

Step Jaws & The Chuck

The Most Used Tool In My Shop

OK, you got a new lathe, and now, what? One of the most often heard questions from new call makers is “What do I need to turn calls?”

Well, the answer isn't always as simple as it may seem. A lot depends on what type of calls you turn, but one thing is certain. Your life will be a whole lot easier in the shop if you make getting a good chuck and a set of Step Jaws a priority.



The chuck I use in my shop is a Oneway Tallon made for mini lathes. There are several others on the market. PSI has one, and CraftSuppliesUSA as well as other sources sell many different brands. The Oneway is a good chuck, not the top of the line, but it is a good serviceable chuck. It will set you back, with the adapter, about \$230.00

Most chucks come with a set of Jaws, usually Number 3 Jaws that work well if you are turning bowls or hollow forms.

But they are bit too large for turning calls. .

A simple set of Step Jaws will go a long way towards making your chuck one of the most used tools in your shop. And they will usually run you less than \$35.00.

They are called Step Jaws because they have STEPS on the outside that allows you to grip the INSIDE of items without opening the jaws so wide that your knuckles become targets.



The red arrow in the pitcher above show the distinct steps. They work very well for holding things like turkey pot calls by the way.

But the real key is that they close down to less than 1/4", which means you can even use them to hold a pen mandral. And unlike Pin Jaws, the Steps give greater outside support to items held on the inside of the jaws, and give a solid and true backing for items held on the outside.

But the real beauty of a chuck with a set of step jaws is that anything you put in the head stock taper, you can put in the jaws of a chuck with step jaws. As a

matter of fact, I never take the chuck off my lathe!

Want to turn between centers?

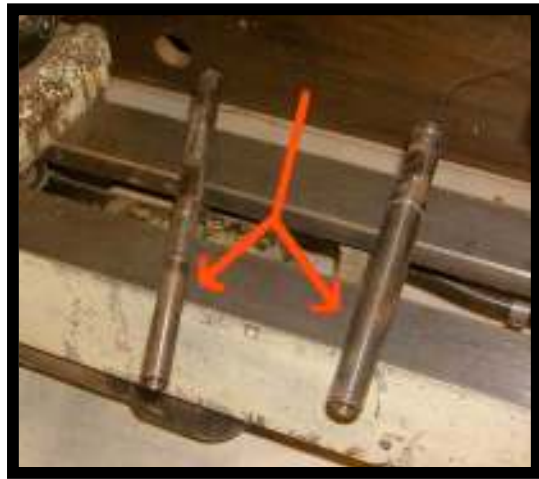


No problem. Grab your dead center and put it in the jaws of your chuck.



Oneway even makes a dead center that fits their jaws for about 30 bucks, but the one that comes with your Jet, Rikon, or Delta mini lathe is free and works perfectly. One other advantage, is that when you are done, you don't have to go looking for your knock out bar to remove the dead center from your headstock. And if you ever get one stuck in there, you will really see the benefit to this trick.

OK, what if I want to use a mandral?
No problem.



A blind mandral, one that needs a draw bar, will fit right in the chuck and step jaws without a draw bar.



And if you don't have a blind mandral, and all you want to use it for is to sand the ends of your calls at slow speeds, a piece of delrin with a couple O rings will work just fine.



Want to turn on a regular mandral?

That works too.



You can even take a bolt and cut the head off, wrap it with athletic tape or masking tape and use it to polish your own metal bands.



So when someone ask me, what is the most used tool in my shop besides the lathe, I tell them my chuck with step jaws.

Try it, and I think you find that it will not only save you time, but make things simpler too.

AI @ THO

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