

Lathe Height

Most lathes that have a stand as part of the lathe are not adjustable for height. So the chances are that the lathe will be too high or too low for your height.

What should the height be?

The centres of the lathe should be at the same height as the bottom of your elbow with your forearm raised. In my case that was 46 ½ inches, meaning my Record CL4 lathe needed 3 inch blocks under its feet.

Probably the easiest way to measure this is to set the tool rest at centre height across the lathe bed, so it is sticking out towards you. Then you have something to put your bent elbow against and can easily measure the difference from the top of the tool rest to the bottom of your elbow.

In my case I had to raise the lathe as there was a gap between my elbow and the tool rest. If you found the opposite then you will need to build yourself a wide and sturdy platform to stand on as you are unlikely to want to cut the stand of the lathe.

Why do this?

If you are turning for any length of time your back will soon tell you why, especially if the lathe is too low, as mine was. If the lathe is too high, tool control will not be so easy, probably tempting you to place the tool rest too low below centre to get the cutting edge of the tool at the right height.

Make the adjustment secure

If you raise the lathe on blocks or have to make a platform, make sure the lathe is well secured on its blocks, or that your platform cannot move. The last thing you will want is the lathe vibrating off its blocks or your platform sliding while you are turning.

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