

Barrie Richardson Watch

Photos and Text by Dick Biow

RICHARDSON WATCHES

Barrie Richardson's outstanding book, "Theater of the Mind," (Hermetic Press Inc., Seattle) presents his magical watch modification ("What Time is It?" pp. 280–281), following this with three exciting routines. Essentially, Barrie's modification consists of switching hour and minute hands so that, with the stem extended, the watch can be rapidly and invisibly set to any desired hour. For costlier watch models, new "custom" hands can be ordered and set in place by a watchmaker, and this is certainly the most elegant way to go: for a pro especially, putting his best watch forward for public scrutiny can be as effective as putting his best foot forward.

This, then, is an alternative method for conversion that accomplishes the same mechanical result (and uses the same moves) for about one fifth the cost of taking the high road. The only difference is that you start with a cheap watch and end with a cheap watch (but some of the cheaper watches are deceptively nice looking — at least until the plating wears off).

Method: Instead of ordering new, custom-size-selected hands (which are not available for cheapies), one cuts back a minute hand to be shorter than the original hour hand. That's it! The result is that the hands have "switched personalities" and you are ready to do Barrie's routines.



In the photo are converted Sharp watches from Walmart, with original minute hands trimmed back as described above. Unfortunately, these models have been long discontinued, and you'll have to select equivalents from newer (and frequently changing) models.

Suggestion: print out this picture and take it along to one of the larger watch counters for comparison. **Most** important: select a model whose original **hour** hand is long enough to let us accomplish what we have accomplished in the photo: making a Richardson conversion without both hands ending up looking suspiciously short.

The victim for surgery needn't be a Sharp, and indeed it needn't be a super cheapie — pick a watch you'd like to wear every day. (Switching back the hands mentally is a trick you'll soon pick up, and you'll use the converted watch as regularly for telling time as Barrie does his.)

Then have a watchmaker or jeweler (not a mere battery changer) trim back the minute hand as shown.

Fini! The rest is the pleasure of executing some truly fresh and novel routines.

Thanks, Barrie, for the entire concept!