

THE ONE PAGE GUIDE ON HOW TO BECOME A STREET PERFORMER!

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Here's all the best advice I could cram onto one page about how to be a street performer.

The main elements of a street show; **Build the crowd, keep the crowd, and get the crowd to pay.**

BUILD THE CROWD

I'm not going to lie, building a crowd is very difficult at first. You WILL get the hang of it eventually. And then once you can build a crowd, you'll be able to do it every time.

Find a busy street, with enough room to build an audience (don't block any paths!). You should have your show equipment, and preferably an amplifier. If using an amp, play some music as you set up your props. Your attitude **MUST** be that you do this every day, that you know exactly what you are doing, and that you will get a crowd no problem.

Don't worry too much about the audience at first, just start setting up your props with some energy and enthusiasm. If a couple of people seem interested, give them a prop to hold onto and examine. Then get that person on stage and start doing a bit involving them. You can start with small tricks and build peoples attention. Think about what you can do that intrigues passers by. If they are thinking, 'What is he about to do?', you're on the right track! Get new audience members to come closer (rope or a waterline help for this), micromanage your crowd to get a good semi-circle without gaps. This creates a good atmosphere.

KEEP THE CROWD

At this point you need to deliver an entertaining show. It works best if there is a clear finale that you are building up to throughout the show (juggling on a unicycle for example) as that keeps the audience engaged until the end. Less is more in a street show. Keep the amount of tricks to a minimum and the amount of comedy to a maximum. Before finishing ANY trick, make sure your audience knows that something much better is about to happen. When a trick is finished, don't pause for even a second, dive straight into your next trick. When you've started a trick you can take your time, but when you've finished a trick you have to quickly start the next one or people will walk away. I cannot stress the importance of this enough. Keep referencing the finale throughout the show and always imply that it is coming soon.

GET PAID

Just before you do the finale, you need to do what we call a 'hat speech'. This involves asking the audience to come forward at the end of your show and pay.

A successful hat speech is best with the following elements:

1. Let the audience know that you are a full time street performer
2. Tell the audience that no-one pays you to be here except the audience
3. Explain what a fair price is - "In London, if you saw me do this in a bar you'd buy me a beer. A beer costs around £5. £5 is a great tip if you can afford it. If you're doing well, £10 would be greatly appreciated."
4. Let them know at the end of the show you'll be stood holding out your hat and you'd really appreciate them to come forward and make a contribution into the hat
5. Get them to clap and cheer. "I hate talking about money, but if I don't I'll never make a living. So let's have a clap and a cheer to get the energy back!"

Obviously there's a lot more to it than this. We'll go into much more detail on the mailing list. But right now this is a good framework to get you thinking. Read this through a couple of times, do your best to internalise it. The advice here is essential for doing a successful show. Heavy hats!