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## Palm Radio Mini-Paddle

Most modern HF transceivers include CW keyers. All you have to do is plug in a set of paddles and off you go. Thanks to the inventiveness of hams, you have a horde of paddles to choose from. Choices range from gorgeously machined desktop creations to miniscule miniature keys. Since I often like to operate while traveling, I was in the market for a compact set of paddles that could withstand the rigors of suitcases and coat pockets. As I browsed the marketplace, I chanced upon a particularly interesting design: the Palm Radio Mini-Paddle.



### What Makes the Mini-Paddle Different

The Palm Radio Company is actually based in Germany. Their Mini-Paddle is a mere 1 × 1 × 3 inches. You can drop it into your pocket and hardly know it is there.

If its small size were its only attribute, there would be little to distinguish the Mini-Paddle at first glance. But what makes the Mini-Paddle different is that the paddles can be quickly retracted and protected within their aluminum enclosure. You simply push gently on the paddles. Within seconds they disappear into the case for safekeeping. When you're ready to operate, press the paddle assembly from the other end to expose the paddles once more.

### Out of the Case and On the Air

The Mini-Paddle includes rubberized feet to help hold it steady on most surfaces, but the package also includes a detachable base. For an additional \$5.50, you can purchase a set of magnets that will secure the base to any metal surface. I purchased the magnets so that I could easily attach the Mini-Paddle to my Yaesu FT-817 transceiver (see Figure 1).

The Mini-Paddle comes with a 3 foot cable that offers a header style connector at one end (to attach to the key) and a 1/8-inch three conductor plug at the opposite end for your transceiver. The cable easily detaches from the key should you need to remove it. All components arrive in a hinged, transparent travel case.

The key offers three adjustment screws for spring tension, contact spacing and paddle stops. The instructions clearly show you how to make the adjustments, but I found the default settings to be completely comfortable. There was little, if any, "play" in the paddles; they felt quite firm between my thumb and index fingers.

My first test occurred at my home station with my Kenwood TS-2000 transceiver. I rested my left hand on the case to keep it from moving and started sending long



The Mini-Paddle with the paddles retracted.

strings of text with my transceiver's keyer in "practice" mode. I always expect to fumble a bit when using an unfamiliar key, but the smooth response of the Mini-Paddle surprised me. It felt as though I was working a much larger key. Within minutes I was confident enough to take the Mini-Paddle on the air.

Going portable with the Mini-Paddle was a pleasure. When the magnets came into contact with my FT-817 case, they grabbed and held fast.

### Quality Construction

A great deal of thought went into the design of the Palm Radio Mini-Paddle, and it shows.

Even though I still haven't bothered to make adjustments, I did take a peek inside the case. The mechanics of the Mini-Paddle are meticulous, right down to the gold-plated contacts. With reasonable care these paddles should last a lifetime.

*Manufacturer: Palm Radio, [www.palm-radio.de](http://www.palm-radio.de). Sold in the United States by Milestone Technologies, 10691 East Bethany Dr, Suite 800, Aurora, CO 80014; tel 800-238-8205; [www.mtechnologies.com](http://www.mtechnologies.com). \$104.95.*



Figure 1 — The Mini-Paddle magnetically attached to my FT-817 transceiver.