

# Fidget Spinners

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

They are made from a range of materials like stainless steel, brass, ceramics, titanium, copper and plastic. The use of different materials changes the vibration and length of time that the toy spins.



## How to Spin a Fidget Spinner

- Hold the middle of the spinner between your index finger and thumb as if you are picking it up.
- Flick one of the outside branches with your middle finger and watch it spin.

## How the Fidget Spinner Began

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. Catherine began inventing toys for her daughter and between the two of them, they created the first fidget spinner.

## Disaster!

In 1997, the fidget spinner toy was patented, which means the person who created it has rights over it to protect the idea from being copied.

However, a patent has to be renewed every few years and in 2005 Hettinger didn't have enough money to renew the patent. She lost the rights over the design and now any company can freely make their own versions. The companies make a lot of money from them but have to give none of it to Hettinger. When she owned the patent, Hettinger would have been making most of the money from the product.

## Uses of the Fidget Spinner

Some people believed that the fidget spinner would be useful for helping people to concentrate. It was found to be an especially useful gadget to help children who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or other special educational needs that affect concentration spans. It is thought that the sensory

experience of the spinner vibrating and creating patterns helps some children with specific needs, to concentrate or to calm down.

The fidget spinners are also used to reduce stress by helping the user to 'zone out' and clear their mind. Because of this, many office workplaces are seeing a rise in workers using finger spinners to ease stress and nervous energy within adult workers.

### **Fidget Spinners in School**

Some schools have banned fidget spinners as they say they are a distraction to other pupils and can negatively affect learning. They could also pose 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/or feel 'different' to their peers if they are allowed them but their friends are not.

# Questions

1. Which materials are fidget spinners made from? Tick two.

- wood
- titanium
- aluminium
- plastic

2. Why are fidget spinners made from different materials?

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3. Write your own title for this 'Fidget Spinner' text.

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4. How do you make a spinner spin? Tick one.

- Flick it with your index finger
- Push it with your thumb
- Use your middle finger
- Put it on the ground

5. Why did Catherine Hettinger create the fidget spinner? Tick one.

- She was caring for her daughter.
- She was ill.
- She wanted to entertain her daughter.
- She wanted to make money.

6. Match up the sentences.

Hettinger could not renew the patent

A patent means that a person

other companies

has rights over a design.

could now freely make the spinner.

because she didn't have enough money.

# Questions

7. Explain how the fidget spinner could help a person's concentration.

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8. Put a T for true or F for false beside the following statements.

Then, correctly rewrite the false statements.

Fidget spinners can help some people cope with stress.

The vibrations of the spinner might cause nervous energy.

Hettinger is making a lot of money from the spinners.

The spinners have helped some children with ADHD feel calmer.

Office workplaces are seeing a rise in spinners being used at work.

The spinners can help children with special educational needs to make patterns.

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9. Give two different reasons why some schools have banned fidget spinners.

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

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

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10. What are your thoughts about fidget spinners being used in schools?

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