



Respect the Spindle

Abby Franquemont

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Enjoying a resurgence in popularity thanks to the current trend of DIY crafts, the hand spindle remains one of the most productive, versatile, and convenient tools for creating stunning fiber arts from home, as this beautifully illustrated guide from a veteran spinner and spindle aficionado demonstrates. With step-by-step instructions, this essential manual details the basic steps of spinning and then advances to the more complicated spinning wheel, showing how to use the spindle to make specific types of yarn, explaining traditional spindle spinning techniques, and detailing five simple projects designed to instill confidence in creating a variety of yarns with this simple tool. Combining fascinating historical narratives, traditions, and cultures from around the globe with vivid photography, this all-encompassing tour of the spindle also boasts easy-to-follow, contemporary techniques and styles that affirm the tool's enduring legacy.

Respect the Spindle Details

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From Reader Review Respect the Spindle for online ebook

Andrew says

Terrifically informative and reassuring to the novice (that would be me). This books covers a variety of spindle types - something for everyone. I appreciate that spindles are treated as a legitimate spinning tool in their own right, and not just a stepping-stone to a wheel. Must-have for anyone interested in spindling.

Jordan says

Fantastic introduction to spindle spinning! Franquemont gives us a general history of spindles, an overview of the physics behind spinning, practical wisdom and tricks of the trade, while encouraging new spinners to try out whatever feels right for them. I've completed a couple of skeins of yarn while reading this book and I honestly don't think I would have made such quick progress without Franquemont's wisdom. I recommend this book to every person looking to break in their first spindle, improve their skills, or explore other methods beyond their routine.

Meghan Wyrd says

I guess this didn't end up being very helpful, but it was nice to read nonetheless.

Kat says

This is going to be inflammatory. You have been warned.

I ordered this book the day I picked up a spindle, and waited impatiently for Amazon to take its sweet time sending the book to me. In the meantime, of course, there was no way I was putting that spindle down, and I spun and spun and spun while I awaited the book that was touted as the spindlers' Bible, written by the woman touted as the omnipotent goddess of spinning.

In the couple of weeks it took to arrive, I learnt almost everything that was taught in its pages through my own trial and error. The book was nothing short of useless to me. Even the illustrations weren't enough to salvage it as a coffee-table book - the whole work lacks polish and gives the reader a sense that it was slapped together in a hurry to meet some imagined niche in the market - which I believe to be the case.

The US's obsession with the cult of celebrity has infected even the grass-roots movement toward handcrafts, even down at this extreme end where mad people like me spin their own yarn on tiny stick-and-disc implements not dissimilar to those used in Egypt tens of thousands of years ago. For some reason, the author of this book has been elevated to the status of some all-knowing cult leader and we're all meant to throw our money at her - oh, sorry, I mean at Interweave, who have deftly inveigled their way in between Franquemont and the general populace, as they have done or are threatening to do with other spinning "greats" like Margaret Stove, Judith Mackenzie and Jacey Boggs (list not exhaustive).

In short - don't waste your time.

Niffer says

Excellent. The author has a wonderful perspective on the usefulness of multiple spinning tools, discusses briefly the benefits of spindles versus wheels without denigrating either, and then goes on to give an incredibly complete review of types of spindles, how to spin on them, and which ones tend to be best for different tasks/fibers.

Well worth adding to your spinning library.

edit to add:

Okay, so I read a couple of the less positive reviews and some of the feedback and I decided that maybe I wanted to clarify some of what I liked about this book and why I agree it might not be for everyone.

The author spends a lot of time doing things like discussing physics and things like larger objects will take more effort to get in motion but will stay in motion for longer, smaller whorls will spin faster, bottom whorls will be more stable, etc.

If you're a beginner looking for a "how do I spin on a drop spindle," there's a lot of information that probably you don't care about. Don't get me wrong, there's a whole section on starting to spin and it's got a lot of useful information, but I don't know that it has more information than any other beginning spinning book. I know when I started spinning, I didn't really get the concept of drive ratios and why I should care. I just wanted to know how to do it.

But after a couple years of spinning, I started to care. The same with this book and spindles. There's a tremendous amount of good information in it--but it might not be something that you particularly care about when you're first starting. I've been spinning for 20 years, but mostly on a wheel. I can use a drop spindle, but I've never used a support spindle and I've been curious about different types of spindles, like tahlki spindles and the pointy Russian spindles and the huge Navajo spindles. This book discusses all of these different types of spindles and the hows and wheres of changing your technique to use different spindle types.

Is this a totally useless book for a beginner? No, I don't think so. It does give you basic instruction on how to spin. It also gives more advance information. Is every advanced spinner going to get a lot out of this book? Not necessarily. But if I have a question about how to use a particular drop spindle, or the advantages of top whorl versus bottom whorl, this is going to be the book on my shelf that I will reach for first.

Overall, I think it's well worth being in any spinner's library.

Tara says

Very readable and interesting! This book doesn't just explain how to spin, but also why spinning works. It

goes into the science and history behind spinning, building up an engaging tradition that modern people are invited to join. The book also includes exercises to build up muscle memory for each discrete action involved in spinning. The photographs are also gorgeous.

Mary says

I have always been curious about all fiber arts--embroidery, crochet, weaving, spinning among others. This is a good survey for anyone just starting out (me) or anyone who wants to improve their skills.

Laurie says

Very helpful for a beginner like me - helped me to envision the entire process of hand-spinning yarn. I know I will come back to it after I feel confident I have the process down so I can re-read and see what I missed the first time around because I did not yet have the experience to understand. I am doing well after only a couple of days of practice. Having spent thousands of hours of my life handling and creating with yarn since I was a child, I seem to have an affinity for adding new skills to my repertoire. I want to take a project from hand spinning through finished product to see if I like it enough to keep doing it and at that point, determine if I want to try a wheel or an electric spinner, or keep to the spindle.

Tomomi Landsman says

I picked up this book at a spinning shop in Kyoto, Japan called Kin no Hitsuji, which translates to Golden Sheep. It was a bit of an impulse buy and was a little pricey at 3614 yen.

I am a brand new spinner and was looking for a book specifically about spindle spinning. I am not very interested in buying a wheel, so it was nice to feel validated in sticking with spindles entirely. The parts about this book that I enjoyed most are where Franquemont writes about her personal experiences and outlook on spinning. I felt the how-to parts are rather weak, and I don't think I will be referencing this book for the majority of learning to spin. I feel like drafting is the area in which I would like the most help, which this book just didn't do for me.

The book also has four patterns at the end of the book. Only one, a hat, is for crochet, which I plan to check out in the future.

Alejandra says

I did not find this sufficient to learn how to spin (classes with a local instructor got me off the ground), but it is a great resource to fine tune your spindling and to know which terms to search for when looking for videos on specific techniques. I really enjoyed the chapters describing how the different elements of the spindle and the fiber contribute to the yarn you make. Physics is fun.

Teddy says

This book is amazing. I especially recommend it for anybody who's interested in spinning but who has a disability that affects their ability to use a treadle.

I didn't really notice it at the time, but when you start (or return to after a ~25 year absence) spinning and go through the myriad of books, videos, and tutorials on the topic, it all assumes that you're going to move onto a wheel. The spindle is considered valuable, but as a learning tool, not quite a toy but not for those interested in serious production. I was aiming for a wheel simply because it didn't occur to me that there was another option, which is a big thing for me because an old injury means I can't work a treadle for any length of time - I was looking at e-wheels, but they are hellishly expensive and I'd still have to sit for extended periods, something which is more manageable than treading but not ideal.

Then I read this book, and I find that actually, staying with the drop spindle is an option; not only an option but a good option. I feel like I should have known that anyway, because the spindle lasted a long time and is still in use in some parts of the world, but see above point about everything seeming to assume you'll move on. In fact, according to the author, drop spindles are better for some types of yarn, and those happen to be types I'm interested in making (weaving yarns, alpaca fibre, etc.) Instead of thinking about a wheel I'm now using the techniques described to speed up my production using drop spindles, and I'm producing plenty of yarn even in this beginner stage, as I get better practiced and faster I have no doubt that I'm going to leave the amount of yarn I could produce on a wheel well behind; especially when you consider that I can only treadle for ~20 minutes if I don't want to cripple myself for a couple of days.

Not to mention, learning how to spin when walking around (something it didn't occur to me to try until I read this book and the author's description of a childhood in the Andes spent playing games whilst spinning) has added to my ability to cope with pain; I have to walk around sometimes or I seize up, there's only so many things you can do while walking, and spinning takes enough of my concentration that it provides a bit of distraction from the hurt + bonus yarn. It's not exactly something I could do with a wheel.

Granted there aren't a lot of spinners with my particular circumstances, but I think there's plenty in this book for the able-bodied spinner too.

Linda Guzzaldo says

I just finished reading this book for the second time. I first picked up a spindle in 2009, and I learned some new things in this reading that I missed the first time. I'd like to have a copy for my own library eventually.

Abby Franquemont says

It wouldn't let me add this book to my shelves without including a rating, which is weird for me to try to do because I wrote it, so I have no idea how to rate it, really. That said... well, I use it as a text when I teach. ;-)

Velma says

Disclaimer: I'm friends with the author, so my gushing review should be taken as gospel because I know what the hell I'm talking about.

I came to spinning with a spindle late: I learned long *after* mastering spinning with a spinning wheel. But I figured, "Hey, if little *kids* can do it, how hard can it be for a talented girl like me?!?" Well, yes and no. Yes, I can do it, but it does require some instruction. And I'd say that, short of an in-person class with the author (which I highly recommend), *Respect the Spindle* is just about the absolute perfect source of that instruction.

Written by the renowned spindle guru Abby Franquemont, *Respect* is packed with everything needed to turn a wanna-be into an expert spindle-spinner (I know, Abby, I know: you don't like that term; too bad, because I do.) With humor, patience, and more skill than you can shake a stick (or rather, spindle) at, Abby takes the reader through the basics and then continues into more advanced techniques, demonstrating throughout the book in clear, explanatory color photos.

An absolute must-have for any self-respecting (oh yes, pun intended) fiber artist, your copy will sadly not arrive with the irreverent, hand-written annotations that Abby graciously penned throughout mine, but I do believe that it will nevertheless become your favorite spinning reference book.

penny shima glanz says

When you know an addition to your bookshelf will change your life and make something you enjoy doing much more enjoyable and easier, how do you write a proper review?

When I first started spindling I was very shy and scared and really really bad at it. Some people I asked for assistance had a very anti-spindle bias; they saw a spindle as a stepping-stone on the way to a wheel. I knew that was silly and that for many cultures there were spindles, not wheels doing the yarn production. I am very lucky that I have some very good friends who love spindling *and* wheels and they helped me get on the right direction. I'm still not very good.

When I heard Abby was writing a book I was thrilled. I found her articles and blog posts informative and very helpful over the years. A few months ago she had posted a video tutorial that introduced me to the concept of winding a butterfly and my spindling immediately got easier (there's a photo tutorial on p 86).

When I finally got my hands on a copy (thanks to a surprise gift from my husband) and I actually had a chance to sit and read through this book while ~~fondling~~ holding my spindles I was thrilled and thankful.

This is a soft cover book, so it is light and could be taken along in a bag. It's not spiral bound, but I don't find I care about that in my spinning books. The photos are clear and if a technique is being demonstrated it is done so with very precise steps and I'm very thankful for the plain background and Abby's simple clothing.

Just reading this book will not make you a better spinner overnight, you still need to practice but I think Abby has written a superb book. This book is valuable for anyone, whether you spindle or not, thought if you

aren't interested in spinning you might only like the first 47 pages of history, science, and other knowledgeable things. I think this will help me if anyone wants me to try to explain the basics of spinning to them. I wouldn't go out and ask to be hired as a teacher, but when you spindle in public, people are interested and this book should help me figure out a clear and concise way to explain what I'm trying to do.

The most amusing part of the book was seeing two different ways to wind a cop and realizing that my other life prepared me for this one. I used to make my own bassoon reeds and the thread knotting method for that is very similar to winding a cop using the crossing method. I love it when my life experiences overlap!
