



Utrecht Art Supplies

Studio Craft: Maintaining Technical Pens



Ask the Expert: "I got a set of refillable tech pens for a gift. How do I keep them clean and in good working order?"

A: Technical pens are delicate drafting instruments, but with care and maintenance your new set can last many years. This means cleaning them regularly and using them on surfaces that will not wear them out.

Because technical pens use pigmented ink, particle residue can build up and clog the delicate feed mechanisms. Try not to leave pens filled for an extended period- after 2 or 3 days it's a good idea to remove the ink reservoir, empty the ink and flush the pen nib. Use only cold water for this- never wash technical pens in hot water, as this can cause them to develop leaks.



If you use your pens regularly, once a week clean them with a special solution designed to remove dry ink residue. The solution is sold separately or in a kit with a syringe that attaches to the end of the nib and gently forces fluid through the pen, expelling residue. The syringe is also handy for flushing out ink with plain water when changing colors.

Stubborn clogs can be removed by disassembling the nib using the included wrenches (the bits that look like gears) and soaking the parts overnight in cleaning fluid. If pens become badly clogged, it may be necessary to use a sonic cleaning tank to restore them.

Metal-tipped technical nibs last indefinitely if used on paper vellum, but frosted mylar is has an abrasive surface that will eventually wear down metal points. If you work regularly on mylar, use synthetic sapphire tipped pens; these are more durable than steel and cost only slightly more.