

# Making a Veneer-Wrapped Turned Box

By Bill Tilson

This demonstration will show the basic steps in forming a piece of veneer to wrap the outside of a turned box. Due to the characteristics of veneer, you won't be able to cover the side of a box that has coves and/or beads with a continuous sheet. I will show you the basic shape and once you become proficient you'll be able to wrap different shapes.

Hopefully it will look something like this:

	<p>Supplies needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Box blank</li><li>• Longer Scrap blank – poplar/cedar/pine/etc</li><li>• Veneer - two contrasting grain patterns</li><li>• Yellow glue or Heat-Loc glue</li><li>• Veneer conditioner or water</li><li>• Craft knife</li><li>• Iron - not your spouse's iron!</li><li>• Scissors</li><li>• Cardboard</li></ul>
	<p>Step 1</p> <p>Mount a scrap box blank and turn a cone from about 1" at the smallest diameter at the spur drive end to the maximum diameter allowed by the scrap box blank. Put a tenon on the tailstock end large enough to be chucked. The side should be straight and at an angle around 12-15 degrees. Mount the scrap box blank in your chuck.</p> <p>Wrap the cardboard around the scrap box blank and draw and cut the cardboard to the pattern you would like to wrap the box.</p>
	<p>Step 2</p> <p>Cut two pieces of veneer using the pattern template you just created. Make sure that the grain runs from bottom to top. Make many – many cuts with a sharp blade instead of one or two. If you do this, you will have a better chance of the veneer not cracking/splitting/breaking.</p>

	<p><b>Step 3</b>  Identify the natural curve of the veneer by wetting it and noticing which way it curls up. Due to how the veneer is cut from the log, when wet it will have a natural tendency to return to that shape which is round. You may need to soak some species of wood a little longer, put the veneer into boiling water, or use a veneer conditioner to get it pliable enough to wrap around your box blank.</p>
	<p><b>Step 4</b>  After the veneer curls, gently form one piece of veneer around the scrap box blank and then form the other piece. Put some wide rubber bands around the veneer to hold its shape while drying. Don't get them too tight because there will be indentions you might not be able to remove.</p>
	<p><b>Step 5</b>  After the veneer is dry, remove the veneer pieces and apply the glue to each side that will be joined. Let the glue dry per manufacturer's instructions.</p>
	<p><b>Step 6</b>  Set the iron's dial to med-high cotton. Align the two pieces and use the iron to reactivate the glue by starting at one end and working to the other. Make sure that you heat each area evenly and do not stay long enough on one area to scorch the wood.</p>
	<p><b>Step 7</b>  Trim the now glued pieces to the shape of the pattern made earlier. I use a craft knife, roto tool, dovetail saw, and sandpaper blocks. Pay special attention to get the sides which join straight. Now finish sanding the inside and out; I sand to 600 prior to the finish.</p>

	<p><b>Step 8</b>  Mount the box blank and turn the box to the same profile that you did on the scrap box blank. Make sure that the wrap will fit the new box, modifying if necessary. At this point you can modify either one. The most time consuming part is making sure that the wrap fits the box without any gaps at the seams. Finish turning, sanding and finishing the inside of the box and the box top.  Set the top of the box aside.</p>
	<p><b>Step 9</b>  Put glue on the outside of box and the inside of the wrap. After the glue dries, iron as before to reactivate the glue. Pay special attention to get the joint perfect and have no glue showing on the inside.    After glued, sand and apply a finish. I use 50/50 lacquer and lacquer thinner putting on light coats and progressively sanding from 600 to 2000 grit between coats.    Part off bottom and finish.</p>

You can put a wrapped finial on the top or just make a nice finial without the wrap. I will now show you how to make a wrapped finial which might look something like this one:

	<p><b>Additional supplies needed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finial blank</li> <li>• Finial scrap blank</li> <li>• Contrasting veneer</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Step 10</b>  Follow the steps 1 - 7 above. The only difference will be that the wrap will be smaller. Depending on the wood species, you will crack or split a number of them before successfully bending two. I normally cut out a minimum of 4 sets of finial wraps.    It's a good idea to sand both sides and finish the inside of the wrap now.</p>

	<p><b>Step 11</b> Turn the finial to shape and finish the upper part. Note the slope on the back side of the finial. This is the same degree as you made the finial scrap blank.</p>
	<p><b>Step 12</b> Glue the finial and finial wrap together making sure that the finial is in the center of the wrap. Trim the base of the wrap. Finish sanding and finishing the finial. Form a tennon and then part off the finial. If you choose to, with the remaining material, you can make a bead/ring for the finial to set into.</p>
	<p><b>Step 13</b> Remount the box top from Step 6 and make a mortise that will fit the tennon made in step 10.</p>
	<p><b>Step 14</b> Insert the wrapped finial into the box top with some glue. Make sure the finial runs true and is centered. You can do this by slow manual rotation of the arbor or by turning the lathe on at a slow speed.  Finish sanding and finishing the top with finial.</p>

If you have any questions or need further help please contact me:

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I purchased these items from [www.joewoodworker.com/catalog](http://www.joewoodworker.com/catalog)

- Better Bond Heat-Lock™ Veneer Glue
- Super-Soft 2 Veneer Softener/Conditioner

You can get veneer from most wood supply companies.