



## One Question a Day / One Answer a Day

Thursday, August 5<sup>th</sup> 2004



How often and how should one clean a fountain pen?  
And last but not least: why?

If a fountain pen is used on a regular basis, it should be cleaned about every three months or so.

Filling the pen with luke warm water and emptying it out until the water runs noticeably clearer is all that is required for fountain pens that have a piston or piston converter filling system.

If a fountain pen has been left unused for some time, then it should probably be cleaned before being used, and cleaned once a month if used infrequently.

It is different with the retractable fountain pens from the Bohème collection. The twisting mechanism works smoothly because of a special oil that is found within the barrel. Because of this oil, it is very important that NO water gets into the barrel. Therefore, while cleaning a retractable Bohème fountain pen you have to make sure that you only put the nib under running water. You should in no instances let water through the top of the barrel (where you insert the cartridges).

### **Why should a fountain pen require cleaning?**

Ink is made up of water and pigments of color. In any circumstances, water will eventually evaporate.

In the case of ink that means that the pigments, or "solids", of the ink will be left behind and will eventually clog the heart of the nib. If the heart of the nib is clogged by these solid particles, no air will be able to get into the barrel and thus no pressure will be created for the ink to flow out smoothly. This is why you should clean a fountain pen regularly, so that no builds up of pigments or dust particles end up clogging the heart of the nib.

By regularly cleaning your fountain pen, you ensure a smooth flow of the ink and by that a smooth writing experience. If bottled legal Blue/Black ink is used, the pen should be cleaned more frequently, as this permanent ink contains more solids than other inks.