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EzyMagic SHOWS

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Contents

Please Read This First	2
About the Author	7
Introduction	8
Magic - the Next Step	10
Amateur or Professional?	11
More Secrets	12
Everything you Say and Do.....	12
First Time on Stage.....	13
Insurance	13
Microphones	14
Photographs.....	15
Press	16
Building Your "Ezy Magic" Show	18
Clothing	20
First Aid Kit	21
Group Performance	23
Your List	24
Accessories	25
Tables	25
Card Table	25
Music Stands	26
Case Tables	26
Pilot Case Table	27
Handkerchiefs	27

Wands	27
Also Starring	29
Animals	29
Assistants	30
Children.....	31
Family	32
Volunteers	32
Magician, Clown or Magic Clown?.....	33
The "Ezy Magic" Magician.....	34
Size of Tricks	34
Costume	35
Boxes.....	36
Flip Down Production Box.....	36
Collapsible Box Production.....	39
Castle Production.....	40
Paper Tricks	42
Torn and Restored "Whatever"	42
Variations on the Basic Trick	45
Rope Tricks.....	46
Cut the Rope!.....	46
Cut and Quick Restoration	46
No Cut or Restore!	48
Mini Indian Rope Trick.....	49
Handkerchief from Rope.....	50
Handkerchief Tricks	51
Vanishing Handkerchief.....	51
Handkerchief Vanisher and Producer.....	54
The "Ezy Magic" Clown.....	57

Make-up	57
Costume	58
Equipment	59
Big/Small Gloves	59
Tube Glove	60
Tricks and Props	60
The Swatter	60
Nosey Insects	61
Vanishing Biscuit	61
Feather Duster	62
Bang Wand	62
Umbrella Wand	63
Bottomless Bag	65
Egg-stra!	67

About the Author

John Williams is a professional magician with his own on-line magic shop at <http://www.ezymagic.com/>

He has performed all types of Magic shows for audiences of all ages at private functions, conventions, agricultural shows, schools and even a revival of old-time Music Hall!

John wrote two other books, "Ezy Magic" and "the Ezy Magic FUN BOOK". Get them from your [eBookWholesaler Member](#) .



John also presents workshops for community and business groups on a wide range of topics, from "Reduce Stress with Laughter" to "Magic for Non-Magicians".

He is very interested in your comments about this book. Please send them to him by visiting <http://www.ezyebook.com/fbshowbk.html>

Introduction

Thank you to the readers of my first book, "Ezy Magic", who suggested that I write more. I've finally done that and tried to do it better this time (some also suggested that)!

A lot of people want to be a magician but some think that it can be done instantly!

My Ezy Magic book and Ezy Magic FUNbook had simple tricks that didn't take long to learn but I emphasized that learning how they were done is just the first step.

This book is for people from about 10 years of age who want to have their own magic show. I haven't separated the material into sections for different age groups or budgets.

You decide your goals with your Magic, according to your circumstances.

If you just want to learn to do a few more magic tricks well, or if you want to find out whether you could become a part-time professional magician if you applied yourself, all that you need to get started is here.

You may be too busy and not have the time or confidence to start that project right now.

The rewards from learning some magic effects to perform for your friends, or strangers, can include:

laughter

requests for you to perform for groups that they belong to

free drinks

money

a reputation as a clever and inventive person ...and

exhaustion!

You will get the most from this book by reading it right through and then concentrate on the sections that you feel are most useful.

You may disagree with my views and advice - there are few “rules set in stone” in entertainment. You can do anything differently if you believe that you get a better effect doing it your way.

I hope that you get a few laughs on the way through the book too.

Tricks for Your Routines

This book has several individual tricks that you can put into routines that suit your performing style and your audiences.

When you set up a routine, give it a fair trial before swapping tricks in and out. Sometimes a trick or a joke that you use will only reveal its full effect when you do it for a real audience.

Drop any trick that your audiences do not respond to even if you like to do it. It's the audiences that are your focus, after all.

Magic - the Next Step

My first book, "Ezy Magic", is for people that just want to do a few simple, entertaining magic tricks without investing the resources needed to be able to perform a Magic show.

But the Magic "bug" bites deeply.

Could you go to the next step and perform your own Magic show? "Ezy Magic SHOWS" gets you there in easy stages, but you will have to put in more effort and time than you might expect.



The rewards can also be much better than you may realize.

Several magicians that I know echo my belief that doing magic shows is something that we might do, even if we had to pay people for the privilege!

"Ezy Magic SHOWS" has almost all you will need, whether you are young or middle-aged, male or female. Magic is an equal opportunity area. People will watch and even pay for your magic show if it is good, with little regard to your age, ethnic background, religion or other factors.

Amateur or Professional?

You can do a show that is of professional standard even if you don't accept any payment. Some people demand payment but will always be considered to be of amateur standard.



People judge you by your show right from the very first time you perform. You don't want to be known, for instance, as an accountant who does some clever magic tricks. You are a magician who does a professional show, whether you are paid or not.

You might be happy to perform as a magician or a clown without payment. There are always plenty of people and organizations that want free shows.

Others may ask you to perform without charge "this time" because of the good work that their organization does or because "you will get some wonderful publicity and many potential bookers will see you". Unfortunately, that sort of free work only attracts offers from more people that want you to do their show for free as well!

Most performers choose some organization, sometimes more than one, and they support that with their talents at no charge. Whatever you decide to do, please don't do shows for free that would otherwise be paid work for other performers.

Remember that your cost in doing free shows include your time, transport, and missing out on shows, or family activities, that you could have done if you weren't donating a free show.

More Secrets

This section is for topics that may not apply to you now. Please read through them anyway because they are important and you will know where to look when your circumstances change and you have more experience.

Everything you Say and Do

Everything that your audience sees and hears regarding your tricks and you, is what they take with them when the show is over. That impression is what they tell their friends about you, or whether they say anything about you and your show.

The best, and least expensive way to get to do more and bigger shows, is to impress every spectator that you can - make them enthusiastic ambassadors, unpaid sales-people, that tell others that they enjoyed your show and recommend it.

What You Say: Practice everything that you will say, use your own words rather than the phrases that you read here or something another magician says during their performance. Stamp yourself on to the trick. You want people to book **you**, not just any magician that can do the trick.

Use some imagination. Just telling your audience, "I pick up this glass and put the handkerchief in it" will quickly bore them - they can see it for themselves. Never say, "This is an ordinary glass (or whatever)". That might start them thinking that maybe some of the equipment that you use is **not** ordinary!

What You Do: Always leave your audience wanting to see you do more tricks and always have a couple of good tricks with you that you only do when you are encouraged by the reaction to do an encore. Only do an extra trick if you are sure that it won't affect the show - if you've been given a set time in a show that involves other performers or speakers, do as close to that set time as you can, never do more.

I am always ready to do some close-up tricks when I do a stage performance though I don't do them unless someone asks. The person that booked you may ask you to meet them and their friends after the show.

First Time on Stage

If you are preparing a stage act, try to get some experience on stage by performing your show for community groups at no charge, assisting a more experienced local magician when they are working on stage or joining an amateur theatrical group.

You will learn that you often can't see the audience when the house lights are switched off and only the stage lights are on. If you intend to use volunteers from the audience, you have to plan, in advance, the way that you are going to select them and how they are going to get on to the stage:

Are there steps next to the stage?

Are the steps on both sides?

Are the steps safe? (try them before the show)

You have to allow for the time that volunteers take to get on and off the stage (as well as time for you to introduce them and get them some applause afterward) in the time set for your performance.

What about angles?

Can spectators in all the seats see what you want them to?

Can spectators in the balcony see things that you **don't** want them to?

Insurance

Every performer, paid or unpaid, needs public liability insurance. Do not rely on the insurance carried by the person or organization that booked you.

Even if you were not the cause of the incident, if you are not insured:

They may sue you for any damages awarded against them - and that's only IF their insurer is found liable.

You may still be sued by the person(s) injured.

You are unlikely to be employed in the future by the booker or anyone that they tell about the incident

The advised minimum cover (the highest amount the insurance company will pay out on claims against the policy) for a solo performer in Australia in 2003 is \$3,000,000. It may be that performers where you are performing usually have more coverage.

Even when you are insured, you must do everything that you can to ensure that nobody ever has to claim against it. The insurance company can sue you or possibly just refuse the claim (and then the injured party will sue you) if they believe that you are at fault.

Read any policy offered to you very carefully, and then read it again. Get anything that you are unsure of spelled out in writing. Do **not** assume anything and don't accept any verbal assurances. The company will use the words on paper to protect themselves and the words on paper are all you can rely on. Make sure you and the Company agree about what every word and phrase mean.

Tell the insurance company's representative the sort of things you do and what you use in your performance. If you don't tell them that you use balloons, fire, animals or whatever and just say, "I do some simple magic tricks", they may be able to refuse a claim that involves something you didn't tell them. Tell them if anyone has ever claimed against you or you have ever been refused a policy.

Microphones

Learn to use a microphone. If there is a microphone on where you are performing, check it before the show and use it.

There are two types of microphone.



Uni-directional: These mostly take sound that is directed to the center of the microphone's head. If you are speaking or making a significant noise but the sound is not reaching that most sensitive area, then your audience will not hear everything that you want them to.

Omni-directional: These are designed to take sound directed to all parts of the microphone's head. These will pick up an accidental tap against the microphone stand, or a whispered comment to an assistant almost as clearly as the words that you want your audience to hear.

If you are standing at the microphone while using a piece of equipment close to it, be very careful that you don't make unnecessary noises with the prop.

Radio (Wireless) Microphones are great in that they let you move around while you can still be heard clearly by the audience. Most governments require that you have a license for any wireless microphones that you use. Check the range that you can be away from the receiver and still be heard by the audience.

Use modern equipment. Some places, including Australia, have changed requirements for wireless microphones in the last few years and older equipment may not be legal to use.

Photographs

When you need photographs of your performance or yourself in costume, avoid regular portrait photographers. Their mind-set is not usually suitable to produce "entertainer's pictures". If you cannot find, or cannot afford, a commercial photographer who has experience with this sort of work, I have an unusual but useful suggestion for you.

Look at pictures of currently performing professional magicians to see the sort of style that is in use.

There are photo studios that specialize in "glamour portraits". These are not the usual pin-up pictures. These photographers make their living by photographing (usually) women whom they glamorize and surround with suitable props.

They usually have their own make-up artist, more advanced lighting equipment than portrait photographers and a huge variety of props.

You may have to persist with your approach because not all of these specialists will do photos for you. They have the skills that you need but some don't stray from their usual subjects. Don't argue with them - you need the photographer that does your photos to be in a good mood and you'll pay enough without them adding a secret "annoyance fee" to your account.

When you have an appointment, take a range of props and your rabbit or whatever you use, with you. Let the photographer set the pictures as they see fit. Don't be too concerned about preserving the secrets of your tricks from them. They are professionals too.

It is a good idea to get the photographer's approval in writing for you to use any pictures they supply to promote yourself as you see fit. Some photographers try to reserve publication rights to all the pictures they take for themselves.

Press

Don't cause problems for or annoy any people in the media.

Kroger Babb had a more colorful version of that statement and following it helped him to amass a fortune or two with movies and stage promotions at minimal cost.

When you start to get serious about making money from your performances, you should write a fact sheet about yourself. This is not for the media, it's just to make sure that you have anything that the general community might find interesting about your performances and background set very clearly in your own mind.

If a reporter asks you questions, answer them truthfully - don't gild the lily.

If a photographer or film crew at an event want pictures of your performance, or you, try to be as cooperative as you can. You may not get much direct publicity - they're probably there at the invitation of the organization that you were booked

by, but that organization will appreciate you helping to get **their** message out anyway.

Forget the common movie image of reporters as aggressive and rude - they have a job to do, tight deadlines and a lot of people wanting the space where they might put your picture or the story that has your name (if you're lucky).

I've let a press photographer inside my Punch and Judy puppet booth so that he could photograph the watching children from behind the stage. The picture that was published had Punch and Judy at either side of it and dozens of smiling children in the middle. I've stayed back after shows so that reporters could confirm details and photographers could get photos, many of which were never used. It's good experience for us. Creating a reputation as a pleasant, cooperative and undemanding subject could pay off for you in unexpected ways later on.

If you want to use pictures (or text) that were produced by the media, always ask first. They usually will agree provided that you attach a note ("Courtesy of the BESTPAPERINTOWN Inc" or whatever) but they may not give permission, especially if you want to use the material on the Internet. You will usually have to buy a copy of any photos that you want to use.

Building Your "Ezy Magic" Show

Audiences won't mind whether you buy all of your tricks and equipment, including tables, wands and sound equipment, or if you and your partner, or family, make everything that you use.

Whatever you decide to do, ensure that everything you use is the best you can manage - everything works correctly and looks great! You want all audiences to see that you are of professional standard, don't you?

Making magic props and equipment requires particular skills that you may not have and buying everything may require more money than you want to spend at first.

But most people reading this book can probably put together a show from these tricks that will amaze and amuse their friends and even paying audiences!

This section shows you various ways to make and decorate magic props. I'll suggest some basic methods and some slightly more advanced. Some readers might be able to do the more advanced stuff right now, while other readers might need to use the simpler methods until they have more experience.

You might also ask family and friends for advice and even hire people to make particular equipment that you need. Pay people their going rate for helping you but, if they really don't want to charge you for some work they do, find some practical way to show them that you sincerely appreciate their help.

Make sure that any information about how you use the equipment that someone makes for you is kept confidential. It's also important that the helper, whether or not you pay them, does not make copies of the equipment for others. I have heard some horror stories! That's the reason that I include this negative-sounding caution in the book.

Paint and stains are the usual way to decorate wooden and cardboard equipment.

Some people use adhesive-backed plastic (a thicker version of the material that children cover their schoolbooks with). This is widely available and some have a

covering of powdered felt which looks very good on some gear. The black felt type is particularly useful inside containers to help disguise a hidden compartment.

You can also look for suitably colored and patterned wallpaper. Make sure that the covering that you use is durable as well as colorful. You want a finish on your props that will last for more than just a couple of shows.

Clothing

Your clothing must be the best you can afford (the "brands" aren't as important as the quality). Keep all of your costume, including shoes and accessories, just for performing, if possible.

Keep them all in one place so they're to hand when you need them for performance or practice.



Wear your costume when you practice your tricks. It's just as important to wear your jacket when you practice your close-up tricks as it is to wear the outfit you have for your stage show when you practice that. You must know exactly where a pocket will be when you want to put something in it and that it is deep enough for the object to fit.

You might want special work done to your jacket. Don't worry about confidentiality with professional seamstresses. If they are any good, they are usually too busy to remember what special thing they did to your costume five minutes after you picked up and paid for the work. They probably have done much stranger things to other people's clothing than the sort of thing that we magicians ask of them.

First Aid Kit



This is your Magic, or Clown, "first aid" kit - not the one for minor accidents around home. Get a small, strong plastic box to hold:

Mirror - A two-sided mirror, where one side magnifies is useful

breath spray and mints

glass cleaner if you wear glasses.

Needles, thimble and threads (colors matching your clothing)

safety pins, various sizes

rubber bands, various sizes

adhesive tape; heavy tape as well as some for just sticking papers together.

scissors

batteries - put new ones in monthly, even if you didn't use the previous packet!

press-to-seal plastic bags

marking pens, black, red and white to quickly fix scratches on painted equipment.

blank cardboard, various sizes, thickness and colors. You may need to make temporary signs or use some to protect or separate equipment in your case.

tissues

moist tissues (contain lanolin and a mild cleaner) - freshen up just before you go on and remove the crumbs of the biscuit that you should leave until afterwards.

Cassette recorder to tape your shows (and you do, don't you?)

Spare blank cassette.

If you are a Clown, you can use the same case for your make-up. That way, you are unlikely to leave it at home. It is better, though, to have separate boxes and make sure that you don't leave either behind.

Make two copies of a list of everything that you need to take with you.

Group Performance

Sometimes a group decides to add some magic or a clown routine to a performance they do. Dance troupes, actors and community groups that do public shows (to raise funds) contact me from time to time.

If that's your situation, you'll find tricks and routines in "Ezy Magic SHOWS" that you can adapt. You might approach a local magician for more help. Most are reliable but I remember the lady that called me a few years ago. She was part of a group that did acting workshops in schools.

They were invited to Asia for an exchange visit and she rang me about a week before they were to leave. She'd asked a local magician for some simple tricks that she could add to her workshop. That "kind" gentleman sold her two tricks that actually needed several weeks' rehearsal before she could present them well, even though she had acting experience.

She got some tricks from me that she could have up to speed with in a week. I would like to have been present, but invisible, if she met her local advisor again!

Everyone that is involved in your presentation is important. So is their part of the production. You should all rehearse together.

One person should be the manager. This may be someone who is part of your stage presentation or someone that, for whatever reason, does not take part. They listen to all members' input about the presentation, and then make the decision - the final script.

If your group just does everything after a general discussion, because you get along so well together, you have a trigger for tension, discord and disaster. Elect one capable and willing person to have the responsibility, and then support them.

If you disagree with their decisions, it's not good to argue right up to the time of performance or let everyone down by breaking away from the group. If you or any other member thinks they could do better, they get the position and responsibility next time.

Your List

A vital step in preparing your Magic show is to make two copies of a list covering everything that you need to give your best performance.

Tape one copy inside the case with the equipment for your show and keep one with your pocket diary. The diary has the details of the location and time of your shows, fee payable and the name of the person who is in charge there (don't forget their phone numbers, including their mobile).

The list needs to cover:

Transport arrangements; are you driving, getting a lift, using other transport?



The contents of each box, case and other items that you take.

Check everything is on your list and check that every listed item is in place the day before your show.

Then, on the day of your show, check it again, preferably at least two hours before you start your journey.

It's common for popular magicians, even part-time professionals, to do more than one show on the same day.

Check that you have time and materials to refill and reset anything that you used in an earlier show, if you want to use it for later shows on the same day.

You also must arrange sufficient time to travel between shows and set-up at the next venue. Booking shows without enough time between them will stress you and you'll lose future bookings (and your hard-won reputation) if some mishap causes you to be late for a show!

Bookers (especially parents managing a crowd of excited children at a birthday party) expect a magician, not an excuse.

Accessories

Tables

Magicians use different types of tables at various times during their career. Today's magicians use only one or two tables during a performance, but in the early 1900's, many had several tables on stage at one time.

The "wonder worker" would pick up a trick from one table, perform it and put the prop down. Then he (it was usually a man) went to the next table, picked up another marvelous piece of apparatus and demonstrated that, and so on!

We've learned the importance of focusing the spectators' attention on the magician. Keep tables to a minimum.

Card Table

Some magicians start with a folding card table because:

It folds, so it's easy to carry

They just need to put a large, bright cloth over it

They already have it

Don't put your country's flag on it! You should never put anything on your flag, nor let it touch the ground!

There are some possible problems with using the family's card table:

It may be worn out, fold at the wrong time and spill your tricks!

They are usually too low. Your tabletop needs to be about waist height for convenience and so that your audience can see what is on it.

Some other family member may need it when you want it

It does not have a professional appearance.

But they're okay for informal shows.

Music Stands



When I began to learn Magic in the 1960's, many amateur magicians used music stands that were made entirely of metal and could be folded when stored. They replaced the sheet-music holder with a flat, felt covered board that became their tabletop.

Those stands could not hold the weight of many props and there was often a spectacular *crash!*

Modern music stands, with a single central rod and solid weighted base should be quite safe as well as being professional in appearance.

Case Tables

Some Magic dealers can supply these.

Some are shaped like an attaché case, with a folding metal stand that you carry inside the case. Part of the case may become your tabletop or there may be a separate top that you keep inside the case when you are not performing. You attach (or unfold) and secure the tabletop, then attach the stand to the bottom of the case and you are ready.

It will hold small props. You can have your entire show in the case if you select your tricks carefully.

Please, be thoughtful of your audience; don't put fifteen different card tricks in the case and say that you have a show!

Most "case tables" are suitcase tables. Some look more like decorated wooden packing cases than suitcases. Most are wooden, with roller-wheels permanently attached to the base to make them easier to move about. They have plenty of room for the equipment for your show.

The cost depends, in part, on the quality of construction and the material used in making the case. They can be expensive because the number sold is relatively small.

Be sure that a particular case will suit your show before making the investment.

Pilot Case Table

You could use two of these flat-sided cases. Carry your equipment in one case and have the other one empty. Put one chair at each side of you on the platform.



Put the full case on the chair at the right, if you are left-handed or on the left, if you are right-handed.

Take the props from the full case as needed, then discard them in the other case. If you carefully select appropriate tricks, the props will mostly be ready for your next show by just using the cases in reverse order!

Handkerchiefs

I am referring to the fabric squares that magicians and clowns use (produce, vanish and change the appearance of) in their performances.

They're usually called "silks". Magicians used to use fine silk with unbeatable strength and compressibility - you could squeeze a lot into a small space and they would show hardly a wrinkle when you produced them and displayed them to your audience.

That type of silk is now hard to get and very expensive. The silk handkerchiefs that are currently sold by dealers vary in quality but are usable.

Look around or ask friends for information about fabrics that are colorful, strong, and resist creasing. All "silks" should be neatly hemmed.

In this book, I refer to them as handkerchiefs or silk squares. They can be any size that is appropriate to the trick you are doing and the size of the audience.

Wands

The traditional wand is wooden and colored black with white tips. Whatever style of wand you use, treat it with respect. Show your audience that your wand

is not just an object that you've made or bought from your favorite magic shop, but something with special qualities that helps you to entertain and amaze them.

A lot of magicians use wands that are not like the traditional model! If you can improve your show with a wand that is made from:

Clear Perspex

Polished metal

A cardboard tube

... that's fine. Just make it *magical!*

You can use a wand that is much larger, smaller, flat sided or even bent (if you are doing a comedy act). You can even use more than one type of wand during your program.

Making a traditional wand is fairly easy, even if you have little mechanical ability. The wand is usually made from common dowel rod, about a half an inch wide and twelve inches long.

Decide whether you will paint or polish the wand. I use shiny enamel paint for wands that I make from dowel, but prefer clear varnish or polish for those made from natural woods.

Just put packing tape over the last inch at each end of the wand (that will be the tips), then paint or polish the main part. Let it dry thoroughly before you apply the second coating.

If you want to enhance the finish of a painted wand, rub the dry painted surface down with fine sandpaper between coats.

Now, put packing tape over the center part of the wand while you paint the tips. Make sure it is thoroughly dry before you apply the second coat.

You can make your wand from more exotic woods if you have them. And you can make the tips from a differently colored wood or even metal.

The length and thickness of your wand is entirely up to you too.

Also Starring ...

Magicians and clowns often use other people, and animals, in their presentations. Here is some general advice for you to think about when inviting someone (or an animal) to share your spotlight.

Animals

Animals can add a unique appeal to your act if they are treated and trained correctly.

You may see magicians and clowns use doves, rabbits, dogs, parrots and goldfish and many more exotic animals in their shows.

You should always treat animals and birds as well as you treat members of their families.

I've used doves and rabbits but I don't use any animals now.

Here are some points to consider before using a volunteer that can't say "No" in your act:

Practice the way that you will lift the bird or animal from the equipment when you produce it. The audience must see that you care about your animal assistant; it's not just another prop to you. If it's hurt when you lift it out, you probably will not work for anyone present again and may face other penalties.

If the animal or bird is not completely at ease, the audience will hate you.

The animal or bird may use your host's carpet or furniture as a toilet. You need insurance!

Train them early to remain as quiet as possible while they are hidden.

Even well-trained birds may fly away from you because of noise or strange surroundings. How do you get them back quickly and safely?

They might bite someone.

If the audience expects your rabbit but it's sick at home, you might need a spare.

You may need two of each for some tricks. That's extra cost and care.

Always have a veterinarian check your animals and birds.

You need well-made, safe props for tricks that use animals and birds.

You need special boxes, cages or bags just to transport them.

Carry food and water for them. Small birds can't be without seed or water for long.

Looking after them before and during the show is extra work.

Keep the time that they are confined (hidden) in apparatus to a **minimum**.

The animal or bird must be comfortable and get fresh air while it is hidden.

I used to discuss any new animal/bird tricks with the Veterinarian (and paid for longer consultations) just for my peace of mind. The only thing he ever suggested that I should not do was color the feathers of a dove; I didn't do it.

Most dealers have animals and birds that they use to check any new tricks they intend to sell. They look after their animals well too.

Assistants

If you are lucky enough to have someone offer to assist you during your show, you can double the impact of your program. Always treat assistants very well.

Your assistant must know your show almost as well as you do. They need to rehearse with you.

You both need to work out how to move around the performing area without taking the audience's attention from an important part of a trick,

blocking the audience's view of the other person or

drawing the audience's attention to something that you don't want them to see.

Simple actions like handing equipment to each other and responding to each other's actions also have to be practiced.

The advantages include:

You can share the preparation, re-packing and driving

Your assistant can take some props off and bring others to you

The assistant's personality will enhance the appeal of the show.

Two minds to work on presentations and any problems with the tricks

Children

These days, all performers should be very careful about how they approach and deal with children at all times. Parents, and others, have had to become more careful, even suspicious, of everyone that they don't know well.

The most innocent actions can easily be misunderstood and explanations probably won't be enough to repair your reputation.

Don't touch any child except on their hands and, possibly, very lightly on the top of their head.

Don't let any child, except close relatives, grab you. If a child, especially a very young one, rushes toward you with their arms stretched out to hug you, drop to one knee and gently take their hands in yours as they get close.

It is no longer appropriate to produce and distribute candy for children or give it to child volunteers. Apart from the "stranger danger" aspect, many children are not supposed to have some types of candy. Some may have allergies. The wrong type of candy might affect their health.

Paranoid? Not really. That's the way things are today, unfortunately.

Family

Will some family members assist you in your program? That sounds great but make sure right at the start:

Do they **want** to put away their own interests to rehearse and perform with you?

Do they like performing magic or clowning and being in the spotlight?

Do they like wearing and caring for costumes?

Did they just volunteer or agree to your request because of a family obligation?

Do they do their part well enough to maintain the professional image of the act?

Volunteers

Treat all volunteers that help in your shows as you would expect a stranger to treat your closest relatives.

Volunteers are friendly, generous people that leave the anonymity of the audience and venture into the spotlight to help you give the best performance you can.

They risk being made a fool of (you've probably heard or even seen some instances) and they never ask for part of your fee.

Even if you are doing a broad comedy act, you'll get a better reaction from the audience by turning any jokes against yourself rather than the volunteer.

You may see some professionals belittle their volunteers and get a great reaction. They probably worked that routine for years and suffered bad reactions while they fine-tuned it.

You don't want any bad reactions, especially when you are starting out.

Some professionals have paid "imitation" volunteers (stooges) just for routines like those.

Magician, Clown or Magic Clown?



Doing magic shows and clowning are two related sets of skills. The time and effort to reach a good standard in either can be substantial.



Some very good clowns use some magical techniques. This adds variety to their shows - they can entertain a wider range of audiences. It's the same with some magicians that use techniques and equipment that were developed by clowns.

But anyone who believes that they can use clowning techniques and props to cover flaws in their magic shows (or the other way round) will not impress audiences.



If you add techniques and props from the other discipline to your presentation, the entire presentation must be of the same high standard.

The "Ezy Magic" Magician

The tricks in this book are less than one hundredth of one percent of the available tricks. My personal magic library is almost a thousand books and manuscripts.

There is probably nearly that much produced every couple of years with modern technology making the publication of small runs relatively easy.

I've selected tricks with two main criteria:

Ease of use

Impact

They're simple but need to be studied and rehearsed. Think about the people that you perform to. Pick tricks that you believe will best entertain them.

Practice the tricks and the routines that you combine them in to, several times before you try them on anyone, even your family. Your family may become fairly jaded after you've shown them a few tricks and routines that you are preparing more than once each.

Some might try to encourage you with "over the top" praise even when you know something went wrong. Don't try to get them to be more critical. Just allow for the generosity in their comments when you ask them to watch you in future.

Watch yourself in a mirror sometimes. Tape your presentations; both audio and video if possible. This can be a shock at first but is very valuable, even though you only use one camera and don't get all the angles that you would get if a professional studio filmed you.

Size of Tricks

You can sometimes adapt tricks with small objects for large venues by increasing the size of the equipment that you use, and vice versa.

Always keep in mind the comfort of your audience. Don't expect them to be able to see the difference between the Eight of Clubs and the Nine of Clubs at fifteen feet with ordinary playing cards.

You could just use larger cards with simple symbols on them or do a different trick.

Some professional magicians do very well with small tricks in fairly large theatres. That's because they have years of experience. They know how to point up the differences between the small pieces of equipment with actions and words that they've perfected over many performances.

Costume

Are you going to perform as yourself or "in character" - a wizard, old-time conjuror, a fictional or mythical person?

Special characters can add appeal to your show if you do them well. They also impose extra demands on you to remain in character, move and talk appropriately and you have to use tricks and equipment to suit your character.



Do **not** use a fictional character that may be covered by copyright or trademark. For instance, you can use a Wizard where you make up all the details but not "Harry Potter". Don't impersonate such characters and don't use pictures or other material identified with them in your tricks unless you have specific written permission from the rights' holders.

I use coasters (beer-mats) with certain company trademarks on them. I always ask their permission. They usually say, "Yes" and even supply coasters for me. If any say, "no", I would not mind - that's their right.

Respect the work and rights' of others and save yourself the possibility of fierce penalties.

Boxes

Tricks with large apparatus like these boxes have been important in magicians' stage performances for a very long time. Assistants on these shows were known as "box-jumpers".

The boxes and other apparatus that modern illusionists use are much more sophisticated than we need to present highly entertaining illusions to audiences.

Get good equipment, whether you make it or pay someone to build it for you, decorate it well, have everyone practice thoroughly and you should get your investment back many times over.

Flip Down Production Box

This is a very adaptable design for different magic or clown programs.

A large one can help you make people appear and disappear. Use a small one a few feet from your audience to make a candy bar appear - you can make it disappear after the show!

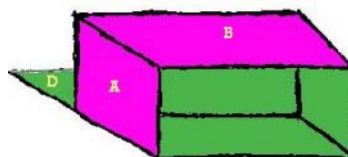
You could make this from a couple of cardboard boxes if you are going to only use it a few times for unpaid shows. You could perhaps make up one with cardboard, if you have that on hand, to work out any bugs before having a wooden one made. For steady or professional use, you need a wooden one, but they are not difficult to make.

The box is wider than it is deep. Its depth and its height are identical.

It has a total of seven panels:

A] 2 end panels for the box

B] 2 long panels for the front and



back	(top (C) removed for clarity)
------	-------------------------------

C] 1 long panel for the top of the box

D] 2 long panels for the two bases

That's right, this box has two bottoms!

Assemble the two end panels [**A**] and the two long sides [**B**] in the normal way.

Attach a thin edge strip to the long piece that will be the top.

Hinge the back edge of the top to the top of the box's back panel. Use cloth hinges if your box is made from cardboard and regular hinges if it is made of wood.

Attach the two bases together on one long edge. Put a strut at each end of them, from one to the other at a 45 degree angle. These struts are to ensure that the two bases remain at right angles (90 degrees) to each other.

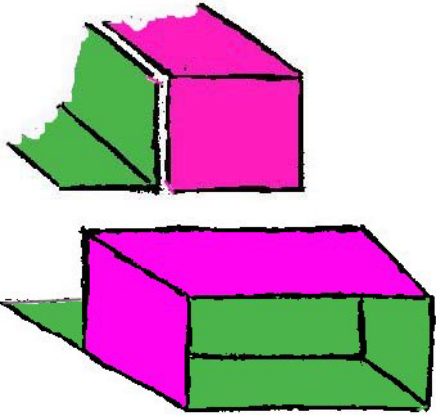
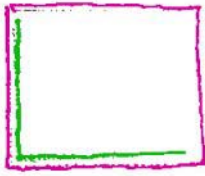
Both bases will have to be slightly shorter in each dimension than the other panels so that they will not jam when you tip the main part of the box over.

Put the box over the joined bases.

Now you have to hinge the edge where the bases are joined to one long edge of the box where it is open at the bottom. This should be at the bottom of the long panel that is not hinged to the lid of the box.

Your prop will look like a wide box with a hinged lid.

Put whatever it is that you want to magically produce in the box and close the lid.

<p>Top and struts removed for clarity.</p> <p>The box is tipped forward to show the audience that it is empty. The mauve sections are the side and end panels. The green sections are the two bases.</p> <p>In the second picture is from the audience viewpoint. They see the green inside of the box</p> <p>The second base (green, at the back of the picture, is not seen by the audience.</p>	
<p>This picture shows the box in upright position. The 2 bases (green) are both inside the box.</p>	

Stand behind the box with the hinge of the lid on the side nearest to you.

Hold the lid closed and tip the box away from you. Tip the box forward and you will see the person, or whatever you intend to produce, behind the false bottom of the box.

But they will not be seen by the audience when you lean down and open the lid because the other base of the box will swing in to place and the audience will think that is the bottom of the box.

Close the lid again, swing the box back to the upright position and re-open the lid.

Your assistant can now rise up from inside the box to finish your magical production.

Collapsible Box Production

You and your assistant show two boxes with neither tops nor bases. One box is slightly larger than the other and you put it around the smaller one.

Say the Magic word and another assistant or perhaps the Guest of Honor appears from the boxes that you just showed were absolutely empty!

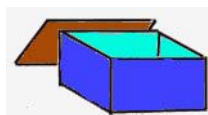
A prolific magical inventor and dealer, Gen Grant, devised the box on which this is based.

Like the Flip Down Box, you can build this large enough to produce a human being and you can make it from either wood or cardboard.

There are two sections to this apparatus; two boxes with neither tops nor bases. Both are hinged so that they can be collapsed almost flat. One “box” is slightly larger in each direction than the other one.

Do not use heavy materials when you make this prop. You and one assistant will have to lift the larger section high enough to place it around the other box.

To perform, set the smaller box on the stage and the larger one, collapsed, leaning against the back of it.



The person that you will produce from the box is crouched, hidden behind the flattened larger box.

Your other assistant holds one end of the flattened box (to keep it upright) as you walk forward past the smaller box and start to talk to the audience.

You lift the open smaller box up so that your spectators can see there is nothing inside it without you having to say that.

Ask your assistant to lift and open the other box. The assistant starts to do this, pretending that it is heavy, so that you have time to move backward and put the smaller box down **around the hidden person** who is behind the box that your assistant is about to lift.

Now you can help your assistant to open and display the larger box, then you put it down around the smaller box.

Make a magical gesture and then produce the Guest of Honor or a second assistant.

This is an excellent way to produce the guest of honor, provided they go through the routine a couple of times with you before the show.

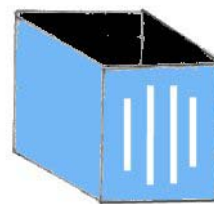
Castle Production

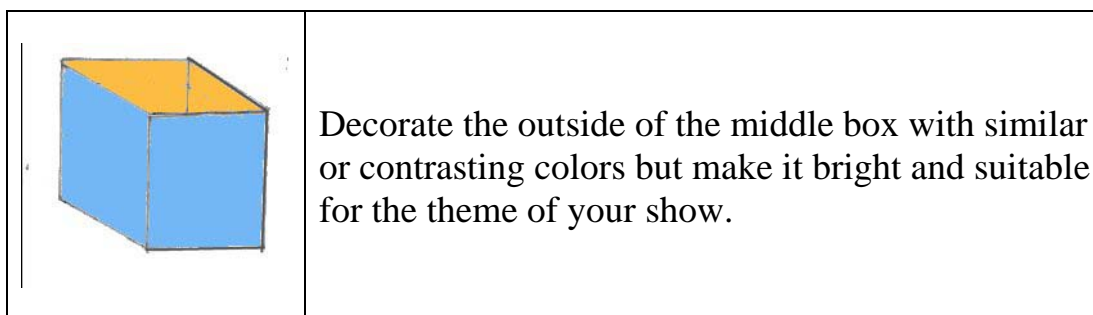
A version of the Collapsible Box Production that you can do by yourself.

This box is ideal for when you want to produce one or more solid items and it can be made to whatever size will suit your need. I've seen some that you can hold in one hand while you pull items from it with your other hand. But you can make or buy one that is large enough to produce a human being!

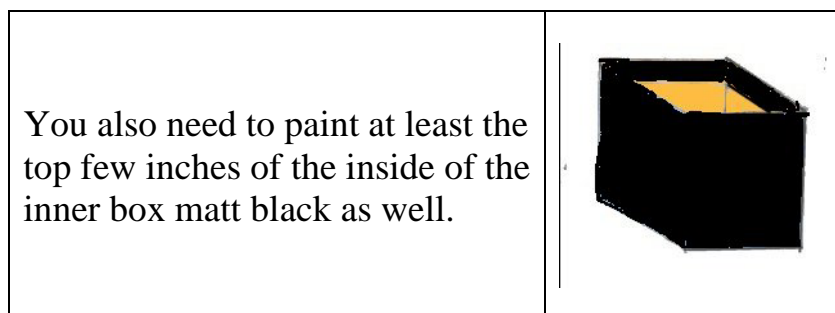
You need three boxes that don't have bases or tops. The three boxes are graduated in size, so that they can nest inside each other.

The largest box is the outside of your "castle". Decorate it to suit your show; a castle, gift box etc. Cut large slots or have a large circular hole in the center of the front panel





Cover the inside of the largest box and the outer surface of the smallest box with black felt for the best effect. If you cannot get black felt, use the adhesive backed plastic sheet that has black flock on it or paint those areas with matt black paint.



You can use a cylinder as the smallest “box”. This may be better optically as there are no edges on the inner container for the audience to glimpse.

To perform, have the person or items that will be produced ready inside the smallest box. Point to the outer box and tell your story to the audience. Now you and an assistant (you can't use an audience volunteer here as they would see into the inner boxes) lift the outside box “so that the audience can see the inside (really the middle) box”. Of course, you don't tell them there are actually three boxes. They think that there are just the two decorated boxes that they can see.

Replace the outer box, and then lift the middle one up out of it. The black surfaces will hide the smallest box and your audience will think that the largest box is empty.

Replace the middle box, make a magical gesture and say the Magic word, then you can produce the person or items from the innermost box to, hopefully, great applause!

If you make this equipment tall and narrow, you could put a tabletop on it and use the table through the show.

For your final and biggest trick, remove the table-top and do the production from the castle.

Of course, you would not have a person or animal in the box when used this way. The time that they have to remain concealed would be far too long!

Paper Tricks

As you read through the book, you'll see tricks with paper in other sections.

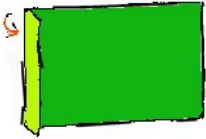
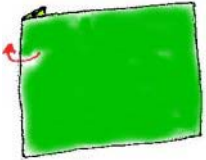
Think about different tricks that use similar materials. That will lead you to work up original routines. Audiences appreciate and remember performers who add their own original touches to tricks.

Torn and Restored "Whatever"

The basic trick is to show the spectators a piece of paper, tear it up and then restore it. It's very easy to do and surprisingly effective even in the basic form.

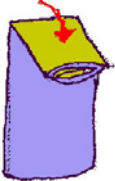
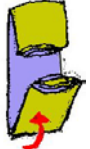
Do you think this is a strange name for a trick? The "whatever" refers to the fact that the "piece of paper" can be many different things. But first, let's lay down the steps for the basic effect:

You need two identical sheets of paper. Fold up one sheet, concertina fashion;

	fold about one eighth of the sheet towards the center.
	fold the doubled piece to the back of the paper. Press the creases

Fold this thicker section onto the front of the paper.

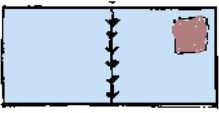

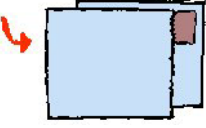



Repeat these actions, folding to the back, pressing the creases and then folding the thick section to the front until your folded paper is just the width of the folded section.

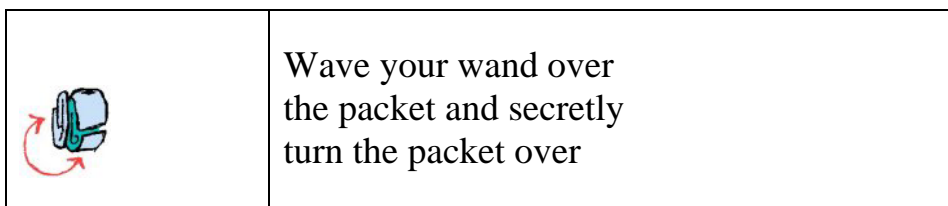
Fold the top third of the packet down.	
Then fold the bottom third up towards the top.	

Glue the flat back section of the folded sheet to the back of the flat sheet at the top, left-hand corner but place it about one inch in from the edges of the flat sheet.

Lay the paper aside with the flat sheet on the table and the folded sheet on top. Put a weight on the folded sheet for a few hours to further compress the bundle of paper.

To Perform:

	<p>Show the front of the paper. One hand holds the top corner and ensures that the audience doesn't see the flat packet behind it.</p>
	<p>Use your other hand at the center, top of the sheet to tear it in half.</p>
	<p>Put the normal section in front of the section that is hiding the packet.</p>
	<p>Your other hand again tears down the center of the sheets. Then put the normal piece in front of the sheets in front of the bundle.</p>
	<p>Fold down the top third of the loose sheets forward.</p>
	<p>Fold the bottom third of the loose sheets upward. You want it to look like the hidden bundle.</p>



Now your prepared bundle is at the front, closest to your spectators.

Because you concertina-folded the packet, it will almost unfold by itself when you let the edge go. You just hold the loose pieces at the back of the "restored" sheet as you accept the audience's applause.

That basic version of the trick still works well. Use your local newspaper for the routine and tell the audience some funny things that you pretend to read from the paper as you are tearing off the pieces.

That's how some professionals use this trick when they take their show from city to city. They buy extra copies at each place that they perform in, make up this trick with the newspaper and adapt the same jokes that they always use with names and places that they see in the newspaper. This makes an impact on the audience. It will work just as well for you.

Variations on the Basic Trick

I sometimes prepare the "restored" paper with broad strips of packaging tape across it, as if that is what is holding the restored paper together. This idea, which was originated by Billy McComb (a British magician now living in the U.S.A.), gets a great response.

If you are doing a comedy act, you might tear up the sheet that you will restore and glue it back together with the pieces mixed up. The audience will expect that you'll restore the paper exactly as it had been and the mixed-up pieces will be a great surprise.

We used to get large format British comics printed in color on newsprint when I started doing Magic. I used these for this routine while I told young audiences

jokes and tore the comic apart, pretending that I was reading the jokes from the paper.

You can use this method and basic plot in any way that suits the theme of your show.

You could have a funny sign printed on the sheet that you tear up and an optometrist's eye chart on the one that you restore. Tell a story about someone complaining about the sign; that it has too many words and is hard to read. So you tear up the sign as you tell the story and finish with a line such as, "So I told him that, if he couldn't read my sign, he'd better go and read this one" as you unfold and display the chart.

Years ago, I used a commercial version that Roy Baker, another British magician, developed; a "BEWARE OF THE BULL" sign. When you restored it, there was a picture of a fierce bull instead of the words!

If you want to do something a little fancier, use two sheets of thin paper that are different colors; for instance, one black and one white. Restore the papers as one sheet that is a simple picture of, say, a magician's top hat and a rabbit, with the various parts of the picture made from blocks of the black and white papers.

Rope Tricks



Cut the Rope!

This is the classic "rope trick" just as the torn and restored paper is the classic "paper trick". The devious minds of Magic's most creative performers and designers have spawned hundreds of variations.

I'll tell you briefly how to do the basic trick which was also described in my Ezy Magic book.

Cut and Quick Restoration

You can work this by yourself. You need:


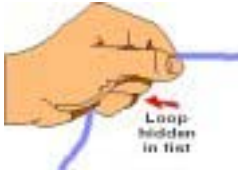



a piece of rope up to three feet long


a short piece of rope about four inches long and

scissors.

Stitch and glue together the ends of the short piece.

To perform:

	<p>Thread the small loop on to one end of the long piece.</p>
<p>Show the long rope but hide the loop in your hand.</p>	
	<p>Fold the rope and lift the center. As you bring the center through your hand, swap it for the loop.</p>
<p>Pick up your scissors and cut through the short piece</p>	
	<p>Tie the short piece around the long rope. It looks like you are tying the ends together.</p>

<p>Your right hand rolls the rope round your left hand. Grip the knot in your right hand and let the rest of the rope slide through.</p>	 <p>Knot hidden in fist</p>
<p>Your right hand pulls off the knot & drops it on your table.</p>	<p>APPLAUSE!</p>

Build the finale of the trick by waving your wand over the bundle of rope, then let one end free so that the rope uncoils from your hand. Stand with both arms raised (the applause position). In one hand you have your wand and the rope is draped down from the other.

APPLAUSE!

No Cut or Restore!

This is a great version to use in a stage show. You don't actually cut or restore the rope! One drawback is that you do need two well-rehearsed assistants on stage with you.

You use a dangerous looking knife with a shiny blade. Make sure the point and the edge of the blade are both **blunt**.

Cut a long piece of thick, soft rope in half. Stitch the ends of the rope closed to prevent fraying.

Apply some rubber cement to the cut edges and let it dry thoroughly. Press both the cemented edges together so that it looks as if there is just one length of rope.

To perform, your assistants bring on the rope in a coil. They each take one end and walk to opposite sides and towards the back of the platform, letting the rope uncoil between them.

You pick up the knife and display it to your audience. Then you throw it as close as you can to the center of the rope. At that moment, your assistants each pull

their end of the rope and, if you've practiced this well, the audience will think that you threw the knife and cut the rope.

You walk back and pick up the "cut" pieces of rope. Take both edges in one hand and squeeze them together. At the same time, you wave your other hand, with the knife, over the rope.

The audience starts applauding when they see that you "restored" the rope to one piece!

Mini Indian Rope Trick

You talk about the Indian Rope Trick where a boy is supposed to have climbed a rope that an Indian magician made rise, unsupported, into the sky. Then the boy vanished or the magician chased him up the rope and the boy came down in pieces!

You can change the story around to suit yourself and your audience. After all, you're talking about something that never really happened!

That won't stop you showing the spectators a special reduced size India Rope Trick.

You need:

A soda straw


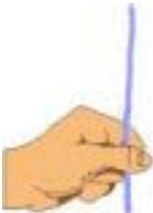
A piece of soft, hollow rope that the straw can be pushed in to.

Your rope should be a bit over twice the length of the straw. Push the straw in to the rope. You may have to remove loose fibers from inside the rope first. If the straw is difficult to fit in the rope, trim the end of the straw that you are pushing in to the rope so that it is rounded. You do want the straw to be a close fit.

When you show the audience your rope, twist the empty part of the rope a few times and just let the part that has the straw dangle.

Now, you tell the audience about the India Rope Trick. Say that you wanted to do the full-size trick for them but the budget was too tight and this was all of the special rope that you could get.

After you have twisted the rope a few times, grasp the part near the center where the straw ends and raise the end containing the straw toward the ceiling while you gesture magically with your other hand.

	<p>Twist soft part while the part with the straw just hangs loosely.</p>
<p>For levitation, point the stiff part of rope up and loose part hangs</p>	

Keep the limp section of the rope from moving while you do this and the illusion of the whole rope going stiff is quite good.

Give the spectators just a couple of seconds to see that you've done another miracle, then let the straw drop.

Now you wrap the whole length of the rope around your hands a few times to show, without saying anything, that it is just a piece of rope.

You'll have to replace the straw before you can do the trick again so make sure that you charge a fee big enough to cover the cost!

Handkerchief from Rope

Push a handkerchief into a similar piece of hollow rope and you are ready, after a little practice, to do a trick that has two small but satisfying climaxes.

Show the audience the rope. It appears quite normal, especially if you have neatly trimmed the open end.

Grasp each end with one hand. Stretch the rope and the handkerchief inside it slightly. Lift one end in to the air and let it go. The extra stiffness caused by the handkerchief will make the rope stand up for at least a few seconds. (CLIMAX I)

Grasp the top, open end of the rope, and gently pry up the end of the handkerchief from inside it. Now, your other hand grabs the rope at the top, squeezes and pulls the rope down off the handkerchief. Your fist will hide the rope as it compresses in to a small bundle and the audience will only see the handkerchief! (CLIMAX II)

Handkerchief Tricks

Vanishing Handkerchief

The Magician shows a handkerchief and a large sheet of paper and then twists the paper into a cone.

He puts the handkerchief in the cone, pushes it to the bottom with his wand and waves the wand over the cone.

He unfurls the cone and the audience see that the handkerchief vanished.



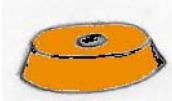

For this quick trick, you need:

A special Wand





A square handkerchief

A large piece of stiff paper or a sheet from a newspaper

To make the wand, you need:

<p>a tube with one closed end and the other end open</p>	
<p>Thick, stiff wire. Blunt the end of the wire or it may damage your handkerchief.</p>	
<p>Wooden button, slightly wider than the tube opening. Drill a hole in the center and taper the sides of the button</p>	
<p>Push the wire into the hole and glue it. The button becomes the other end of your wand</p>	

To perform:

<p>Show the paper and form it in to a cone.</p>	
	<p>Put the button end into the cone. Leave the button and wire in the cone. Don't let the audience see the open end of the wand.</p>
<p>Drop the square on to the wire inside the cone.</p>	
	<p>Push the silk down with the wand. It slides inside the wand. Pull the wand out.</p>

Bring the wand out of the cone and wave it around in a magical manner.

Here's where you ask your audience, if you are performing for a young audience, to say the Magic word. I always use the name or slogan of the company that is sponsoring me, or "Happy Birthday" with the birthday child's name if it's a party. That always makes the sponsor or the parents very happy.

Now, you just flick the cone so that it falls open and your audience will be amazed that the cloth is gone!

If you use plain, opaque paper for the cone, show just one side when you make the cone. Print “**GONE**” in large letters on the other side of the paper (which becomes the inside of the cone). This certainly can add to the impact on your audience.

This trick illustrates an important magical technique - misdirection. The wand is critical in this trick but your audience will focus on the innocent cone. You may find that someone will grab the cone if you leave it around after the show.



You finish the sneaky part of the trick when you push the open-ended wand back into the cone and over the wire and the handkerchief. But the audience think that the magic has not yet happened, so they watch you more closely **after** the "dirty work" has been done!


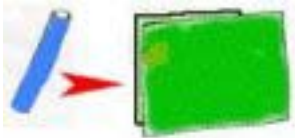
Handkerchief Vanisher and Producer.

This device is easy to make. It will make a couple of handkerchiefs vanish and seem very innocent at even just a short distance.

You can use the various boxes and other equipment in this book to produce or vanish as many handkerchiefs, of any size, as you like. When you make this item, make a few at the same time with different kinds of paper so you can use it in different shows.




You need:

Two identical sheets of paper to suit your theme	
a narrow tube, as long as the height of the paper	

<p>Two or three handkerchiefs.</p>	
<p>Glue the sheets together with the tube hidden between them</p>	

The tube does not have to be round. I've used a triangular-shaped one, made of soft card that will bend if I bend the paper.

To Perform:

<p>Show 2 handkerchiefs and the (double) sheet of paper</p>	
<p>Roll the paper around the secret tube and push the hanks into the tube</p>	
	<p>Unroll the paper to show the squares have gone!</p>

When you show the handkerchiefs and the open paper to your audience, use your arm to hide the bulge of the tube from your audience.

If you have handkerchiefs that are identical to the ones that you vanish in the tube, do another trick with different apparatus to produce the duplicates. The extra effort will be rewarded as the routine will have a greater effect on spectators than just doing a vanish.

You could use this item in reverse to produce a couple of silk squares. Keep these points in mind if you do that:

Cut one side of the tube down slightly so that the edge of the first handkerchief sticks up slightly, making it easier for you to grab it.

When you put the squares in the tube, twist one corner of the first handkerchief around a corner of the next handkerchief and do the same with the rest of them. This way, when you pull one out of the tube, the corner of the next one will pop up. That is a much easier way to pull all of them out of the tube in turn.

Don't use the two versions of this apparatus in the same show.

The "Ezy Magic" Clown



Circus clowns are as accomplished as any other circus performers.



Many are great musicians and acrobats as well as master clowns. This gives them a broad range of methods to poke gentle fun at the feats of their fellow performers and also many ways to engage the audience.

Some people think that they only need some outlandish costume and a squeaky voice - they're a clown! But they just look and sound silly. Practice your clowning skits and think about the impression your audience will get.

Make-up

Use the best quality make-up that you can afford. That's not really a problem because it's also a good idea to use less rather than more - where more is the half bottle of thin white you'll see many beginners slap over their faces and, often, their costumes as well!

Use a quality white pancake make-up for large areas like your face. Use red greasepaint for a red mouth and/or nose. My "Mr. Pockets" character has a small amount of red (about a half-inch) on my nose, no more. I won't use a plastic or rubber nose because they restrict my breathing.

I rub the red on with my finger, use a tissue to blot it and then dust it with talcum (baby) powder. I brush away any excess powder and my nose color will last all day.

Don't use an eyebrow pencil. Use liquid eyeliner to do any lines that your character has around the eyes, mouth or to thicken your eyebrows. The eyeliner that comes with a small brush lets you do excellent lines.

If you have a beard or moustache that you want to keep, that's not ideal. I have seen some people (but no professional clowns) who dye their beard bright, light colors. I think that clowns should be clean-shaven but that's for you (and the people that might hire you) to decide.

I cut down the amount of paint and powder that I used for my Clown when I realized that some small children were afraid of made-up Clowns. They don't see many these days. We used to see them frequently when there were more circuses traveling around.

The sad fact is that some people that put on clown make-up and costumes act more like bogey-men than "real" clowns. They become clumsy, silly adults with squeaky unnatural voices. I think they might scare me if I was a very small child!

Costume

Buy a professional clown wig rather than one of the colorful Afro-style that kids get in their Christmas stockings. The big problem with using these stock items from the variety stores is that you could be hired to perform as a professional Clown at a children's dress-up party and arrive to find that all the children are wearing more professional outfits (made with love and care for them by their mothers) than you are!

Many new Clowns buy an off-the-rack clown costume from a variety store or get a friend or relative to make an over-size pair of pajamas for them from that sort of material. They add a few large spots of wildly contrasting colors and, hey, they're a clown!

Look through some circus books at the library and see the sort of outfits that their clowns use. Don't copy anyone's outfit or make-up closely but work up your own ideas, using the pictures in the books for inspiration.

You can get very colorful running shoes but the kids, and some of the adults, will probably be wearing them at a party. Some amateur clowns paint them with colorful enamels. That makes them look like running shoes that somebody dropped paint on. They don't look like shoes that a "real" clown would wear.

Get the real thing by either buying them or have a pair made, especially if you are charging for your clown work. You will get a lot of use from a well-made pair of clown shoes as long as you only wear them when you are doing shows and rehearsing!

You can buy clown half-shoes for a lower price. The best of these have a professional appearance but they are less expensive than full clown shoes because there is less required to produce them. They fit over your regular shoes or runners.

These shoes are not very comfortable to wear. You should also invest in supportive insoles to protect your feet. Most of us only ever get one pair of feet - look after them.

Equipment

Clowns can use exaggeration to good effect. I collect any items that I see at markets and garage sales that are oversized, smaller than usual or that work in unusual ways. I collected a giant metal cigarette lighter and matches made from wood with rubber heads - the matches are about a foot long. Of course, my clown doesn't use them except very occasionally with an adult audience. I've got a fly swatter that is a pair of hands that clap together - they might deafen a fly but I don't think they'd kill one!

You could show a large box or tube, make a great fuss with your wand and then produce only a very small piece of cloth from the tube!

Just as many clowns wear over-size shoes, I've worn a very small or very large hat at times. Ties can also be over-size or made of unusual material.

Gloves are another accessory that can get you a lot of laughs.

Big/Small Gloves

You can get gloves that stretch to fit various size hands. Buy a pair and squeeze your hands in to them.

They will stretch but it isn't always easy. Anyway, you want the gloves to be much smaller than your hands when you remove them. That's all you do, take off one glove then try hard, but not very well, to put the glove back on.

Pretend to pull the glove hard, then let go and spin round as if the tension between your hand and the glove made you do it. Hold the glove you have taken off against your gloved hand so that everyone can see the difference in size.

Tube Glove

If you wear white gloves with your Clown character, sew a long tube to one side of the opening of one glove.

Tuck this extra fabric into your sleeve. Pull off the ordinary glove from the other hand, then pull off the gimmicked glove and continue to slowly draw out the extra material – it will look as if you have one short glove and a very long one!

Tricks and Props

The Swatter

I made a giant imitation fly swatter that got a great reaction. It was so popular that it disappeared one day at a show where I was walking around in my Clown costume. I will make another one some time but these directions should be sufficient for you to make one for your clown.

If you cannot understand any part of these instructions or anything in the rest of the book, just email me and I will do my best to explain it more fully.

There was a long, thin spring attached to the flat netting surface and a garishly colored insect with big teeth at the other end of the spring. All this was the result of a brainstorming session one afternoon.

The striking surface swatter was made from some light netting and thin sheet plastic, the insect from some foam balls and scrap wool fabric while the spring was found in a junk box that I bought at a market.

I ran around open-air venues waving the swatter as if trying to hit the insect, then I let the insect (on its spring) flip over the swatter as if the insect is attacking me.

It's very simple and a bit silly, but adults as well as children found it pretty funny.

Nosey Insects

Children, especially, are very interested in insects. I sometimes stick a small, imitation fly or a brightly-colored plastic bug on my red nose. I pretend that I don't know that it is there. This gets great reactions from many children though they are supposed to be too sophisticated to find simple things like that so funny.

Vanishing Biscuit

This trick looks great and gets a double reaction because some people take a few minutes to realize how you did it. You show a cracker-type biscuit, then fold your hand around it.

You wave your empty hand over the one containing the biscuit, then open that hand but, of course, the biscuit is still there.

You pretend to swap the biscuit to your other hand. Then you hold out the hand that you pretend has the biscuit in it. Wave the hand that really has the concealed biscuit in it and, as you do so, crush the biscuit to crumbs. Sprinkle them on to your other fist as you say, "My *MAGIC* powder!"

Now you just show that the biscuit has disappeared from your other hand.

Some spectators get it straight away and laugh, and then others will join in as they realize what you really did.

Then the first lot of people will start laughing about the others being fooled!

Not bad – 3 laughs for the cost of a cracker biscuit!

Feather Duster

I always respect the people that I perform to and know that children's feelings of self-worth are very important and need frequent re-enforcing, but I still use this non-politically-correct prop.

It gets a lot of genuine laughter from the children I use it with.

The duster I use has a multi-color fiber head (no feathers because of possible allergy problems) and the shaft can be extended to a couple of feet. It's only used in my clown routines, of course.

I only ever brush a child on the arm with the duster and take it very close to the top of their head sometimes. But I don't touch their heads or anywhere else with it. And I always pretend to hit myself with it "accidentally", usually knocking my hat off, at the end of the routine.

Wands

Your wand can be featured in part of your show, but don't overdo it.

You can use more than one wand in your show and some of your wands can be very different from "normal" wands.

Bang Wand

Make this wand from a cardboard tube, decorate it like a stick of dynamite with a thick cord wick coming out of the top. The wick is not actually connected to the tube; it is long enough to extend down inside the tube, almost to the bottom. The bottom end of the wick is tied to the string of a "party popper" - a plastic toy, vaguely shaped like a bottle that contains a small firework and very thin, coiled-paper streamers. The party popper is taped inside the tube.

You grab the outside of the tube in one hand and the wick with the other hand. Point the open bottom of the tube to the ceiling - **never** point anything like this at anyone or any animal!

Pull the wick, which sets off the party popper and your "bang wand" will **BANG** after all!

If you want to extend the few seconds this will take, make a paper sleeve, slightly larger than the "dynamite". Decorate the sleeve to look like a regular black and white wand.

Push the dynamite inside the sleeve before you start your show.

When you are ready, pick up the "wand" and say, "Someone said this wand will start my show with a BANG!"

Pick up a cloth and wipe the wand. While you have the cloth in front of the wand, slide the tube off and crush it in to the cloth.

Drop the cloth and your audience will see that you are now holding a stick of dynamite! You pretend that you still think it's a wand. You say, "Look - my wand has magically changed color!" and wave it over your head so everyone can see that it's dynamite.

Say, "I wonder what the cord is for?"

"Should I pull it?"

Children will reply almost as loudly as real dynamite! Point the bottom of the tube upward and pull the "wick".

Umbrella Wand

You will need to make this but it's fairly simple. You need:

eight pieces of thin, flat-sided wood, the size of chopsticks but they do not taper.

a piece of thick wire about two inches longer than the sticks and

a block of wood, about half an inch long and the same thickness as the sticks.

a piece of leather or thick fabric.

Drill a hole through the length of the wooden block. Push the wire into the block and glue the end in place.

Use pliers to twist a circle at the free end of the wire.

Lay three of the sticks side by side on a table, and then put the wire and block on top of the center stick.

Put one stick at each side of the wire and block.

Put the remaining three sticks on top of the "stick, wire and block, stick" layer.

Cut a piece from your leather or fabric, the same width as three sticks in each direction.

Glue this piece with the strongest glue that you can find, on the end of your construction where it is all wood, not the end where the wire sticks out.

You need to leave a very small gap between the wire and block in the center and each of the sticks. The easiest way to do this is to wrap 2 layers of paper around the small block but the paper must not reach the end where you will glue your fabric or leather.

Press the fabric to the sticks and the block while it dries.

When it is completely dry, paint or stain the outside surfaces so that your creation resembles a flat-sided wand (with a wire ring sticking out from one end. Don't forget to color the fabric, or leather, white also.

To perform, show the flat, black and white wand and then wave it over some object.

Secretly, your little finger slips in to the wire ring as you raise your arm slightly and point the other end of the wand downward.

Let go of the sides of the wand and the sticks will splay out like the ribs of an umbrella. Your wand will seem to come to pieces but can easily be reset for your next show.

The Best Wand Trick That is NOT Here

The best wand trick is where you give a wand to a child that is assisting you, and then find that you have another wand in your hand. You repeat this several times and the child becomes loaded up with a lot of wands.

I cannot tell you how to make this because it is a commercial trick, "Multiplying Wands", invented by Mr. Bev Bergeron. Bev Bergeron has invented many fine tricks and appeared on USA television for several years as "Rebo" the Clown in Mark Wilson's "Magical Land of AllaKazam".

You can visit Mr. Bergeron's website; <http://www.bevbergeron.com/>

Bottomless Bag

Effect: Show your audience a flat cloth bag (let them see inside the bag) and two handkerchiefs that are contrasting colors to each other.

Say, "With your help, we'll do a miracle with the blue handkerchief and the yellow handkerchief."

Put them in the bag, wave your wand and ask the audience to say your magic word.

Take out the handkerchiefs and say, "It worked! The yellow one has magically become blue - the blue one is now yellow!"

The audience let you know they're not impressed, so you put the handkerchiefs back in the bag and tell them, "We'll try one more time but say the magic word twice this time."

They say the magic word again when you put the two handkerchiefs in the bag. You then show that the two handkerchiefs have become one that's larger and has both colors!

You pretend to hear someone say that the smaller handkerchiefs are still in the bag, so you push your hand in and right out the bottom, then turn the bag inside out to show they've gone!

For this routine, you need:

A special bag

Two handkerchiefs that are the same size but contrasting solid colors.

One handkerchief that is about one and a half times the size of the others and has both of the colors.

If your two smaller handkerchiefs are, say, blue and yellow, the larger one should have stripes of both colors or a background of one color with stripes or spots of the other color.

This trick includes repetition, silliness and a little bit of mystery - aspects that are ideal for clown-style magic.

You need a flat cloth bag with two compartments. You can make this (or have it made) from one long length or three equal-size pieces. The outer material needs to be colorful. You may use thinner, dark material for the lining but there is no reason that it has to be black if you can add an extra touch of color by using a dark blue or dark green.

Sew the lining to the inner surface of the two outside pieces and to both sides of the central panel. The lining stops about one inch below the top of the panels.

Stitch the bottom of one pocket closed but use Velcro® (hook and loop) to close the bottom of the other pocket. You don't need to have the fastening material right across the bottom of the pocket - use just a couple of short sections so that you can open the bottom quickly by just pushing you hand down through it.

Put the large two-color square in the pocket with the Velcro® (hook and loop) at the bottom. Put the two differently colored squares about half-way down in the pocket that has the stitched bottom.

To Perform: Show the bag to the audience. Pull out the two small squares and say, "I will use these handkerchiefs for my next miracle".

Put them back in to the regular pocket, pointing out the colors.

Pick up your wand, wave it over the bag and then take out the two squares again, saying "the blue one has become yellow and I've changed the yellow one to blue!"

Your audience will quickly, and loudly, tell you they haven't changed.

You put them back in the same pocket, wave your wand and turn the bag around a couple of times before slowly taking out the large two-color square.

Accept any applause that you can get at this point, then pretend to hear someone say that the two small squares are still in the bag.

You push back the sleeve of the arm that is not holding the bag, and then push that hand down and out through the bottom of the other pocket. You can then raise both arms; you'll have the large square in one hand and the bag about half-way down your other arm which will attract applause.

Or, you can remove your arm from the bag, take the top corners in both hands and turn the bag inside out, making sure that you only display the false pocket - don't show the other pocket which has the two small handkerchiefs in it.

Egg-stra!

This is one of the best Magic tricks of all time. You can buy a version (sometimes several versions) of it from almost every Magic shop on Earth or you could make, or have made, the special bag - it's not a very difficult task.

Some of Magic's most creative minds have devised their own versions of the basic prop that I will show you here and some of the other versions are very clever (and worth buying).

You can use this basic version with most audiences - adults or children and get a great reaction. I'll suggest a few variations after I show you the Eggstra-ordinary EGG BAG!

You show a small cloth bag, drop an egg into it and then the fun starts! The egg disappears, re-appears - all the usual stuff but this trick will always get a great reception if you have fun with your audience.

You need:

a plastic egg

a wand and

the bag

Yes, the bag is special.

Decide how large your Egg Bag will be.

A good size is about one inch wider and deeper than the width and length of your spread fingers. Of course, you need to adjust this advice if you have a small hand and a bag of the suggested size will not hold and hide the plastic egg that you use.

You make the bag from a single piece of fabric that has a length that is two and half times the height that your bag will be.

If your bag is to be 10 inches high, get 25 inches of fabric, measure 10 inches from one end and fold the fabric at that point. Measure another 10 inches - you now have the front and back of your bag.

Fold the extra 5 inches of fabric inside the bag and sew the two sides.

Hold the bag with the secret pocket at the back, your left thumb at the back of the bag and fingers inside.

Drop the plastic egg inside the bag.

Your right hand grabs the bottom of the bag and lifts it up.

As you remove your left hand, the plastic egg slides from the bottom of the bag into the secret pocket.

While your right hand still holds the bottom of the upside-down bag, you can show both hands empty and the egg has disappeared!

As you grab the bottom corner of the bag with your left hand, your right hand grabs the opposite corner (where the egg is hidden).

You twist the bag between your hands (your right hand is hiding the bulge of the egg) to show that the egg really has gone.

The audience can still see that your hands are empty as your right hand picks up your wand and your left hand turns the bag upright again.

Of course, the egg now drops back to the bottom of the bag but you don't reach into the bag yourself.

Ask a volunteer to wave your wand over the bag while the audience (if they're children) make a noise like chickens.

Then let the volunteer remove the egg and show it to the audience.

You then ask the audience to give your volunteer some applause which is, of course, also for you!

That's a brief outline of the basic routine.

Here are some additions, intended for when you are entertaining young audiences:

When the egg is hidden in the secret pocket, you can put one hand in the bag, pretend to remove the egg and hide it under your armpit.

The children will tell you that they saw what you did. Ask them if you should lift your arm.

Then lift the wrong arm.

Say, "Do you want me to lift the arm on the other side?"

They'll say yes, so you turn around and lift the same arm but "on the other side"!

Don't push this too much. Finish with the chicken noises.

This probably sounds dumb - but it works!

If you can get someone to do some more sewing, ask them to cut out an imitation (flat) chicken head and small rooster tail. Stitch them to opposite sides of the inside of the bag.

Finish your routine, then say that you will show the young audience where the egg came from.

Turn the bag inside out (taking care not to show the secret pocket) and display your chicken - holding the beak in one hand and the tail in the other.

But, why stop at chickens?!

You could have:

An imitation bone - tell them this bag is what your dog keeps his food in.

An Easter Egg - this is where your bunny keeps his spare eggs!

A Christmas decorative ball - make the bag very brightly colored or shape it like a Christmas Stocking.

That's the sort of thing that you should think about with each trick that you prepare for your show; try to create something unique about its presentation that is yours alone.

Do something Magical every day!

John Williams

Many More Steps

I hope that “Ezy Magic SHOWS” cleared the way and encouraged you to perform as a clown or magician (or magic Clown)?

There’s more fun, and maybe even fame and fortune in your performing future if you give your audiences what they want. I hope you’ll ask the EBookWholesaler Member that sold you “Ezy Magic SHOWS” about my other magic related books and the 60+ other EBookWholesaler ebooks.

You’ll find more information about Magic at my magic site;

<http://www.ezymagic.com/>

There’s a Magic web log (blog) at <http://www.ezymagic.com/mblog/> and you can email me about this book or anything related to Magic.

The email address is fbshows@ezymagic.com

Keep well and have FUN

John Williams