

# 3 wheeled steady rest for the lathe

by *Dominic Greco*



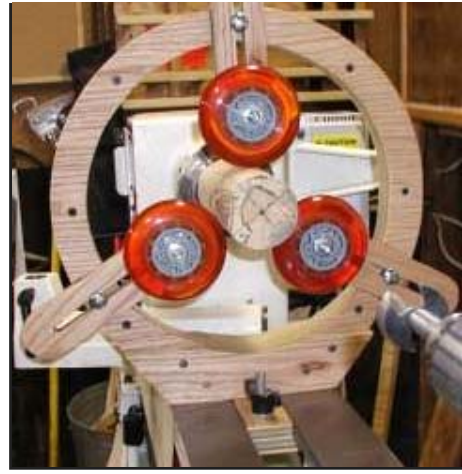
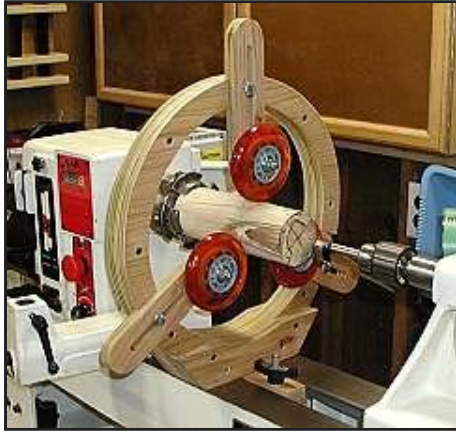
Here are some pictures of a (3) wheeled steady rest I made last month. The basis for the plans came from American Woodworker's website (imagine my surprise at something useful coming from there!). I tweaked the design a bit since I really didn't like their clamping mechanism. I also scaled the size up a bit to take advantage of my Jet lathe's increased capacity. (Well, you didn't expect me to just use their design as is, did you?)

The construction is pretty much all 3/4" oak plywood I had left over from when I built my ballast box. Instead of the in line skate wheels, I used skooter wheels. At 3", these are a bit bigger in diameter. I choose them because they happened to be in the "close-out" bin at Kmart and were selling for \$4.00/pair. If I need some extra room for a wider project, I can always slap on a pair of 2" dia in line skate wheels. But for now, this works just fine. The hardware is just 5/16" carriage bolts and wing nuts. I estimate that the total cost for this project (without figuring in the 2 hours it took to make it) as \$25.00 (approx).



As you can see in the picture to the left, I sized the sub-base of the steady rest to fit between the ways of my lathe (1 3/4"). The clamping block was sized to be just a bit bigger. Locking it in place is a simple matter of tightening the knob. But this clamp wasn't enough to ensure that the steady rest wouldn't tilt as I tightened the knob. On the other side of the assembly (as shown below), directly underneath the main "rings", I made a "T" shaped section that was secured to the base of the steady rest. To install the steady rest onto the lathe, I simply remove the

tailstock, and slide it in place. Once engaged, the clamp mechanism holds it fast to the ways.



After I finished the construction, I gave the entire assembly a couple of coats of tung oil. I just tested this rig out over the past weekend when I needed to drill a 1" diameter hole through a peppermill blank (shown above). It made the entire task a lot easier to manage. It worked just as well on the cherry, walnut, and maple blanks I drilled, too. I really can't wait to try this steady rest out on a hollow form.

This was by far the easiest accessory I've ever made. And it's proven its worth already