

## How to Refill your Ink cartridge

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The empty ink cartridges do not necessarily have to go into the trashcan. They can either be recycled (which could help you make some money) or re-filled. Re-filling an ink cartridge is not only the cheapest option but it also increases the life of a cartridge.

The best way to re-fill an ink cartridge is to buy an ink re-filling kit. This can be bought from any online store selling ink cartridges. Along with this kit you would be provided with the necessary tools along with a set of instructions on how to go about filling-the-empty-ink-cartridge.

Here are a few simple instructions that could be followed to refill your cartridge and it's not very complicated.

1. Draw the ink of any one colour with the help of the syringe provided in the re-fill kit. Ideally, this should be done over the sink. This is to make sure that even if some of it spills over no documents, clothes etc. gets ruined. The amount of ink each printer holds usually varies depending upon its manufacturers. For Example, in most Epson printers the black cartridge holds about 17ml of ink and the colour cartridges hold approximately 8ml. Please refer to the instructions on your refill kit to check how much ink should be injected into the cartridge.

2. A small hole needs to be made on top of the cartridge (Could be done with a ball point pen), one for each colour chamber. The hole should be at the top of the cartridge near the label. The needle should be pushed into the hole and the ink injected slowly. If the ink is not injected slowly, it could result in foaming and air bubbles could be formed. If this happens, the re-filled cartridge might not be able to print.

Caution: If this happens, hold the cartridge over a waste paper basket upside down and swing upwards and stop suddenly. This could rectify the problem. If it doesn't then you could clean the ink heads with cleaner or try soaking the heads. This could remove any dry ink that is clogging the ink heads and allow the ink to flow freely again.

3. The re-fill holes need not be sealed, as there are already breather holes on top of the cartridge.

4. Any ink that is left over in the syringe can be returned to the bottle. The syringe needs to be cleaned with water and dried properly before using it for another colour. It might be handy to use different syringes for different colours.

5. Once the refilled cartridge is placed back in the printer, run the cleaning cycle 1 to 3 times. If there is any gap in printing, the cycle could be run a few more times till the problem is rectified.

Before placing the refilled cartridge back into the printer, you could hold it upside down just to make sure ink is not dripping out of the sponge.

Here are a few things that must be kept in mind before re-filling a cartridge

1. The cartridge needs to be refilled before it is completely empty. If this is not done, the cartridge can dry out completely and get clogged.

2. It might be a good idea to place the refilled cartridge into the printer and leave it alone overnight so that the pressure in the cartridge can stabilize.

3. While making the holes at the top of the cartridge, to inject ink, please make sure you do not hit it too hard or it might crack open the cartridge and make it worthless. It might also make a hairline crack and allow some air in, which in turn would dry the ink out prematurely.

4. Some of the newer models of printers have a green chip in their cartridges. Looking at the cartridge closely one can spot this chip. They are usually known as 'Intelligence' cartridges. The chip keeps track of the ink levels in the cartridge and notifies the computer when the ink levels are low. A resetting chip can be used to reset the memory on the chip. With the help of this chip, the printer recognizes the cartridge as being full and allows the refilled

cartridge to print.

A refill kit is considerably cheaper than a new cartridge and obviously promises more than just one re-fill. It is therefore, easier on the pocket, keeps us from adding more useless plastic to the environment and increases the life of a cartridge.

A re-fill kit typically contains:

1. Bottles of Ink
2. A bottle of cleaning solution
3. A 2 part syringe
4. A users manual

Something to look out for before buying refilled cartridges

There are some cartridges sold with the 'Single Use Only' tag. It is illegal to refill these cartridges with any other ink. This is usually found in Lexmark cartridges. If these cartridges are sent for refilling or refilled cartridges are bought, technically one could face legal charges for doing so. The cartridges that are not marked 'Single Use Only' usually come at a higher price.

For such cartridges Lexmark offers a 20% reduction in price if the customer agrees to send the cartridges back to Lexmark.

This does not mean that using refilled cartridges is illegal in any way. All one needs to watch out for is whether the maker has prevented a third party refilling for their own cartridges. This can be understood easily by looking out for any labels such as 'Single Use Only'. If there is no such obvious label, it is absolutely all right to go ahead with refilling the empty ink cartridges.

### **Short note about the author**

John Sollars is the managing director of Solar Electronics, which are both ink and pc peripheral suppliers based in Shropshire, UK. To access a comprehensive online shop of original and re-manufactured ink cartridges please visit <http://www.mega-office.co.uk>.

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