

Live Centers for Lathes

DT Workshop Equipment Reference — D&T / STEM resource for school workshops | Machinery & Power Tools



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A live centre is a lathe tailstock centre with bearings inside, so its point rotates with the work instead of rubbing like a dead centre. It supports long work between centres without burning or wear and comes with standard 60 degree or bullnose points.

Key Features

- Bearing-mounted rotating points
- 60 degree standard and bullnose tips
- MT2 and MT3 morse tapers common
- Interchangeable insert points
- High-speed or solid carbide tips

Typical Uses in the Workshop

- Support spindles and long turnings between centres
- Turn between centres without centre wear
- Drill through the tailstock with centres changed
- Hold wood work with a four-prong drive centre opposite

Safe Operation

1. Clean the morse taper and the tailstock socket
2. Drive the centre home and check it is seated
3. Set the tailstock so the work turns freely
4. Adjust tailstock pressure after the first cut
5. Lubricate the point when working wood

SAFETY NOTES

- Check the centre is seated before starting the lathe
- Do not overtighten the tailstock - it can damage the work
- Keep fingers clear of the rotating point
- Check the bearings run smoothly
- Remove the centre from the tailstock when finished

Maintenance & Consumables

- Keep the bearings clean and lubricated
- Wipe the taper clean before storage
- Check the point for wear and chips
- Replace the insert when worn
- Store with the point protected

Specification & Buying Notes

A quality bearing live centre with interchangeable inserts suits both wood and metal lathes. Match the morse taper to the tailstock. Carbide points last for production runs.