

Electronic Tool Tip #20 – DIP IC Pin Straightener

Whenever the electronics technician – or hobbyist – has the need to insert a dual inline package (DIP) integrated circuit (IC) into a printed circuit board (PCB) or into a DIP socket, there is a concurrent need to ensure that the IC pins are all straight and aligned in a pair of clean and straight rows. Ordinarily, new IC's will have the two rows of pins splayed apart, with the rows at some angle to each other instead of being clearly and cleanly parallel. Also, during handling and/or shipping, some of the pins may have become bent out of line with the others. While it is possible to straighten and align the pins by pressing the IC against the tabletop, it is not always so easy to get the rows properly parallel and spaced to fit the PCB or DIP socket holes. Fortunately, a very inexpensive tool is available to make this task a simple one.



Figure 1 - IC pin straightener

The tool to which I am referring is the DIP IC Pin Straightener from Jameco Electronics. This tool is a member of the Jameco BenchPro product line. It is incredibly simple, but it is meant to work for both the 0.300" pin row pitch and the 0.600" pin row pitch IC's.

The tool consists of three molded plastic pieces that are assembled with pins at each end and with springs on those pins between each of the plastic bodies. The width of the center section is 0.300" on top of the tool, and is 0.600" on the bottom of the tool. The user simply drops the IC into the tool on the proper side, based on the pin row pitch, and then squeezes the three sections together against the spring pressure, which causes the pins to become aligned and the rows to become squared to each other.

This tool is quite compact, measuring a mere 3.2" long by 1.4" wide, and is about 0.450" thick. It is nothing short of ingenious in its design and simplicity, but most importantly, it works! It is a time saver as well as being a part saver, as it prevents the accidental over-bending of the pins that will sometimes happen when pressing the pin rows against the work surface to straighten them. It will handle IC's with up to 42 pins.

As already indicated, this item is available online from Jameco Electronics (www.jameco.com) for a standard price of \$8.95 (USD) plus tax and shipping. However, the buyer should be aware that Jameco has a \$20 (USD) minimum purchase threshold, below which there is a surcharge on small orders.

If you do not happen to need anything else from Jameco at the time when you want to order this tool, it is good to know that the tool is also available online from Amazon, at a price of \$9.36 (USD) plus shipping if you are not an Amazon Prime member. Of course, the government has to get its share, so tax will also be applied. Point your browser to <https://www.amazon.com/Jameco-BenchPro-Straightener-0-300-0-600/dp/B0CQMRLKR7> if you want to investigate this item there for yourself.