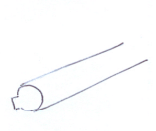
SPRINGS FOR BUTTON TIMERS

By George White

I recently was scanning through things at Hip Pocket Aeronautics (www.hippocketaeronautice.com) the other day and ran across an article by Alan Cohen on how to make springs for activating button timers. Basically, he inserts a 7/64" drill bit into a small plywood square and, using a dremel tool, grinds the end of a piece of 5/32 brass tubing to create a small "nib" as shown in the "artfully" drawn picture below. The purpose of this nib is to grab the wire as he winds the spring.



He says that he has found that a piece of .009" music wire 36" long makes a perfect spring which will allow a constant pull. He bends a short 90º angle in one end of the wire and inserts that into a small hole in the plywood near the drill bit, then places a piece of tape over the wire to hold it in the hole while he winds the spring. He places the brass tubing into a variable speed drill, slides the tubing over the drill bit to catch the wire and slowly winds the spring. He says he gets about 100 turns out of that much wire.

Having made many springs like this myself, I've found that to make loops at each end I can simply take a sharp knife or razor blade and insert it into the spring to catch 2 or 3 loops and forcibly bending them 90º to form the end loops .

Don't want to mess with this work? Alan has a solution for you. He has a website called www.hobbyspecialties.com. For the price of $1.25 you can buy a spring ready made which seems like a fair price. If you're going to use a button timer, don't be foolish enough to try to drive it with a rubber band. You're only setting yourself up for frustration, never knowing what the result will be from one flight to the next.