



<http://www.hauntforum.com/showthread.php?t=10319>

Alfred the Stalk Around

Alrighty, here it is, I sucked it up and posted it, for all to view, Alfred: the making of.



What you need

- 2 or so 8ft lengths of 2" PVC
- 2 lengths of 1/2" PVC
- 4 2" PVC elbows
- 2 of those connectors that are like an elbow but have another piece sticking up (look at photo)
- about 6 links of a 1" per link chain
- heavy duty zip ties
- a handful) of nuts washers and bolts at least long enough to go through PVC and connectors (around 14, or 4 if you don't bolt your connectors
- about 5 pool noodles
- a hunk of egg carton foam to pad out the back hands

- two soda bottles(same type)
- a wig head
- a mask or equivalent to go on head
- a tomato cage (the lightest you can find)
- strong cord
- an aluminum framed hiking back pack
- a drill
- a PVC cutter(MUST HAVE)
- a helmet with a chin guard
- one of those connector thingies(to attach PVC to the helmet, I found it in the fixture isle at home depot, look at the pic, figure it out, buy the screws that go with it)
- duct tape and safety pins
- lastly, about 8 yards of light, cheap material,

some sheer material to cover the hole in front,
a package of thin elastic
a sewing machine
decorations(nets, webbing, cheesecloth, etc)

THE FRAME:

Take a look at this picture



I can't give you exact measurements because they will be based on my measurements, so a lot of eyeballing is involved. The lower arms are the 1/2", the rest of it is 2". Basically you want to line up a piece of PVC with the bar behind your head and measure so that it comes up about 5" above the top of your head.

Cut 2 of these. Put an elbow facing outward on each of these, then cut two that will extend out just past your shoulders. Connect these to the elbows and place the other elbows on them facing up. Two more pieces are needed to rise up and be the shoulder line.

After this, cut one long piece to connect these. Connect these with the last connectors, making sure the extra point faces the FRONT.

This will be your shoulder line and what the arms hang from. DO NOT CONNECT ARMS YET! The next thing to do is have someone wear the pack and hold the frame against the two upward bars of the pack with the ends resting on the cross bar. Zip tie, cord, knot, bolt, and duct tape the fool out of it to make it secure. I also suggest bolting all the connections because I've had a few blowouts.

I have no pictures for this portion, but turn over the tomato cage and bend/cut off the tines; you don't need them unless your lazy and want a stationary dragon head, in which case bend them over into a snout and make your head. Ignore everything to do with the head or helmet portion of the how to.

Now, line up the largest ring of the tomato cage with the cross bar of the pack. If you're lucky like I was, this lines up the next ring with the elbows and the next ring snug just below the shoulder bar. Some tweaking might be involved. Once again zip tie, knot, and tape the thing secure.

One thing I had to modify was to cut out the front arc of the bottom ring so I could have better motion with my helmet

NOTE FOR CONSIDERATION

I have to say that the tomato cage has given me a lot of trouble with weight and sagging issues; however I have been unable to think of a substitute for his long, tapering neck. If you would be willing to have a short necked dragon, or if you want to make a regular stalk around with humanoid proportions, you can go without it with a few modifications:

Shorten the neck pipe accordingly

Also, you must find another way to flesh out the torso, using a wire mesh torso or foam padding you can attach the head pipe either by cutting the shoulder pipe in two and inserting a cross piece for the 1/2" neck pipe to go in(less motion, more secure) or tying it to the whole shoulder pipe (more motion, prone to slippage)

ARMS

You want to cut two lengths of 2" PVC that run from the top of the shoulders to about YOUR elbows, maybe a little below. Then cut two pairs links of the chain. Pre-drill holes through the front pointing connector bits HORIZONTALLY, then screw in a bolt through one side, through one link, and out the other. Do the same for the top of the arms. They should hang easily and naturally and sway without strain. Make sure they have good range of movement in all directions.

As for the lower arms, I can only give you general guide lines .



- 1) Make sure that your final length will leave the hands & FINGERS just barely grazing the ground. If you don't plan for it then they will drag, ruining the hands, and maybe even tripping you. IF YOU FALL, ITS CURTAINS FOR THE DRAGON and maybe for you too, so keep that in mind also when you make the robe the length of the handle will take a lot of experimenting.

You will have to wear it and test it to find maximum mobility. It is impossible to put his arms all the way to his head, but you can move his arms across, behind, in front, and out quite a lot. His arms will be at the highest and widest when your hands are at the end of your handles, and most mobile and most inward when they are at the base.

Play with it. By the end of the day, I was dancing disco to "I'm your boogie man" . Connect it with zip ties or chord through horizontal drilled holes at the joint area, and make sure there is less handle than arm so that when let go, the hand area naturally moves to the ground and the handle becomes a natural elbow.

I was also able to cross my arms into a pray position, shrugs, and actually hug people(which I did a lot of at AWA and Dragon con). Whether or not you can grip things will have to do with how hard you can squeeze the hands together



THE HEAD



Attach the connector thingy to the top of the helmet then measure from the top of your head to about 2 feet or so above the top of the tomato cage and cut a 1/2" piece to length (about a foot over the shoulders if not using the tomato cage)

Secure the PVC to the fixture. Stick the wig head on the top with the mask on it and test it out. Now you can swivel the head, and even look a tiny bit down and up. With practice you can get an incredible amount to expression with it. I tied a webbing of cord over the top of the cage so that when I took the helmet off or relaxed, the head stayed up and didn't fall down or out. This became INVALUABLE when resting, or when I set it up to be static. Also, it takes pressure off of your neck, which can be dangerous. When making the out fit, it is important to have some type of headdress or collar that covers the transition area.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE GOOD RANGE OF MOTION. If you don't or if you have too much weight on your neck you can seriously hurt yourself and standard disclaimers apply. Also, it is relatively lightweight set up, but it is still heavy with a serious strain on your back and shoulders. It is vitally important that your shoulder straps are tight, and your waist strap is putting most of the monster's weight on your hips, and you DO NOT have your head tilted forward or back. Good posture is a must.

THE HANDS

If you have solid hands already made, just stick them on the PVC, but I bought some gloves in an after Halloween sale.

Cut off the bottoms of the bottles so that they fit into the hand portion of your gloves. I stuck straws in the fingers to flesh them out a bit. Stick the bottle necks over the PVC and tape them in place



Here is a friend of mine wearing the rig and turning his head to the side.

FLESHING OUT

Cut the pool noodles to go with each arm length of pipe and the shoulders. Make sure you leave enough space near the joints to not hurt mobility. Slit the noodles hot dog style and just push them on, and duct tape in place.

Also slide a portion under the shoulder straps behind your neck. This adds tightness to the straps, helps you stay erect, and gives much needed padding to shoulders and neck. This is also where you stick on

the foam on back to give him a nice smooth hump instead of lumpy deflated bulge. Attach it to the shoulder pads and sides with the silver stuff(just like the Force, Duct tape holds the universe together).

THE ROBE



I started with the poncho method of doubling it over and draping it beside the rig on the floor until I had the length from the top of the cage to the bottom of my feet. Then I cut it so I had two panels that length (not doubled over).

I sewed the panels together, long ways for the length of the tomato cage and about 3 or 4 inches extra on both sides and stopped, leaving the top open. Then I folded the top over on the inside to make a place for the elastic to be strung, so that it could be draw stringed closed around the neck.

I then used the same method down the arms, and sewed one end up except for a hand hole. The idea is to have flowy sleeves to hide your hand, with elastic tightened wrists so it can't slide down the arm when you move. Sew these to your robe with the sides still open at this point.



It was here that I learned a few things. First, the panels were just a bit too tight to just sew up, which would have made it simple. Some wine and a seam ripper later, we came up with the solution of adding another panel of fabric under each arm. We opened up a two foot hole in each side starting under the sleeve (so the bottom of the pit was now attached to the new panels) thus giving the necessary extra space. It was re-sewed down to where we stopped the hole, and then allowed to drape naturally to the floor. This became a serious advantage when I needed to be handed things.

The world will never see or hear, the hilarity and cussing that went into putting that robe on the dragon. It was ALMOST worth it to remove the arms and stick them through the sleeves and then attach them from the inside, cause DAMN was it hard, but we did it, and I think that would have ultimately been more difficult.



I cut some jagged slits at eye level, and pinned some sheer camo patterned material to the inside over it to cover me. after that its all trimming and trappings.

We draped raggedly cut material around and on the head and stuck it on with safety pins and sewing pins jabbed into the wig head. I made sure it obscured the neck transition and was long enough that it blended in the eye hole rips.

Alfred went through a couple incarnations of decoration, the last being the addition of the black horns and red ears, and the red added to the front (it was a child's cape I got at the thrift store that I cut up). I also sprayed the whole thing randomly with lines of green and grey to give it a mottled look (it made a huge difference, don't ask me why) and believe it or not, few people found where my head was, despite the slits so I guess I hid them well enough.

Additions could be fur, webbing, or cheesecloth, which I used a bit in my haunt.

USING HIM

A few things that you should know and have when operating:

- 1) HYDRATE! Even with the flimsy material, you are working hard, and the space keeps heat. It was never less than 70 degrees inside. I suggest a camel pack inside the back pack with the hose near your mouth. Wear cloths that are tight and light weight , which hopefully match your color scheme
- 2) Keep one of those cheap little dollar store fans beenied to you for an occasional but needed breeze.
- 3) REST. Sit in a chair and scare, take breaks, let your back and neck rest, or I guarantee you will be down for the count by the end of the night. I gave myself the flu running myself into the ground in freezing weather in this thing for hours every night, and I was laid out for two days. No matter what, its an extreme work out and you WILL be sore.
- 4) I suggest you build a stand so it can be a static prop when you want it to be. I just propped it in my chair and that was ok, but if people touched it, it would fall over, and didn't look fabulous. A cross stand would be better

5) You NEED an assistant. Visibility is low, and your voice is muffled. They need to direct you, hold your trailing cloth, help you in and out, get things for you, keep you hydrated, fix things when they inevitably break, and to be your spokes person for pictures, space, and confused security guards. Without one it is possible but extremely unadvisable (and far from graceful).

6) Practice, have fun, and develop a personality. As mascots everywhere can tell you, it's hard to make emotion from a thing whose face doesn't move, but it's easier than you'd think to imbue your dragon with life that will have people screaming, or laughing, or loving your big monster as if he were alive. Stay active and moving, and do your best to move in natural, but exaggerated poses that will get your silent attitude across.

Get ready to make them laugh, cry, and piss their pants, and if at a sci-fi con, ALWAYS grab the red shirts first!

Obtained from
Omarshauntedtrail.com