

How to Install a Countdown Timer Light Switch

Written Instructions

By See Jane Drill, Copyright 2014

Time needed to complete project: 1 hour

Materials Cost: Cost of the countdown timer light switch runs from \$20 to \$40

Electrical Safety Precautions

The power of electricity should be respected. Electricians take basic safety precautions when working with electricity, and so should every do-it-yourselfer, to keep yourself and your family safe.

Before proceeding with the job, read and observe the following safety guidelines.

- **Always shut off the power to the circuit on which you will be working.** If you are unsure, shut off the power at the main breaker.
- Post a warning sign on the breaker box to let others in the house know that you are working on the electricity, and to not touch the box. Lock the box if possible. Make sure that children and pets are not present in the working area.
- Test all the wires in the open box to be sure they are dead, not just the ones you will be working on. Never assume that a box contains just one circuit. The best way to check this is with a voltage tester.
- Even after turning off the power, work as if the wires are live. Work in a methodical manner and double check the security of all connections before restoring the power.
- Wear protective shoes and clothing. Always wear rubber-soled shoes. Never work with wet feet or while standing on a wet surface. Avoid jewelry, a watch, or clothing items that might get snagged while you are working.
- Don't touch any metal while working. Make sure you grab tools by the handle (rubber-gripped tools are best). If you need to use a ladder, use a fiberglass or wooden one, NOT aluminum.
- **Special Note:** It is dangerous and is against code to connect copper to aluminum wire.

Tools and Materials Needed

Materials

- Countdown Timer Light Switch

Tools

- Voltage Indicator
- Needle Nose Pliers
- Wire Strippers
- Screwdriver (Phillips & flat head)
- Electrical tape
- Wire nuts

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Review and follow the safety procedures outlined above.
2. Remove the face plate of the switch.
3. Using your voltage indicator, check to ensure that there is no power inside the box.
4. Remove the two screws that are holding the light switch to the box, and carefully pull the light switch from the box (it will still be attached.)
5. Cut the wires to remove the switch from the box, ensuring that you leave enough wire inside the box to attach the new switch.
6. Strip the wires in the box with your wire strippers.
7. Remove the sheathing from the wires on the new switch.
8. Using your wire nuts, attach each new wire to the corresponding existing wire in the box.
9. Wrap the wire nut and the wire with electrical tape to ensure that your connection is secure. Repeat the process with the other connection(s)
10. Carefully place your wires back in the box.
11. Secure your new switch with the screws provided.
12. Attach the new plate. This process may vary, depending upon the type of switch that you have. In the See Jane Drill video, we are using a dial-type timer switch. With this type of switch, you will hold the plate up to the wall, and attach it with a filler plate nut. You will then put a cap on, which allows you to turn the timer.

13. Turn the power back on at the breaker panel.
14. Test your new light switch.

And that's it...You did it!

Note: It is the intention of See Jane Drill to educate and empower people to perform their own home repairs. However, if, after viewing the video and reading the safety precautions and instructions, you still feel uncomfortable with performing an electrical job, you may want to call an electrician. Safety is the number one priority.

Due to differing conditions, tools, and individual skills, See Jane Drill assumes no responsibility for any mistakes, damages, injuries suffered, or losses incurred as a result of following the information published on our website and in the videos and written instructions published through our website. Before beginning any project, review the instructions carefully, and if you still have any doubts or questions about how to complete the project, consult with local experts or authorities. Also, because codes and regulations vary greatly by location, you should check to ensure that your project complies with all applicable local codes and regulations. Always read and follow all the safety precautions provided by any tool or equipment manufacturer, and follow all accepted safety procedures.

See Jane Drill is dedicated to providing accurate and helpful do-it-yourself information. We welcome your questions, input and feedback about the information provided on this website.