

I'M CONFUSED:

I get a lot of calls and messages concerning woodturning. I love to chat with turners who either have a problem, situation or solution.

This is where the topics World Wide Woodturners will cover, we'd love you to share with us.

For the past year or two, I've received lots of calls about the "Negative Rake" scrapers and blades. We are part of a growing industry and changes are inevitable.

"Negative Rake" is a term applied to a design of a scraper blade or insertable carbide cutter, etc. Although there is no real science to this tool, or its use, the hype is great and the results appear to be fantastic.

But, let's consider what and how we are cutting. A scraper is a scraper is a scraper. no magic, no mystery. Scrapers have been in use forever and a day. They remove wood by slicing with a burr, which you create on the tool. This can be accomplished with a jig, designed to create a burr, or with a sharpening device which will move metal to create a burr.



Common shapes of what is now called "Negative Rake"

The "Negative Rake" stipulation refers to the angle at which the cutting edge is sharpened. There are theories that propose that the best way to grind a scraper is with the "Negative Rake." This is supposed to give you a better and smoother cut on the material. But that grind is an option, a properly sharpened skew will make a great negative rake scraper.

But, does your material know about this "Negative Rake" or will your presentation offset the need? The material doesn't know and will never suspect any wrong, if you use a scraper in what I call a "Bias Cut".

"Bias Cut", that is what you do with an Ellsworth type tool, or a fingernail gouge, if you are slicing material. Slicing is so much better than hogging or gouging out the material. It's all about the angle of attack that wins this war. The "Negative Rake" concept works great if you keep the tool flat on the tool rest. It will still catch, dig in and tear wood, it just does it in a nicer fashion. If you present a scraper, any scraper, at a "Bias Cut", the cutting action will be more of a slice than a gouge.

I know you're thinking that lots of folks believe in this, how can they be wrong? They are not wrong, but playing to a different audience. I'm playing to a turner who is smart enough to slow down the process and pay attention to what's happening to the material.

Slicing material is what you do with your pocket knife, pretty simple? You wouldn't take your pocket knife to a block of 2X4 and attempt to remove a full 1-1/2" on each pass with a blade cutting straight across the wood. You'll probably do as we all have, kick the blade to a slight angle and take a less-aggressive slice. See, that's what slicing is all about. Taking an angled, or "Bias Cut" on your material.