

When done, please return these instructions for the next person to use. Thank you.

Kit 58: ChiCon8, August 2022 V0.92

This *Blinkie* is made with a circuit board, four light emitting diodes (LEDs), a battery and battery holder, a switch, and a tie tack pin so you can wear it. You will make it yourself by soldering the parts onto the circuit board.

We hope you have fun building this blinkie, learning soldering or improving your soldering skills.

Start with a bag of these parts:

Finish with a Blinkie you can wear!



First, open up the kit and review the contents below, comparing to the parts picture above:

- A tie tack, separated into its **pin**, and **back** (or 'clasp')
- A power switch
- The ChiCon8 blinkie circuit board
- 4 Color Fading LEDs (laying on the circuit board)
- A CR2032 battery
- A CR2032 battery holder

Are you ready to start? Do you have all the parts? If not, give us a shout.

“How to solder” will be covered briefly in “Assembly”, but a detailed description may be found on the **last page** of these instructions.

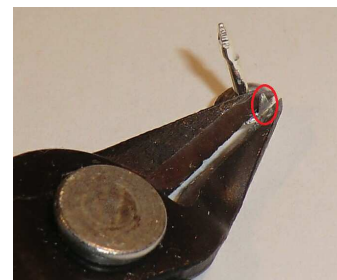
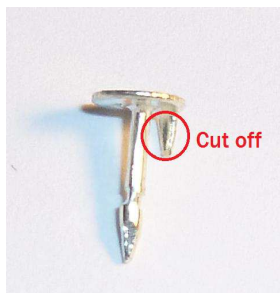
TERMS:

Solder	A metal alloy that melts easily, holds things together, and conducts electricity. You will have a “coil” of it on a sewing machine bobbin (spool)
Lead	Rhymes with “seed”. The wire that comes out of an LED that you solder to the circuit board
Pin	Like a lead, but on the battery holders, tie tack pin or switch
Pad	Small shiny areas on the circuit board, usually circles or squares, that you'll be connecting LEDs and other components leads or pins to by soldering.

Assembly

You're going to solder the tie tack pin, then the switch, then the battery holder, and finally the LEDs.

1. **Separate the pin from the clasp** of the **tie tack** (pin and clasp). The pin has a small secondary post we need to remove before soldering.



2. **Use the cutters to remove the smaller post next to the big pin.** Catch it so it doesn't fly off! If there is a little stub left you can flatten it against the round head of the pin with your pliers.

3. Inserting the tie tack pin:

- **Insert a pin from the front** into the large hole shown in the left picture.
- Hold the pin, and flip the board over for soldering. **If you are on a plastic table, put it on cardboard or the business card to protect the table from the soldering heat.**



Insert the pin through the **Front**



Flip to the **Back** to solder the pin

Follow the next 4.1) through 4.4) steps for all soldering.

4. Solder the pin. **Use these 4 soldering steps:**

- 1) **Heat pin and pad:** the soldering iron tip must touch **both** for the solder to connect them.
- 2) **Add solder into connection** – about 1/8". Slide it along the board to be on the pad.
- 3) Remove solder, but **keep heating the pin and pad to flow the solder around them.**
- 4) **Remove iron and wait for the solder to cool** and harden so the entire round pad is covered by solder, going up on the pin just a little.



1.



2.



3.

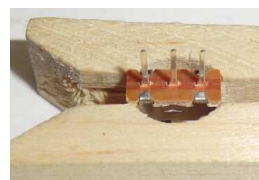


4.

5. **Put the clasp on the pin so you don't lose it.**

6. **Installing the switch** to prepare for soldering

- 1) If you have a clothespin, insert the switch with the pins sticking up, as shown:
- 2) Flip the board to the back side, and **insert the switch pins into the 3 holes inside the rectangular outline.**



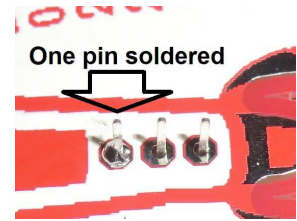
- 3) **Hold the pins** and flip to the front side, and make sure the pins stand up from the board



- 4) Place the tie tack on the back on a battery to level it.



- 5) Solder **ONE PIN**, then take it out of the clothespin and make sure the switch is straight. Re-melt solder and adjust it, if not.
- 6) Then **solder the other two pins**.



7. On the back side, **insert the battery holder** over the printed outline.
 - The square extension (left side in this picture) lines up with the outline square extension (labeled “+”) as shown.
 - It should just drop in – do not push – you might push the pins back out of the battery holder. As you can see this battery holder had a bent pin that had to be straightened first.



8. **Flip the board over** so it rests on the battery holder.
 - **Solder both pins** – picture shows them before soldering
 - If the battery holder isn't flat against the board, melt the solder on one end and push it flat, then repeat for the other end.



9. Install the battery:
 - Hold the battery with the “+” sign facing up.
 - Angle it into the battery holder against the metal tab, and then squeeze down hard, so it snaps in place.
 - **Turn the power switch on.** (“Up”, if not marked)
 - In the next few steps, **the LEDs will be tested before soldering**



10. Installing and testing the LEDs:

Orientation is important when inserting LEDs:

- The **long lead** of each LED goes into the hole with the **round pad**, and the **short lead** in the **square pad** hole.
- The LED should light up as you wiggle the leads. If not it may be inserted the wrong way. If it doesn't light even when wiggled, flip the switch, and check that the battery pins and switch are well soldered.
- With the LED flat against the board, spread the leads on the other side into a SLIGHT “V” as shown, bottom right:



TEST THE LEDS!!!

11. **Repeat the above LED steps:** insert, test, and “V”, for the next three LEDs.
12. **Turn OFF the switch.** IF the LEDs continue to blink, is there solder between two pins? Otherwise have a Blinkie Tech help you with the switch
– or – if there are no blinkie techs, check the solution under “Troubleshooting” on page 4.
13. **Solder the LED leads** making sure each LED is flat against the front of the blinkie.
 - Solder **one** lead, then if the LED isn't flat, re-melt the solder as you hold the LED flat against the circuit board, then solder the LED's second lead.
14. Trim the excess leads with the cutters.
Hold your finger over the ends of each lead to keep it from flying off when cut.
15. You may also want to **trim the pins on the power switch and battery holder**, because they're sharp. Again, **catch the pieces that might fly off.**



That's it – you should have a working blinkie now!

Troubleshooting

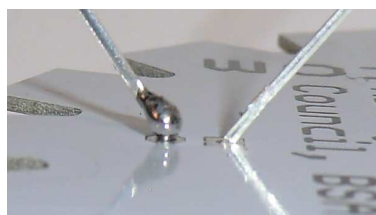
If the switch doesn't turn off, this is usually NOT your fault.

- If the switch is too tight against the board, the little metal tabs that hold the top of the switch on can make a connection, so “off” doesn't work.
 - The solution is to move the switch a tiny bit off the board.
 - Put your thumbnail under the switch, on the end next to the battery holder.
 - Pull a bit away from the board with your thumbnail, then re-melt the top pin on the front so the switch can pull away from the board on the bottom.
 - The blinkie should then turn off. If not, repeat with the middle, then again top, pin.
- If the switch still doesn't turn off, it is either a defective switch, or, you have used too much solder and some flowed under the pins or between the pins, and is shorting the board.
 - Ask a blinkie tech to use the solder sucker to remove, test and reinstall or replace the switch.

If the LEDs don't flash, then you'll need to do a little troubleshooting to finish your project. The following steps should isolate most problems. Be sure the power is off to save the battery.

If you've made a solder **bridge** (meaning the leads of an LED or switch pins are soldered together), it is easy to fix. You can often just re-melt the solder and pull the tip of the soldering iron through the bridge, breaking it, then shake any captured solder off the iron. Or, reheat all the solder and tap to the board on edge to shake off the excess while it is still melted. Ask a tech if you need help.

- **A common soldering problem** is to have solder on the pin or lead but NOT connecting it to the pad. Notice the pad **UNDER** the solder in the picture:
- Re-heat the connection, being sure to press **DOWN** on the pad with the soldering iron tip and wait for the



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solder to “puddle” around the pad and pin.

- Recheck your solder connections. 80% of all problems are traced to this. Cold solder connections (dull, not shiny) and broken connections will cause erratic performance or failure. Reheat any questionable solder connections until they flow and look shiny and secure.
- Check for bits of solder, lead ends, or other foreign matter which may be lodged in the wiring.
- LEDs reversed. You will need to remove the LED by having a tech desolder it, and then insert it the correct way and solder it. Trying to remove it yourself can BREAK the circuit board.
- The battery is incorrectly inserted. The “+” side of the battery should always be inserted facing up.
- The battery holder is inserted backwards – and if you tested the LEDs and they worked, so are they. This actually “works”, and is usually left alone.
- A bad part: it does happen. In thousands of boards assembled, we’ve seen two or three parts fail. If bought online, send us email, and we will send a replacement part.
- A part got lost/melted/damaged/destroyed while building the kit. It happens – you’re not the first (or second, or fiftieth). If you are doing this at an event, just let a tech know. Otherwise, send us email, and we’ll see what we can do. We have no problem selling just the parts you need to get it working.

Caring for and using your blinkie

Once built, the use of this blinkie is fairly straightforward. Don’t get it wet. Don’t stick it in a pocket with a bunch of coins or metal where it might short out. Don’t set it on a metal table top or in a metal dish, etc. To prevent it shorting out, you may want to keep it in the bag it came in.

Soldering Hints

Soldering is not like gluing: Both the “pad” (shiny circle or square on the circuit board) and the component (lead coming up through the hole) must be hot enough so the solder flows around them, making an electrical connection.

For the purposes of learning how to solder, you do not need to be perfect. With a little bit of practice, your soldering skills will rapidly improve. The goal is to have fun while learning, and your skill will develop as you have fun. Happy soldering!

Here’s how to make a good solder connection:

- Prepare the connection. Bend the component lead slightly after it passes through the printed circuit board (this helps hold it in place while soldering). Ex: Bend LED leads into a “V”.
- Prepare the soldering iron. The soldering iron should be up to temperature. Clean the tip by plunging it into the stainless steel wool in the jar. Melt a little solder (a 2mm length) onto the tip so it’s shiny. This is called “tinning”. The solder coating helps conduct heat from the tip to the connection. If the iron doesn’t get shiny, contact a Tech who has special tip cleaner.
- Place the tip in contact with the component lead AND the printed circuit board pad.
- Place the solder against the connection directly opposite the tip. It should melt within 2 seconds, and flow around the connection. If it takes longer than that, you’re not getting enough heat into the connection. Use only a TINY bit of solder.
- Pull back the solder, but keep the soldering iron in place until the solder flows freely and completely covers the connection. If the heat is removed too soon, the solder will tend to “ball up” and not stick well to the conductors. The solder connection should look “wetted”, with concave shapes.

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- Let the connection cool without movement at room temperature. This usually takes only a few seconds.
- If a connection is moved before it cools, it will take on a dull look that is characteristic of a cold solder connection. A cold solder connection is fragile and conducts poorly – reheat the connection until the solder flows freely, and hold it still until it cools.
- Keep the tip of the soldering iron clean. Jab it into the steel wool tip cleaner jar several times until it is shiny.

Directions by Ward Christensen, WardC@2dkits.com. Feedback welcome!