



Motion Sensor Hack

To get your electrical props to move on cue each time a visitor approaches requires a little ingenuity. Enter the motion activated light. Commonly used outside houses to detect motion and then turn on a light, this security device can be altered to create a simple but very effective prop-activating sensor.



To make this sensor requires one (1) cheap motion-activated light sensor available at your hardware store (mine was \$13 at Lowes), a simple extension cord (\$2), two (2) electrical plug light socket adapters (\$1.50 each), and a piece of scrap wood.

When purchasing the motion-activated light, make sure it has a sensitivity dial and time adjustment switch with a TEST mode on the bottom of the sensor. These are important to enable the sensor to turn only momentarily (rather than having the prop activated for a full 60 seconds) and to allow you to set how close the visitor must be to the sensor before the prop is activated.

Disclaimer: Working with electricity in any form can be dangerous. Please be careful!

First, cut off the female end of the extension cord, expose the ends of the wires, and connect it to the bottom of the motion-activated light using wire nuts. Next, cut a notch at the rear of the base of the motion-activated light to pass the cord through. Then mount the base to a piece of inconspicuous, dark-colored board. The sensor and board may be in plain sight, so the more inconspicuous, the better.



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Face the two light sockets away from the sensor, tighten them into position, and attach the two electrical plug light socket adapters.

Now, you can make holes in the scrap wood to enable easy mounting to another surface. You will want to mount or position the motion sensor in the vicinity

of the prop facing the area where the visitor will approach or pass. Experiment to find the best location.

Set the sensor to TEST mode and the sensitivity dial to somewhere in the middle. Plug in your electrical prop (preferably one that activates instantly when power is supplied) into the socket adapter, and plug in the extension cord. The prop will activate for 30 seconds and then turn off.



Now the sensor is ready. Move your hand in front of the sensor to test it. The prop should turn on for no more than 10 seconds, and then the sensor will reset itself. Experiment with the sensitivity dial to find the desired activation range.

Important: When using outdoors, protect the electrical plug and socket from water intrusion by placing the device in a covered but ventilated location.