



How to...



DID YOU KNOW?
One second of a stop-motion movie can require 24 photographs.

Make a stop-motion film

Bring toys to life with this creative and easy technique.

Stop-motion animation is a filmmaking technique that uses photographs. Many photographs are taken of an object in slightly different positions and then put together to make it look like the object is moving. "The coolest part about making stop-motion films is creating characters from materials and bringing them to life," said Adina Cohen, an animator in Los Angeles, California. To make your own movie, follow these steps.

Download a program

There are many apps for making your own stop-motion films. A good one to start with is Stop Motion Studio, which is available to download from Google Play and iTunes. Its free version allows you to take photos, put them together into a video, and add a recording of your voice.

Set the stage

Once the app is downloaded, make a stage. You may want to keep the stage simple so you can see the characters. A piece of foam board propped up by a stack of books on a table can work. Or you could use a toy house or paint a backdrop of a specific scene. Next, prop up your smartphone or tablet so you can snap photographs without having to hold the device.

Gather your characters

Now it's time to recruit the stars of your show—your toys. Small figurines that have movable joints (like Lego characters) work well because it's easy to change their

positions. But you can also use toys that don't move and just move their position on the stage. Or you can make your own characters out of modeling clay. Stop-motion films made with clay figurines are called claymation.

Lights, camera, action

Open the app, click "new movie," and use the camera icon to take photos. Take a photo, move your character a little, then snap another picture. Do this five to 10 times. Then hit the play button to watch the images come together. How does it look? Experiment with moving your figures in different ways between photos until you get a video that looks like what you envisioned.

Edit your film

Once you've taken your photos, move them around in the order you want and delete the ones you don't need. This step is what animators call editing. Then add music and voices for your characters.

As you play the movie back, hit the record button (it looks like a microphone) and speak the parts you want your characters to say.

Be sure to use your best funny voices!

Save and share

Besides saving your video in the app, download it onto your device. This way you can easily email it to relatives and friends to enjoy. If you decide to create more videos with the same characters, you could create your own mini movie series that you save and share over time.



Small toys make great characters.

Popular stop-motion movies to watch

These films use a series of photos to make the characters look like they're moving.



The Boxtrolls The animation is so detailed that producers said they completed only about one to two minutes of footage a week.

Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-rabbit

Wallace and his loyal dog Gromit are trying to save his town's vegetable competition in this award-winning claymation film.



Fantastic Mr. Fox The director of this film adaptation of Roald Dahl's book wanted the movements to be less smooth so viewers would know it was made with stop-motion.

Gumby: The Movie

This 1995 movie continues the story of Gumby, who first appeared as a claymation character on TV in 1955. He's one of the most famous characters ever illustrated using claymation.

