring up the tailstock to apply pressure until the glue dries. You can use medium or thick CA glue, but I prefer using wood glue, letting it dry overnight.

Turn the disk and part it off as described in the article.