

Transcription of the Questacon Science Squad Activity Video – Floating Octopus

The video for this transcript can be found on the Questacon Science Squad website at:

<http://sciencesquad.questacon.edu.au/activities/>

Transcription from video:

(Sound of bubbles popping)

Anna: What has eight legs and flies? Give up? A floating octopus, of course!

My name's Anna and I'm from the Questacon Science Squad. Today I'm going to show you how to make your own floating octopus.

You need:

- a plastic shopping bag
- a pair of scissors
- a modelling balloon
- a balloon pump and,
- a piece of silk, wool or cotton cloth.

Now, the first thing you need to do is take your plastic bag and cut a 30 centimetre long, 2 centimetre wide, strip out of it, like this one right here.

(Anna holds up a completed example)

Then you need to fold it in half and cut a strip all the way to the top. It's a bit fiddly. Now, right at the top you want to make sure that you leave a 1 centimetre gap, so you don't want to go all the way through the plastic bag. So, cutting all the way to the top. There we go and a 1 centimetre gap, excellent. Now you need to do this three more times until you have an eight-legged octopus, excellent.

(Anna holds up a completed example)

Now take your modelling balloon, fold it in half and cut it. Then tie off the half with two open ends and pump them up. Now at this point you need a friend. Luckily I've got Steve here.

Anna: Hi, Steve!

Steve: Hi, Anna!

(Steve appears in the shot)

Anna: Now, once you pump them up, you'll have something that looks like this.

Great. Now we need to charge up the balloons. So grab your piece of wool, silk or cotton cloth and rub the balloons. If you don't have a piece of cloth,

you can use each other's hair, like Steve is doing right now. You'll know when the balloons are charged, when your hair is attracted to the balloon or if you hold the two balloons close together, you'll notice that they repel each other. Excellent. Now, not only do you need to charge up the balloons, but you also need to charge up your octopus. Place your octopus on the table and then stroke it with your piece of cloth until it's nice and charged, 15 or so times should do it. Here we go...nearly done...excellent. Now when you're ready, grab your balloons, throw your octopus in the air and see who can keep it in the air the longest. Are you ready, Steve?

Steve: I'm ready, Anna.

Anna: Here we go!

Steve: AAGH!!!

Anna: *(laughs)*

If you want to know why the octopus stuck to Steve or floated in the air, head to the Questacon Science Squad website. See you next time.