

Steve Fearson's Original Floating Cigarette Routine



The Final Word in Close Up Levitations

With Bonus Ideas for Kid Shows and Non-Smokers!

Note: This effect requires Invisible Thread and Magician's Wax.
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With Bonus Ideas for Kid Shows and Non-Smokers!



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Effect: The performer displays an ordinary cigarette which can be removed from a box of cigarettes. The cigarette is placed in the mouth and lit. The performer sticks his tongue out, and the cigarette is suspended on the tip of the tongue with no visible support or movement by the performer.

The cigarette is removed from the tongue and momentarily suspended on the tip of the finger. Next, the cigarette begins to float freely between the hands from the left to the right, and slowly moves down towards the floor.

Moving in a circular pattern, the cigarette floats back up towards the hands. The performer forms his fingers into a ring, and the cigarette floats through the fingers, proving no connections to the cigarette are possible.

The cigarette again floats down to the floor, stops for a moment, and finally rises up into the performers mouth, for a spectacular finish to an incredible effect.

REQUIREMENTS: You will need a six foot length of [invisible thread](#), a tiny blob of [magician's wax](#), and a cigarette.

PREPARATION: The first thing you have to do is strip out a single length of thread in this package (each length is made up of many tiny strands). Under the right conditions this single strand of thread is quite invisible. (For instructions on stripping the thread, see notes at the end of this book.) Once you have the thread, attach a pea sized or smaller

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blob of wax to each end.

You must now tie one end of the thread to the cigarette. If you already know, a way to tie the thread to the cigarette, use your own method. If you don't, here's how I do it.

Lay the thread across a table so that the wax on one end is hanging off the edge of the table and the other piece of wax is on the edge of the table nearest where you are standing. Under the thread, about six or eight inches from the end on the table, you must place something (a paperback book on edge will work) to raise that portion of the thread a few inches off the table.

Now you are looking at the length of thread from the wax on the table to the book. Lay the cigarette on the table, across this area of the thread and lay the fingers of the right hand on the cigarette, with your fingers pointing left. Take the wax in your left fingers and drop it forward over

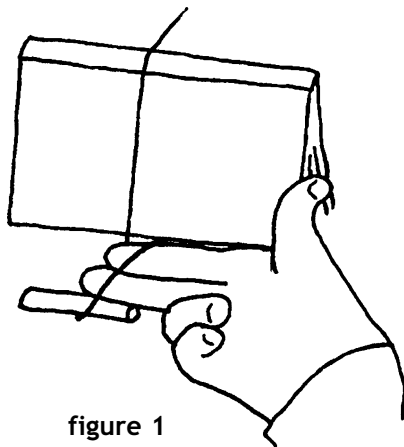


figure 1

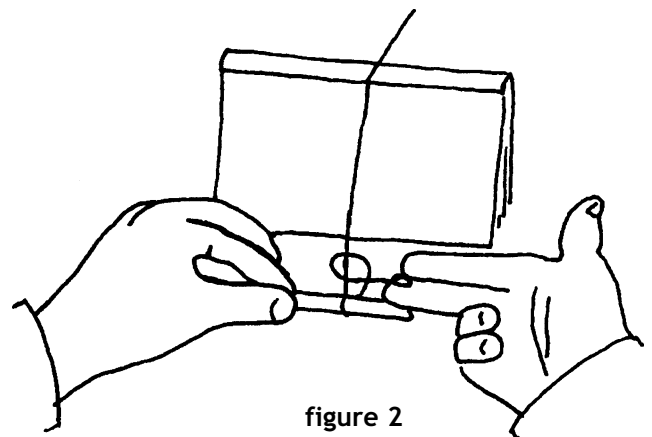


figure 2

your right fingers and to the right of the rest of the thread. (*Fig. 1*) Now if you reach under the thread in front of your right hand with your left fingers and grasp the wax, you can pinch the wax with your right fingers and draw your right fingers out of the loop, (*Fig. 2*) pulling the wax through and forming a simple knot. Form three or four knots this way to secure the cigarette to the thread.

With a scissors, clip off the short thread about 1/8" away from the cigarette. You should now have a length of thread about six feet long with a cigarette on one end and a piece of wax on the other end.

Now you must adjust the length of the thread. Hold the wax and let the cigarette hang straight down to the floor. Wind the thread around the wax until it is as long as the distance front the floor to your chest.

SET-UP: This depends on the performer. During performance, the thread runs over the top of your head. so your hairstyle is actually involved with the effect. I have experimented on people with different hairstyles and types of hair, and with a little experimenting it can work with anyone. A little hair spray on the front of the hair is recommended to prevent any movement during performance.



figure 3

Even if you have trouble with your hair (or lack of it), you can put on a hat and do the effect. This solves any problems you may have and is a good excuse to go into character, set a mood, etc. This is up to you. I feel the effect is well worth it. What you want to do is attach the wax to the left edge of your right thumbnail. With the cigarette hanging from the right thumb, (*Fig. 3*) run your right thumb over the top of your head

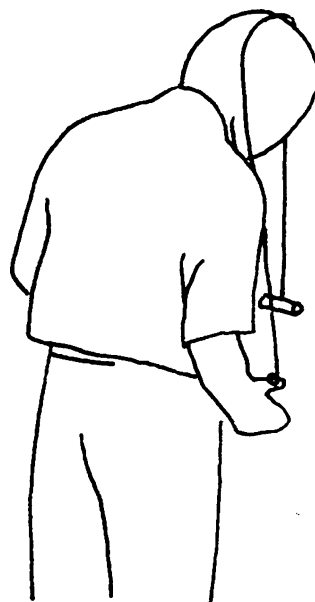


figure 4

starting in the center of your forehead and going all the way over to the back of your neck. The right hand continues to move straight forward and downwards until the arm is fully extended.

Now by moving your right arm up and down the cigarette should move down and up. (*Fig. 4*)

When your right arm is extended downwards the cigarette should come up at least as high as your mouth. If it doesn't, take it off your head and adjust the length of the thread until it will.

When you have the thread adjusted so that it runs across your hair without getting stuck, and there is minimal movement of the hair, you're ready.

If you're using a hat or cap, it is usually a good idea to put a small notch in the center of the brim, or two tiny pins for the thread to run between.

WORKING: There are a few different ways to begin the effect. If it is your opening effect you can enter with the cigarette in your mouth and the wax on your thumbnail.

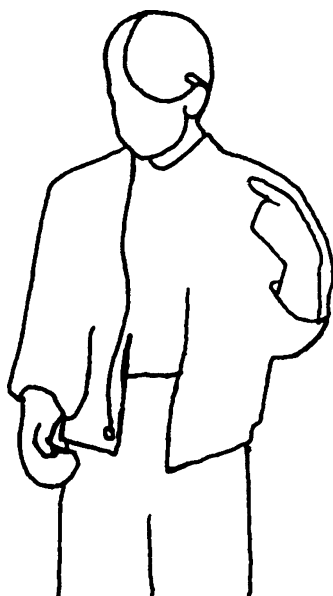


figure 5

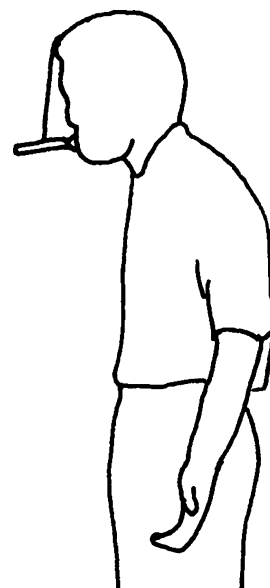


figure 6

I usually wear the cigarette behind my ear and keep the wax attached to the lower part of the right lapel on my jacket. (*Fig. 5*)

You can also put the cigarette into a box of cigarettes, place the box in your breast pocket, and attach the wax to your lapel a little higher up. If you wear the wax on your lapel, you can secretly obtain it in the action of adjusting your jacket.

With the cigarette in your mouth and the wax on your right thumb, turn to the right so your left side is facing the audience and your arms are at your sides. If you stick out your tongue you will find that you can balance the cigarette on the tip so that it is parallel to the floor. (*Fig. 6*)

Grasp the cigarette with the left hand as you turn to face the audience. Move the cigarette downwards with the left hand as the right hand moves up to meet the cigarette.

Place the right fingertip against the filter end of the cigarette and let go with the left hand so the cigarette is now suspended on the right fingertip. This is somewhat more difficult than the suspension on the tongue, but With practice you will be able to hold the cigarette perfectly still, and push it forward a distance from your body. To begin the levitation, let the cigarette rest in the left palm with the right hand above and a bit in front of the left. You should be looking at the cigarette with your head tilted slightly forward so that when you move your hands away, the cigarette remains floating between them. As you move you hands to the right, turn your head slight to the right and the cigarette will move along

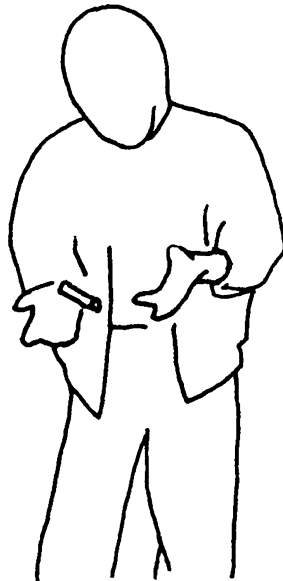


figure 7

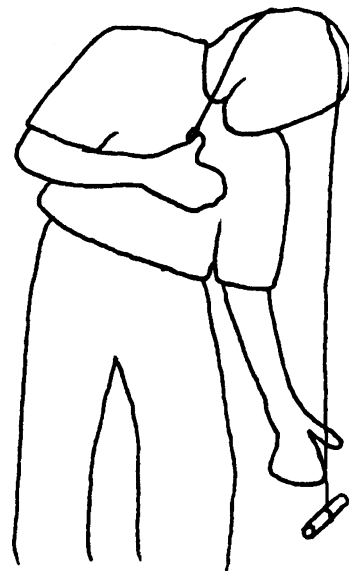


figure 8

with your hands. (*Fig. 7*) This is what makes this the most natural close-up levitation ever. When you do this properly it appears as if your head is moving to watch the cigarette, when actually your head is moving the cigarette! As the cigarette moves to the right, begin to raise your right hand towards your right ear. Your left hand follows near the cigarette, and as it goes lower, you should begin to bend slightly at the knees. All these actions blend together to look like a natural dramatic gesture as the cigarette falls. (*Fig. 8*)

The bending of the knees exaggerates the distance the cigarette travels, and is interpreted by the spectator as natural since the cigarette has gone so low you must bend to keep your left hand near it.

I usually make the cigarette travel in a big circle and as it rises back up to the hands I make a ring with my fingers. The ring is formed as the



figure 9

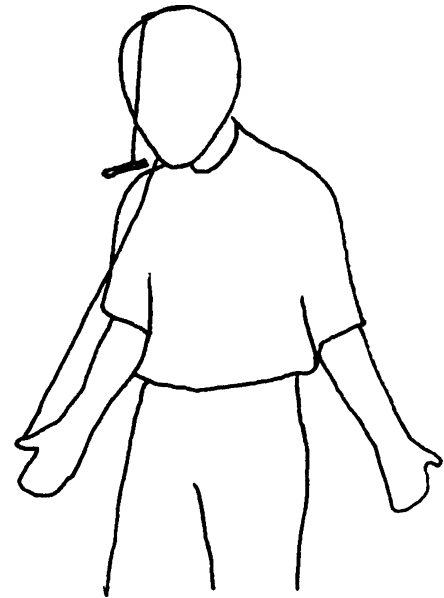


figure 10

cigarette is traveling to the right and the fingers actually come together around the thread with the left hand on top, right hand on the bottom. (Fig. 9). If the cigarette continues to the right as the hands move slowly left, the illusion of the cigarette passing through the fingers is perfect.

You can continue by making another circular pass with the cigarette bringing it down near the floor before gracefully straightening your knees and dropping your arms to your sides which will bring the cigarette up to your mouth. (Fig. 10)

If you perform the effect without lighting the cigarette, you can reset immediately by sticking the wax back onto your lapel and putting the cigarette back on your ear or in the box.

If you perform with a lit cigarette, be very careful when you light it at the beginning of the effect, as the thread is very sensitive to heat. At the end of the effect you can tilt the lit end upwards, severing the thread, and hand the cigarette out for examination.

BONUS IDEAS: Here are some extra ideas for kid shows and non-smokers.

Jeffrey Campbell suggested using a lifesaver candy. It could be taken from it's package, floated the same way as the cigarette (don't try lighting it of course!) and the candy floats into your mouth at the end. I think this is a great idea. If you hand out candy or any small prize to kids, you could make it extra special by floating it first.

I have experimented with a plastic kazoo, first playing a tune on it, then floating it, and after it returns to your mouth, playing a triumphant tune for the end. Any lightweight party favor or horn also works very well.

One thing I tried that approaches the beauty of the lit cigarette is a bubble pipe. First blow some bubbles and then float the pipe. The combination of the floating pipe and all the bubbles around it make a beautiful effect.

STRIPPING THREAD: Probably the most difficult part of this routine is stripping the invisible thread. You probably won't succeed in stripping out a full length of thread the first time you try, but with patience and practice, it will become quite easy.

Begin by removing one of the lengths of thread from the card, making sure it does not become tangled.

If you look closely at the end of the strand you'll see many tiny filaments. You must take hold of one of these tiny strands with your right fingers. Use a tweezers if necessary. Gently pull the single strand of thread out from the rest about an inch or two.

Attach a piece of wax to the single strand, and using the wax secure the thread to a wall just above your head so that the length of thread is hanging down towards the floor and the top end is attached to the wall by a single strand.

With the first finger and thumb of the right hand, lightly pinch the thread just below the bunch of threads at the top and slowly pull downward on the thread, causing the single strand to pull out another inch or two. When you feel the thread begin to bind, take a grip under the bunched up strands and pull the bundle of strands down a little more. Repeat this until you have pulled the bundle right off the end of the thread by the floor.

Work the thread off the single strand inch by inch, and be careful not to snag or knot the thread. When you have removed the entire length of invisible thread, attach a piece of wax to the bottom end, and if you are not using it right away, you may wrap it around a cord for safe keeping.

PRACTICE: John Haar suggests practicing the effect with fish line until you have all the body and hand movements memorized. This way you can visualize where the invisible thread will be when you actually perform the effect. This also saves you from making many invisible threads because you will no doubt break them while practicing. I would like to thank John for his helpful advice on this manuscript.

STORAGE: After you have a cigarette tied up, you can wrap the thread around it and attach the wax to the filter. This keeps it safe from tangles until you are ready to use it.

CONCLUSION: This effect has endless possibilities. As you practice it I hope you will come up with many new moves and ideas, and develop a routine that is all your own. Just watch out for direct sunlight, and strong rear or overhead lighting, and you will baffle

laymen and magicians alike. Performed correctly it will send chills up the most hardened magic fan's spine.

Please give it the practice it deserves!

- End

See Steve explain the Original Floating Cigarette Routine for the first time ever on video in [AREA 51 The Ultimate Flying Light!](#)

In this great routine, a piece of space junk is displayed which lights up and begins to levitate!

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