

The “Red Hot, How-To-Build-A-Backdrop Frame”

Special Report!

.....
Having a good backdrop will increase the visual appeal of your stage show by several notches. By having an attractive backdrop, not only will you have a place to use as a “back stage” area, but your clients will be extremely impressed with the professional ‘look’ of your show!

This sizzling report will teach EXACTLY how to build a sturdy backdrop frame quickly and easily, for about \$10!
.....

CONGRADULATIONS! With this report, you get the knowledge to add a critical piece to your act without having to spend a fortune. A decent ‘professional’ backdrop frame normally costs well in excess of \$200...I know, because I bought one!

While I feel \$200 is a good price for the frame I bought, I didn’t start off with it. Like a lot of other magicians, I didn’t have a lot of money when I was starting out, so a cheaper alternative had to be found.

This inexpensive backdrop frame is easy to build, easy to put together at your shows, and can be adapted to literally ANY size! I used mine for several years before I “upgraded” to the professional photographer’s model I use now.

Before I begin, I must credit Dennis McGuiggan, a terrific clown/magician from Western Pennsylvania for the idea.

I also want to point out that I’m not very knowledgable about building things, so these instructions are going to be designed for someone like me. If this doesn’t apply to you and you’re insulted by how “in depth” I go, I apologize.

Let’s get to it!

With these instructions, you’ll be able to build a backdrop frame that 6’ by 6’, without wasting ANY material, although as you’ll soon see, it be EASILY expanded to any size you need.

Go To The Store

The first thing you'll need to do is go to a Home-Depot or a Lowe's...one of those "home improvement" store chains. I purchased my stuff from Lowe's.

When you get there, go to the section that has the lo-o-o-ng plastic pipes, for home plumbing. Get three ten-foot long plastic pipes that are about one-and-a-half inches in diameter. They'll run around \$2.00 each. You can use either thicker or thinner pipes, but I've found one-and-a-half to be sturdy without being too much of a pain.

In the same section, you'll want to get, all in the same size to fit the pipes you picked (I'm not mechanically inclined so I just tried them one the ends of the pipes), the following items: 4 'endcaps', 4 "T" connectors, 2 'elbow' connectors, 4 'sleeve' connectors. Now a few words about each...

"Sleeve" connectors

Oops! As I write this, I'm not sure of the name of these things. The bin I bought mine from was not labeled. The "sleeve" is a collar that will accept an end of a pipe into each end. It's used for connecting two pipes end-to-end.

"T" Connectors

These are "T" shaped, obviously, and will accept a pipe end into each of the three ends. You can look at my admittedly sad drawing at the end of this report.

"Elbow" connectors

These will accept an end of pipe in each of the two ends, and they will stick out at a 90-degree angle, hence the 'elbow' name.

"End caps"

These are just as the same says—caps for the end of your pipes. They're going on the "feet" of the frame for cosmetic purposes.

Other Stuff

You'll need a way to cut the pipes. If you have a simple hacksaw at home, that should all you need as the pipes are easy to cut through. If you have a power saw, so much the better.

I would also imagine, though I never asked, that the store you buy the stuff from can cut it for you since I know most places will cut wood for you.

In a pinch, if you're ultra-cheap like me, you can probably find a hacksaw at your local "dollar" store.

You'll also need **some fine-grit sandpaper**, which you can either get at Lowe's or the "dollar" store to save money.

You'll then need to go to Wal-Mart (ugh) and get the cheapest **Flat Black spray paint you can find. Wal-mart usually has the cheapest: \$.97 by Krylon.**

Preparation

At this point, using whatever method works best for you, you want to cut each ten-foot plastic pipe into the following sections:

- Two of the pipes will EACH be cut into three 3-foot sections and two 1-foot sections
- The last pipe will be cut into two 3-foot sections and two 2 foot sections.

When you're done, you should have the following sections:

- Eight 3-foot sections
- Two 2-foot sections
- Two 1-foot sections

Sanding

Guess what? The hard work's over! Now, take your fine-grit sandpaper and simply scuff up the surface of each section. It doesn't have to be a big deal—you're simply trying to create a rougher surface so the paint will adhere better.

Sand the end caps, "T" connectors, "elbow" connectors, and "sleeves", too.

Painting

Spray paint everything with flat black spray paint. Observe all rules of safety: ventilated area, drop clothes so you don't spray your couch, etc.

It's best to use a few light coats. Professionals also recommend lightly sanding between coats, although I confess I've never done that.

Assembly Time

You're just about done! To complete your backdrop frame, you'll simply need to assemble everything as in my sad little picture at the end of the instructions. Here's basically what will happen:

You'll want to attach a two-foot piece to a one-foot piece with a "T" connector. Attach these pieces so they are on opposite ends, so you have a completed 3-foot section with a "T" connector in between where you can attach a vertical piece.

Repeat this with another 2-foot section, 1-foot section, and “T” connector. At the uncapped ends, cover with the four end caps. These are the “feet” of the stand.

You’ll want to attach two 3-foot sections with a sleeve. Repeat this with two more 3-foot sections and the last sleeve. One of these two completed 6-foot pieces forms the horizontal top bar from which your fabric hangs. The other piece forms your middle horizontal support, for more stability.

Then you’ll want to attach two 3-foot sections with a “T” connector. Connect them on opposite ends of the “T” so you have one 6-foot long piece with a “T” in the center. On one end of the 3-foot section, attach an “elbow” connector.

Repeat this with the last two 3-foot sections, the last “T” connector, and the last “elbow” connector. These two completed pieces are your vertical supports

Done!

Believe it or not, you’re done. You should at this point be left with the following:

- a total of four 6-foot pieces
- two 3-foot pieces

Consult the final picture to COMPLETELY assemble the frame. At your show, before you finish putting the top bar in place with the elbow connectors, you’ll need to “thread” your fabric on the top bar.

A Few Details...

Some of you may be wondering why I had you cut the pipes into three-foot (and smaller) sections when the backdrop was going to be 6-foot tall and 6-foot wide.

That’s easy—I wanted to give you the option of breaking it down into three-foot sections, making it VERY easy to transport.

You can buy a canvas bag, such as the “stuff sacks” at the camping section of department stores, to easily transport your frame without lugging it around in a garbage bag...a garbage bag will NOT impress your clients!

Wherever I looked, all I could find were white pipes. I wanted the “feet” of the frame to be less conspicuous so I painted mine black. If you find black plastic pipes, you can certainly skip the sanding and painting!

Fabric

A few thoughts on fabric...

You can use any color you like for your fabric. I currently have four different backdrops: a small black velvet one for most birthday parties, a “smiley” face one for very young children’s birthdays, a black velvet with silver “spider webs” for Halloween parties, and my big 12-foot glittering silver-sequined fabric for school shows, fundraisers, and other big events.

Pick something that fits the theme of your act! Silver works GREAT for me and gets a great response before I even start the show.

Whatever the width of your “top bar” of your backdrop, in the case of the instructions, we’ll say 6-foot, you’ll need the width of your fabric to be a LOT wider, at least a third or more, so that the back drop fabric “billows” like a set of curtains. This looks very classy.

You’ll also need to sew a seam in the top of your fabric that the top pole can slide into. Think of it as a shirt sleeve. You’ll need the seam to be wide enough to give you plenty of room to allow the pole to slide easily.

Wrap up

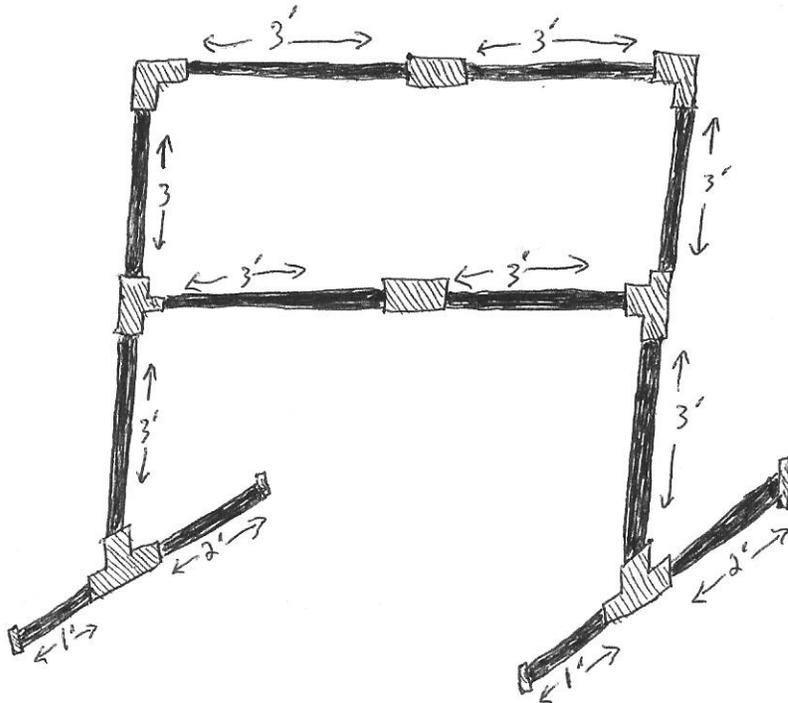
That’s it! I hope with this Report, you’ll see just how easy it is to add an element of class to your stage act as well as giving you a handy “backstage” area to prepare your show!

Remember to practice assembling the frame to familiarize yourself with the process BEFORE you get to a show.

Also remember that this simple system of pipes and connectors will allow you to easily expand this backdrop frame system to any size you need!

Good Luck!!

Completed Frame



Parts List

"End Caps": 4 total



"Elbow" Connectors: 2 total



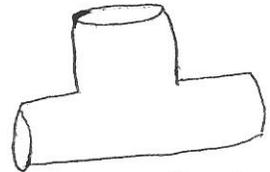
10-foot poles: 3 total



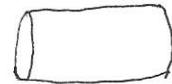
Fine-grit Sandpaper: A couple of sheets

I can't draw a square

"T" Connectors: 4 total



"Sleeves": 4 Total



Spray Paint: One can

