

A Basic Manual Sound Effects Kit

CRASH BOX – made from a metal Christmas popcorn container. Fill it about a third-full with broken coffee mugs, gravel, crushed cans, screws and some toy wooden blocks. Experiment until you get a good sound, then seal the lid on with duct tape.

OLD DIAL TELEPHONE - and ringer bell box -- the kind companies use for delivery doorbells. You can find old phones at flea markets for about \$5. Don't bother trying to make the old phone ring--it'll cost hundreds for a step down transformer to deliver the 84 volts necessary to engage the phone's ring circuit. Just buy a clapper-bell doorbell kit for \$10 at a hardware store. Then ring it 4 seconds on-2 seconds off and repeat. Use the old phone for dialing and handset pickups/hang-ups.

THUNDER SHEET - 2x4 foot 16th inch high-impact polystyrene. Look in your local yellow pages for "Plastics" and call around. It'll cost about \$10.

WALKBOARD - 2x3 foot doubled 3/4 inch plywood for footsteps. Put tile on one side to get a different sound.

SMALL DOOR - cut the bottom 3 feet off a regular door, but keep the width--that's key to getting the real sound. Then build a frame of 2x4s and install a typical lockset. Mount it to a plywood base--and mount that on casters so you can move it easily.

GRAVEL BOX - get or make a shallow wooden drawer-type box and pour in some small gravel--for horses/dirt. Then use coconuts or small plungers for horses and short 2x4s as "boots"--add some small jingle bells to them for spurs!

CAVEMAN CLUBS -- large hollow caveman style toy clubs--great for fights and bodies dropping to the floor. You can find them at Hollywood Toys & Costumes in Los Angeles. Call (800) 554-3444 and they'll ship them to you. The clubs cost about \$10 each. Get two.

STIFF PLASTIC BAGS - for fire, static, even--with the right motion--marching feet

CLIP BOARDS - for gun shots. They never misfire or run out of blanks--but try to snap them on top of a resonator box to sound "bigger." A small metal trash can might be the ticket.

TOY RATCHET - get the large plastic New Year's noisemakers. The typical little metal ones sound too small. Ratchets are good for handcuffs, winches,

drawbridges... ratchets.

VIBRO PEN - a "Dizzy Doodler" pen that writes wobbly--for planes/jackhammers. Turn it on and apply the star-shaped top (not the pen point) to a cardboard box for a convincing airplane. Do the same on a stack of small saucers and you'll have a great jack-hammer. The KB Toy liquidator chain sells them for \$4.

TOY CELL PHONE - for radars, space beeps, even cell phones! Hollywood Toys & Costumes in Los Angeles sells them for \$4. Call (800) 554-3444 and they'll ship them to you. They also sell decent toy pager/beepers.

SLIDE WHISTLE - Besides eeeeeYOOOP, it can also be quickly slid back and forth for radars and space sounds. They're available at toy stores and some musical instrument stores.

PLASTIC EGG MARACAS - for jungles, rattlesnakes, weirdness. You could make some with plastic Easter eggs and rice, but many music stores sell them for \$2 each and those have a finer gravel that sounds very good.

TEACUP SAUCERS - good "dishes" sound. Apply vibro-pen to two stacked saucers for a great jack-hammer.

METAL SPOONS/SPATULAS -- get a really big pancake flipping spatula and some large metal cooking spoons for great sword fights. Use dinner forks for diner sounds.

PLASTIC TUMBLER - for pouring water. Drop AA batteries in empty tumblers for ice cubes. They also can be used to fake a telephone voice filter if you hold them to the side of your mouth while you talk.

CIRCUIT BREAKER - At hardware stores you can find the large black home circuit breakers. They produce that old-fashioned, LOUD light switch click.

CREAKER BOX - cotton clothesline wrapped around a dowel rubbed with violin rosin--sounds like a creaking door or thumbscrews. It's rigged in a wooden shoe-box sized thing.

CREAKER DOWEL -- a 1/2 inch dowel rubbed with violin rosin and wrapped by a rubber hose with a standard car hose clamp. It's a different kind of creak.