

# Fidget Spinners

Fidget spinners are gadgets that are made with a ball bearing in the centre and three 'branches' coming from the centre. The 'branches' of the mechanism spin around the middle.

They are made from a range of materials like stainless steel, brass, ceramics, titanium, copper and plastic. The variety of materials used in the bearings alters the vibration and duration of the spin.

## How to Spin a Fidget Spinner

Simply hold the middle of the spinner between your index finger and thumb as if you are picking it up. Then, flick one of the outside branches with your middle finger and watch it spin.



Unlike many toys and gadgets, they don't need charging to work so they can be used anywhere at any time.

You can also lie the spinner on a table and hold its centre with your index finger. Use your other hand to flick one of the branches and then let go with your index finger. Depending on the type of spinner you have, it should steadily spin for quite a length of time.

## Origins of the Fidget Spinner

Fidget spinners were created by an American inventor, Catherine Hettinger, in the early 1990s. She was ill but still caring for her eight-year-old daughter and found she didn't have the energy to play with her as much as she would have liked to. Catherine began inventing toys for her daughter and between the two of them, they created the first fidget spinner.

In 1997, the fidget spinner was patented, which meant Catherine Hettinger was granted ownership of the design and protected the idea from being copied by others.

However, the patent had to be renewed every few years and in 2005 Hettinger didn't have enough money to renew it. She lost the rights over the design and now many companies make their own versions. The companies are now making a lot of money from sales.

### Uses of the Fidget Spinner

Some people believed the fidget spinner would be useful for aiding concentration and focus. It is considered a useful device to help some children who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism or other special educational needs that affect concentration or their sensory experiences.

The device can also aid fine motor skills with some musicians being known to use the fidget spinner to exercise their fingers before a performance.

Fidget spinners have been used more recently to decrease stress, through the rotation of the branches, helping the user to 'zone out' and clear their mind. The theory of the fidget spinner being used for reducing stress means that many office workplaces are seeing a rise in workers using them to help ease stress and lower nervous energy.

### Fidget Spinners in School

Some schools have banned fidget spinners as they say they are a distraction to other pupils and affect learning potential as well as being a potential safety hazard.

Some parents of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are concerned that banning the devices will cause their children to lose concentration and feel 'different' to their peers if they are allowed them but their friends are not.

# Questions

1. Why are the bearings made from different materials?

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2. Find and copy one word which means 'length of time'.

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3. Write three things that you are told about fidget spinners in the introductory paragraphs.

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What makes fidget spinners different to most hi-tech toys used today?

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5. Write a more suitable sub-heading than 'Origins of the Fidget Spinner'.

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6. Put these statements in order by numbering them 1 to 4.

A patent was obtained by Hettinger, which lasted until 2005.

A range of companies have the right to make money from fidget spinners.

Hettinger invented the fidget spinner with her daughter.

Hettinger did not have enough money to renew the patent.

7. Identify three types of people who may benefit from using a fidget spinner and explain how it might help them.

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# Questions

8. Tick 'True' or 'False' for the statements below. Then, rewrite the false statements correctly.

	True	False
Fidget spinners can help the fine motor skills in fingers.		
Fidget spinners could cause people to develop problems with stress.		
Some people with ADHD might find fidget spinners can help to calm them down.		
The rotating branches sometimes increase nervous energy.		

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9. Complete the sentences below.

Some schools do not allow fidget spinners because they might...

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Parents of children with special educational needs are worried that ...

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10. What is your opinion about fidget spinners? Explain your reasons.

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