



HOW TO BUILD A

# PORTABLE FLAG

FOR NEXT TO NOTHING!

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## We Did It Ourselves!

In fact, it's something I can personally attest to.

Yes, my wife Simone and I, built a man-powered flag by going to the garbage dump! Unfortunately we don't have any photos of our "high-tech" pedal-powered device, but it worked extremely well besides the occasional shouting match between rider and pedal pusher. And it all cost less than \$50!



## Practicing At Home



- In the sport of reined cow horse, many of us start from humble beginnings. To be able to practice at home and be competitive often requires a little innovation and practicality.
- If you don't have the budget or the power to run a state of the art mechanical flag, there is a great alternative!

### We did it ourselves!

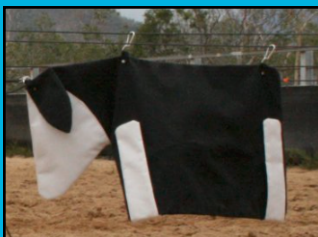
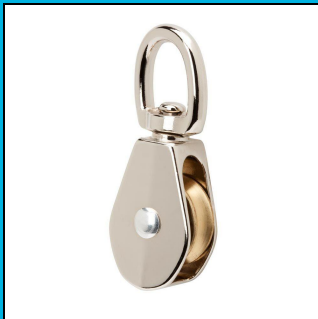
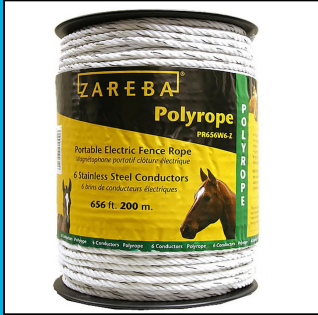
Here's how we took garbage and turned it into a homemade portable flag-and here's how you can do it under \$50!

## Getting Started:

## Understanding the Flag

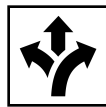


- The art of working a man-powered flag is having an operator who understands how a horse should work. Since they control the flag, they need to identify when the horse/rider is ready for the stop and turn.
- It's actually *a great way for a novice person to learn about the training of a cow horse* if they are pedaling under the instruction of the trainer who is riding.
- I recently saw Doug Jordan giving a clinic where he was working horses with a homemade flag just like the one we made many years ago. I decided we needed to create a brief guide so that anyone could make one at home.



## What You Need

1. An old exercise bike (make sure you can pedal forwards & backwards)
2. 240ft of poly rope (1/8, 5/32 or 1/4 inch diameter. Polypropylene rope for outdoors will probably last longer)
3. One large or two smaller pulleys
4. Two snap hooks
5. A piece of material of your choice as the cow (something sturdy like canvas with two metal eyelets for the clips attached to the rope) Doug Jordan used the front of an old square fan. Or simply tie some cloth to the rope if you'd rather not use snap hooks.



## Step #1 - Deciding Where to Put it

- First, decide where you are going to operate the flag.
- Make sure it has a good soft footing for your horse.
- Try not to have the barn/home etc at one end of the flag, as this may cause your horse to run longer on that side and want to run harder that direction, and lose connection.
- Be aware of the sun.
- Try to have the sun behind you when working the flag so it doesn't distract you or your horse.

## Step #2 - Mount the Bike

- Mount your exercise bike onto a very simple platform/box at least 1 foot off the ground (2 feet is probably even better) to give you some height so the



flag doesn't drag on the ground.

- The pulleys need to be attached to a fixed post at the opposite end of the bicycle to give it some support. **See photos at the end of the presentation.**
- You can also tie your bike off to something firm as well, so you can get sufficient tension on your rope. Or you can do what Doug has done and fill a bucket with a weight or rocks to help brace the bike. If you want a portable flag so you can take it to shows than this is a great option.



### Step #3 - Tying the Rope

- I used 240 ft of rope because that gives me 120 ft of working area. *This is completely optional.*
- However the longer the better because this allows your horse to reach and travel somewhere with the flag.
- Use the two snap hooks on either end of the 240 ft rope to attach to your flag. Try to have no knots in your rope because it will catch on the pulleys or bike wheel.

### Step #4 - Finishing Up



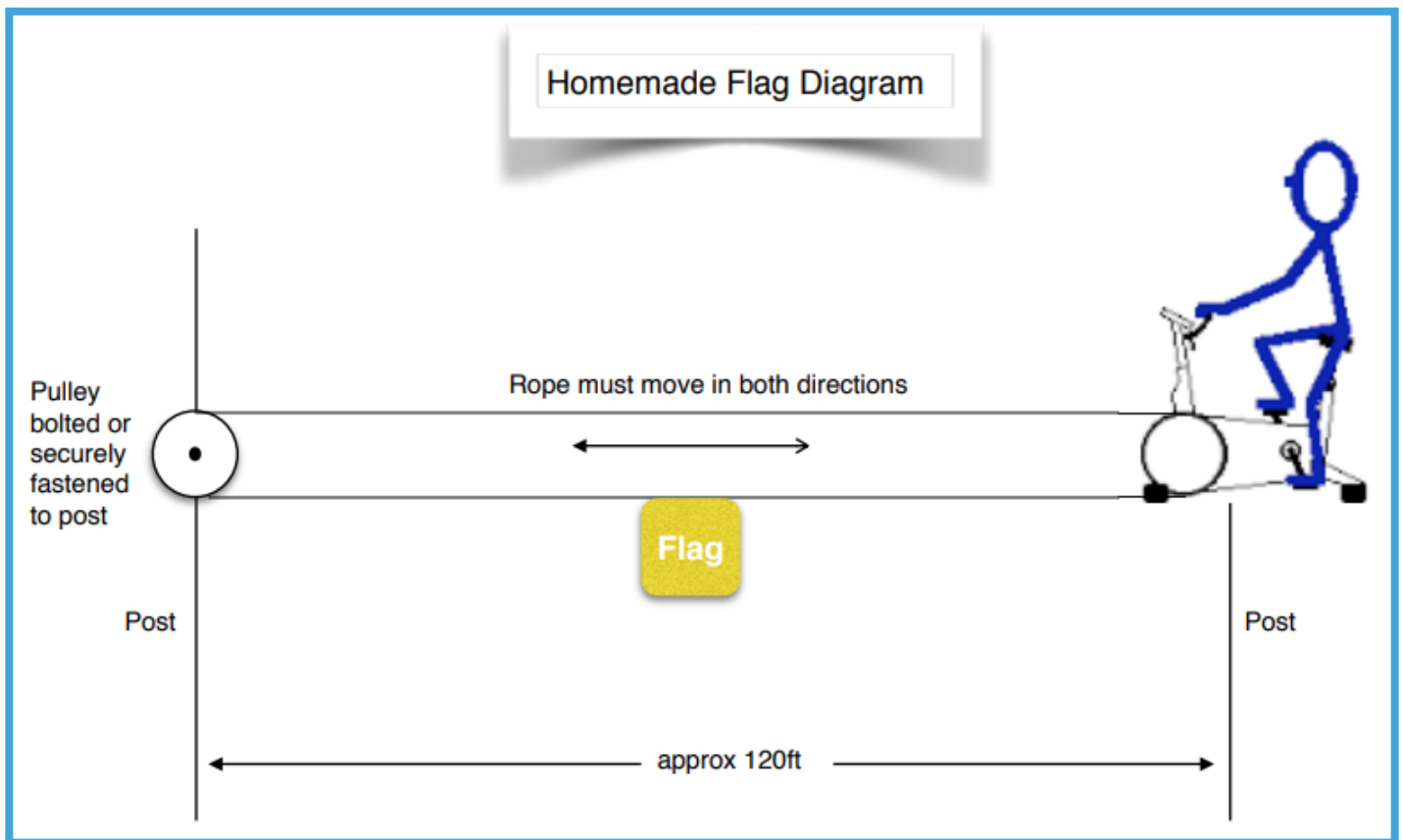
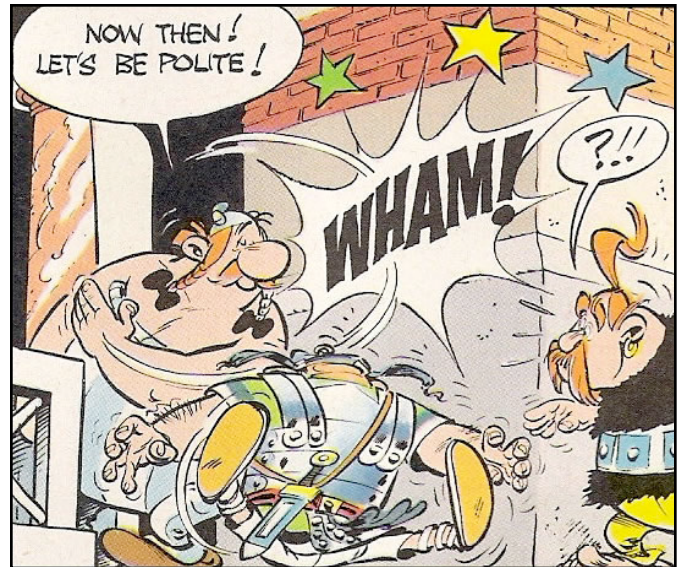
- You may have to cut a groove in the exercise bike wheel so the rope doesn't slide off or you can take the tyre off and just use the rim, which has edges on it to stop the rope from slipping off.

- Finally, make sure the bike has a decent seat to make it a little more comfortable for the operator.

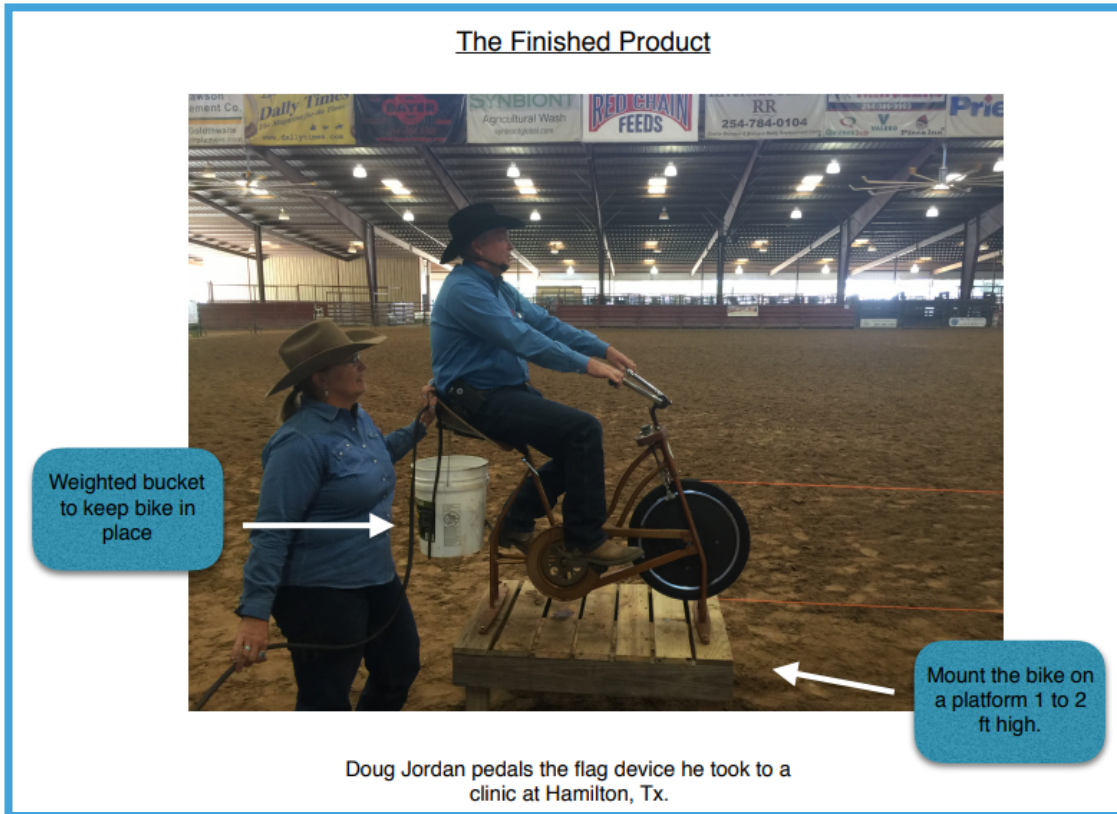




- And if you are the horse rider, be sure to throw in a please and thank you when yelling your instructions, it might just mean the pedal pusher sticks with you for the next time! (of course, a reminder about how many calories they'll burn could go either way...)



# The Finished Product



## Tips



Position pulleys to take up slack.



Using the front of an old square fan for the flag works well.



Working the flag. The results are the same as a \$20,000 model!

## Helpful Videos

We found some Youtube videos showing other people's home-made flags, some of which are mechanical versions.

### YouTube

- This one shows an actual bike (not exercise bike) you pedal with your hands and is positioned against a fence in a pasture:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQKeH7povNA>

- This link shows a rider using it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xACyZk3KN-o>

- In this one, the flag is attached to a small motor:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSID1TtREvY>

- This is another example of a homemade mechanical flag, powered by a drill. It has a “stuffed” canvas cow on both cables:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEEK3MI\\_o08](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEEK3MI_o08)

**Best of luck with your flag building!**

