

Photography Light Box

by [tekjock](#) on April 3, 2009

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intro: Photography Light Box

Photography Light Box to take pictures of small to medium items.

:: Parts ::

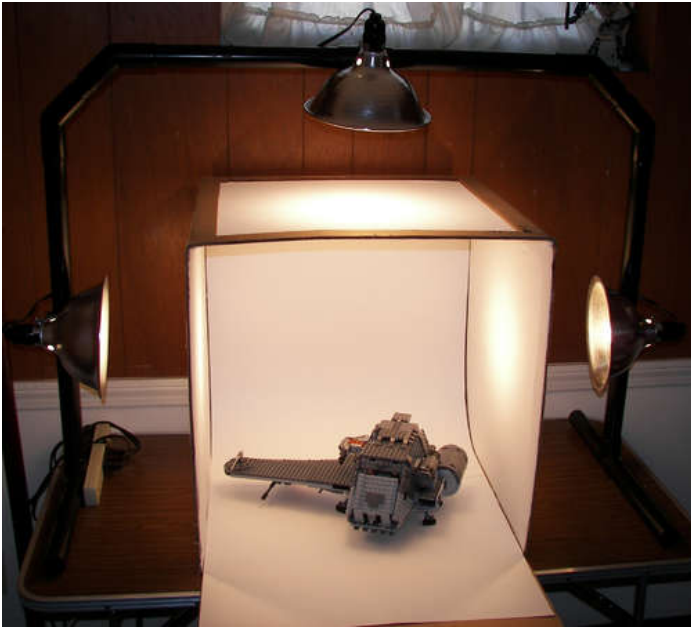
Large cardboard box (thicker box will hold up to the abuse of cutting and working on it)
Several yards of white cloth (I got 3 yards)
Wide/Think Double stick tape (I used Shurtape carpet tape)
Thin double stick tape.
[2] thin poster boards
[3] Reflective lights (I got mine for \$5 at Job Lot {Local discount store})
[3] Light Bulb (I am using standard 100 watt bulbs)

:: Tools ::

Sharp Knife (I used a heavy duty box cutter)
Writing implement
Straight Edge (I used a a large shelf)

Give me your feedback and Please don't be one of those people who says, "there are already Instructables for light boxes." I know there are and sadly I did not get inspiration from Instructables. I love what **trebuchet03** said, "**I personally think it's better to have each variant in separate instructables - -and link between them ;)**"

:: UPDATE :: I mentioned before that I was going to make a frame for this. Here is the link to my new [Light Frame](#)



step 1: Preping the box

To allow light to enter all sides you will need to cut open three sides of the box. GO from the sides and leave the top and the bottom the way they are.

[Pic 1] :: Here is the box I used. It is a large heavy duty printer box.

[Pic 2] :: From all four corners measure in 1.5 inches and make a cross hair.

[Pic3] :: Using a straight edge line up the cross hairs on each corner and draw a line.

[Pic4] :: The completed lines on one side. Continue this on 3 sides. I cut out the sides that had the handles

[Pic5] :: Cut the box on the lines. I used the straight edge to cut. This works well when cutting against the grain of the cardboard. (warning :: as you are cutting the second and third side try not to push to hard. You do not want to crush the box.)

[Pic6] :: Completed cut box.

NOTES :: After I was almost finished with the light box I decided to cut off three of the box flaps. I only kept the bottom one. So lay the box with the uncut side down and remove the Left, Right and Top flaps. You will see what I mean in the last couple of images.



Image Notes

1. Measure in 1.5 inches from both directions.

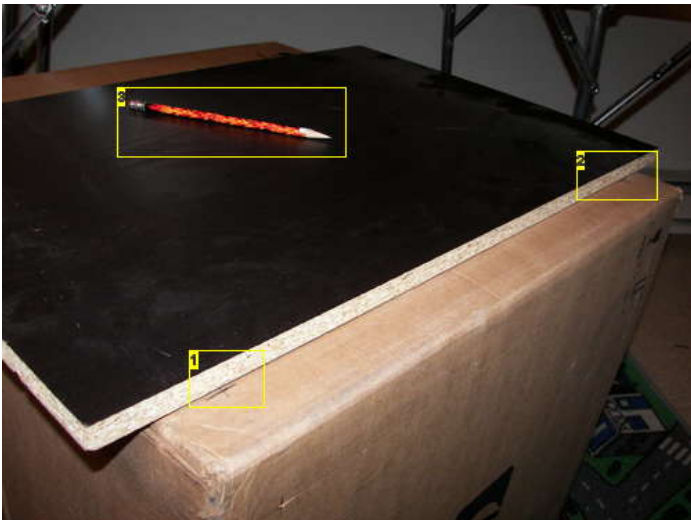


Image Notes

1. Line up with cross hair on both corners
2. Line up with cross hair on both corners
3. FIRE PENCIL ... It burns



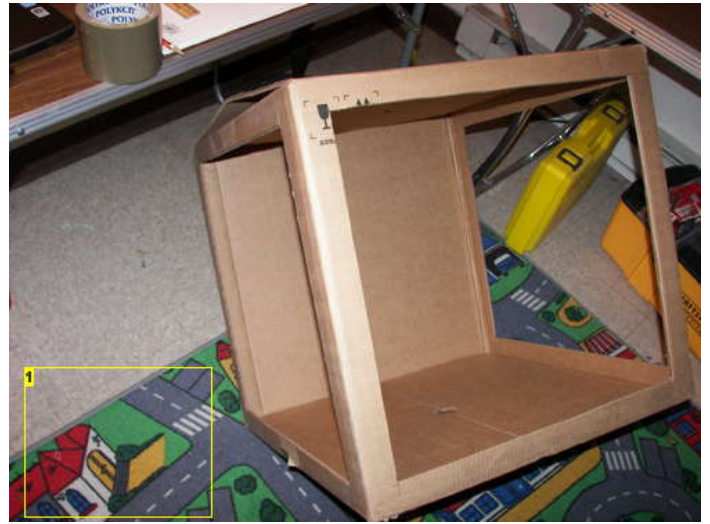


Image Notes

1. Please ignore my sons play rug. Vroom Vroom

step 2: Taping the sides of the box for the cloth

As you can see in the picture, Tape inside the opening. This is where I used the Heavy Duty Carpet tape.



step 3: Putting in the Cloth

Cut the cloth to the size of the inside of the box. I cut it an extra 1 to 2 inches just to be safe.

[Pic 1] :: remove the cover on the double stick tape. When you put in the cloth pull it as tight as you can. Obviously you don't want it loose or have any wrinkles. I had wrapped some of the covering from the double stick tape and rubbed it over the cloth to ensure the cloth was stuck in place. after I put in each side, I trimmed the excess cloth.

[Pic2] :: Here you see the cloth in the box and trimmed



Image Notes

1. This extra has been removed, did not matter anyway. I will be covered up in the next step.

Image Notes

1. Cut off the excess
2. Yea, these are not there anymore.

step 4: Preping & Inserting the Poster Board

This step is the backdrop for the light box

[pic1] :: Measure the inside width of the box and cut the 2 poster boards. Do not worry about the length of the poster board as you want it to over hang outside the box.(I used the straight edge to ensure I get a straight line.)

[Pic2] :: Place the wide double stick tape on the bottom of the box. One in the far back of the box and one at the opening of the box.

[Pic3] :: Place one of the poster boards flush with the back of the box.

[Pic4] :: Place the wide double stick tape on the upper rear edge inside the box.

[Pic5] :: Using the thin double stick tape. Place it approximately 1/4 the way from the back. this measure is up to your interpretation. It should produce a slight slope in the back. You don't want it to come out to far, you don't want to lose to much space.

[Pics6] :: Place the other poster board flush with the top tape and then the bottom.



Image Notes

1. As mentioned earlier, I cut the other 3 flaps off.
2. Only leave this flap



step 5: Finale Product

Here is the Light Box finished.

Place the 3 lights about a foot from each side that has cloth. Don't get to close, it should not touch the cloth (FIRE HAZARD YOU KNOW). Place the item in inside and take some pictures. HAVE FUN.

Give me your feedback and Please don't be one of those people who says, "there are already Instructables for light boxes." I know there are and sadly I did not get inspiration from Instructables. I love what **trebuchet03** said, "**I personally think it's better to have each variant in separate instructables - -and link between them ;)**"

I might be making a frame for the lights. I have some spare PVC pipe laying around and all I will need to get is some connectors.

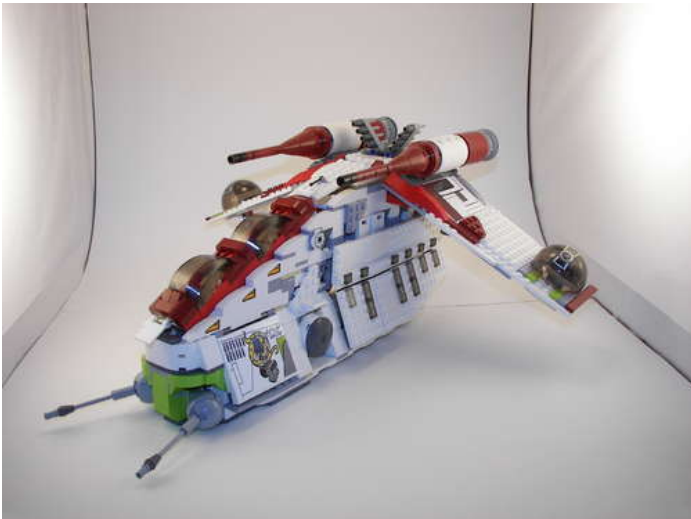
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step 6: Light Box In Use

:: UPDATE ::

The 4 images below are of it in use. From here I would clean up the images and remove all the lines, but that is the easy part.



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Comments

12 comments [Add Comment](#)



tyshef says:

Apr 4, 2009. 1:21 PM [REPLY](#)

I am gonna try this, but I am gonna make one change and try to give the white background solid construction. otherwise very good!



tekjock says:

Apr 5, 2009. 11:46 AM [REPLY](#)

Also ... if you do PLEASE post pics, I would love to see it. And thanks for wanting to make one based on my Instructable. OR ... If you do something different then what I did, post your own Inscrutable.



tekjock says:

Apr 4, 2009. 3:45 PM [REPLY](#)

yea ... the dark lines on the side. I might try to cover them up. I was not very concerned as most of what I take pics of I will be cleaning it up in photoshop.



davidkimmel says:

Apr 4, 2009. 9:42 AM [REPLY](#)

I don't suppose energy efficiency is a big deal here but the fire hazard situation could be improved upon by using 100 watt equivalent CFLs. Not only are they cooler in degrees F, choosing "Daylight" spectrum will provide better color balance in the final photo (degrees K).



tekjock says:

Apr 4, 2009. 3:44 PM [REPLY](#)

I was planing on trying those, going with softer light

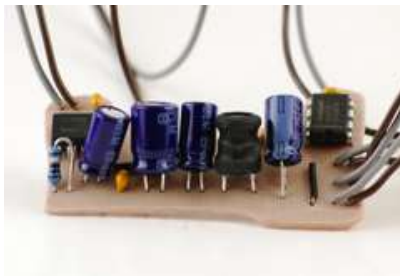


Einsteins Circuitry says:

Apr 4, 2009. 10:53 AM [REPLY](#)

I would actually suggest the opposite. Bigger, and brighter lights are always better. They allow you more flexibility.

PS: Here's a picture from my iPod speaker project taken in my lightbox...



davidkimmel says:

Apr 4, 2009. 5:26 PM [REPLY](#)

More light can certainly be better and CFLs come in greater levels of brightness or one could even add more CFLs. I kinda stole the idea from a photo page where a fella use five CFLs as the source in a diffused light box. <http://alexcampagna.blogspot.com/2008/04/diy-spiderlight-softbox.html>



davidkimmel says:

Apr 4, 2009. 5:20 PM [REPLY](#)

That is, of course, not to say that bigger (150 W equiv.) and brigher (more CFLs) wouldn't have a positive effect.



ve2vfd says:

Apr 3, 2009. 6:35 PM [REPLY](#)

Nice lightbox! I love simple and efficient photography articles.

You may want to add that a builder would want all the lights to be the same type (tungsten, fluorescent, halogen...) and to not forget to ajust the cameras white balance to avoid funky colours.



mrigsby says:

Apr 3, 2009. 6:09 PM [REPLY](#)

It looks very good--I tried a variation that was too flimsy (the sides caved in--and it used paper for the walls). I'll watch for the next big box that comes in and try this!



PKM says:

Apr 3, 2009. 8:43 AM [REPLY](#)

That looks like a nice simple build. As well as the usual "pretty product on a white background" thing, you can have some fun using a completely black background and underexposing, possibly with only one of the side lights turned on and no top light.

I, and possibly the rest of the photographers, want to see your shots! Just because nobody asked, here are a couple of mine, and here are three I did of a friend's Ames Orkshop models.



tekjock says:

Apr 3, 2009. 8:47 AM [REPLY](#)

I have a bunch of shots I have taken using my light box. I will be putting them on Flickr later and I will post them here later.

thanks for the comment .