

A New Look?

It's a Cinch

PRODUCT DEVELOPER OVERCOMES MYRIAD OBSTACLES AFTER INVENTING WIDGET FOR RE-STYLING WOMEN'S TOPS **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**

LESLEY MILLER of Noblesville, Indiana, is an inventor and product developer who has, according to her website, “a God-given desire to create, and the unstoppable curiosity of a 7-year-old who just can’t resist taking things apart.”

Here’s her story about the creation of a widget that helps fashionably re-style a shirt or blouse.

Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): What is the backstory for your invention?

Lesley Miller (LM): I licensed my first product before the days of Google and have since discovered that once a specific problem plants itself in your brain, it’s hard to shake. One of these frustrations came from all of the shirts in my closet that just didn’t fit well; and, after a spirited cleaning, I had a full bag to donate.

The very next day, I happened to catch a TV segment where a gentleman demonstrated a tucking method he claimed would make you look more fit and trim. Since it sounded easier than sit-ups, I gave it a try. To my surprise, it actually worked.

The shirt looked more flattering, but the technique was tedious and required adjusting throughout the day. I accepted the challenge and set out to create an easy-to-use, versatile device to help women enhance the look and fit of their basic, boxy and baggy tops. After numerous iterations, fine-tuning and testing, the pieces came together, and I was thrilled to introduce TwirlyT.

EGT: Why is TwirlyT unique? Have there been any knockoffs?

LM: There are several clothing cinching devices available. However, most are limited to one style and function, are difficult to use, expensive, or

add bulk inside of your clothing right where most of us don’t need it.

TwirlyT can be utilized in several innovative ways, is easy to use and produces a flattering fit at a budget-friendly price.

Last year, TwirlyT was honored to be selected for a special launch on The Grommet in celebration of International Women’s Day, where it earned “Product of the Week.” The surge in sales caught the attention of overseas sellers, who unfortunately hijacked my Amazon listing.

At the time, my trademark was still pending, and despite my management team filing over 30 unauthorized seller cases, they were not able to resolve the issue. I had to sabotage my own listing to protect my brand’s reputation.

There was, however, a silver lining. I decided to pivot from 3D printing to investing in professional injection molding tooling. The result is a significantly improved version of TwirlyT—now proudly bearing my registered trademark—and I couldn’t be happier with how it turned out.

EGT: What is the TwirlyT made of?

LM: I initially produced inventory on my 3D printers but have upgraded to a molded part made from high-quality, textured silicone that is flexible but strong and features a grippy surface—which helps keep your flattering look in place throughout the day.

EGT: How is the product used?

LM: TwirlyT is used to enhance the look and fit of knit tops, T-shirts and scarves. It allows women to create a tailored fit by adjusting the amount of fabric pulled through the opening. Instructions and a QR code allow “Twirlers” to select from several styling options.

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With so many people “gifting” TwirlyT to bridesmaids, teachers and friends, we gave the packaging a fun, spiffy, gift-ready makeover.

EGT: How are you selling TwirlyT (your website, Amazon, retail)?

LM: Amazon, The Grommet, and my website, with plans to expand my reach in retail shortly.

EGT: Where are you manufacturing? Have you had any issues?

LM: TwirlyT is made in the USA by Solid Designs in Holland, Michigan.

Look for an experienced manufacturer who can offer you wisdom and guidance. I have found that there are benefits to staying local, such as decreased shipping costs and a more hands-on partnership.

As with all vendors, have a “Plan B.” Be a good customer: Give generous lead times, be specific and clear about your expectations, and pay your bill early.

EGT: Tell us about the grant you received from *Clean Living* magazine.

LM: *Clean Living* allowed me to display TwirlyT during their Oscars event in Bel Air, California, alongside an inspiring lineup of fellow women founders.

The event was held March 1-2, 2025, at a beautiful hilltop mansion. I met many amazing,

brilliant founders who I now cherish as friends—truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience!

There’s always something that adds a bit of spice to the story: I spent weeks preparing just the right clothing, shoes, jewelry, nails, etc. The evening before the event, I found a local optometrist’s office to have the nosepiece on my glasses replaced. They were kind enough to make the repair free of charge.

After putting my glasses back on, the technician noticed they sat a bit crooked and offered to straighten them. I will never forget the look on her face when she snapped the earpiece completely off the frame. She was able to find a mismatched one that she “Frankensteined” back on. I had to attend, wearing my sassy new clothes and jacked-up glasses!

EGT: What is your patent status? Any advice for inventors considering filing a patent application?

LM: My patent for TwirlyT is pending. I anticipate it will be granted within the next couple months.

I recommend learning how to write a provisional patent application. You will discover new things about your invention and be able to assist your attorney with filing a more comprehensive document.

Unlike most clothing clinching devices, TwirlyT is not limited to one style and function; is not difficult to use; is not expensive; and does not add bulk inside clothing.

EGT: What has been your biggest obstacle in product development?

LM: Honestly, I've been my own biggest obstacle. I have a strong tendency to want control over every detail, which can slow things down and lead to a burnout.

While I've gained valuable experience with licensing and direct distribution through other inventions, marketing and product promotion are areas where I've had the steepest learning curve. Letting go, asking for help and trusting others with the parts I don't know, as well, have been both challenging and incredibly rewarding.

EGT: Will you be adding to your product line?

LM: Like most inventors, I have several other projects in different product categories and development stages. This is the part I love.

EGT: Any further guidance for novice inventors?

LM: Get a 3D printer and learn simple CAD. It will save you time and money developing

prototypes. I have had ideas that I can hold in my hand within a couple of hours.

When it finally comes together, resist the temptation to keep messing with it!

Join a group like the United Inventors Association or Women Inventors Club. They are free to join and truly there to help.

Instead of asking people you know what they think of your invention, ask them what they would change.

Growth happens when you listen to the things you don't want to hear.

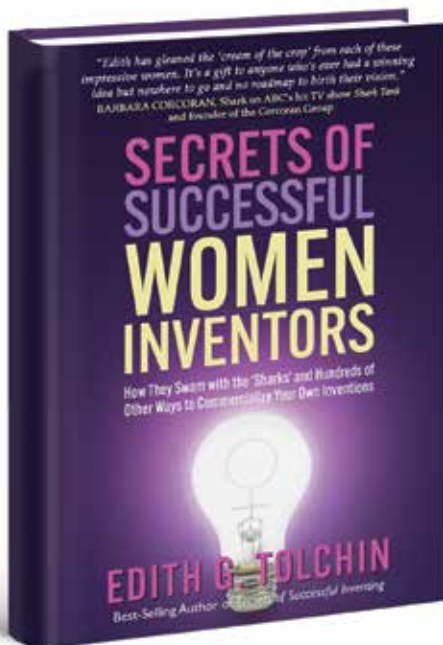
Inventing is like a rollercoaster. Some days I am barely tall enough to ride. 🎢

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Edith G. Tolchin has written for *Inventors Digest* since 2000 (edietolchin.com/portfolio). She is the author of several books, including "Secrets of Successful Women Inventors" (<https://a.co/d/fAGivZJ>) and "Secrets of Successful Inventing" (<https://a.co/d/8dafJd6>).



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Edith G. Tolchin
(photo by Amy Goldstein Photography)

Edith G. Tolchin knows inventors!

Edie has interviewed over 100 inventors for her longtime column in *Inventors Digest* (www.edietolchin.com/portfolio). She has held a prestigious U.S. customs broker license since 2002. She has written five books, including the best-selling *Secrets of Successful Inventing* (2015), and *Fanny on Fire*, a recent finalist in the Foreword Reviews INDIE Book Awards.

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