

# Creativity College

## TOMATO SMASHER

---

### Challenge

With the materials provided, build a system that stops the fall of the hammer from as high above the platform as possible and protects all the tomatoes from harm.

### Approximate Time for Task

25 minutes

### Materials

Four sheets of memo bond paper, six inches of masking tape, and five cherry tomatoes per group. (You may wish to supply an index card cut down to 3.5 X 3.5 inches for use as a building platform. It should remain whole and flat, used only as an attachment point to hold all system elements in their proper positions, conveniently ready for testing.)

### Tools

Scissors and rules for each team. The dreaded Tomato Smasher-- [Click Here for Building Plans](#)-- an ample supply of cherry tomatoes and, perhaps, a roll of paper towels.

### Evaluation

Testing systems built by participants is essential for learning and for the big payoff. Drop the hammer from top dead center onto the paper system! Measure (in centimeters) the height above the base plain the hammer comes to rest and multiply that number by the number of tomatoes that remain under the hammer without damage. Tomatoes ejected, bounced aside or slightly split are to be considered casualties and not counted as survivors.

### Scoring Examples

Hammer resting at a height of 7 cm with 3 whole tomatoes under it equals a score of 21. The hammer held at an impressive 18 cm but with not tomatoes remaining on the test pad receives a score of zero.

### Tips

It is useful to have all team members stand within a few feet of the hammer as their system is tested. Putting a length of duct tape on the floor and requiring their toes to touch it sets a clear and potentially humorous standard of compliance.

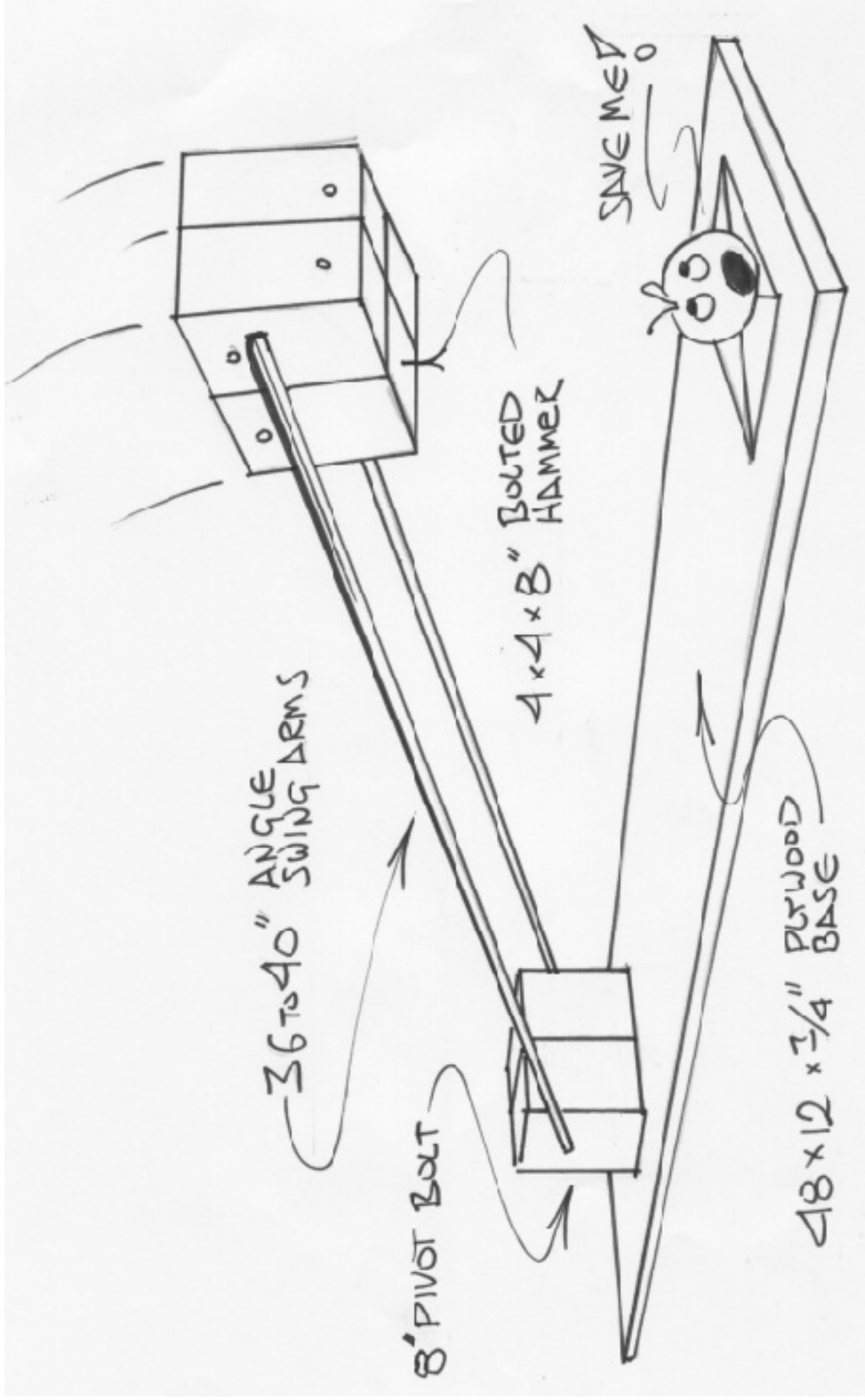
### Teachable Moments

Just before you do any testing, ask each team member to individually record what his or her expectations are for their system. Objectively and accurately assessing one's own ideas and work is an invaluable skill that is rarely acknowledged.

After each test ask the team to review what worked and what didn't. You can model here by examining in detail the carnage or glory.

Finally, when all systems have been tested, ask them if they were to do it again could they do it better? Almost always people say "YES!" With that answer point out that they taught themselves how to solve this problem. That's creativity, that's a transmutable skill, and that's what this is all about!

# TOMATO SMASHER



Project provided by Creativity College and Larry Busch. If you use this project please give credit to Larry, dean, Creativity College, [www.amercreativityassoc.org/sosmart](http://www.amercreativityassoc.org/sosmart). Sponsored by the American Creativity Association.