

Lathe Maintenance

By Monty Roach, Wale Apparatus Co., Inc.

Here we will cover basic maintenance and lubrication of glass working lathes. If for any reason, you as the reader have questions please do not hesitate and give us a call toll free (888) 334-9253 or e-mail me (monty@gv.net).

Let's begin by removing the chucks and the heat shield.

Figures 1a-b: Using rubbing alcohol and a clean cloth (paper towels work also), wipe the entire bed way down. Make sure to get underneath as well. Now apply bed way oil (available from Wale Apparatus). As you apply oil, move fire carriage and tailstock along the bed way to help remove dirt that may, and most likely, will be trapped under both carriage and tailstock. Repeat this until bed way is completely clean. Remember, you will have to remove fresh oil if dirt is still present in this process.

Figures 2a-c: Check the rack for glass and dirt. (Look at center of bed. The rack is the "thing" with teeth that allows carriage and tailstock to move along the bed). Clean the rack with a wire brush, if needed, and apply high temp multi-purpose grease (also available from Wale Apparatus). Here again, move carriage and tailstock to ensure grease is worked into the teeth of rack as well as the pinion. Note: The pinion is located under carriage and tailstock and functions like a gear which allows the carriage and tailstock to move along the rack. Remove any excessive grease.

Figures 3a-c: Make sure the lathe is turned OFF. Remove the cover plates head and tail. Inspect chains for any loose impediments and wipe chains down. It will be impossible to clean chains completely so a good wipe down is sufficient. Now with lathe running slowly, apply grease (rack grease is fine for this step) to entire chain both head and tail. Use small wire brush for this step as you do not want to get your finger caught up in the chain and spindle. Once chains are evenly greased, let lathe run for a few minutes to allow grease to work its way into the chains and drive chain sprockets.

Figure 4: Cleaning of the driveshaft. Simply pour a little kerosene onto clean cloth (paper towel) and wipe shaft down REGULARLY. This will help reduce the wear and tear on the tailstock stub shaft, thus less money spent on future repairs. DO NOT put any lube onto driveshaft, as the lube will pick up glass, dirt, etc... and will work as a grinding compound and slowly wear out the tailstock stub shaft and drive shaft.

Grease the spindle bearings (high temp multi-purpose). The grease fittings on the head and tailstock should be greased once a year. Use a grease gun and with the lathe running moderately, apply two to three pumps to each fitting. If lathe is being used heavily, you may need to do this step every six months. When done, wipe any extra grease away from the fitting.

These easy to follow steps will keep your lathe in great working order. ■

Step by Step



