

How to Fill a Fountain Pen Converter

The convenience and availability of disposable ink cartridges has made fountain pens more user friendly, however there is another convenient option. Modern ink converters, or ink pumps, are easy to use and give you unlimited options of top brand inks available in a rainbow of colors. Not only do you have a wider range of inks, it is also less expensive than disposables. These instructions will tell you how to refill your fountain pen using the optional fountain pen piston converter included with your order.

Gather your fountain pen, converter, bottle of ink, a paper towel or two and some newspaper to protect your work surface. This can be done without any mess, but for the first time through you may want to take extra precautions.

A fountain pen converter is essentially a suction tool that allows you to fill your fountain pen with ink. It has the same size opening as an ink cartridge and plugs into the back of your fountain pen nib assembly. There are different types of converters, but this tutorial will focus on the piston style we supply with each fountain pen purchase. The piston converter has a knob on the top used to move an internal gasket inside the tube. Turn the knob counterclockwise to force air out of the converter, and turn it clockwise to draw in ink into the reservoir.



fig. 1

1. Remove the cap of your fountain pen and unscrew the nib assembly from the barrel. You will see a prong inside the collar at the back end of the nib assembly. This prong will pierce the seal of the converter just as it would a disposable cartridge. Insert the converter into the fountain pen nib assembly from the back until it is snugly secured. Once the converter is pushed snugly in place twist it a half turn to insure a good seal. See fig 1



fig. 2

Disposable Cartridge Installation

(Use the steps outlined above to install a disposable cartridge. Once snugly installed and twisted a half turn gently squeeze the tube once, hold the pen, nib end down, and allow several seconds for the ink to travel the length of the feeding tube to the nib. It is not necessary to press hard or scrub the nib on paper. When the ink reaches the back of the nib it will flow off the tip.)

2. Push out all the air of the piston converter by turning it counterclockwise. See fig.2



fig. 3

3. Submerge the nib of the fountain pen into the bottle of ink and turn the converter clockwise to suction up ink. Make sure the entire nib is submerged to prevent air bubbles from developing. Watch the level of ink through the clear tube. If ink is not being drawn in it is usually because the nib is not submerged sufficiently. See fig 3

4. Next, making sure your carefully positioned above the ink bottle, turn the converter knob counterclockwise to force air out of the converter. This will force air bubbles out of the converter and maximize the amount of ink drawn into the fountain pen. Some ink will be removed along with the air, but don't worry, steps 4 and 5 can be repeated until the reservoir is filled. See fig. 4



fig. 4

5. Finish by turning the converter knob counterclockwise a little so the feed tube is primed. A drop or two of ink will drip off the end of the nib. Do not shake the pen! Ink is in the feed tube and ready to write. Carefully wipe any excess ink off the nib and or collar with a paper towel. Avoid wiping the tip and slit of the nib as this will initiate the flow of ink. Keep the nib clean of dried ink by occasionally wiping it off with a dampened paper towel. Keep the lid securely capped when not in use and ideally, store your pen nib end up.

Cleaning and Care Tips:

Nibs are the metal, pointed part of fountain pens, and they allow you to control the look of your line as it is drawn on the paper. Nibs become stained with ink as you use them, and cleaning them is an important part of looking after your fountain pen. While there are commercial pen cleaners that you can use, you can also easily clean your pen nib with soap and water.

Fill a cup with warm water and a couple drops of dish washing soap. Gently rub the nib with a paper towel dampened in this solution. Do not use solvents, hot water or excessively scrub the nib. If stubborn dried ink remains the nib can be soaked in warm water with a little dish washing soap, and gently scrubbed with a soft bristle toothbrush. Avoid soaking the nib for long periods of time or rust can occur.

The converter can be cleaned by flushing with the same warm water and dish washing soap solution. Fill the converter with the soapy water and flush into a disposable or glass cup that will not be stained by any residual ink. Flush several times with soapy water and then flush with

clean water. Place a folded paper towel in the bottom of a cup and place your assembled pen, nib side down, in the cup over night. The paper towel in contact with the nib will draw any excess water out of the reservoir, feeding tube and nib. Refill with ink and enjoy.

Although the converter can be removed and reinstalled, it is recommended to limited frequency. Repeated reinstallation can widen the seal and lead to leaks. The converter can be filled and cleaned without being removed. Simply use the same method for loading ink to draw warm soapy water into the reservoir and flush. Converters are inexpensive and it is a good idea to have an extra one or two on hand.