



<http://hauntershangout.com/home/tricktable.asp>

Quick Trick Table



I help run a local charity haunt for the Jaycees. With only days to go before the 02 season was to start one of the rooms seemed lacking. It was a operating room with two actors. I threw this table together in two afternoons and took it to the haunt. The idea is simple, The actor lays in the table and appears to be cut in half. I did not come up with this idea. Movies have been using this prop for years. This is not a complete how-too but it will give you a basic idea on how it was made.

Basic Construction



The base is a simple wooden box made of 1" by 8" wood and its held together by wood screws. I made the table 2 ft by 4 ft. I felt that a shorter length would help with the illusion that half the body was missing.



The legs were made with scrap 4" by 4" lumber. Holes were drilled through both the legs and the frame and then bolted together. As you can see by the picture, the leg was installed so that it was recessed 1 1/2" form the top of the frame. The lid will sit on the top of the legs.



Two pieces of angle iron were bolted to the bottom of each side of the frame. This will be the support for the bottom of the prop. A piece of plywood then was cut to size and installed. I cut the plywood so that it was shorter than the frame. I figured that larger actors may use this prop. A 6 inch gap was left at the foot of the frame for the actors legs to fit through.



The mattress was made of 1" by 6" lumber. It is made in two halves. The top is screwed in place. It is not shown in this picture but a thicker piece of plywood was installed for the actors back to rest on. I also installed a small piece of 1" by 2" that will support the lower half of the mattress.



A 1/4" thick sheet of plywood was then cut to size. This will be the top of the mattress. I used a jigsaw to cut a u-shape out of the plywood so that it would line up with the actors back rest. Then the plywood was screwed onto the top of the mattress. I stapled foam to the mattress and then covered that with white fabric.



The second half of the mattress is a cover that can't be removed. This allows the actor to get into the prop. It was made with 1" by 6" also. I measured the frame where it would sit and then took 1/2 inch off of the measurements on the side and 1/4 inch of the length. This way the top will fit into the frame after it is covered with the foam and fabric.



I cut a larger u-shape out of the top and then covered it with foam and fabric as I did with the other half. I then needed to make the chest. I used chicken wire to make a wire frame of a chest.



OK, this part is painful for me. LOL. I wanted the chest to look as real as I could. I decided to make a quick cast of my chest and glue that to the wire chest frame. I figured that I could just smear Vaseline over my chest and then have the dental plaster brushed over it to make the mold. DONT EVER DO THIS! It worked but I no longer have hair not my chest.

A better idea and an easier one for people that do not have a knowledge of casting would be to fill the wire chest with newspaper and then use Great Stuff to coat the outside of the wire. A piece of Cling Wrap is then placed over the Great Stuff. This allows you to mold the chest with out getting it on your hands.

After the chest was complete I connected it to the top. I cut up an old shirt. The sides and bottom were glued to the mattress. The top (arms and shoulder) was to be worn by the actor.



Red spray paint was used for the blood. A blood train was sprayed where the two half's of the mattress met to hide the seam. More blood trails were added and then flat black was misted on the frame.

As you can see the kids in the neighborhood all wanted to take a turn. My daughter Jessica is the model in this shot.

I hope this demo gives you an idea on how this prop was made. I do wished that I had taken a few more pictures to better explain all the steps. It was a huge success at the haunt. It was placed so that the patrons had to walk around it to get to the next room. No one thought that it was a really person. The actor would sit still until the crowd was standing right next to them and then scream and grab at them.