

Spinning Top by tammydownunder

Material list

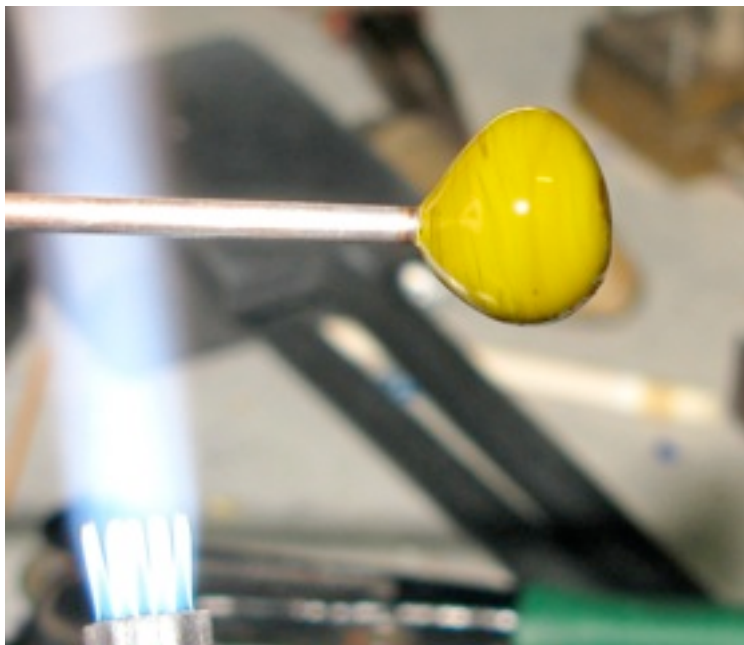
2.4 mandrel

Stubby Bi Cone Bead roller by CG Beadrollers.

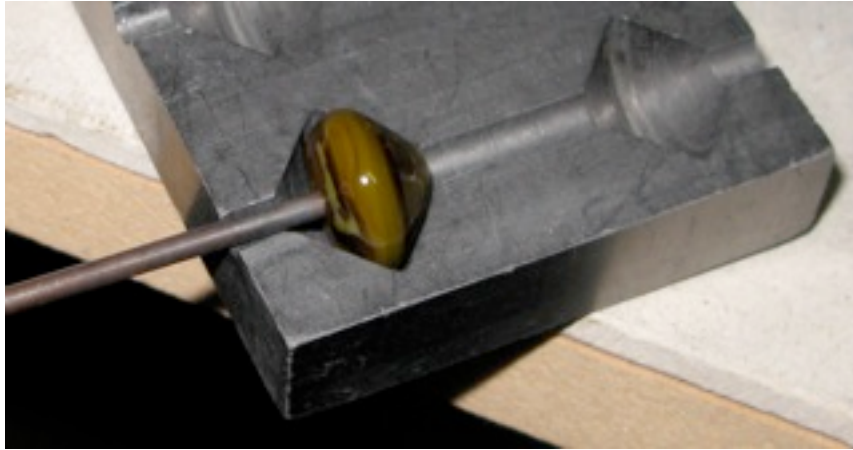
Bolt Cutter or Dremel with a cutting blade. Or, if you live in the Stone Age, a hack saw.

Sander. Again, the Dremel works a treat.

1. Using a 2.4 mm undipped mandrel, apply gather of glass to the very tip.



2. Using your stubby bi cone bead roller, start to shape on the 2nd smallest cavity making sure that you don't push the mandrel too far to the bottom. If you do this, simply reheat the glass and let gravity pull it down and then repeat the shaping.



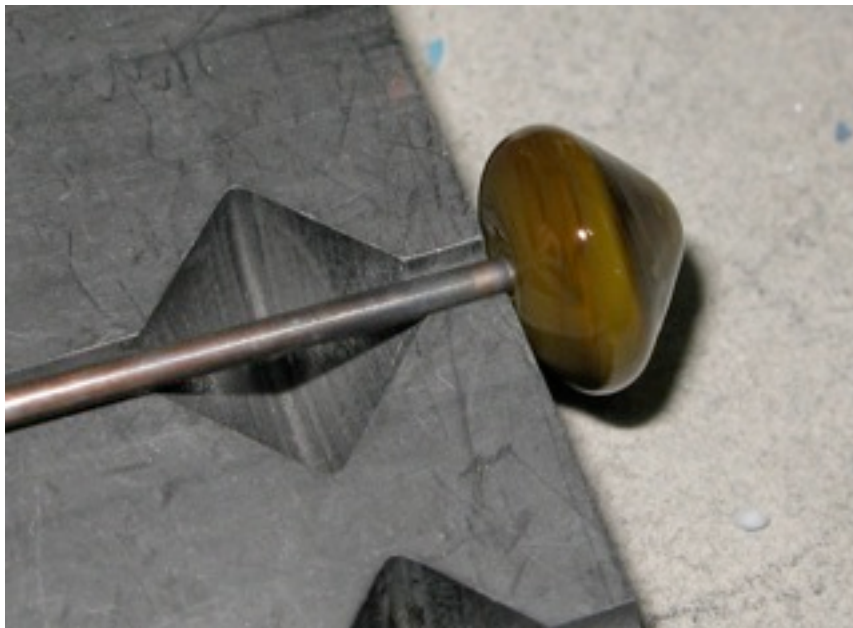
3. You are going to need to add more glass. It is much easier to add glass than it is to remove too much. If you want to decorate, make sure you leave room for the glass.



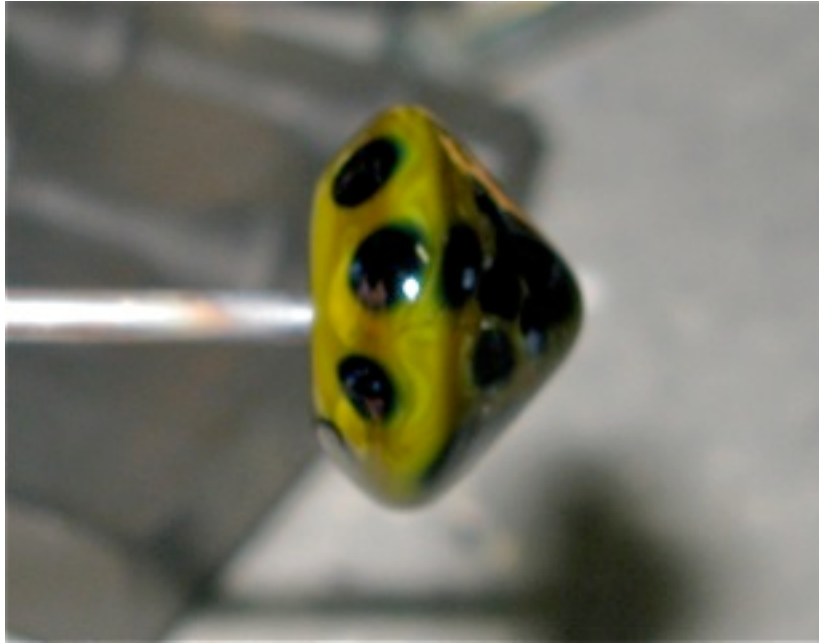
4. Start to shape in the larger cavity. This is the tricky part. You want to push the soft glass into the end of the bead roller without pushing the mandrel through. To get a good pointy end, you need to give a decent amount of pressure. Check to make sure that you haven't pushed the mandrel through. At this point but you have your basic shape so you can heat the bead and as you put it into the cavity, you can pull the mandrel to your right (provided you are right handed)



5. To get a nicely shaped even top, use the edge of the bead roller to make sure it is level.



6. You also want to make sure that you have a pointier bottom. I'm going to add some frit so that will be enough to get a nice tip. At this point, when I know the glass is hard, I test the top being very careful not to have it land in my lap. Spins okay so it is back into the flame for a little heat and then into the kiln.



After the kiln, I cut the mandrel with my bolt cutter. If you don't have a bolt cutter, a cutting disc on your Dremel or a hacksaw will work. Grasping the top just above the glass with my index finger and thumb, I make the cut. This gives my tops consistence in size.



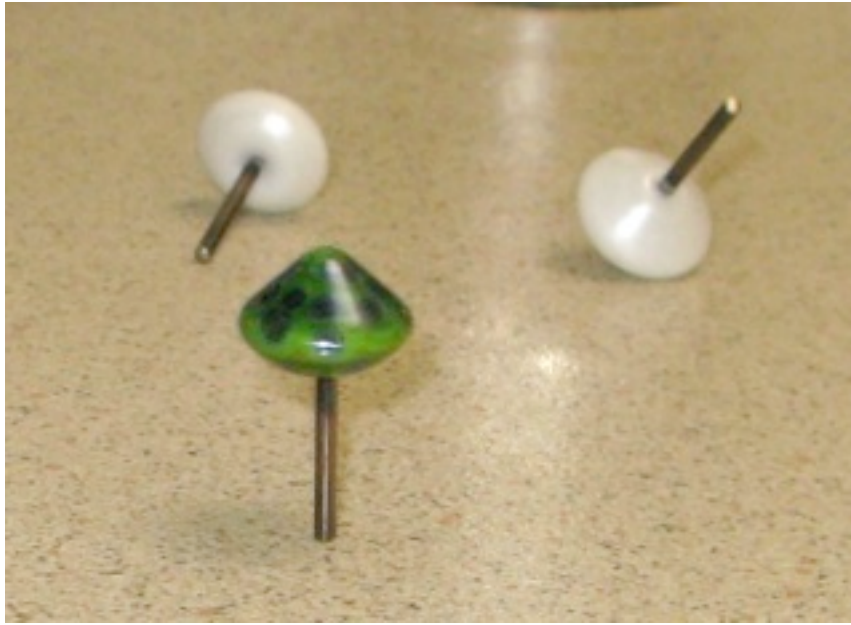
Notice the uneven mandrel from making the cut? I sand the mandrel smooth with my Dremel sanding disc. I hand sand the shaft of the mandrel with 180 grit sandpaper and then buff until I'm happy.



A good spinning top should last nearly 45 seconds and the mandrel should remain perpendicular until it starts to slow down. If you don't have a sharp enough point on the bottom of your top (oxymoron, I know), your mandrel is going to spin like it's bent and will not last long. (notice the shadows cast by the white top's mandrel)



Also, a well-balanced top will spin upside down.



Have fun! They are addictive.