

Schaff Piano Supply Company Presents:

Loading and Using 1 lb. Wire Canisters

Basic Step-by-Step Procedures

Belly Work



By Chuck Behm

Loading and Using 1 lb. Wire Canisters



-Rationale-

Of the several sizes of wire reels and dispensers available from Schaff, the 1 pound coil used in the wire canisters is especially convenient for the technician who frequently restrings pianos. There are two important advantages to this set-up. First, the amount of wire contained within a 1 pound coil allows the technician to go longer between having to change coils, which adds efficiency to the job of restringing a piano. Secondly, the wire may be drawn out from the coil without having to hold on to the canister, as shown in the photo above. With the smaller 1/3 pound dispensing reel, the technician must hold the reel and brake in one hand when drawing wire from the coil. The hands-off feature of the 1 pound canister helps simplify the restringing process.

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By Chuck Behm

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Important message:
Other related articles are also available from your Schaff eStore. Topics pertaining to many phases of piano repair and rebuilding have already been put on-line for your convenience. Check the Schaff eStore website often to take advantage of newly released articles geared to the beginning technician!

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Prepping the Canister

If you're using new canisters right out of the box from Schaff, you might want to take a moment to do a bit of prep work. To make life easier for you once the wire coil is in place, drill three 1/8" holes evenly spaced around the large hole on the top side of the canister.



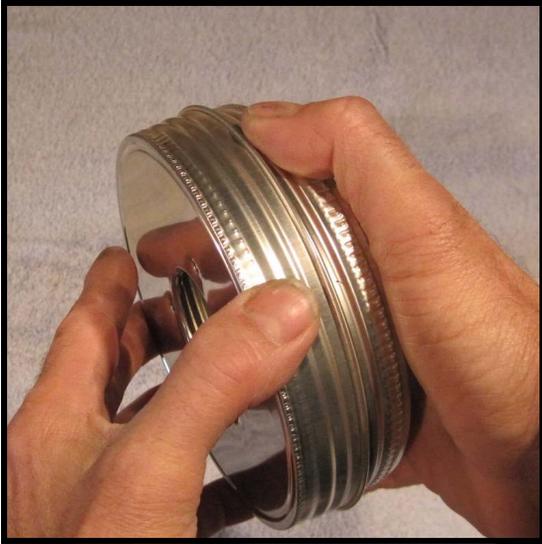
Reason for the modification:

The 1/8" holes will serve as a way to secure the end of the wire when the coil is stored on the shelf. Without this modification, the end of the wire will have a tendency to slip inside the rim of the canister, making life difficult down the road the next time that size of wire is needed.



Step 1: With the canister ready to use, select the size of wire to be loaded. If gearing up for a restringing job, having canisters ready with each size of wire will help facilitate the process. Having also a complete set of backup coils, as shown in the photo, will expedite future projects. Instead of having to wait on the postal system to deliver the needed size of wire, you simply take the size needed off the shelf, and reorder a new backup. That way, you'll never run out.

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Step 2: Unscrew the top of the canister from the bottom half. Place the bottom half (has the small hole in the center) in an easy to reach spot with the open side up. Have the top half nearby as well.



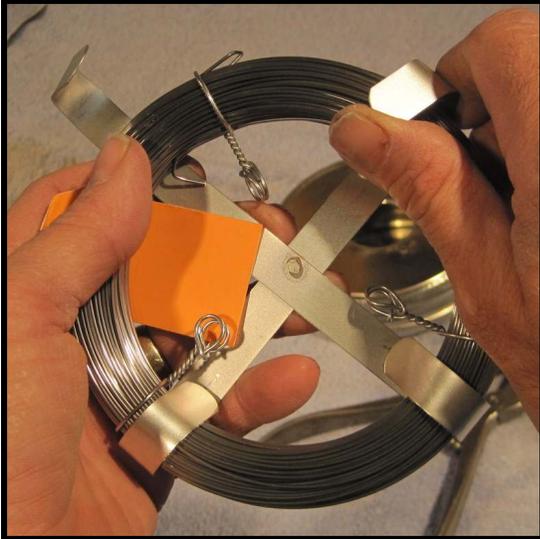
Hint: If the top of the canister is hard to turn, open your bench vise wide enough to accommodate the bottom half of the canister. (Leather or cork faces on the jaws of your vise will help here.) Turn the vise down just tight enough to grip the bottom portion of the canister, and rotate the top part counter-clockwise to loosen.



Step 3: Remove the wire coil from the envelope it came in. Notice the tag advising which end to start the wire on. This will be the end of the wire which emerges from the hole in the top of the canister.

Caution: At this time, be sure to put on a pair of safety glasses! Anytime you are working with piano wire, you should be wearing appropriate eye protection.

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Step 4: The coil is maintained with a metal clamp and also with 3 separate wire ties. Loosen the clamp first by unbending the arms which are wrapped around the coil. *Note: The clamp is made of a soft metal and may be easily unbent by hand.*



Step 5: Completely remove the clamp. If you might have a need for securing coils of wire later on (for example, if you plan to purchase wire in bulk and produce your own smaller coils), save the clamps. Otherwise, put the clamps in with the pile of old tuning pins and discarded treble wire.



Step 6: While holding the coil firmly in your left hand (see cautionary note in step 6), snip the soft wire ties which are wrapped around the coil. As these wire ties are easily cut, any good nippers will do, such as the [Maxi-Shear Flush Cutter \(Cat. No. 215\)](#) shown here.

Caution: *Be sure not to nick the piano wire in the process! Keeping the jaws of the cutters parallel to the wire of the coil (as shown) will help you avoid this.*

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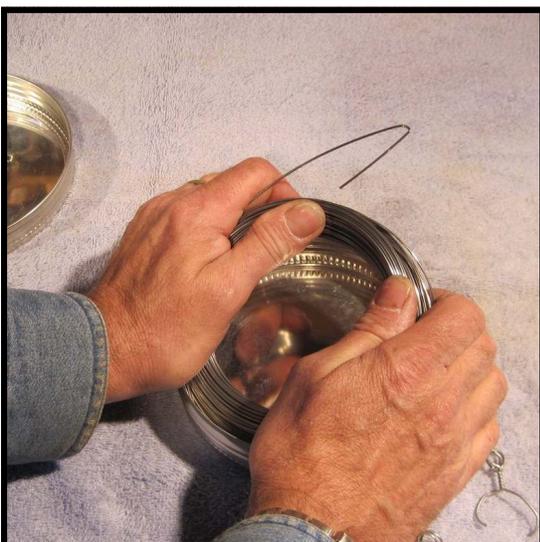
Step 7: With the tie removed, the end of the wire will spring out. Notice that the end which had the yellow tag has a long bend. The inside end has a shorter bend.

Caution: *At no time during this process should you release your firm grip on the coil! Doing so will result in the coil suddenly expanding into a ball of wire approximately 18" in diameter. Chances of getting said ball of wire into canister?**

**(About the same as the beloved but much-maligned Chicago Cubs winning the World Series. Sad but true!)*



Step 8: Once all three wire ties are cut and removed, snip the inside bend of the coil with a pair of wire cutters, such as the [Starrett Wire Cutters \(Cat. No. 225B\)](#) shown. *Note: If you don't cut this inside bend, it will tend to bind on the loops of the coil as you try to draw wire from the canister.*



Step 9: Carefully insert the coil into the bottom half of the canister. It works best to put one side of the coil in first, and then push the other side in while maintaining your grip on the coil for as long as possible. Push down any stray loops that pop up so that they are within the rim of the canister. The exception to this is the bent end of the coil, which should remain on the outside of the canister as shown.

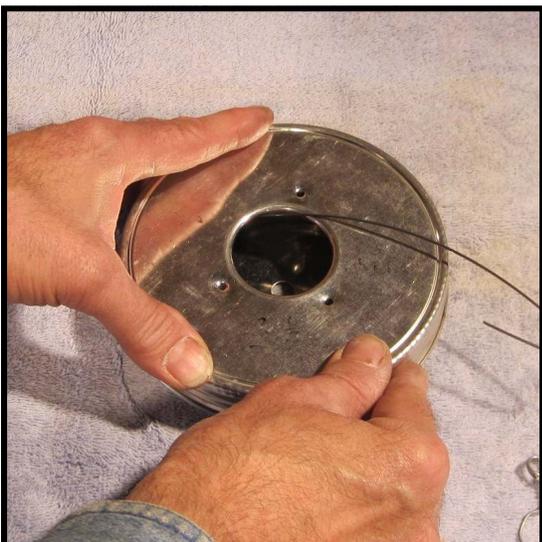
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Step 10: Snug the coil down to the bottom of the canister. Then, while holding the coil in place with your left hand, pick up the nearby top of the canister, and run the bent end of the wire through the large central hole.



Step 11: With the top half of the canister ready to go in place, carefully withdraw your left hand and close the two halves of the canister together. Make sure all of the loops of the coil are within the body of the canister.



Step 12: Push the top half of the canister firmly down onto the bottom half. You should feel it go into place. Apply a little clockwise twist to the top half to keep it from coming apart.

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Step 13: Pick up the canister, holding the bottom half in your left hand and turn the top half clockwise until it is tight.

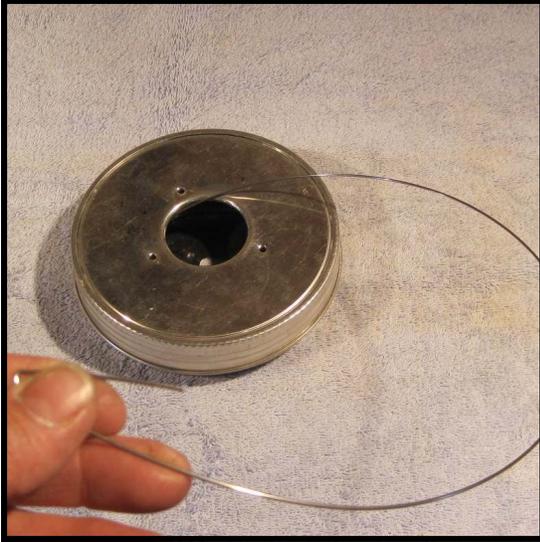


Step 14: Push the bent end of the wire into the nearest 1/8" hole.



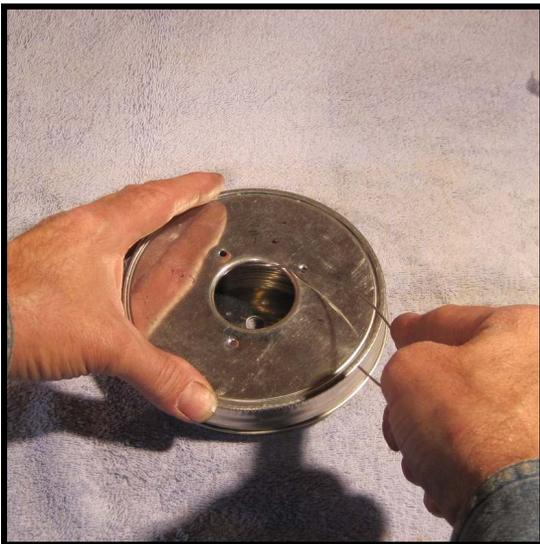
Note: With the end of the wire secured and out of the way in the, the wire will be easy to access without having to fish about inside the canister for the end to start with.

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Step 15: Before finishing up the with the canister, check to make sure that there is no binding. Draw on the wire to see that it may be easily pulled out for use.

Note: Although wire may be drawn from the can with the can placed on a flat surface as shown, at other times it may be more convenient to hold the can (when one end of the wire is fixed to a tuning pin) and pull backward on it to draw the wire out.



Step 16: While holding onto the canister with your left hand, you should be able to push the excess wire back in again. Secure the bend into one of the 1/8" holes before going any further.



CAUTIONARY STEP!

Step 17: Before putting your new wire dispenser to use or away in storage, it is highly advisable to seal the canister with duct tape, as shown. Although the canister is now technically screwed shut it is still apt to pop open, especially if dropped on edge on the floor.

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Step 18: With the fail-safe method of sealing the canisters completed, finish the job by labeling the edge and the top of the canister with the gauge of the wire contained within.



The Completed Package:
Using the duct tape to finish the job in effect kills two birds with one stone: In addition to preventing the canister from ever coming open at the wrong time, the clear labeling of the wire size on the tape is bound to result in fewer instances of choosing the wrong size of wire to use. The numbers seem to last much better on the duct tape than on the slick metal surface of the canister.

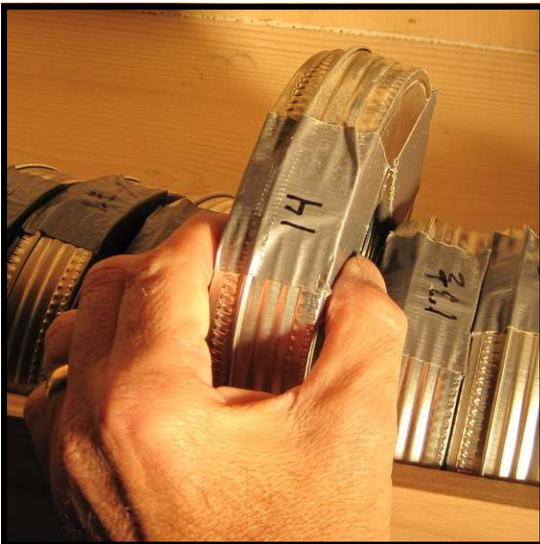


Step 19: When replacing spent coils, save the tags until placing your next order with Schaff. Order replacement coils at that point to keep your reserve supply of wire complete.

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Caution: When using your canister wire dispenser during a restringing job, it is advisable to have a towel protecting the surface of the plate to avoid marring the surface.



Step 20: Return wire coils not in use to storage shelf to avoid having more than one size on the work area at one time.



Go Green! At this time, add all used metal to your recycling bin to take to a scrap metal center. It all adds up in helping to preserve the earth!

Tools and Supplies

For your convenience, the tools and supplies necessary to complete this procedure are listed with corresponding catalog numbers.

Tools:

Maxi-Shear Flush CutterCat. No. 215
Starrett Wire Cutters..... Cat. No. 225B

Supplies

Roslau Piano Wire.....1/2 lb. or 1 lb. coils - sizes 12 to 22
or
Mapes IGS Wire (USA).....1 lb. coils - sizes 12 to 22
Wire Canisters.....Cat. No. 166

Important note: Ordering information is given for the use of Schaff account holders only.

**To order, call Schaff Piano Supply at 1-800-747-4266,
or go on-line at <http://www.schaffpiano.com/>**

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Notes on Procedures