Foto Timer 2.4 Mini-Manual

What does Foto Timer do?

Foto Timer beeps in regular intervals. It can also drive any electric or electronic device through a switch box.

Personally, I use it when I am in the mountains photographing stars. I have it beep every 30 seconds. That way I know when to open and close the shutter of my camera.

Other people use it during development. It can switch your enlarger on and off, beep to remind you when to flip over your Jobo or pass to the next step, and help you remembering notes about film, developer or whatever you want to note down.

Some people use it when they make tea or coffee, some to time a lecture. If you use it for something weird, please tell me! :-)

Where do I get the latest version?

The latest version of Foto Timer as well as older versions and the latest version of this manual can be found on the Foto Timer web page.
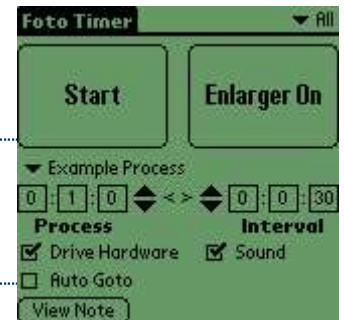
How do I use Foto Timer?

For a step-by-step example of how to use Foto Timer to develop b&w film, refer to Wei Chong's Example.

Here comes a small manual, form by form:

The Main Form

The Main Form contains controls and settings for the current process. More settings can be found on the Edit Process Form.

'Start' button
> Tapping the 'Start' button launches the current process. Foto Timer switches to the Counting Form and starts counting. It also turns on any hardware device if the '[x] Drive Hardware' checkbox is checked.

'Enlarger On' button
> If the '[x] Drive Hardware' checkbox is checked, and if your Palm OS device is equipped with a serial port, you can use Foto Timer to switch any hardware connected to it. Tapping the 'Enlarger On' button will turn on the device without starting the process. Foto Timer switches to the Enlarging Form and start displaying the elapsed time for your convenience. If the '[x] Stop is Everywhere' checkbox is checked, and if the current process has a note attached to it, Foto Timer will display that note in the bottom two thirds of the screen. If not, you will see an 'Enlarger Off' button.

'View Note' button
> If there is a note attached to the current process, you will see the 'View Note' button. Tapping the button will transfer you to the Edit Note Form, where you can edit the note and change its category.

'00' push buttons
> The six or eight push buttons can be used to set the total, interval, and pause times. They represent hours, minutes and seconds. Tapping on one of the push buttons activates it. You can change the value of the activated push button (and hence the time) by tapping and holding the adjacent repeating buttons.

'up' and 'down' repeating buttons
> The repeating buttons are used in conjunction with the six or eight push buttons to change the total, interval or pause time of the current process.

'<' and '>' buttons

The two buttons inbetween the times can be used to set one to the value of the other. Example: If the total time is 10s and the interval time is 20s, pressing '>' will set the interval time to 10s. **Note**: If both times are equal, the buttons will not be visible. If the total time is '0', only the '<' is visible since setting the interval time to 0 makes no sense.

'Process Selector' trigger

The trigger shows you the name of the currently selected process ("<New Process>" by default). Tapping it pops up the list of processes. Selecting "Edit Processes ..." at the bottom of the list transfers you to the Processes Form, where you can create new processes as well as edit and delete existing ones.

'Select Process' trigger

If the '[x] Auto Goto' checkbox is selected, you can choose a process using the 'Select Process' trigger.

'[x] Drive Hardware' checkbox

Check this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to control hardware connected to your Palm OS device. **Note**: the checkbox only appears if your Palm OS device has a serial port which is compatible with Foto Timer.

'[x] Sound' checkbox

Check this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to audibly signal the end of an interval or work as a metronome.

'[x] Auto Goto' checkbox

Check this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to start another process once the current one is terminated. **Note**: the checkbox only appears if the current process ends (i.e. the total time is not 0). Select the follow-up process from your list of processes using the 'Select Process' trigger.

'[x] Pause' checkbox

Check this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to pause before switching to the next process. **Note**: the checkbox only appears if the '[x] Auto Goto' checkbox is checked. Use the '00' push buttons and the 'up' and 'down' repeating buttons to set the length of the pause. **Note**: setting the pause time to 0 means that Foto Timer will wait until you tap the 'Next' button.

'Record / Add Note to Process' menu

Select this item to add a note and attach it to the current process. Foto Timer will switch to the Edit Note Form where you can write down your note. If the current process already has a note, you will be taken there.

'Record / Delete Note' menu

Select this item if you want to detach the note from the current process (i.e. delete it). If the process has no note, nothing happens.

'Record / Configure Sound' menu

Select this item if you want to configure the sounds for the current process. You will be taken to the Edit Process Sounds Form. **Note**: unchecking the '[x] Sound' checkbox turns off all the process sounds at once. It does not change the sound configuration, though.

'Options / Preferences' menu

Selecting this item takes you to the Preferences Form. Preferences affect all processes.

'Options / Audio Preferences' menu

Selecting this item takes you to the Audio Preferences Form. Sound preferences affect all processes.

'Options / About Foto Timer' menu

Select this item to see an information screen containing such things as the version number or my email address.

The Counting Form

The Counting Form displays the state of the currently active process. It also contains some controls.

'Stop' button

Tapping the 'Stop' button stops the current process. Foto Timer switches back to the Main Form. It also turns the hardware devices off if necessary.

'Pause' button

Tapping the 'Pause' button temporarily stops the current process. It also turns the hardware devices off if necessary.

'Continue' button

Tapping the 'Continue' button continues the current process. It also turns the hardware devices back on if necessary. **Note**: this button is not available when the process is counting.

'Next' button

Tapping the 'Next' button makes Foto Timer jump to the next process immediately. **Note**: this button is available only when Foto Timer is making a pause between two processes.

'Next Process' button

Tapping the 'Next Process' button will make Foto Timer jump to the next process immediately. **Note**: this button is available only when Foto Timer is paused and if the current process has at least one followup process.

Time display

The big display shows the elapsed or remaining time for the current interval. You can change the appearance by checking or unchecking '[x] Countdown' and '[x] Two Digit Times' in the Preferences Form.

'Time left' display

The small display on the left shows the time left until the end of the process. **Note**: it is visible only if the process actually comes to an end (i.e. the total time is not 0).

'Round' display

The small display on the right shows the number of rounds (intervals) counted so far and the total number of rounds. **Note**: the total number of rounds is visible only if the process actually comes to an end (i.e. the total time is not 0).

The Enlarging Form

The Enlarging Form shows you for how long your enlarger has been manually switched on. It can also show the processes' note.

'Enlarger Off' button

Tapping the 'Enlarger Off' button switches back to the Main Form. It also turns the hardware devices off. **Note**: this button is not visible when '[x] Stop is Everywhere' is checked on the Preferences Form. In this case, tapping anywhere outside the note will act like the 'Enlarger Off' button.

Time display

The display in the upper part of the form shows you the elapsed time since you switched on the enlarger.

Note display

The lower part of the screen contains the note for the current process, if there is any. You can edit the note while the enlarger is on. **Note**: the note is only available if '[x] Stop is Everywhere' is checked on the Preferences Form.

The Edit Note Form

The Edit Note Form displays a note and lets you edit it. You can also edit and view the note through the Memo Pad application.

Note text field

Edit the note as you do in Memo Pad. You can use Graffiti or the on-screen keyboard. You can copy and paste parts of or the whole message.
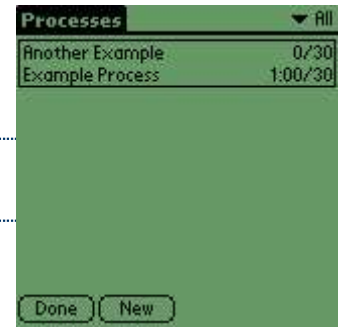
'Done' button

Tap the 'Done' button when you are finished viewing or editing the note. Foto Timer will go back to whichever form was active before you came here.

The Processes Form

The Processes Form lists all your processes. You can create new processes from here. You can also edit or delete processes.

'Done' button

Tapping the 'Done' button switches back to the Main Form.

'New' button

Tap the 'New' button if you want to create a new process. You will be taken to the Edit Process Form.

'Edit' button

Tapping the 'Edit' button takes you to the Edit Process Form, where you can edit the currently selected process. **Note**: the 'Edit' button is only available if a process is selected.

'Delete' button

Tapping the 'Delete' button deletes the current process. **Note**: the 'Delete' button is only available if a process is selected.

The Edit Process Form

The Edit Process Form offers a different way to change process data. Some of the settings can not be found on the Main Form, some are different.

'Category' trigger

You can assign the process to one out of 15 categories, just as with other Palm OS applications.

'Name' field

Use this field to give your process a name.

'Total' field

This field can be used to set the total running time of this process 'by hand'. Times can be specified in three formats: "hh:mm:ss", "mm:ss", or "ss".

'Interval' field

This field can be used to set the interval time of this process 'by hand'. Times can be specified in three formats: "hh:mm:ss", "mm:ss", or "ss".

'Sound' checkbox

Uncheck this if you do not want to hear the interval, prebeep, or metronome sounds.

'Configure Sound' button

Tapping here takes you to the Edit Process Sounds Form.

'Drive Hardware' checkbox

Check this if you want this process to drive your hardware.

'Auto Goto' checkbox

Check this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to start another process once the current one is terminated. **Note**: the checkbox only appears if the current process ends (i.e. the total time is not 0). Select the follow-up process from your list of processes using the 'Select Process' trigger.

'Select Process' trigger

Check this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to pause before switching to the next process. **Note**: the checkbox only appears if the '[x] Auto Goto' checkbox is checked. Use the '00' push buttons and the 'up' and 'down' repeating buttons to set the length of the pause. **Note**: setting the pause time to 0 means that Foto Timer will wait until you tap the 'Next' button.

'Pause Before' checkbox

Check this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to pause before switching to the next process. **Note**: the checkbox only appears if the '[x] Auto Goto' checkbox is checked. Use the 'Pause' field to set the length of the pause. **Note**: setting the pause time to 0 means that Foto Timer will wait until you tap the 'Next' button.

'Pause' field

This field can be used to set the pause time of this process 'by hand'. When the process finishes, it will wait this amount of time before starting the next process in the chain. Times can be specified in two formats: "mm:ss", or "ss". **Note**: the field only appears if the '[x] Auto Goto' checkbox is checked.

'Create Log Entries' checkbox

If this checkbox is enabled, the process will write a log entry upon start. **Note**: View log entries with the built-in 'Memo Pad' application.

'Create Note' button

Tap here to add a note and attach it to the current process. Foto Timer will switch to the Edit Note Form where you can write down your note.

'View Note' button

Tap here to view or edit the note for this process. Foto Timer will switch to the Edit Note Form where you can view and edit your note.

The Edit Process Sounds Form

The Edit Process Sounds Form is where you can switch sounds on and off.

'[x] Interval Sound' checkbox

If this checkbox is enabled, Foto Timer will issue a sound each time it has counted through an interval.

'[x] Prebeep Sound' checkbox

Enabling this checkbox means that Foto Timer will beep *before* the actual end of an interval. **Note**: you can configure the number of prebeeps in the Audio Preferences Form.

'[x] Metronome Sound' checkbox

Enable this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to beep once a second during count.

The Preferences Form

The Preferences Form is where you can set global preferences. They apply to all processes.

'[x] Countdown' checkbox

Check this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to count backward (down to 0) instead of forward (from 0 up to interval time).

'[x] Two Digit Times' checkbox

If you check this box, the times on the Main Form will always have two digits ("02" instead of "2").

'[x] Stop is Everywhere' checkbox

When Foto Timer is counting or when the enlarger is on, you tap the 'Stop' button or the 'Enlarger Off' button to stop. If you enable this checkbox, you can tap virtually everywhere on the screen to stop. **Note**: the Enlarging Form will not display the 'Enlarger Off' button if this checkbox is enabled. Instead, it will display the note if the process has one.

'[x] Chain to same Category only' checkbox

If this checkbox is enabled, the 'Select Process' trigger will display a list containing only processes from the same category as the current process. Otherwise, all processes will be listed.

'[x] Go back to 1st Process in Chain' checkbox

Check this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to go back to the first process (the one that you started) after a chain of processes has been finished.

'[x] Sort Processes Alphabetically' checkbox

If checked, the processes will be sorted alphabetically. **Note**: unchecking this checkbox will not 'unsort' them!

'[x] Night Vision (red on black)' checkbox

If you enable this checkbox, Foto Timer will switch to a black display with red text and controls. This is useful if you do not want to affect the dark adaptation of your eyes. **Note**: this preference is only available on color Palm OS devices.

'[x] Block Hardware Buttons' checkbox

Enable this checkbox if you want to protect against accidentally pressing one of the hardware buttons. Useful if you have your Palm OS device in your shirt pocket.

'[x] Use Up/Down as Start/Stop' checkbox

If this is enabled, you can use the 'Up' and 'Down' hardware buttons to start, pause, and stop Foto Timer. The 'Down' button acts like the 'Stop' or 'Enlarger Off' buttons, while the 'Up' button acts like 'Start', 'Pause', 'Continue', or 'Next' depending on the state of the counter.

The Audio Preferences Form

The Audio Preferences Form lets you set global audio preferences. They apply to all processes.

'__ Prebeeps ' field

You can set the number of 'prebeeps' here. Prebeeps are issued *before* the end of an interval. Example: If you set this to '4', you will hear 4 short beeps in the last 4 seconds of the interval.

'[x] Play Sounds at max Volume' checkbox

Sounds are usually played at 'alarm volume' (you can set this in the 'Prefs' application). However, if you check this checkbox, Foto Timer will beep at maximum volume.

'[x] Sound at Start of Process' checkbox

If this checkbox is enabled, Foto Timer will issue a sound each time a process starts (either because you tapped 'Start', or because another process chained to it).

'[x] Sound on Pause/Continue' checkbox

Enable this checkbox if you want to hear a sound when you tap 'Pause' or 'Continue'.

'[x] Sound at End of Process' checkbox

If this checkbox is enabled, Foto Timer will issue a sound each time a process ends (either because you tapped 'Stop', or because it counted to its end).

'[x] Tick while Chaining' checkbox

When one process ends, it may 'chain' to another one. Enable this checkbox if you want Foto Timer to tick while it switches processes.

'[x] Sound at End of Chain' checkbox

If this checkbox is enabled, Foto Timer will issue a sound when a chain ends.

Will the next version have more features?

Yes, probably:

- Pause before start of process/chain
- Ability to trigger camera using IR (do not yet know if that's possible)
- Count in background or when Palm is off
- Vibrating alarm and flashing LED
- User configurable sounds

This list does not reflect the order in which I plan to work on those items. I usually do the easy stuff first, or whatever people want most. Sometimes I implement stuff that is not even on the list.

If you have a request for a feature that might be interesting, do not hesitate to send me an email!

Questions? Rants? Suggestions?

Drop me an email if you have any questions, suggestions, bug reports or nice ideas, or if you just want to tell me what you think about Foto Timer. The address is Jan.Exner@gmx.net.

Thank you for using Foto Timer!
Jan