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<http://www.thesavages.com/HalloweenChair.htm>

Electric Chair Construction:

The electric chair is a great prop that we we added in 2000. We put it up early in Oct, and left it in place to lull our neighborhood children (and adults) into a false sense of security. When Halloween night arrived, we waited until they walked up to the door for 'treats' and gave them a trick. With the flip of a remote switch, our man in 'electrified', twitching and jerking, to the flash of a strobe, and the sounds of electrification. To a one, whenever someone came by that didn't know what was coming, they were scared senseless.

First steal a good idea.

This was a display at a Halloween store. I figured it would be great to put Frank or someone in a chair. The chair seemed easy enough to make, slap on a costume and mask, and voila...great new prop.

Then I thought, wouldn't it be great to add to the static display with motion? but how?

I don't remember whose pages I took ideas from, there are always many, but this is what I did:

Materials:

- Cheep mask
- 3/4 in PVC pipe
- 4 3/4 in PVC elbows
- 2 3/4 in PVC 4-way tees
- 12 3/4 in PVC end caps
- 18 nuts for joints
- 18 threaded eyes for joints (two per 'joint')
- 32 washers (four per joint)
- 8 rings to connect joints
- 3 in bolt for crank
- 2 in bolt for crank
- 2x4 lumber for chair
- 1x8 lumber for seat and back
- gray paint
- power drill
- 3 inch springs to help lift the victim
- misc. screws, washers, nuts and bolts
- PVC pipe cement (use in well ventilated area)



1. Build a chair. For other possible future uses, I built my to fit (no that's not me, but my son Daniel). If you are not in the military like me, and have a place to store your chair, you don't have to use bolts in the chair's construction.

I did, but only so I could take it apart for storage and our frequent moves.

Build it strong if you will be motorizing it, you don't want it shaking apart.

Cut a slot in the seat for the tail of the skeleton frame.

2. Build the "skeleton". Using eye hook joints allows lots of movement, the point of a great effect. I used 3/4 in PVC pipe with PVC cement, with an extra "tail bone" extending the spine 6 inches below the hips. This was then put through the slot in the chair seat, to the drill/motor for animation.

I used tees, caps, 4-way, and elbow joints to make the frame. The torso extends up for the head to be put on, and the tailbone extends down for attaching to the hidden motor. Into the shoulders and hips I added eye hooks, through drilled holes.

- a. Cut the pipe. Use your self as a template, i.e. Measure the length of your femur, and cut pipe to length. Remember to add your wrist and hand length to your forearm. Save yourself time and buy a PVC cutter (next to the screwdriver in the bottom left of the top picture). It's a real time and hand saver, for \$20, you just snip the PVC pipe.
- b. Test fit the pieces without glue.
- c. Add the joint bolts. The order I used for the joints is pictured in the middle photo, eye hook, washer, PVC pipe through a hole already drilled, washer and nut. They can shake loose, so consider lock washers or another method to keep them tight.
- d. In a well ventilated area use PVC Cement. I just used the cement without primer, since I was not worried about a complete seal, just a permanent attachment.
- e. Then attach the joints using a chain link. Tighten the link.



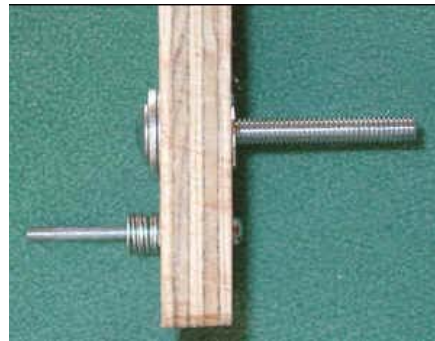
Cut, Fit, Bolt, Glue, Screw



3. Build the crank. I used a scrap piece of wood, tried to find the center, and put the biggest bolt that would fit into my drill chuck into the center (bolt, washer, wood, embedded nut).

Then I worked out 1 1/2 inches, and put another, smaller bolt into the wood, going the other way. The little washers allow the "tailbone" to clear the head of the bigger bolt.

The crank won't unscrew if you use a spiked washer as pictured in the 3rd picture.



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4. Attach a power drill to the bottom of the seat. I used a wood block and plumbers metal thingie (don't want to get too technical), which can be tightened with a screwdriver.

Stick the big end of the shaft in the chuck, and the smaller end through the "tail bone".

As the bigger shaft spins (from a reasonable Stationary position, the little bolt moves in a larger circle. The moving in a larger circle lifts the skeleton up and down, (very quickly). It also makes a good noise.



5. Finish the prop with foam to add meat to the PVC bones. I used a \$10 dollar jailbird costume I had used a year before, rubber monster gloves, and a cheep mask. The dome is a filter for a range exhaust, and some junk conduit finished the effect. I cut up an old belt for straps for the victim, and put boots on his feet.

IMPORTANT: Use some 3-in springs to help lift the victim. The drill can't lift him/her all by itself. 2-3 springs should be enough to take the weight off of the drill. Attach them to the back of the neck and anchor them to the chair. Springs can be found at any hardware store, are about the diameter of a thick pencil, and run about a buck or two.

When power is applied to the drill, the Electrification begins. I adjusted the speed of the drill, and kept it permanently on. I made a remote switch to give power to the drill and a strobe light. I kept him quiet until Halloween night. The neighborhood had grown used to seeing him. Then, when they got close, Zap, and screams. What fun.



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