

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
**HAUNTERS**  
**GROUP**  
OUR HAUNTS ARE TO DIY FOR!

# Skeleton Lantern Tutorial



# Tools and supply list

- Hand Drill
- Drill bits - assorted (1/8 in)
- Dermal with cutting guide
- Heat gun
- Wire cutter
- Rubber gloves
- Paint thinner
- Vise
- Staple gun
- Hammer
- Putty knife
- Paint brushes
- Thin wire
- Paint plates
- Paper towels
- Work gloves





Skeleton hand



Wood plaque  
9 x 12



1/8 in diameter  
metal rod (18 in)



Rolled cotton



Lantern



Metal paint tubes



Epoxy putty



Frosted glass  
Spray paint



Metal spray paint  
Primer



All surface primer



Wood stain





# Skeleton Arm

For the arm, I used inexpensive plastic arms found on Amazon. You can get a pair of these for around \$16. These usually come with the fingers flat, so when you bend them, you can choose if you want a left and a right hand or two hands facing the same direction.



Use a heat gun on the fingers of the skeleton hand. Make sure to work in a well ventilated area and wear work gloves to protect your hands from the heat. Make sure not to heat too much or the fingers will become too soft to keep their shape.



Once the fingers are softened, begin bending at the joints to achieve the desired pose. Make sure not to bend the fingers too much or you could break a digit. The fingers will cool so you may need to reheat to bend them.

# Skeleton Plaque

Wood plaques can be found in a variety of stores from Michaels and Home Depot, to Hobby Lobby and Amazon. I've used 9 x 12 inch plaques that usually cost around \$6.



Grab your plaque and determine the location where you would like your skeleton hand to be mounted. This may not be center. Once you find your spot, mark it with a pencil.



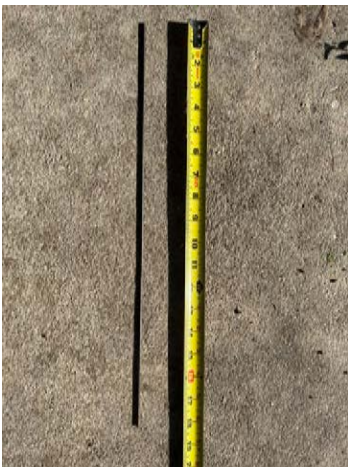
Using a 1/8 inch bit, drill a hole on the place you marked. Make sure to drill all the way through the plaque.



Use a Dremel with a cutting guide and set the cutting bit to approximately 1/8 inch deep. Turn your plaque over and use a Dremel to cut a 1 inch to 1 ½ inch groove downward from the hole.



Your groove should look something like this.



Cut a 1/8 inch metal rod to 18 inches in length. Test the rod to make sure it fits through the hole you made in your plaque.





Remove the metal rod from the plaque and bend the end so it matches the length of the groove. Using a table mounted vise is very helpful for this.



Insert the metal rod into the hole on the back of the plaque using the straight side. Once it is all the way inserted, the curved part should rest flush in the groove. If it doesn't fit, adjust the groove so the rod fits perfectly.

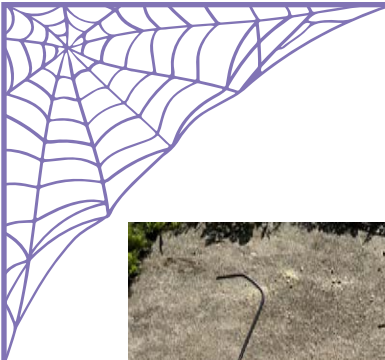


Place the metal rod next to the skeleton hand and check the angle you would like.

Measure from the base of the arm to the wrist and mark the metal rod. Mark the rod where the finger digits bend too.







Bend the rod upwards to the position you like. Then bend the rod at the location of the wrist and the finger digits. Compare with the skeleton arm to make sure the rod and the arm fit as close to each other as possible.



When you are happy with the bend of the metal rod, flip the plaque over and make sure the back curve of the bar fits in the groove.

Use a staple gun to secure the rod into the groove.



The stapled rod should look like this.







Prepare an area in a well ventilated space with a drop cloth or painting box. Select a spray primer to coat the plaque. I used a primer that includes iron metallic paint.



Spray the plaque at the proper distance and in a side motion from left to right. Ensure you don't have any drips or runs.

Let the paint dry and add a second layer if needed.



Once the plaque is dry, cut short pieces of thin wire to attach the skeleton arm to the metal rod. Start at the center of the ulna and radius bones (the large arm bones) and make sure the arm is securely fastened to the rod. Then secure the rest of the way to the tips of the finger.





Grab some epoxy putty and cut off a small amount using a putty knife.



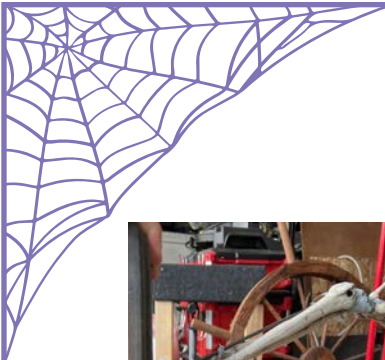
If you have never used epoxy putty, it consists of an inner and outer layer. When the two layers are thoroughly mixed, it will dry as hard as plastic.



Once the putty is thoroughly mixed, apply it to the base of the plaque and wrap it around the end of the skeleton arm. Blend with your fingers.

Cut, mix ,and apply more putty to areas you need to secure the arm to the base and the rod.





Check the profile to see if you like it. Make any adjustments you may need. You can also place a lantern into the hand to see if it will hold the weight.



Now its time to cover the wire and the metal rod. We are also adding a little rot to the skeleton arm.

Paint some primer to an area you would like to cover.



Rip a small piece of cotton from a roll of medical cotton.

Attach it to wet paint and spread it out as needed.







Paint over the cotton you just applied and spread out as needed.



Continue adding this technique to different areas of the arm as needed to cover the wire and metal rod.

Make sure not to cover the whole skeleton arm with this technique. We want to leave some exposed bone.



Your arm should look something like this. Once it's dry it is ready for the next step.

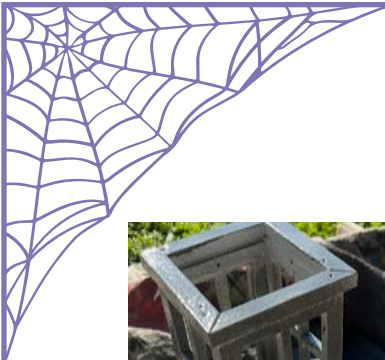


# Lanterns

There are a variety of lanterns out there in a variety of shapes and sizes. The price also ranges on these lanterns. Some come with lights already.



I chose to use this lantern without a light. I wanted to add my own light later.



For this lantern, I removed the top and all the glass windows before I sprayed it with a primer with metal paint.



While the frame is drying, I sprayed the glass panels for each of the lantern windows with a frosted glass spray.



The frosted spray defused the glass but it looked too clean. To correct this I mixed a little beige paint with some glue and brushed that onto the glass.





# Painting and Staining

Now it's time for the details. This will add that extra level of distress and rot to your project.



Paint an area of the skeleton hand with some stain. Before it dries wipe it off with a paper towel.



Continue this process till you have covered the entire arm. You can add additional layers or colors to give it a more rotted look.

Let the stain dry completely.



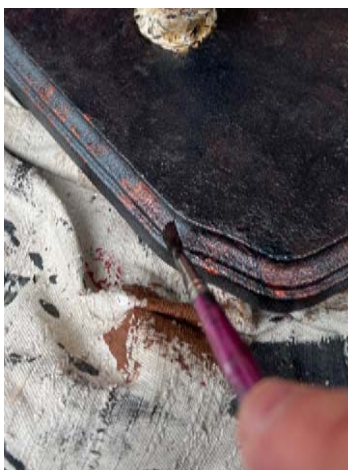
Now it's time to add a little more detail to the plaque.

Squeeze a couple of blobs of metal paint onto a plate. I used copper and black iron.

Do not mix the colors on the plate.



Paint your plaque by dabbing it with one of the metal colors. Then before it dries, dab a different metal color and blend it into the other color.



You want to make sure you see all of the metal colors so don't blend too much. If the colors are not blending enough, get your brush a little wet, dry it off a little, then dab on top of the colors to blend more.

Repeat till you are happy with the result.



# Final Lantern

That's it! You're done! Well....sort of. If your lantern doesn't come with a light, then there is one more step.





# Light Source

There are many options for light sources you could use for your lantern. Here are a couple of examples.

Battery operated candle



Flickering light tutorial



Rechargeable flame bulb



Battery operated string lights

