



AGEING AND BEING ABLE TO CONTINUE WOOD WORKING AND WOODTURNING

By Phil McLeod

It is an unfortunate fact of life that as we age all those little aches and pains that were an inconvenience when we were younger become somewhat debilitating.

In most cases back ache, hip and knee pain will eventually mean that we can no longer stand for long periods of time. This is when some of us will stop a hobby that we have enjoyed for many years. However, this should not be the case. As with most things, if we are prepared to make some compromises and accept a little help we should be able to continue to work with wood for many happy years.

Medical and pharmaceutical help is one option, and should be explored. However, I wish to address a more physical possibility. This has come about because of meeting members of the Woodturners Guild and from my own members at Eastern Woodturners. We now have a number of members who cannot stand for long periods, and one member is in a wheelchair.

Certainly one option is to use chairs of varying heights and to adjust benches to appropriate heights for people to work on or at.

Even various pieces of machinery can be adjusted to meet special needs. But, one piece of machinery that I wish to address is the **SIT DOWN LATHE**. This is a picture of the lathe. It can be purchased complete, or as just the stand. The picture shows it with a Vicmarc lathe attached. It is available from Timberbits, (I should point out that I AM NOT an agent for Timberbits).



From the TIMBERBITS website:

Product Information

VICMARC Lathe - VL200S Sit Down ASM EVS 1.5kW Cost with Lathe \$5335.00 plus shipping.

The **Vicmarc VL 200 Sit Down** lathe has been designed to suit people in wheelchairs or for people who have trouble standing for a long period of time. The lathe comes complete with an electronic variable speed unit, a 1.5kW motor and a magnetic remote switch box that can be positioned anywhere where you are working.

The stand can also be purchased separately to suit a VL200 Short bed Lathe. Stand Only - Part No. V01083

The stand is designed to be adjustable to suit many different applications and sizes. The adjustable legs allow up to 150mm height adjustment (every 25mm) and the pivoting bed allows a tilt angle from 0 to 45 degrees.

The height range from the floor to the centre of the spindle while the lathe is tilted at 45 degrees is from 750mm to 900mm and when the lathe is tilted at 0 degrees the height range is from 950mm to 1100mm.

Because you can buy the stand on its own you have a fair amount of flexibility with this stand, the cost of the VL200 lathe is \$3025.00, while a Nova Comet II costs just \$1049 from Carbatec meaning that you do not have to spend a large amount of money to get the desired capability.

You can put your own small lathe on the stand. Because the lathe stand is hinged it can be used in the normal way by people who can stand for the required amount of time.

Because the stand tilts the lathe to 45 degrees it means that people sitting at the machine are able to apply the tool to the job at the correct angle. This makes the process of working at the machine much safer for everyone involved.

As you can see, setting yourself up to turn wood while sitting down need not cost the earth.

So, what am I saying? Do not give up on your hobby just because you feel you cannot continue to work the way you used to. Find options, and use them and accept help from other people to get you where you want to be. I intend to be working with wood, making sawdust and shavings for as long as possible. You should too.