

Wooden Chess Pieces

A little larger than most standard chess pieces, this set is still a great fit for any chessboard with typical 2-inch squares. As any chess player knows, with the exception of the Knight, most chess pieces could be turned easily on a lathe...making a fantastic project for practicing your spindle turning techniques.



Now, thanks to some pretty ingenious thinking, you can turn the entire set on the lathe, including the Knight! Our turned Knight was created by using an offset turning technique, much like the one used for turning cabriole legs for furniture.

Start by choosing a couple of contrasting hardwoods to turn them from. Walnut & Maple, Pear & Wenge, Beech & Ebony, Holly & Cocobolo, the list is limitless. Due to heavy handling of chess pieces, unless you're planning to apply a hard cover coat such as polyurethane or varnish, closed grain woods are usually better than open grained woods. The more highly figured and striking the pieces look, the more they'll be worth to your customers.

Print out the patterns -- they are at 100% of size (each square should = 1/4-inch). If you'd like to make a smaller and/or a larger set, just reduce or enlarge your printout accordingly.

Turn the Kings, Queens, Bishops, Rooks and Pawns according to the patterns. You can turn them freehand or use your Shopsmith Lathe Duplicator to speed-up the process considerably. In fact, for even more efficiency, you can create a set of long templates (or patterns for duplicator-turned pieces), each designed to turn rows of multiple pieces.

When you're ready for the Knights, mount your stock on center (we don't suggest trying the offset turning on your Lathe Duplicator) and first turn just the base and part of the head (see Figure 1). Then, set the head end of your stock 3/8-inch off-center (see Figure 2) on the tailstock end. Turn the neck of the Knight (see Figure 3). While the piece is still

mounted off-center, sand the neck smooth.

Move the Knight back on-center and finish turning the head, stopping just before cutting the piece free (see Figure 4). Now, sand the rest of the piece.

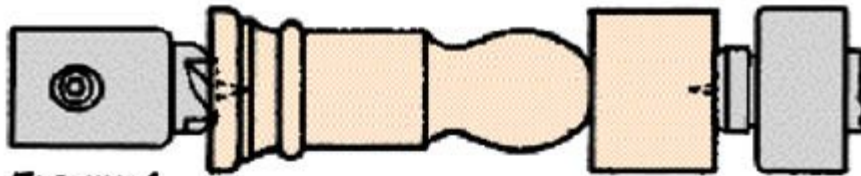


FIGURE 1

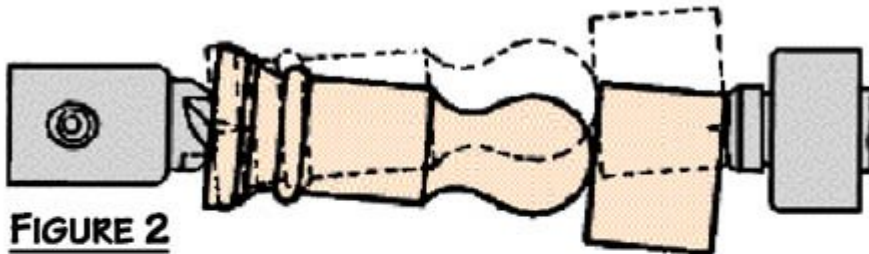


FIGURE 2

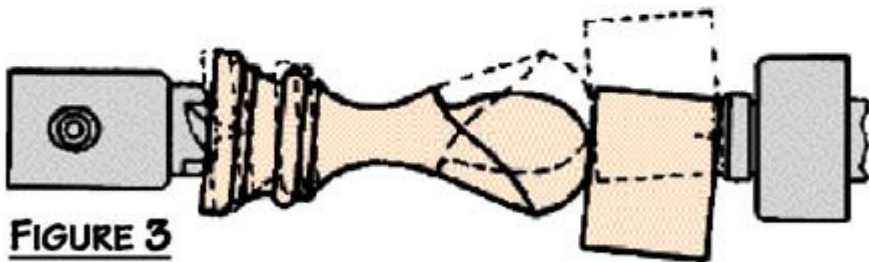


FIGURE 3

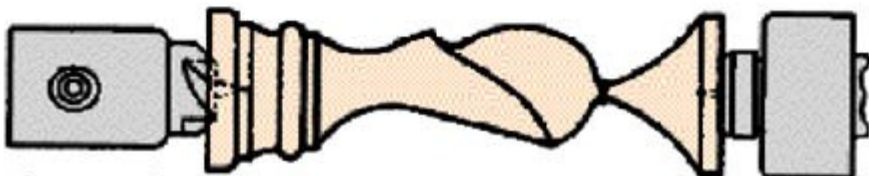
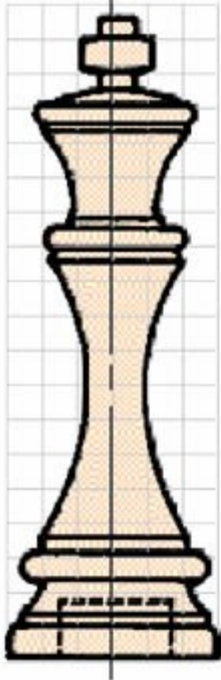


FIGURE 4

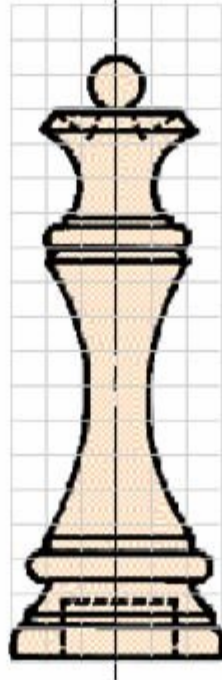
Once you've finished with the turning, a little hand sawing and "carving" will be needed for the King's cross, Queen's crown, Bishop's mitre and Rook's parapet.

For weighting, we suggest that you drill a 1/2-inch diameter hole, 3/4-inch deep in the bottom of each Chess Piece. Fill these holes to within 1/4-inch of the surface with small lead shot (from a sporting goods store or gun shop). Then, using a 1/2-inch Plug Cutter, make a 1/4-inch thick plug for each Chess Piece.

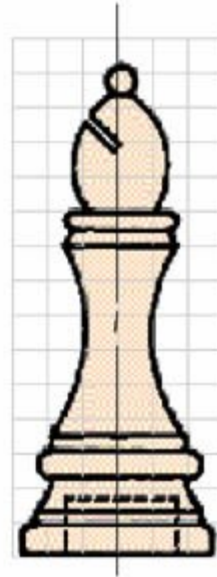
Glue the plugs in position, sand off flush and apply a moisture-resistant finish. Glue felt circles under the weighted bases.



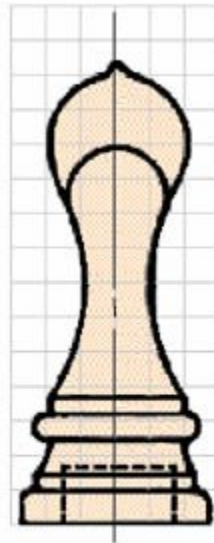
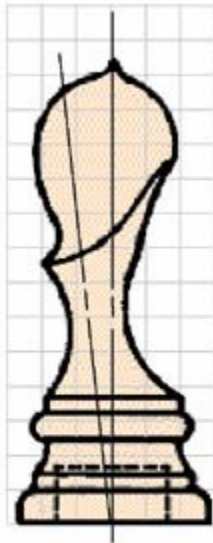
KING



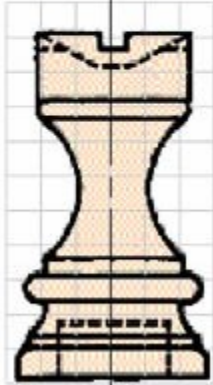
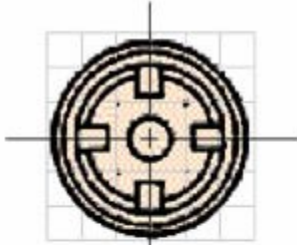
QUEEN



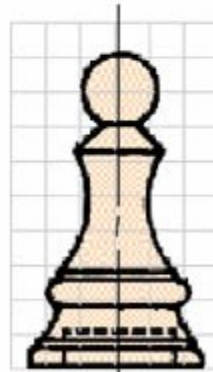
BISHOP



KNIGHT



ROOK



PAWN