

# Cindy Drozda "The Fine Art of Woodturning"

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## CD's Arsenal of Abrasives

The variety of abrasive products on the market today is incredible! There are abrasives created for metal, wood, solid surface countertops, automotive finishing, and many other applications. They all do different things well. There is also variation in their quality and price. This list is my attempt to share with everyone what abrasive products I currently use, and what comparisons I have made to similar products. To simplify, I have only listed products that I currently (though maybe only sometimes) use. Any omissions are either products that I haven't tried or have found to be inferior (or not useful).

I have listed sources for these abrasive products, but they are probably available elsewhere, too. The contact info for these sources are on my "sources of supply" list.

Please feel free to contact me by email if you have any questions, feedback, or observations to offer about your own abrasive experience!

Product/Sources	Description/Comments/Comparisons	Application	Sources
Mirka Abralon	Flexible, abrasive coated mesh on open cell foam and velcro backing. Sold in 6", 3", and 2" disks. Use at lower speeds as it can burn/melt/dull from too much friction. Ok with water or solvent, and so can be "washed" if loaded up. Longer lasting, more flexible, more durable, and more heat resistant than other products of this type. Also more expensive, but so long lasting that it is worth it. Nothing else performs quite like it.	Excellent for polishing wood in grits of 500, 1000, 2000, 4000. I cut 6" disks into quarters, or use the 2" or 3" disks. Removes sanding scratches from paper or cloth backed abrasive extremely well. It is also available in 180 and 360 grits which I don't use. Works like an abrasive sponge to apply oil-type finishes. I sometimes use it to sand between coats of any type of finish. Flexible enough to be worked into fine details in the workpiece. Can be used under power, but I usually use it hand held.	TurningWood.com TheSandingGlove.com Woodcraft (sometimes) Craft Supplies, Packard, etc
Mirka Abranet	Metal mesh abrasive with a Velcro back. Doesn't load up, even when sanding gummy finishes and sap-filled wood. Being a flexible mesh product, it tends (like Abralon, Spectrum) to conform to the surface, rather than level it or adjust its shape.	I don't use this product very often. When sanding anything that would load up regular abrasive, it performs like nothing else. Coarser grits tend to accentuate the irregularities of the wood grain, rather than level them out.	TurningWood.com TheSandingGlove.com
Hermes RB406	Flexible, cloth backed abrasive. Blue grit on yellow cloth. Commonly found in 2" rolls. Not available in finer grits than 400. Superior to the Klingspor "Shop Rolls". Very long lasting and sharp.	I use this wherever I want a flexible abrasive cloth. I use grits 120, 180, 240, 400. Not as good at getting into corners as stiffer material. Good for sanding inside a vessel using hemostats. Much more flexible than Purple Ceramic cloth. I attach this material to my fingers with double stick tape to hand sand inside of odd shapes ( <b>not</b> under power, of course).	(Canada): Lee Valley Island Woodcraft Supply

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<p>Mirka Royal &amp; Royal Micro</p>	<p>Velcro or PSA backed, paper backed abrasive. Available in 6", 5", 3", 2", and 1" disks. I cut my own smaller disks from the 6" ones and use the scraps for small work. Excellent performance especially in finer grits (400+). Longer lasting and sharper than Klingspor. Stiffer than Dry Ice (for getting into corners). Folds into a nice round radius for sanding small coves, doesn't crack when folded.</p>	<p>Great for power and/or hand-held sanding in finer grits. I use the Velcro backed in grits of 240, 400, 600, 1200 and A-weight PSA in 400, 600, 1000, 1500.</p>	<p>Turningwood.com</p>
<p>3M Ceramic (purple grit) Disks</p>	<p>Available in PSA disks and cloth sheets. Backing pads are available from Sanding Glove to use the disks on a Velcro mandrel. Incredible, unbelievable performance and longevity. Not at all flexible. Lasts forever! Only available in grits 220 and coarser. Coarsest cloth sheets available are 120.</p>	<p>This is my first choice for power sanding, especially on convex surfaces (like the outside of a hollow form). Does load up when sanding gummy finishes, etc.</p>	<p>TheSandingGlove.com</p>
<p>3M Ceramic (purple grit) cloth backed</p>	<p>Only available in grits 120 -220. Same incredible performance and longevity as the disks. More flexible than the disks. Better performance than the Hermes RB406. If only it were available in more grits.....</p>	<p>Great for hand-held power sanding where flexibility is needed, but PSA or Velcro is not. Not as good at sanding into a corner (too flexible). Excellent choice for sanding drums.</p>	
<p>3M Dry Ice</p>	<p>Superior performance in a very flexible Velcro backed disk. Extremely flexible. Sometimes too flexible to get into tight corners when hand sanding. Only available up to 240 grit</p>	<p>Extremely flexible. An excellent choice for power sanding, especially concave surfaces (like the inside of a bowl), because of its flexibility.</p>	<p>TheSandingGlove.com</p>
<p>3M 275 disks</p>	<p>Velcro backed disk very comparable to Mirka Royal Micro, More flexible. Sometimes too flexible. Less expensive than Dry Ice or Ceramic purple grit. Also doesn't last as long.....</p>	<p>Very flexible. Great for power sanding, especially concave surfaces, like the inside of a bowl. I use this in grits that Dry Ice doesn't come in.</p>	<p>TheSandingGlove.com</p>
<p>3M 275 paper sheets</p>	<p>The paper sheets are longer lasting than anything but 3X. Available finer than 400 grit. Cracks when folded.</p>	<p>I use small pieces of this paper for hand-held power sanding and hand sanding. Not as stiff as Velcro backed, but gets into tighter places due to being thinner without the bulk of Velcro. Doesn't make a clean radius when folded, therefore not as good as Mirka Royal/Micro for sanding tiny coves.</p>	<p>TheSandingGlove.com</p>
<p>Norton 3X</p>	<p>Paper backed sheets are more economical than Velcro disks. Available in 80 grit Long lasting, fast cutting grit for a paper-backed abrasive</p>	<p>Good for sanding down into sharp vee-grooves and up against shoulders. The thin edge gets into tight places. Creases and cracks when folded. Excellent choice for sanding drums, especially in the grits that 3M Purple cloth sheets don't come in.</p>	<p>. TheSandingGlove.com</p>

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Deer Brand	Also good for removing dust and roughness from dry finishes between coats. Velcro backed. Not long lasting at all, but nothing else is better, or as flexible, in a stiff-backed fine grit abrasive.	I use this in 2000 grit where I want a stiff but flexible film, as opposed to a polishing abrasive such as Abralon or Micromesh.	Vince's Wood-N-Wonders
Spectrum Finishing Paper	Mesh double-sided cloth-like abrasive. "Washable", flexible. Compared to Abralon, doesn't clog up as easily, lasts a long time, not as expensive. Less aggressive than Abralon. Doesn't conform to irregularities or features in the surface as well as Abralon. Much longer lasting than the 3M Tri-M-Ite, but doesn't squish into tight places as well.	Good, and economical, for sanding between finish coats and rubbing out finishes. Good for wet sanding. I use the 2000, 3000, and 4000 grit. Not as aggressive as Abralon for polishing the surface of the wood before finishing, though sometimes I use it for that. Seems to give a higher polish than 4000 Abralon.	Rio Grande
3M WetorDry Tri-M-Ite Polishing Paper	Cloth-like sheets with very fine abrasive. Not long lasting at all, but inexpensive. Flexible and non-scratching as compared with Automotive wet/dry and finishing films. Not aggressive.	I sometimes use this for a final rubbing out and polishing of finishes. I only use the finest grits, higher than 4000. If I want 4000, I'll use Abralon or Spectrum.	Rio Grande
Micro-Finishing Film	Micron graded finishing film. Very heat sensitive. Non-aggressive. Dulls quickly. A flexible alternative to Automotive wet/dry papers that crack when folded.	I sometimes use this in 2500 and 4000 for details on finials where Abralon doesn't reach. Good for polishing small coves. I really don't use this much because it is so heat sensitive and dulls so quickly.	Rio Grande