

Crochet Hooks

By Mike Lanahan



Finally!

- Yes, FINALLY someone to show you how to turn and make crochet hooks! The reason you took up woodturning.
- Yea, me too. The LAST thing on my mind was making crochet hooks.
- I made the mistake of commenting on Katherine Kowalski's "Creating Crochet Hooks" article in American Woodturner.

No Choice

- Q: What's a guy to do when his daughter is a hooker?
- A: Make her crochet hooks!
- Without her guidance and feedback I would have never learned enough on my own to make a good crochet hook, nor been inclined to try to make one.

Symbiotic Relationship

- Strangely, crochet hooks are symbiotic to peppermills.
- Corners cut from peppermill blanks glued together with veneer make great crochet hook blanks.
- Crochet hook sales pay for peppermill blanks.

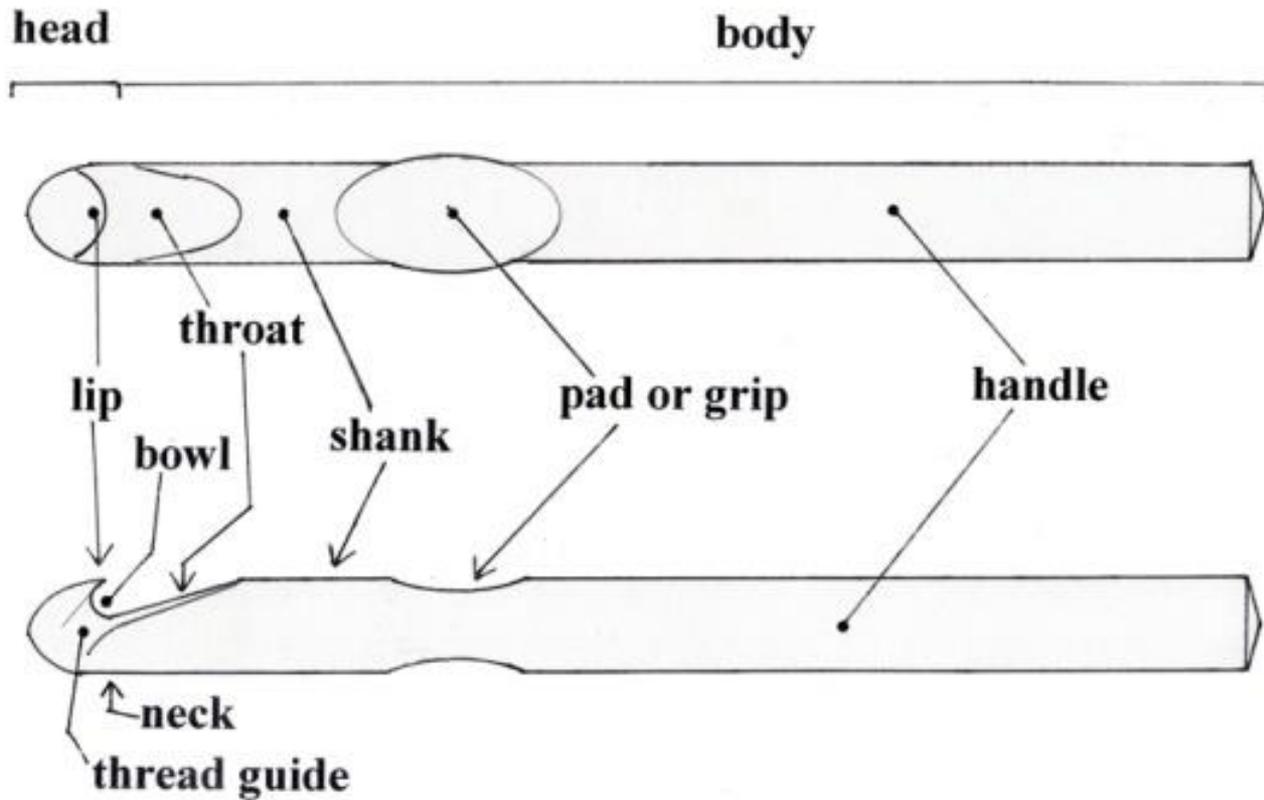


Why Crochet Hooks?

- Commercial metal hooks are cold, soulless, and not friendly for long use or arthritic hands.
- Fiber artists appreciate the craftsmanship and warmth of handmade wood hooks.



Anatomy

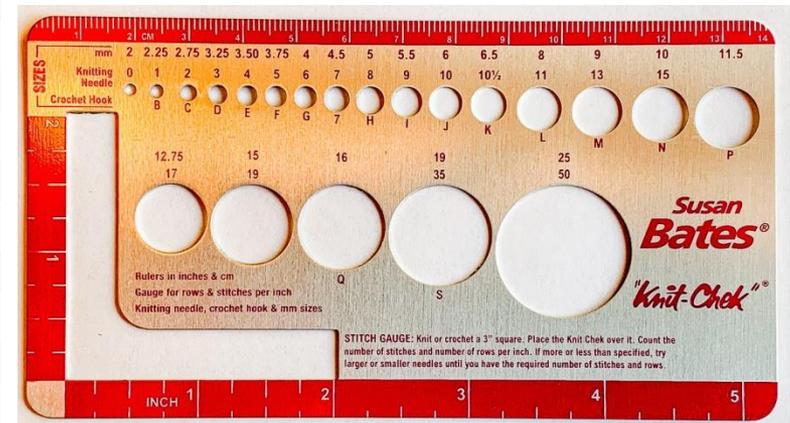


Qualities of good Hook

- Smooth
- Comfortable in hand (no sharp edges where the hand touches handle)
- Light weight, well balanced.
- Hook shaft is straight sided cylinder.
- But there is no one design fits all.

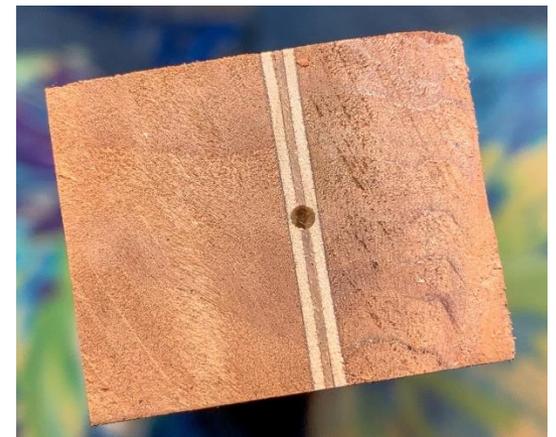
Sizes

| METRIC SIZES (mm) | US SIZES | UK/CANADIAN |
|-------------------|----------|-------------|
| 2.0 | - | 14 |
| 2.25 | B/1 | 13 |
| 2.5 | - | 12 |
| 2.75 | C/2 | - |
| 3.0 | - | 11 |
| 3.25 | D/3 | 10 |
| 3.5 | E/4 | 9 |
| 3.75 | F/5 | - |
| 4.0 | G/6 | 8 |
| 4.5 | 7 | 7 |
| 5.0 | H/8 | 6 |
| 5.5 | I/9 | 5 |
| 6.0 | J/10 | 4 |
| 6.5 | K/10 1/2 | 3 |
| 7.0 | - | 2 |
| 8.0 | L/11 | 0 |
| 9.0 | M/13 | 00 |
| 10.0 | N/15 | 000 |



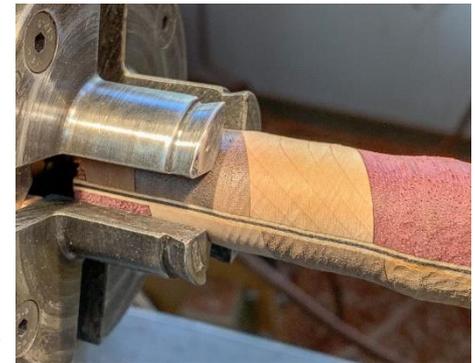
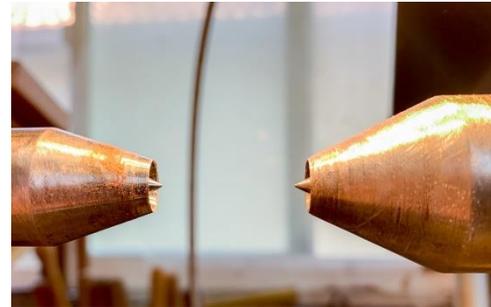
Wood Blanks

- Tight grain, dense and hard, especially for smaller sizes.
- Oily exotics for very small, < 5 mm (like rosewood, cocobolo, ...)
- Grain on axis with hook (easiest).
- Can glue-up blanks
- $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 10-12" indent centers.



Turning Process

- Mount between centers (cup centers preferred)
- Nock off corners and rough turn.
- Form a cylinder on handle end
- Re-mount w cylinder in pin jaws and live center snug, but not tight.
- Carefully turn blank round & smooth w 80 grit



Good Vibrations?

- Vibrations are NOT your friend.
- Long, skinny blank supported at each end.
- From which end do you start turning?
 - Trick question – start from the center
 - It wants to move like a jump rope
 - Leave meat at the ends for support and a stiffer blank

Handy Steady Rest

- Hand 1
 - Finger tips on back side of tool rest
 - Fingers/palm on “smooth” blank
 - Thumb holds gouge on tool rest
- Hand 2
 - Fingers hold gouge close to rest
 - One finger rides the tool rest to control cut
- Hand 3
 - Tool handle on hip which controls bevel to wood
- If hand gets hot you are applying too much pressure
- Teach yourself to turn both L & R handed



Turning

- Turn the hand position
- Check to see it feels good
- Turn the shaft (cylindrical)
- Adorn the butt end at whimsy
- Sand to 400 grit
 - Keep paper at angle to the wood
 - Sand in grain direction after each grit to hide scratches.
- Part off.



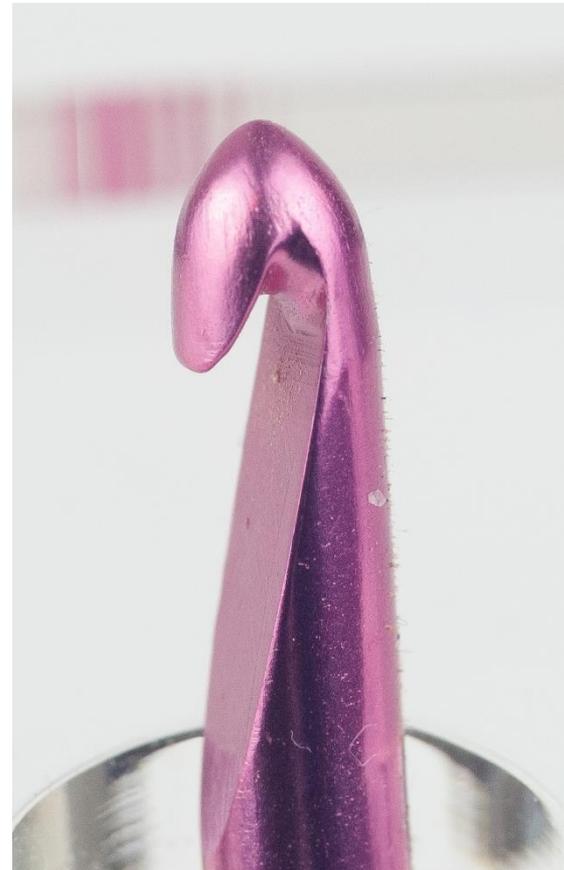
Apply Finish

- Dealers choice
 - I like a CA finish for it's durability and smoothness
 - bSi thin "odorless" CA with BLO
 - Apply w paper towel & nitrile gloves, low RPM
- Hold crochet hook in pin jaws using plastic tube
- Sand & Finish the parted off spot
- Buff w Beall buffing system



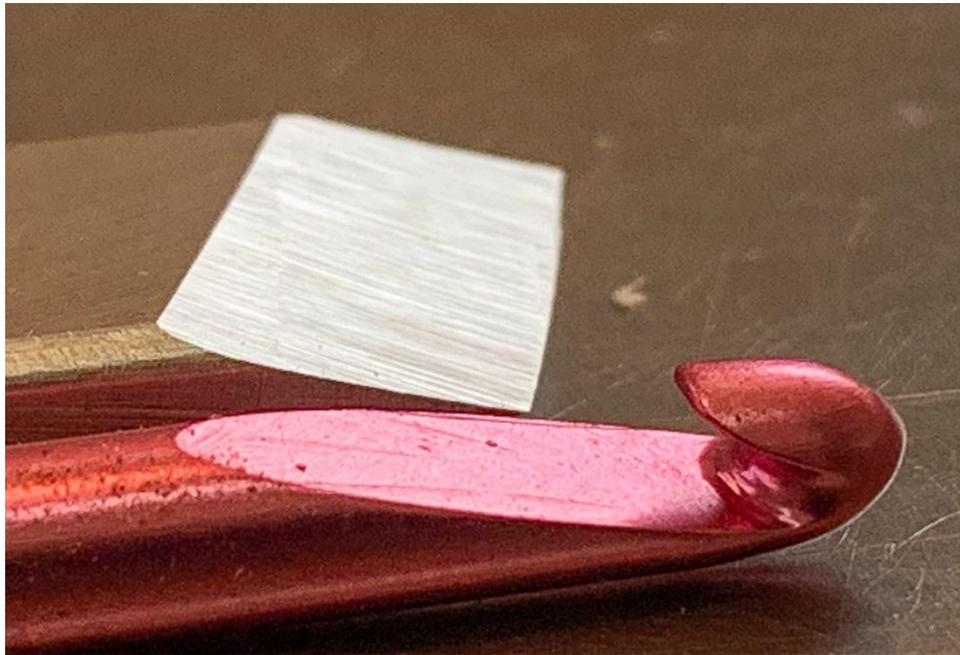
Carve What?

- What does the head and throat really look like? Shape of tip?
- How about the lip, throat and thread guide?
- Study a commercial hook up close
 - My daughter likes Susan Bates hooks, so...



Shape

- The angle of the throat is surprisingly acute. Sharper than the 25 degrees of my skew grind.



Carving

- Cut the tip to length (~1 ½") and rough shape a conical tip on a small 1" belt sander, or w sanding disk in headstock
- Cut the bowl & throat with the rotary cutter & 1 ½" Dremel cutter disk



Carving, cont.

- Form thread guides on side of tip w small cylindrical cutter.
- Refine shape of bowl, smooth and remove any burn marks from disk.



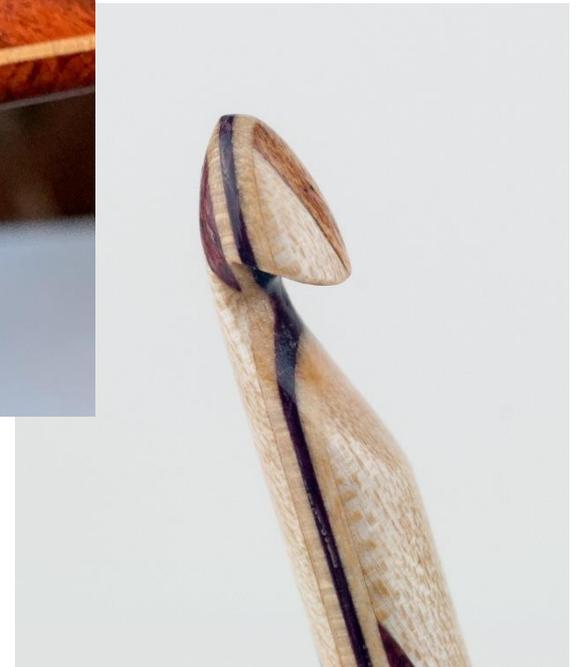
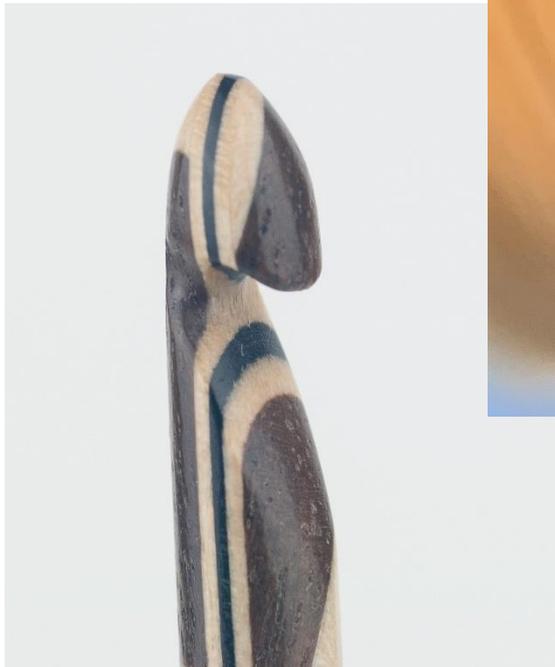
Sand

- Credit card wrapped w 400 grit gets into bowl and thread guides. Remove any sharp point on nib and refine shape. Smooth overall.



Finish tip

- Wipe on thin CA finish and buff.



Practice Carving First

- A 3/16" dowel makes good practice medium
- I usually make 10-12 crochet hooks at a time. By the last one I'm getting pretty good at the carving. Let the dowel suffer the indignity of your learning.



Cheating

- Sometimes vibration is just too bad. You need to refinish or reshape a hook after completed.
- Shop made cup to fit live center allows aligned and supported remounting with tubing and pin jaws for fixes or recovery.



Solicit Feedback

- QA – Best case, have a family member try each one as it is made.
- Alternative, ask users to report what they like and don't like or how to improve.
- Hookers can be surprisingly picky!

Tools & Equipment

- Drive & Live centers (matching cup preferred)
- Gouges of choice (any or all):
 - Spindle Roughing gouge
 - Bowl gouge,
 - Spindle gouges (conventional, continental, detail),
 - Skew,
 - Parting tool.
- DIY cup center for live center, helpful.

T&E, cont.

- Rotary cutter
 - Master Carver Micro Pro (my preference)
 - Dremel



- Cutters
 - Dremel EZ loc 1 ½” cutter disk metal
 - Small cylindrical cutter



- Beall Buffing system, or equivalent

Supplies & Materials

- Wood blanks, $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 10-12"
 - Veneer & glue, optional
- Plastic tubing, $\frac{1}{4}$ " – $\frac{1}{2}$ " I.D.
- Sand paper strips, 1" x 4-6", 80-400 grit
- Credit card size piece of plastic
- Finish of choice
 - bSi Odorless Super-Gold CA, & BLO
- Gloves & paper towels

References

- Kowalski, Katherine "Creating Crochet Hooks," American Woodturner magazine, 26.1:44–47
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOKQhsp-rXU>



The End

