

How to Build a Studio in a Box



Items: Large Box, Shoe Box, Tracing Paper, Tape, White Paper. Optional: White Paint



Tools: Marker, Ruler, Box Cutter, Scissor.



Starting on a longer side, if you have a rectangular box, mark out a big rectangle to cut out of the box. Here I cut out all but 3 cm around. This leaves some solid structure for the final box.



You may want to leave more or less depending on the size of the box used.



Start carefully cutting out the first side.



After the first side, move onto the top of the box. Draw another rectangle as before, leaving 3 cm around, and cut it out.



Now you have the left side and top cut out.



Now move on to a smaller side of your box. This will be the front. Mark out another large rectangle, leaving the same space round the outside, and start cutting it out.



Be sure to remove the cardboard rectangles you cut out carefully so you don't damage the rest of the box.



Now you have the top, left, and front sides cut out.



Carefully mark out and cut the final side. This is the other long side of the box opposite the first side you cut. The box becomes less stable at this point so take care.



Now you have the left, front, right, and top sides cut out. This is the perfect time, if you choose, to paint or glue the same paper as your background onto the inside of the box, covering the inside corners so the cardboard doesn't reflect on your shiny object.



Measure out the tracing paper for the right side. It is going to cover the entire side of the box. Make sure you leave extra paper in the height so that you can fold it over the top and bottom edges.



Line up the tracing paper. It will reach from left to right sides and extend up and over the top lip of the box.



Tape the top of the tracing paper in place.



Tape the bottom of the tracing paper to the bottom of the box while pulling it tight.
Then tape the left and right sides.



Now your paper is taped on and wrinkle free for the right side of the box.



Cut out another sheet of paper and repeat the process, taping it to the top of the box.



Install a second box as a platform for your products to rest on. Shoeboxes work great for this.



Measure the width of the inside of the box.



Use that measurement to mark out the width of your background paper.



Then measure out the length of your background paper. It will be about $1 \frac{1}{3}$ times the length of the long side of the box. Cut out your rectangle of background paper.



Place the background paper into the box.



Gently position the paper so it does not wrinkle.



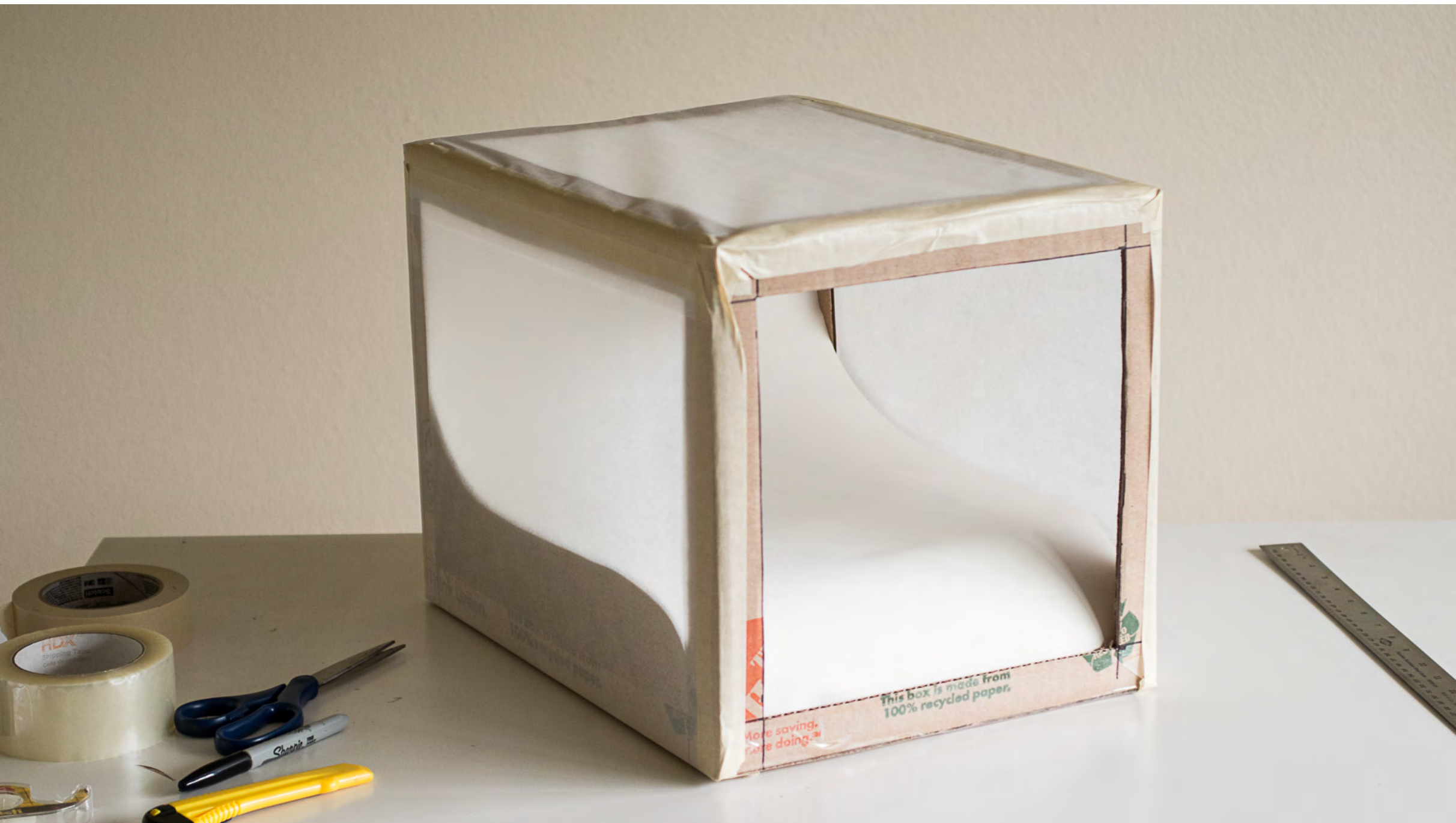
Adjust the paper so that it has a nice, smooth curve up in the back and a smooth curve down in the front.



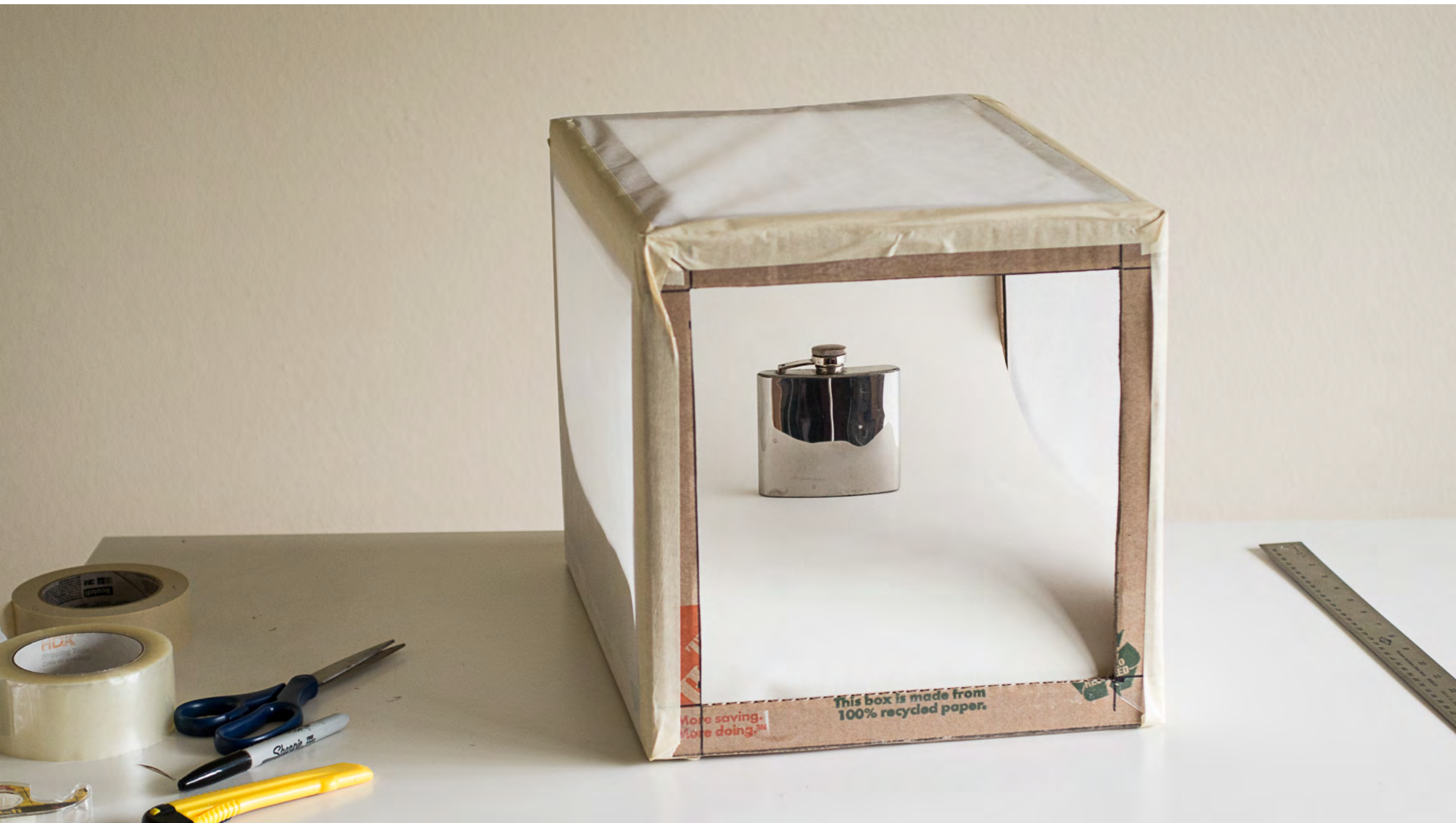
Here's what your box will look like now from the front.



Now tape tracing paper on the left side of the box, repeating the steps you took for the right side. Make sure that tracing paper is tight.



Here is what your box will look like now with the tracing paper and background installed.



Now you can put your shiny metal product on the background paper.



The camera side of the box can also benefit from being covered by a sheet of tracing paper but it will need a hole that you can shoot through. Start by cutting a piece of tracing paper to fit the front of the box. Then measure a circle around your lens cap to shoot through.



Cut out the circular hole and tape the tracing paper to the box. This does not need to be securely taped because you will need to move it a lot as you change products out.



Here is a closer view of the metal object in the box. When you shoot, put the lens into the circular opening you cut.



Here is a final shot of a shiny metal object lit from the left and right sides of the box. This studio in a box allows you to light from both sides for even light. It is also possible to light from the top only or from the top and the two other sides. For lights, I am using cheap hardware store work lamps with halogen bulbs.