

Action Figure

Create a Jumping Jack puppet with levers and string. Then make it dance!



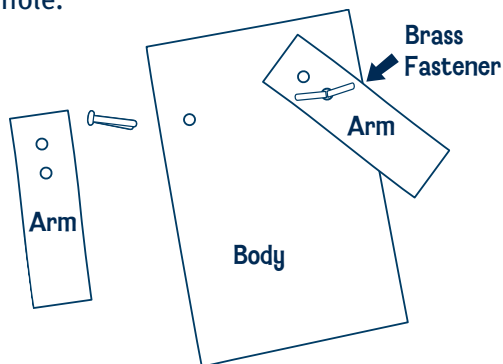
1 Get what You need.

- 1 rectangle of thin cardboard (5" x 8")
- 2 3" x 5" index cards cut in half lengthwise
- hole punch • 4 brass fasteners • string
- scissors • construction paper • tape or glue
- markers

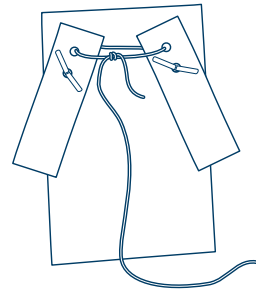
2 Make arms. With a hole punch, make two holes near the top of one of the index card strips, as shown. Leave about a half-inch between the holes. Do the same to a second strip.

3 Make armholes on the body. Punch a hole on each side of the cardboard rectangle, about two inches down from the top, one on each side.

4 Attach the arms. Use brass fasteners to attach the arms to the body. Be sure to use the lower armhole.



5 Add string. Pull the arms down against the body. Loop string through the top holes on the arms and tie, letting the extra string hang down. Pull on the string. What happens? You've just created two levers. The brass fasteners are the fulcrums—the point on which the levers rotate.



6 Add legs. Create legs the same way you made the arms.

7 connect arms and legs. How can you attach a string to both the arms and legs to make them move at the same time?

8 Add Personality! Once the arms and legs are working, it's time to get creative. Use markers and construction paper to make a character of your own. Punch a hole at the top and add a loop of string to make it easy to hold.

Chew on This!

A lever is a bar that's attached to a pivot (turning point) called a fulcrum. You use a lever when you flush a toilet, paddle a boat, or cut with scissors—they're everywhere! Some are good at moving something heavy—a crowbar, for example, can pry open a door that's stuck. Levers can also make something move fast—a baseball bat hitting a ball, for instance, or a catapult hurling a stone.

Dig Deeper

Take it outside. Make another action figure, decorating it with materials found in nature—you might try acorn eyes, pine-needle hair, a leaf jacket, and bark pants.

Jack-of-all-trades. Create a Jumping Jack puppet where the levers are NOT arms or legs. Can you use levers to make a tail that wags, ears that flap, or wings that fly? Can you make a Ruff or Blossom action figure?

Did You Know?

The Jumping Jack is an old fashioned mechanical toy. In Germany, it was called a Hampelmann. Made of wood, these dancing puppets were often clowns, jesters, or animals. Lots of mechanical toys from the past have hilarious names. There's the Whirligig (a wind-powered spinning toy), the Flipperdinger (which suspended a ball in a stream of air), and the Gee Haw Whimmy Diddle (a propeller toy).



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Fold

Fetch!

Action Figure

Check out the Ruff toy I made. He dances! He leaps! He's got team spirit! He's Rufftastic! Who needs a store-bought action figure when you can customize your own? Now it's your turn. Use your toy-making talents to create a super hero, an alien, or a mini-you!

