

Installing the Track Odometer

By Del Tapparo

The G-Scale Graphics Track Odometer is a tool for answering the question of "How many feet of track do you have?" This is done by counting wheel revolutions using wheel mounted magnets and a reed switch. So, the installation is primarily the mounting of the magnets and reed switch on your rolling stock.

Mount the 1/8" diameter neodymium magnets to the inside of a wheel, but towards the axel to avoid hitting the guard rails in your turnouts. 1 to 4 magnets, equally spaced around the wheel can be use. Technically, more magnets increase the precision over short distances (less than 10 feet). But since we are measuring long distances, any number of magnets will be fine.

The reed switch needs to be as close to the magnets as possible. Side to side play in the axel may move the magnets too far away from the reed switch in turns, so washers are added as spacers to each end of the axel to reduce the play.

Connect a 9V battery and the reed switch wires. Power on/off can be done using the jumper on the board, or by connecting an external power switch. In this case, the car already had a switch mounted, so I used it. You are now ready to calibrate the Track Odometer for your installation. Place your Track Odometer car on the track along side a 10' tape measure. Press and hold the white button until the calibration screen appears. Move the car exactly 10 feet, stop, and press the button to save the calibration. This only needs to be done once.

From now on, to start a measurement session, just press the button to reset the counter, and start pulling the car down the desired track. The current distance will be displayed in feet.

