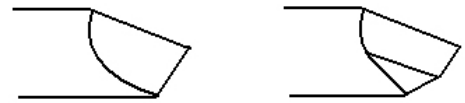


Removing the heel of the bevel from your gouges

Over the years, I have seen the shapes of the gouges used by demonstrators at CAW and MCW meetings. There is a trend among the professionals such as JoHannes Michelsen, Trent Bosch, Cindy Drozda, and many more, to round off the heel of the bevel and, further, to go with a very narrow working bevel. The latter is a matter of taste, style, experience, safety, and philosophy, so I won't get into that part of it, but regardless of the width of the working bevel you chose to have adjacent to your cutting edge, you can safely remove the heel. This could also be called "adding a secondary bevel", "relieving the bevel", "rounding off the heel", etc. It's all the same thing regardless of what you call it. The point is that if you are not religiously "floating the bevel" the way Stuart Batty taught us, that heel is going to be acting as a pivot point and squeezing down into the wood, particularly on a concave cut. In many woods, this will leave a visible mark that may or may not sand out easily.



The thing that brought this to my mind right now is I turned some of that Bradford pear storm wood. I turned it before Stuart's demo, and I got a series of bruises that appear as rings (inset photo). Bradford pear seems to be particularly sensitive to that. I had a nice cut on this bowl, and I did not have to do much sanding. As a result, the heel marks are visible in the finished piece as a periodic discoloration. Bummer. The good news is that this is an end-grain bowl, so they look like the grain pattern, and the "man on the street" would never know. But I know. And I expect you would recognize them for what they are. So I want to make sure it doesn't happen again.

I took most of my gouges and ground off the heels. It's a very quick and simple action on your grinder – no reason not to do it. My bevel widths went from around 3-4/16" to 2-3/16" – still enough to float (remember, we no longer "rub" them). Unless you go all the way into a fully rounded (convex) shape for the bottom of your gouges, per Hannes, Trent, & Cindy (inset photo), you'll still have plenty of bevel left, and you may still have a small heel, but the angle and sharpness of that heel will be significantly reduced, and so will be the damage it can cause. Once you go this far, I imagine you'll at least add a third bevel to soften the remaining heel, and you may end up with the ideal convex curve.



This is one case where we do not want to be well heeled.

+++++

*Always use common sense. Things that work in one situation may not work in another.
Follow all Safety Rules. If it feels wrong, it probably is; stop and rethink.
Your **Mileage May Vary***