

*How do I?*

*An occasional series*

*This week: Do HF portable!*



Icom 718 with LDG tuner and Yaesu power supply working the WV QSO party from the porch in Bedford County, PA

Ever want to go someplace and still be able to check into a favorite net? Or simply move the shack outdoors and get some fresh air? Here is how I do HF portable. I have my Icom 718 (a great first radio), an LDG tuner, a power supply and the necessary cables. Everything but the power supply and headphones fits in one carrying case. I think something like a Yaesu 857D and an MFJ “*Mighty Lite*” power supply would fit in one box.

For an antenna, I use an EAGLE ONE portable. They are made by W8AFX /S&G Engineering out of Ohio. The website is [www.w8afx.com/](http://www.w8afx.com/). The Eagle One is an interesting antenna. There are 32 current reviews on eham.net, with a 4.6/5 rating. Many well

known antennas do not have that many reviews. Some like it, some hate it. I like it because: it allows me to get on 80-10m without a tuner or manual band switching. I have a tuner, but not sure why I hook it up! It is very portable. The basic unit is four feet long. The tripod doesn't take up much room and everything else fits in a repurposed camera bag. What is everything else? a hammer, vice grips, a 3/8" flex handle with a 1/2" socket, a screwdriver, 3 8" lag screws, a home made plate to attach 4 32' radials to, and a 100 foot roll of coax and a 32' wire I attach to the top loop that may improve its 80m performance.



The antenna takes one person about 15 minutes to set up. A lot of the time is spent carrying it from the car to the site. The assembly instructions are not very clear. There is an aluminum tube that attaches to the tripod and supports the antenna. I spent a long time puzzling over the instructions and finally decided that the rubber cap with the indentations for the bolts must go on top to keep moisture out of the tube. Looking at the YouTube videos of it, other folks put it together with the cap at the bottom. the only differences I can tell is that the bolts mar the tube and the electrical shock warning sticker is upside down.

The antenna comes with 3 three foot copper ground rods. These are intended to be the ground system and spike the antenna to the ground. I have used them, but three feet is a long way to go when you have no idea what is underneath. So I use 3 1/2 inch lag bolts. Easy to drive in and pull out. I had to drill out the pads on the legs from 3/8 to 1/2". You could use tent pegs and not need to drill.

Since I didn't use the ground rods and some

Eham.net reviews talked about radials or counterpoises, I made 4 32' radials out of TV rotator control wire. (Thanks Garry K3EYK!!!!). I don't know what the magic length or number is. More radials may work better but takes more time to set up. Some use a 30' or so counterpoise and tuner and seem happy with the results.

I have only used the antenna a handful of times, with mixed results. When testing at my home QTH, my Comet CHA250B vertical outperformed it. I took it my dad's in Breezewood, PA where the noise floor is typically S1 (vs the S6-9 at home) and easily checked into the Virginia Fone Net on 75m. On subsequent trips it has made contacts in Florida and Montana. I think the antenna was designed primarily for 20m DX work. For me, DX is anything more than 500 or so miles away, so I use it primarily on 80m and 40m. The last time I used it, I was trying to test the power output on the Icom 718 and ended up with a Czech and a Spanish station on 20m!

I like it as a portable antenna. It can be used in a semi permanent set up, but not sure the quality is there. The instructions could be better and the tabs the wire wraps around when the antenna is stored are very flimsy and will eventually break off.