

## Gloves

©Trevor Pope (tpope AT iafrica.com) – Aug 2001

The use of gloves in the workshop with stationary power tools certainly stimulates debate. Opinions range from “*don’t work without them*” to “*never use them, as they are dangerous*”. From the debates I have seen on the rec.woodworking newsgroup, both sides of the debate can quote examples of why gloves should or shouldn’t be used, including some scary incidents.

I regularly use leather gloves to protect my hands – the red leather gardening gloves from Gardena are excellent value for money, and I have worn out several pairs over the years. When I’m handling lumber, gloves help to keep splinters out, stop nicks and grazes, keep my hands clean, and even reduce the chances of pinched fingers.

Conventional wisdom holds that gloves should be kept away from moving machinery. However when I’m roughing out a large blank on my lathe, bark and bits of wood fly off even at the slowest speed. Without gloves, these bits of wood can sting or worse even break the skin. Naturally when a large, rough piece of wood is spinning at speed, I keep both my hands behind the tool rest. Then the chances of a glove catching are remote. As the roughing out progresses, all the protuberances are removed, so the chances of snagging a glove reduce further. I have never had a glove catch yet. I also use a glove when sanding, to reduce the heat reaching my fingers. When sanding inside a pot, as the sandpaper moves close to the center, it has a tendency to whirl. When I am wearing a glove, this whirl is not as uncomfortable. When sanding the inside of narrow hollow forms, be aware of the possibility of the glove catching, leaving your hand at the mercy of the lathe.

As always, your own judgment should be used – you must be happy in your own mind that what you are doing is safe. Gloves can help safety, but near moving machinery, they can be dangerous. Assess the situation yourself using the most important piece of safety gear in the workshop – **your brain**.