

In my last article, I described how to make badger-hair shaving brushes (*AW*, vol 24, no 4). Now it's time to apply a wonderful lather and clean up those whiskers using a matching razor. In this article, I explain the two primary methods of making a razor handle. Two different styles of handles are presented and the option of creating a handle with trim pieces is included.

To make a custom razor you need: a razor head, a pen-blank size piece of wood or other material that is at least $\frac{3}{4}$ " to $\frac{7}{8}$ " (20 mm to 22 mm) square and about 5" (13 cm) long, a drill bit, and some epoxy. One of the more popular razor heads is the Mach 3. Its three-blade design comes with a push button so that you can remove the dull head and replace it with a refill. Another option is the faithful double-edge razor, which has a fixed stainless steel blade with two edges. Perhaps you used one back in the day or you watched your dad shave with one. The double-edge razor has several advantages. It produces a clean, close, drag-free shave with its single sharp blade. Also, it is less expensive than a multiblade refill. Double-edge blades are not as readily available as the Mach 3 blades, but a number of stores still stock them and a large variety can be found on the Internet.

Double-edge razor head

Let's start with my favorite: a double-edge razor. For this handle, I use a piece of amboyna burl (*Photo 1*). Mark the center of the ends of the blank and mount it onto the lathe between centers. Rough turn it to a cylinder (*Photo 2*) and then remove the cylinder. Using a drill press, drill a hole that will accept the razor head rod, lining up the drill bit with the center mark left by the lathe's revolving center (*Photo 3*). The double-edge razor head has a 5 mm × 0.80 rod



Shave, Two Bits

Anthony Turchetta

that attaches to the handle, so use a #19 drill bit (.166") and drill the hole approximately 1" (25 mm) deep.

Remount the blank onto the lathe and turn to whatever shape you desire. Before parting the handle off the lathe, I sand it and then apply at least six coats of CA glue for the finish (*Photo 4*). A durable finish is important—the handle will come in contact with a lot of water and soap. Part the handle off the lathe. Hand-finish the ends.

Tap the hole (*Photo 5*). The rod on the razor has a 0.80 mm thread, a

relatively common size. That size tap (5 mm × 0.80) is generally included in a metric tap set. If you do not have a tap or do not want to buy one, just drill the hole slightly larger to accept the rod.

Test fit the rod. If for some reason the hole was not drilled deep enough, I find it easier to simply grind a little off the rod. Mix a batch of two-part epoxy and epoxy the rod into the hole. Set it aside to dry (*Photo 6*). That's it! The next day, just slip in a fresh blade and you're ready for a great shave.

Mach 3 razor head

To make the handle for a Mach 3 razor head, I use a four-jaw chuck to hold the blank while turning the shape. I've selected a Tru Stone white turquoise blank that is $\frac{3}{4}$ " (20 mm) square and 5" (13 cm) long (Photo 7). Place the blank into the chuck and bring up the tailstock (Photo 8). Rough turn the blank into a cylinder. Then, shape the handle however you desire (Photo 9). For this type of material, I start dry sanding with 320 grit and then wet sand with 320, 400, and 600 grit. Buffing is last. Another good finishing technique is using acrylic polishing pads with water.

Next, drill the hole to accept the rod from the razor head. The rod on the Mach 3 is a 4 mm \times 0.70 mm thread. This size calls for a #30 drill



bit (.1285"). Remove the revolving tailstock center and insert a Jacobs chuck into the tailstock to hold the drill bit. Lower the speed to about 600 rpm to do the drilling. Slowly advance the drill bit into the material taking time to repeatedly clear the shavings. Drill the hole 20 mm ($\frac{3}{4}$ ") deep (Photo 10).



Part the handle off the lathe. You may need to sand and finish both ends by hand. Tap the hole with a 4 mm \times 0.70 tap. Since the hole is small and threads are fairly

fine, most of the threads will chip away because of the nature of the Tru Stone material. This is okay—only a few threads are required to keep the rod square while the epoxy is setting. Insert the rod of the Mach 3 into the razor handle and mark the rod to the appropriate length for receiving the razor head. Epoxy the rod into your handle to that length, leaving several threads exposed for connecting the razor head. Let the epoxy set up overnight. The next morning, attach the Mach 3 head, insert new blades, and you are ready to attack those whiskers with style! ▶



1 Amboyana burl is used to create the handle for this double-edge razor head.



2 Mount the blank between centers of the lathe and turn to a cylinder.



3 Drill a hole that will accept the rod from the razor head using a #19 drill bit. Drill the hole approximately 25 mm deep.



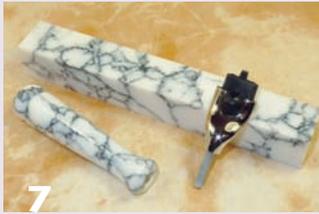
4 Remount the cylinder, finish turn the shape, and apply several coats of CA glue for a durable finish.



5 Tap the hole using a 5 mm \times 0.80 tap.



6 Both styles of razor heads are ready to be assembled.



7 The Mach 3 razor head and a Tru Stone white turquoise blank make for an attractive combination.



8 Mount the blank into the four-jaw chuck. Use the tailstock for support.



9 Turn the razor handle to whatever shape you desire.



10 With a drill bit inserted into a Jacobs chuck, reduce the speed of the lathe to about 600 rpm, and drill the hole to accept the rod of the razor head.

A handle with trim pieces

A variation of the Mach 3 razor handle has a longer threaded rod, which allows for the addition of top and bottom trim pieces (Photo 11).

This style handle can be made using a typical pen mandrel and pen tube or alternately by just drilling a hole through the blank.

I use a 3/8" (9 mm) pen tube cut to 2 3/8" (6 cm). I cut my blank



just slightly longer than that to leave room for squaring and trimming the blank to the tube. Drill a hole completely through the blank using a 3/8" (9 mm) drill bit. Use thick or medium CA glue to set the tube into the blank. Set aside and let dry, then trim the ends of the blank with a barrel trimmer.

Use pen bushings to hold the blank in place on the mandrel while turning the handle (Photo 12). Turn the handle to the desired measurements. I use calipers to check the diameter of the ends so that they will match up nicely with the trim pieces. Wet sand and then buff the handle (Photo 13).

This style handle can also be made without

a pen tube. Cut a 3/4" (20 mm)-diameter blank to 2 3/8" (60 mm) long. Using a #18 drill bit (.167"), drill completely through the blank (Photo 14). The width of the razor's rod is 5 mm, so it will slip easily into this hole. Simply mount the drilled blank onto the lathe between centers (Photo 15) and turn to desired shape. Sand and polish.

To assemble, simply screw the Mach 3 head onto the rod and slide the top trim piece on. Insert the rod into the handle and thread on the bottom trim piece. You are now ready to go get cleaned up! ■

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11 Trim pieces can be used to create a more finished looking shaving handle.



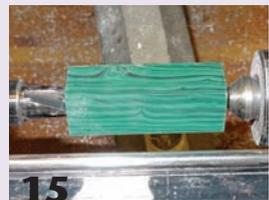
12 Use pen bushings to hold the blank in place while turning the handle. Measure the diameters of the ends to match them with the trim pieces.



13 Wet sand the handle before buffing.



14 For a handle without a pen tube, drill through the blank using a #18 drill bit.



15 Mount the drilled blank between centers of the lathe and turn the handle to shape.