



# The Spindolyn

*~ the Original Quill Supported Lap Spindle\**

This lighthearted spindle will set you and your spinning free. Held in your lap, between your knees, or nestled in a bean bag pouch, the unique and original engineering\* eliminates the "drop" of a drop spindle, the need for the support of a support spindle and gives a smooth, fast spin, great for a range of medium fine to fine fibers.

**\*The Spindolyn™** and the "Quill Supported" spindle design are protected, original designs and inventions by Catherine Goodwin, 2002.

## Tips for Spinning on the Spindolyn™

The style of spinning done on the Spindolyn is very similar to a tahkli or other **support spindle**. It differs in that its construction allows both hands to remain free for drafting and fiber manipulation, as it is fully self-supported in an upright position in its brass quill. The whorl can be "strummed" to start it in motion, as well as using the traditional thumb and forefinger "snap" as with a regular tahkli. Most of the techniques that apply to support spindling apply to the Spindolyn, with the exception of not having to use your non-fiber supply hand to keep the spindle from falling over.

- ❖ Unlike a drop spindle, the supported spindle does not use gravity to keep tension on the yarn. The spinner's hands maintains the tension by constantly drafting away from the hook or point. This gives you more control of the amount of twist and eliminates the tug that might pull apart finer fibers. If you are not familiar with the action of support spindles, it may take you a bit of practice to adapt to a slightly different style of spinning.
- ❖ It is normal for the spindolyn to have a slight amount of wobble when it is spinning empty without the tension of the forming of yarn, because it has freedom of movement in the tube. Once yarn is being drafted, it will spin smoother.
- ❖ If you are unfamiliar with support spindling, you can practice this type of "pull away from the hook" drafting by starting out slow. (see the next page for more beginner tips) Because it won't drop, and unless you are highly over twisted, it won't unwind itself, but rather wait for you to catch up with your drafting, you can practice as slowly as you like on the Spindolyn. Put the spindle into the quill tube, give it a good spin, stop it, then begin drafting your fiber with the pinch-pull method, pulling out the thickness of fiber that you want and releasing the stored twist to allow it to run up into your fiber. If you find you are pulling the spindle right out of the quill, this indicates that you are not pinching the twist to stop it until you have drafted the fiber adequately. Take your time to study the action of your hands, the amount of twist you are applying and the speed of your drafting and in no time you will have caught on to the possibilities of a self-supported spindle.
- ❖ Although support spindles are ideal for spinning short fibers, such as cotton, using the "point of twist" technique for drafting, the Spindolyn can also be used for longer fibers. Using a modified long draw, maintain a steady drafting motion away from the spindle.
- ❖ You will get the longest and fastest spin out of your Spindolyn by using "tahkli twirl", that is, giving it a rapid twist with your thumb and forefinger. However, it has been designed so that also may be set in motion by a "strumming" action. This can be with your thumb, the side of your forefinger, or anything that is comfortable for you. You can also give it two or three strums to bring it up to speed. Like learning to play an instrument, with practice, your strumming can become very smooth, gentle and rhythmical.
- ❖ Care of the Spindolyn is minimal; a drop of oil now and then is good. You may also consider graphite or white lithium grease as a lubricant. If your Spindolyn seems slow, check to see if there is fiber wrapped around the shaft below the whorl, or something else is amiss that is causing undo friction.
- ❖ The whorl should ride just above the top of quill (you should be able to see a tiny section of shaft between the bottom of the whorl and the quill.) If it should become dislodged and slide down on the shaft to the point of touching the quill, there will be unwanted friction and it should be moved up and re-glued with a touch of strong glue.
- ❖ The shaft could, of course, get bent out of shape if you sit on it or force it into an unnatural position by some other means such as stuffing it in your already full-of-fleece suitcase. It will spin longest and fastest if it is completely straight, so you may have to apply the pliers to it at some point, try not to mar or nick the shaft when straightening or tweaking the shaft or the hook.

## Step by Step Spindolyn Tips for Beginners

(Please Note: this is only a brief introduction, it is recommended that you refer to a book or other reference on spinning or better yet, learn to spin in person from a group or class. You can also find various learn-to-spin videos on the internet)



- ❖ Start by making your first section of yarn to tie on to the shaft, this is called a "leader".
- ❖ To make this leader, catch the hook into a handful of **loosely** held fiber, while you **slowly** turn the shaft with the other hand and at the same time, pull the fleece upward. Continue these two motions (slowly turning the shaft and pulling upwards) until you have made an arms length of "leader" yarn. (Don't worry about what this yarn looks like.)
- ❖ Unhook this leader yarn, move it to the base of the shaft (above the whorl) and wrap it tightly around the shaft. Continue to spiral wrap the leader a couple of times up to the top of the shaft and about 2 inches beyond the hook.

- ❖ Keeping the fiber supply hand directly above the hook, continue to turn the shaft with your fingers as you pull the loosely held fiber upward with you other hand. Pulling the fiber up and away from the twist you are building up as you draw it out into the diameter you want for your yarn is called "drafting". The diameter and character of your yarn is all determined by your drafting.



- ❖ As the twist builds up, it will try and run up into the fiber in your hand. You must stop it from doing that by always drafting the fibers upwards faster than the twist can travel. As you are learning to draft quickly, one way of getting control of the twist is to pinch it off **below** the drafting fiber, and **above** the forming yarn.
- ❖ To practice the pinch and draft method, stop turning the shaft, and with your fingers pinch the stretching out fibers to stop the twist from running up into your fiber supply. Once you have stopped the twist, you can pull and draft up your fibers as thin as you would like, before releasing the pinch and allowing the twist to run up into the fiber, creating your yarn.
- ❖ Wind the yarn on to the shaft above the whorl by holding the fiber straight out perpendicular to the shaft and turning the shaft.
- ❖ After some practice with slowly turning the spindle shaft and drafting your fiber into yarn, you are ready to give the spindle a twirl to set it in motion.



- ❖ Let's recap the movements. Give the spindle a twirl.
- ❖ Pull the (**loosely held**) fiber supply with a direct, upward motion, drafting the fibers upward, allowing the fibers to pull from the mass in a fan shape.
- ❖ Pinch the yarn below the fan to stop it from entering the fiber supply and draft the fibers upward and out thinner.
- ❖ Release the pinch that you have on the fiber below the fanned, drafted fiber, allowing the twist to run up into this drafted section.
- ❖ Immediately after you have released the pinch, pinch again above the section of yarn you have just formed and draft some more fiber upward (your arms will be rising higher with each pinch and pull.)
- ❖ When you have spun a comfortable arms length of yarn, it is time to wind on.
- ❖ Unwind the bit of yarn that is spiraled up to the hook by turning the shaft a few times backwards from the direction that you were spinning. Hold the yarn firmly and directly out to the side of the whorl. With your other hand, turn the shaft so that yarn winds onto the base of the shaft directly above the whorl. As you wind more yarn on , you will be forming a conical shape. Always wind on firmly and as close to the base as you can.
- ❖ You will know when your spindle is full and it is time to wind off your yarn as the spindle will begin to spin sluggishly.

### TIP!

When you are first learning you may want to stop the spindle at any point, so that you have more time to draft your fiber out and up. You may even want to go back to just slowly turning the spindle by hand while you draft, without advancing to twirling it, while you study how yarn is formed, and how twist is inserted into fiber.

Remember to hold the fiber **very loosely** so it can feed into the new yarn.

**For more information and video, visit**  
**[www.knittinganyway.com](http://www.knittinganyway.com)**