

Acetone and Styrofoam

Acetone and Styrofoam is demonstration of a simple chemical reaction that is very portable and effective for stage shows like on the UP trip.

Materials

- Two large opaque containers (**must be made of HDPE to avoid a reaction**)
- Acetone
- Many large pieces of Styrofoam

Safety Precautions

This demo produces a sticky flammable mixture of dissolved Styrofoam and acetone. Please read the Fire Safety section of the [Demonstration Safety](#) page before performing this demonstration. Please properly dispose of the accumulated chemical waste, once the container is too full for the demo.

Demonstration

1. Add acetone to one of the containers until it is about 10% full (this should be done ahead of time).
2. Leave the other container empty.
3. Call for a volunteer from the audience.
4. Explain that you will be holding a competition to see who can stuff the most amount of Styrofoam into their container in 60 second.
5. Guide the audience member to the empty container.
6. Start the competition and nonchalantly add Syrofoam to the container. It will dissolve in the acetone and significantly shrink in volume.
7. Eventually the audience will notice that the Styrofoam is disappearing. Then admit to you crimes and explain to the kids how it works.

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