

S C A R L E T & G O L D

calligraphy FAQ + tips for lefties

FAQ

Q: Straight pen holder vs. Oblique pen holder. What is the difference?

A: There really is no right or wrong. A lot of calligraphy supplies become personal preference. Straight pen holders have been deemed left-handed holders and oblique for right handers. BUT I (a lefty) was trained on an oblique and have had right handers tell me they prefer the straight pen. Personally, I prefer the straight holder; it allows a relaxed, natural hold similar to a normal pen or pencil and allows you to have more control and ease in creating modern calligraphy. Because of its construction, the oblique holder can be helpful for very traditional copperplate calligraphy written at a strong angle

Q: Are there certain nibs/supplies for left handers?

A: Not necessarily. There are certain broad tip nibs specifically for left handers, but pointed nibs can be used by everyone. As stated above, it's been said the straight pen is best for lefties, but I really believe it comes down to personal preference and what is comfortable for you. I encourage you to try different nibs, pens, supplies and angles for what works best for you.

Q: Why won't my ink flow out of my nib?

A: Make sure you are dipping a clean, dry nib well into the ink so your vent hole fills with ink. Try warming up your nib by marking on scratch paper a few times to try and get the ink flowing. If you still feel that your ink is building up and not flowing well, you can add just a few tiny droplets of water and mix well.

Q: How often should I dip my pen in ink? It seems my ink is running out very quickly.

A: You should be able to write almost a whole word before refilling; make sure you aren't writing too fast and your pressure isn't too hard. If you are getting big blobs of ink on your paper, ease up on your pressure.

Q: How should I clean my supplies?

A: I am a firm believer in Windex and Clorox wipes! Be careful with water; it can dilute your ink and cause bleeding and splits. Always clean your nib completely when you are finished practicing. Close your ink lid completely and do not store your ink in extreme temperatures. *i.e. hot summer car

TIPS FOR LEFTIES



Many left-handers think they may be at a disadvantage when it comes to calligraphy, but that is definitely not the case! You will hold your pen the same way right-handed people would, just like a regular pen or pencil. Hold your pen about half an inch away from the base.

If you are using an oblique pen, the elbow or part that sticks out and holds your nib, should face outward or to the left of your hand. Personally, I find more success as a left-handed calligrapher using the straight pen, but that is just my preference!

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If you are an under writer, meaning your hand writes from below the line you are working on, try slanting your paper clockwise 20 degrees or so to get a comfortable angle for your hand.

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If you are an over writer (also known as the “hook” writing style), meaning that your hand is turned so you’re writing above the line you are working on, slant your paper almost 90 degrees clockwise so you are writing downward.

TIPS & TRICKS

As you dip the ink and nib, lightly brush it on the edge of your ink well to rid excess ink. I also like to make a few marks on a scratch piece of paper to get your ink and nib warmed up. Hold your pen about a half inch from the nib's end.

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Think of calligraphy as more like painting than writing; you don't have to grip the holder as hard as you think you do! Your fingers should not be completely curled around the pen; keep them relaxed and your ink should flow easily from your nib.

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Hold your pen at about a 45 degree angle from the paper - A good trick is to hold your pen, nib on the paper, straight up at a 90 degree angle from the paper. Without picking up the nib, bring your hand down so your palm and pinky touch the paper.

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If your nib is snagging on the paper, try to ease up on your pressure. If you find that it is still catching the paper and your nib has been cleaned, it may be time to retire your nib. Hold it up to the light; if the tines are bent or separating just a little, it's time to retire your nib.

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