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How To Make Your House Haunted For Halloween

By Scary Jeff 's Studio
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IN THE SCARY BEGINNING:

One of my fondest memories as a little kid was this time I was trick or treating on good old Miller Road. I remember walking up to a very dark and concealed front porch that was barely illuminated by the struggling glow of a Jack-o-lantern. From the sidewalk, I could just make out two dimly lit dummies laying strewn along the concrete surface of the porch. I remember thinking, "They could have propped those up a little bit better."

I went up to the front door and yelled the traditional chant. To my horrifying surprise, those two lumped over dummies sprung to life moaning and groaning at the top of their lungs. Well, I just about flew out of my plastic Dracula mask! I wasn't expecting that at all. They really, really scared me.

It was at that exact moment I knew I wanted to scare people for Halloween and I've been doing just that ever since.

Now, when I look back over the twenty plus years I've been freaking people out, I can safely say - it's not what's in your Haunted House, but who's in your Haunted House! All I can say is, when you scare your very first kid you'll fall in love with it. When you scare your very first parent, you'll be hooked on it for life!

With that in mind, here are some really spooky tips that will help you get started doing the Halloween thing at your dwelling!

THE HAUNTED PLACE:

This is the very first thing you need to consider, it can be any place you want really. Your

apartment, house, basement, yard, garage, porch or even just your doorway! I've found over the years that any place is a good place to scare someone!

Once you decide where you are going to have your haunted.....area, sketch a diagram of the layout or floor plan. Next decide how the kids are coming in and how they are going out. Then build up your scary stuff around the pathway the little devils will be taking. This is a good time to start plotting where your scare spots will be. What are scare spots you say?

FIENDISH SCARE SPOTS ARE:

Scare Spots are the little nooks and crannies where you hide around the point of evil action takes just before it takes place. The number of scare spots depends on how many helpers you have working with you. - (Although if you're really good, like my pal Lee, you can sneak from one scare spot to the other and spook the kids two or three times.)

Scare Spots can be made by using old sheets, plastic, fake spider webs, corn stalks or Halloween displays - i.e. dummies, coffins, ghosts or zombies if ya got'em. Sometimes you can even hide right out in front of the trick-or-treaters and they won't even see you.

No-o-o-o really! One year, I put my cape up over my head and squatted down on the floor like a ball. The kids (and parents!) just thought I was an obstacle to move around so they did. When they where getting their candy, I'd slowly rise up and creep in behind them. When they turned around to go, my evil face was mere inches away from theirs. "Happy Halloween!" I'd yell in the best demonic voice I could muster and it worked like a freak'en charm! Try it out if you get the chance! You'll dig it.

BLACK PLASTIC FROM HELL:

This stuff could be called, "The Instant Room." I love it! It's cheap, around five bucks for a ten by twenty foot roll of it. As I mentioned before, it's good for scare spots or cheap capes, gargoyle wings, instant rooms and instant walls. It's also great for covering up un-scary clutter around your working area. A shelf full of tools can be hidden in seconds without moving anything. That gives you more time to work on other scary stuff for your Haunted House.

You can also make a quick doorway by cutting strips down a plastic partition wall you have hung up. When kids walk through it, the hanging plastic strips will drag over them, freaking them out as they pass into the next room. I think they think some unseen creature is touching them. Maybe one is?

GRUESOME PROPS:

For the first year or so, I would concentrate on your Monsters (you & your help) more than your props. I try to buy, make and save a few new things every year and that seems to work out well. Before you know it you'll have skulls, demon babies, floating heads of death, skeletons, coffins, crosses, grave stones, a grave yard and a fog machine! - But remember, it's not what's in your Haunted House, it's who's in your Haunted House. Be super scary and you'll always come off being your best prop! Trust me.

THE NOT SO DUMB DUMMY:

Making a dummy is a good cheap prop to start out with. All you need is news paper or leaves, old clothes - pants & long sleeve shirt, old shoes, old garden or work gloves, some clear nylon thread, a needle and an old pillowcase.

First stuff the fingers of the gloves with the news paper or leaves, then stuff the rest of the glove. With the clear thread, sew the gloves to the ends of your old long sleeve shirt, then stuff it's arms. I like to form tubes out of the news paper then stuff those. It gives the arms and legs a little more definition. When the arms are finished, start to stuff the chest. Don't stuff it all the way, we'll finish that up after the next step.

Sew the shoes to the ends of the pants then stuff the legs. When that's done, sew the shirt to them and stuff the waist and stomach area. You can either go tucked or untucked with the shirt it's up to you. Now finish stuffing the chest and do any reforming the figure needs.

Now for the fake dummy head. Take the pillow case you have and turn it inside out. Take a marker and draw a simple outline of a head and neck shape on it. It should look like an upside down vase with the open end of the pillow case being open end. Sew along your marker lines. This doesn't have to be a neat job, just good enough to hold the shape of the dummy head. Turn the pillowcase right side out and stuff it good! Sew it to the rest of your dummy body and you're almost finished. Now you can either draw an evil face on it or take assorted pieces of colored cloth and sew a face on him.

I like to use other things other than a pillow case for a head. I am currently using a store bought plastic pumpkin that lights up for a head. It looks great staked up out in the graveyard like a scare crow. Another cool thing to use for a head is a cheap (or not so cheap) latex mask. (Use a Styrofoam Wig stand for mask support.) Not only does this look cool but you can also buy latex hands that close match the head you bought for your creation.

Now all you have to do is hang him, stake him up, nail him to a cross or sit him up in a scary lawn chair and it's done. The scale and extravagance of your dummy is limited only to your imagination!

GHASTLY LIGHTS:

With a few light bulbs of assorted colors you can set the mood for what ever room you use them in. For instance, blue and green work very well for a forest or graveyard scene. Red and orange is perfect light for demons and carnage type rooms. I like to use purple lights for crypts or places you want dark, but not too dark. (Some places sell these as black lights. But they are not fluorescent! - Still love'em.) Fluorescent black lights are cool for space scenes and places where you have lots of glow-in-the-dark type stuff. Then the disorienting Mac-Daddy - The Strobe Light! Use this in the room for the main scary contact. Either leave it running or click it on just as the scary action is about to take place. Both ways are really cool and freak people out! See what works best for you and go with it.

DEMONIC SOUNDS:

For spooky sounds, buy a Halloween CD. For around five to six bucks you can put that baby in a CD player, hit repeat, then play and it will go all night long for you. Cassettes work well too you just have to flip them every so often. Sometimes that can be tough job when a train of kids are coming right at you.

Also, look into loop tapes. The play the same thing over and over again without flipping them over. You can buy them in different time increments - i.e. 10sec, 30sec, 10min. Cool stuff! With these and a few tape players you can produce a eerie sound track for your haunted house. Then you know you're a big time Halloween nut!

SPOOKY HALLOWEEN ETIQUETTE:

In today's day and age, it pays to be careful. So tell all of your monsters, if someone hits you or reeks havoc, call the cops, don't hit'em or reek havoc back. Always make sure that no one hurts themselves and know when to back off of troubled situations or freaked out people.

When little tiny kids come though, don't scare them. Tell them you're a happy monster who just loves to give out candy to little kids. The parents love it, and that kid will be back for the next ten years - with there friends.

At my house, we like to make peek holes in the black plastic so we can see who's coming down the sidewalk. Plus, it's a lot of fun yelling scary stuff directed right at the people as they walk up though the grave yard.

The most important thing I can stress, and I mean really stress is - Scare the living HELL out of the teen-agers dressed as teen-agers! That's the absolute best!! They think their so-o cool! --- Happy Halloween and have a scary good time Making Your House Haunted For Halloween!!!