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Monday, Dec 26, 2016

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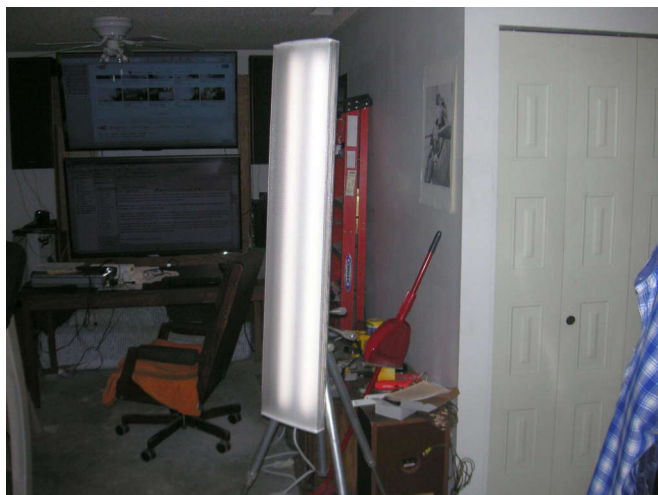
Studio light build

I make some poor-man's Kino Flo studio lights from Home Depot florescent fixtures.

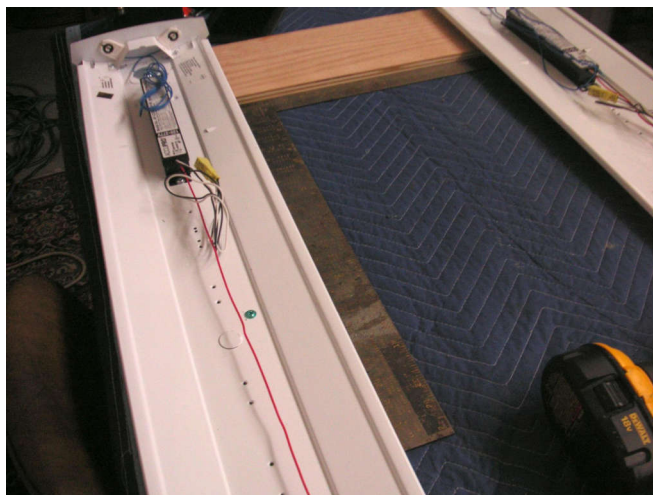


I needed broad even studio lighting for my pictures and YouTube videos. Not wanting to drop bug bucks on pro studio lighting, I bought seven 4-foot florescent light fixtures from Home Depot. A key thing was the fixtures have electronic ballasts so there is no 60Hz flicker to cause problems. Another important thing was hunting down some Philips bulbs that have a CRI (color rendering

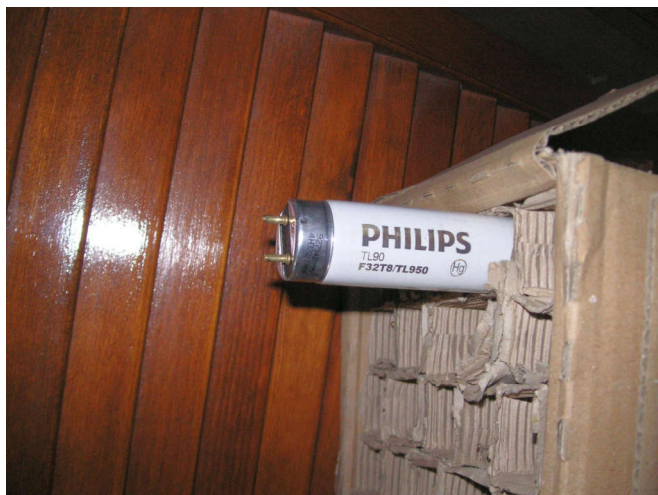
index) of 98. I paid 200 bucks for a box of 25 bulbs, I think from bulbs.com. I hard-mounted four fixtures on the wall, tented up to peak at the tip of the cathedral ceiling in the living room. I took two just tripods, one from the flea market and the other from Goodwill. The larger one has wheels so I mounted two fixtures on it. The smaller tripod holds one fixture, all vertically, to disperse the light.



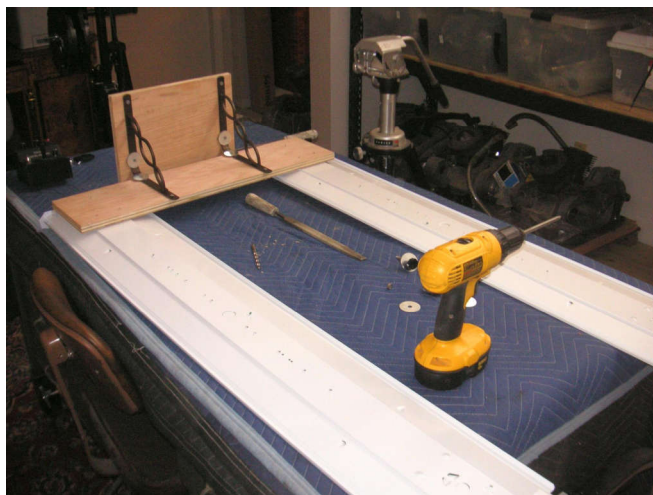
Here is the 10-dollar Goodwill tripod with a fixture mounted to it.



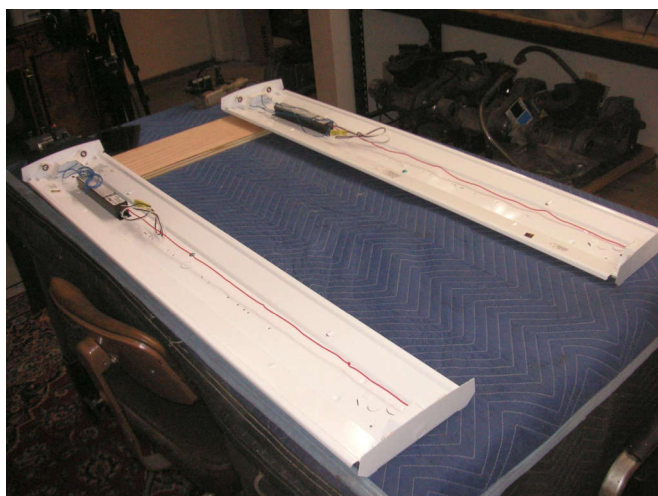
I put the ballasts downwards, and made sure they are away from the mounting screws.



With seven fixtures I only needed 14 of the bulbs.



Short drywall screws bored through the metal and secured the fixtures to the board. I used cheap shelf brackets to mount another board at right angles.



I mounted two fixtures on a plywood board.



The tripod cost something like 20 bucks and is rock solid. It was not very smooth for camera work, and the wheels kept sticking, so this is a good use for the thing. It is light enough I can tilt the thing to get under doorways and such.



Here is my 1952 K-model Harley with just the four lights on the wall.



This is the bike with the added lights working.



The double fixture I use as a key light, the single fixture is the fill light. You can see they throw a lot of light. That lets me open or close the f-stop as needed for the depth-of-field I need for a

given shot.



The same shelf brackets on the dual fixture works to mount the single fixture to the tripod.



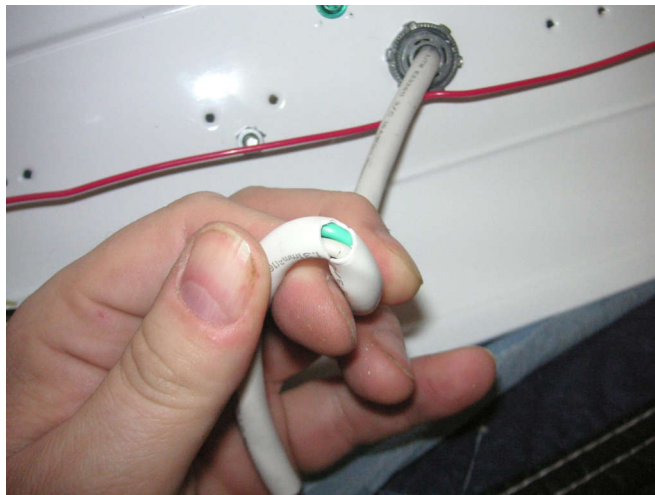
I run a cord from a knock-out on the back.



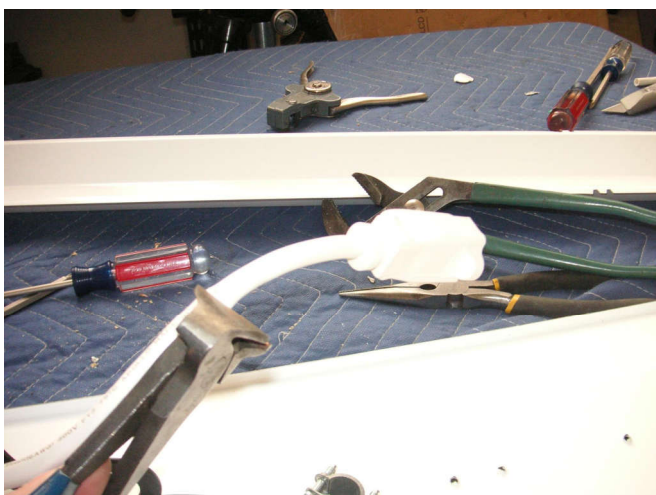
Cheap lights have ragged holes.



When you drop the cable-clamp nut, this is how it rolls to hide under a caster. Sheesh.



Some sheaths you can nick and then bend to break the sheath without nicking the copper.



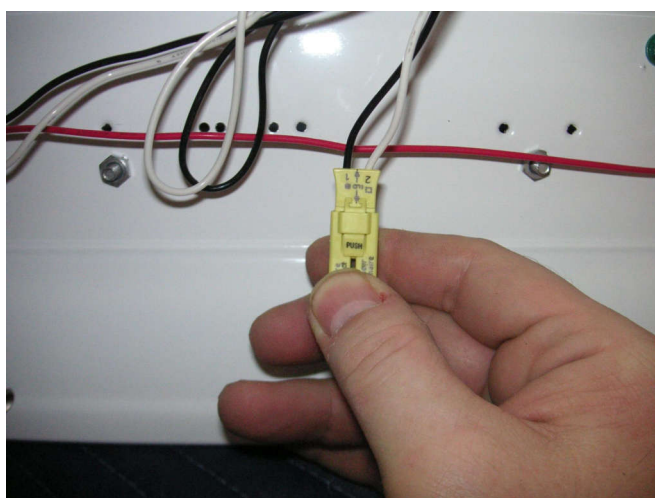
I bought a long extension cord and snipped the receptacle end off.



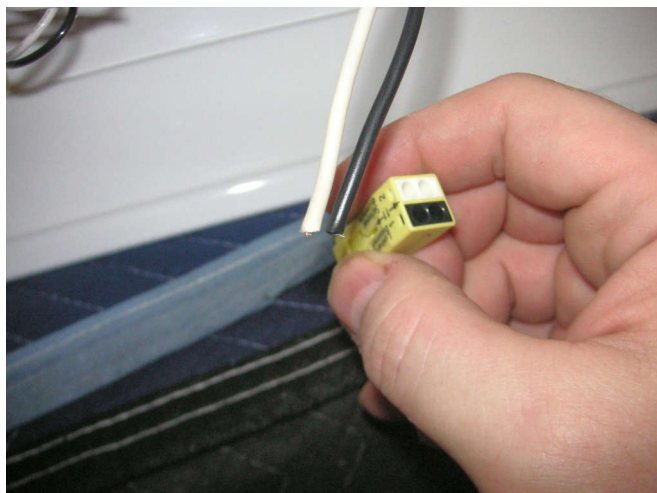
I call these type of wire strippers the Clackomatic 5000. They work great.



I cut the sheath way way back.



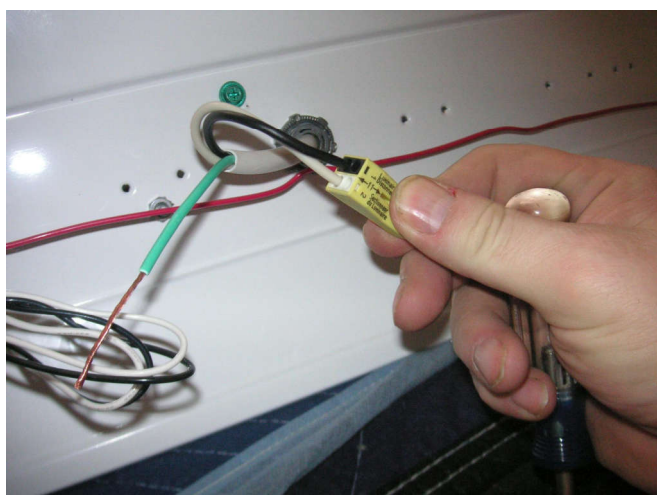
The fixtures have these little push-on connectors that makes hooking them up easy.



Black-to-black and white-to-white, pretty basic.



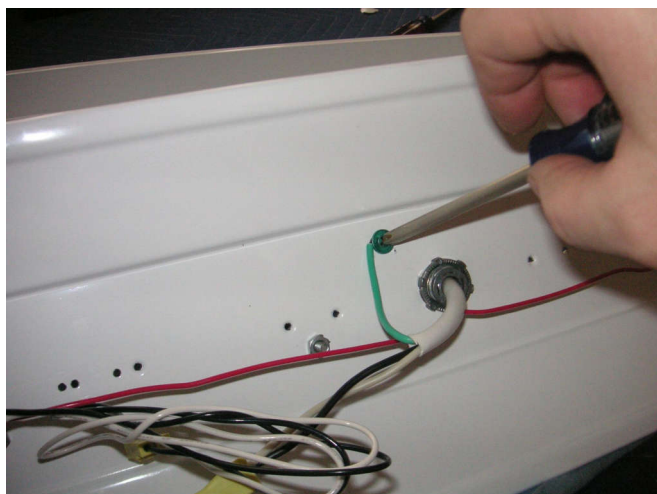
Stuff tucks together pretty well, the solid copper wires tend to stay put when bent.



The extension cord wires inserted, not the long stripped green ground wire..



The bench test goes fine, time to mount.



Always hook up the ground, it keeps you from getting shocked since a short will trip the circuit breaker in your panel rather than kill you.



A 1/4-nut goes on the stud in the tripod. This used to be a good tripod, but it got beat up before arriving at the Goodwill.



The single-fixture trip is light enough to whip around the room as needed, to move into the garage.



Here is that 1952 K-model Harley with all the lights on. This is the four mounted to the wall, the two on the key light tripod, and the one on the fill light tripod. You can see the light is even and there are no harsh shadows, perfect for a tech presentation where you need to see the fins and into the nooks and crannies of the bike.

Every once in a while I think about buying LED lights. Problem is, the bright ones I like all have a fan. That makes them useless for video work. These fixtures take a few minutes to come to full brightness but work great. I have since bought some cheap 5-bulb CFL studio lights to add even more brightness.