

Electronic Tool Tip #13 – Ribbon Wire Stripper

When you work with electronics long enough, you will eventually get to the point where you find that you need to strip ribbon wire. Ribbon wire is best described as a multi-conductor cable in which the individual wires that comprise the cable are arranged in a parallel form. Such an arrangement makes for difficult stripping of the individual wires without separating them. Bring in the Dowell Ribbon Cable Stripper.

This tool provides the ability to simultaneously strip all of the conductors in a ribbon cable up to 1/2" in width. By making multiple "bites" on width of the cable, wider cables can also be stripped. To put things into proper perspective, an eight-wire 28AWG ribbon cable will be 10mm wide, or about 0.39" wide, and will therefore be strippable in a single motion using this tool.

The stripper is designed for wire from 24AWG through 14AWG, and can make strip lengths of anywhere from 1/4" to 3/4" in length. The strip length is adjustable by way of a sliding stop against which the end of the wire is placed prior to stripping. There is also an adjustment for the diameter of the wire to be stripped. Turning the knurled knob at the back of the tool head adjusts the wire diameter setting. Rotating this knob clockwise provides for stripping smaller-diameter wire, while turning it counter-clockwise sets the tool for larger-diameter wire.

This tool is also perfectly suited for making directly-repeatable strips to individual wires as well. For example, when preparing one of the kits that I sell, I need to strip a total of twenty-four wires. At one end, all of the wires get stripped to a length of 5/16". At the opposite end, 18 of the wires get stripped to that same length, while the remaining six wires must be stripped to a length of 3/4". This repeatability is quite easy using this tool. I set it once for the 5/16" distance and strip everything that goes to that length, and then I reset the tool for 3/4" and strip the rest of the wire ends. When seeking a professional appearance and feel to my kits, this degree of uniformity is exactly what I need, and this tool makes it easy to accomplish.

I frequently use this stripper for preparing twin-lead or zip-wire for termination or soldering. It works perfectly on the two-conductor flat cables, as would be expected. While the documentation says that the tool tops out at 14AWG wire, I have successfully used it on 12AWG silicone-jacketed zip-wire.

This stripper is available online from Amazon, at a price of \$7.99 (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/DOWELL-Stripping-Electrical-Automotive-HY040701N/dp/B09N17V87V> if you want to investigate this item for yourself.

