

# MORE WOODTURNING MAGAZINE

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## Make Refrigerator Magnets

by John Wolf

You probably have a collection of small pieces of beautiful wood. Pieces that are big enough to be used as a color accent or to make that one knob. I used to be overrun with wood that was too good to throw away but not large enough to make useful projects. Not any more! Why? Refrigerator magnets!

This quick project makes a useful item that everyone seems to need. I begin by purchasing rare earth magnets. The most useful size is just under 1/2 inch diameter (12 mm) and 1/8 inch thick. These can be ordered from most supply catalogs, but I get mine from my local craft supply store. They are about 1/2 the price as the mail order sources, and the magnet is the major cost in making this project.

### Samples of stock to be used.



Select the blank of wood. I usually start with stock that is at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch square but larger or slightly smaller will work. Cut the wood to lengths anywhere from  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 3 inches. If your saw doesn't leave a beautiful finish, you should true the end on a sander. Drill the approximate center

of the finished end with a brad point or Forstner drill that leaves a hole just large enough for your magnet. I use a 15/32 brad point drill for the 12 mm magnet. I use a drill press vise and drill press to do this most of the time, but it can be done with a hand drill. What you must do is secure the wood blank using something other than your fingers! Drill this hole to a depth that equals about 3/4 the thickness of your magnet.

The drill will leave a center mark. At this center point drill a 5/32 hole with a standard twist drill to a depth of 3/4 inch.

Make a screw center for your lathe that is appropriately sized for this project. I take a scrap of wood that fits into my chuck and true its face. I then drill clear through the piece at its center with a 5/32 drill. Remove this blank from the chuck and countersink the backside of the hole so that a #12 flat head screw will seat firmly. I typically use a 1" by #12. You may need to deepen the countersink so that 1/2 to 5/8 of an inch of the screw protrudes through the front of the blank. I then put epoxy on the head to hold the screw in place.

#### **Homemade screw chuck to hold the blank for turning.**



Once the epoxy has cured, the small size screw chuck is ready to use. Remount it into your chuck. Screw on your wood blank and turn to a shape of your choosing using gouge, skew and or scrapers.



**Turning the wood to shape, in this case a neat knob.**

Sand the turning and apply the finish of your choice. I often use either a friction polish or lacquer depending upon the wood, my mood and the ambient temperature.

Remove the piece from the screw chuck. Clean the magnet with solvent to remove any oils from manufacturing or handling.

Apply a small amount of epoxy or super glue to the magnet recess and then press in the clean magnet. The project is complete when the glue has cured.



**The finished refrigerator magnet**

**Note:** *Larger more powerful magnets are desirable when the turning is more than 3 inches long and is going to be used as a “hook” for aprons or potholders. Otherwise, these powerful magnets may break the glue bond with the wood before they pull off the frig.*