

Comment on “A Better Magnetic Stir Bar Retriever”

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ABSTRACT: This letter to the editor comments on the communication, “A Better Magnetic Stir Bar Retriever”.

KEYWORDS: General Public, Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary, Hands-On Learning/Manipulatives, Laboratory Equipment/Apparatus

I was intrigued by the report by Dr. Peter Marrs in a recent issue of this *Journal*.¹ His communication described the economical construction of a magnetic stir bar retriever using a pine drawer knob hollowed out on the underside to hold a circular rare-earth magnet. For a number of years in my lab, we have been employing neodymium magnets recovered from failed computer hard drives as stir bar retrievers (Figure 1). The use of recycled computer parts has been described previously in this *Journal* for the fabrication of a magnetic stirrer/hot plate.² The hard drive magnet can be used in exactly the same manner as described by Marrs, and is easily removed from a failed hard drive using a “star” (Torx) screw driver (available at most hardware stores). The advantages of using magnets from failed hard drives are that they do not necessarily require the addition of a handle, they are impervious to organic solvents (unlike a painted handle), they are easily cleaned, and they can be conveniently stored on the inside or outside of a metal fumehood. So, the next time a computer is about to be discarded, it might be worthwhile to rescue the hard drive and the magnetic stir bar retriever inside.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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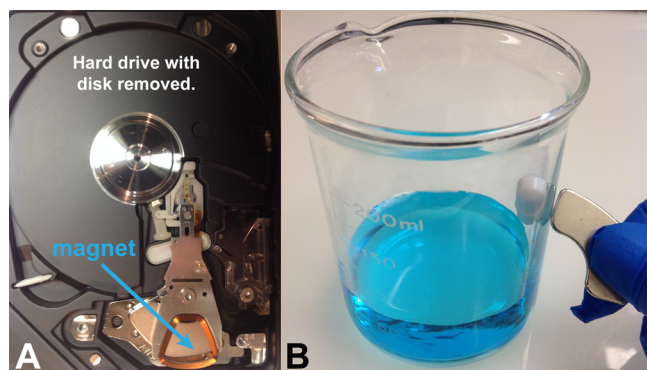


Figure 1. (A) Failed computer hard drive with the disk removed showing the location of the magnet. Note that the curved magnet is often glued to the metal plate behind it, usually requiring that it be pried away from the metal plate. (B) Hard drive magnet used to support a magnetic stir bar on the side of a beaker.