



The Alden Amos Big Book of Handspinning: Being a Compendium of Information, Advice, and Opinions on the Noble Art & Craft

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Alden Amos shares his deep knowledge of wheel mechanics, spinning fibers, wheel construction, and yarn, as well as a wealth of spinning history and traditions. Every aspect of handspinning is explored, including dissolving lanolin, washing fleece, rotating wheel position, and choosing types of wool. Also discussed are various hand positions, which can result in everything from smooth, fine thread to funky, bulky yarn.

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Diane says

My head burst from the amount of information packed into this book but I finally got the answers to some nagging questions so it was worth it.

Absolutely full-coverage of anything you ever wanted to know, needed-to-know, didn't know you needed-to-know of spinning and everything connected to spinning.

This covers everything from growing your own fiber (hemp, flax, etc.) to making the tools (by hand) needed to prepare the fiber (by hand) for spinning. (By hand.)

Cost analysis for preparing your own fiber vs. sending fiber out to be processed are included, formulas for figuring grist, twist, and more than I can understand at this point are covered well.

This might rate 5 stars, but I don't know enough about spinning to do that. Compared to other books it's amazingly complete. If I get into spinning this will be on my bookshelf as a reference.

Lynne says

Lots of technical spinning information (yes, a lot of it comes down to mathematics; why didn't we get problems like THIS in high school?). I came away with useful information on grist and plying. Probably other info as well, but the vocabulary does not immediately spring to mind.

Katrina Bergherm says

This is definitely NOT a book for beginners but it should be on the shelves of every handspinner. A great resource for every little technical thing you might ever want to know about making yarn. At times it felt like reading a textbook and I expected to have questions at the end of each chapter (which actually might be a good idea). But the author is humorous and knows his stuff. I skimmed some sections but I'm sure that I'll be reading this book over and over throughout the coming years.

Stacy says

Interesting even if you're not a spinner, and jam packed with info if you are. Written in the engaging personal style of the author, which includes ample footnotes that, at times, completely diverge from the topic at hand. I loved it.

Debbie says

very informative for all levels of spinning, a little heavy in some parts for me as I'm a beginner spinner.

Definitely recommend reading it to all spinners

Renee Gordon says

A super dense reference. It is a necessary addition to any spinner's library.

Cayenne says

Finally finished! What a tome. This book took me at least a year to read, but it was worth every minute. I learned so much about spinning, preping, and scouring fiber. There are all these awesome diagrams at the back for building your own tools and a great glossary. The tongue and cheek humor is enjoyable and made even the long math parts pretty interesting. This author definitely knows his stuff.

Jess says

the depth of information in this book suggests that it should be incredibly boring and dry, but alden amos is an apparently awesome guy who writes with dry humor and considerable technical expertise. there are times when technical information in this book would probably overwhelm many of the crafters i have met, but for anyone technical minded, it is a great book for better understanding the art and craft of spinning yarn.

Laura Brooks says

I have taken a spinning class, and done a LOT of thinking about what my first (and last, please) wheel should be like. He walks you through Every Step, anticipating problems and questions, and then he answers them.

He says on the cover that these are his opinions, and his style and persona reinforce the picture of a one-on-one master class on everything he knows. Necessarily idiosyncratic. He shows his work as he steps you carefully through the reasoning for things that he has taken the time to think through the process' physical and mathematical results. You may use a table to remember some quality of the fiber/yarn, but you should have a passing familiarity with where the numbers came from and what you did to them. He is very detailed, but he starts from a big-picture point of view, so it is very easy to follow him right into the detail weeds.

I have been taking notes on my first read through. It is an amazing resource. Though, as with many things, probably not the only book in a handspinner's library.

Tonya says

Holy of all holy help me how to so stuff books! It's like YouTube! Except pages! And no crashing or lagging computers! Oh joy! My ascent to the world of backward and old fashioned And silly and why don't you just buy what you need naysayers has brought me here In a hand knit scarf, with two angora goats beside me, hopes for alpacas and a Navajo spindle in my hand as gifts of my lack of knowledge but willingness to learn.

What I lack in skill at this point I have 10 fold in enthusiasm. Been hugging this book for days!!!

Michele says

Overall, the book provides a lot of useful information. However, Alden definitely expresses his opinions and personal preferences about spinning and spinning wheels through. For example he expresses a strong distaste for double treadle spinning wheels. This tends to be more of a personal preference among experienced spinners than a hard fast rule.

This book is not for beginning spinners. More experienced spinners will be able to not only better understand and appreciate the technical information of both spinning and spinning wheels in the book, but also realize when Alden is expressing personal opinion and judge accordingly.

But the book definitely made me think about my own personal spinning preferences as well as take a closer look my spinning techniques as well as giving me a better understanding spinning wheel mechanics.
