

How to make an Imp-themed clock for home or workshop

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I recently decided I needed a clock for my workshop but wanted something to reflect the Imps housed within. Having just acquired a Stiletto restoration project, I thought how the 'sunburst' hubcaps would make an ideal clock face. So I acquired a Santai 5168S clock mechanism (£4.25) and clock hands (£2) from a seller on eBay. (And before some wag quips that the Stiletto will look a bit odd with just three hubcaps, a set of alloys is destined for the car!)

Upon arrival of the clock parts, having thoroughly cleaned it, I turned the hubcap upside down and drilled an 8mm hole in the centre of the cap. To avoid the drill bit slipping on the 'peak' it's easier to drill from the back. You may need to file a small additional amount from the hole should the clock spigot not fit through.

Having trial fitted the clock mechanism in the circular recess on the reverse side of the hub cap, the clock spindle would not quite protrude through far enough to enable the fixing washer and nut to attach on the front face. So, using a larger long socket sitting centrally under the cap and a smaller socket above it on the outer face, a few taps with a hammer had the desired effect and dished the peak of the hubcap down and enabling the washer and nut to screw onto the clock spindle.

I then fitted the hands, starting with the hour hand, followed by the minute hand and finally the second hand. There are many styles and colours of hands available but for reference the hour and minute hands I chose are 75 mm and 115 mm long respectively. Fit all the hands in the 12 o'clock position; this ensures correct alignment of the hands. Be careful when fitting the hands as they bend easily; the hour and minute hand are an interference fit on the clock spindle. I fitted mine by carefully seating them then using my fingernails pushing on the hands in the area next to the clock spindle. The second hand is a simple push fit into the top of the spindle. Once all hands are fitted, using the white adjustment knob on the clock mechanism, turn the hands around to ensure they clear each other. Should any of them foul, gently bend the appropriate hand to clear.

Finally I fitted short lengths of red pinstripe tape to denote the 12, 3, 6 and 9 o'clock positions and then the other hours with thinner white pinstripe. Finally, fit your AA battery.



As the hubcap has a hole for the valve to protrude through, I used this as the 12 o'clock position and used it to hang the clock up by.

The shaft of the Sangtai 5168S clock mechanism is 12 mm long; sourcing a mechanism with a slightly longer spindle may negate having to flatten the peak of the hubcap in to get the clock spindle through. Additionally, finding a round clock mechanism that sits more comfortably within the central recess on the reverse face of the hub cap may have the same effect.



As hubcaps are usually only found in sets of four why not team up with three friends from your local area centre?
Photos: Chris Clark