

# Light Stands and How to Set Them Up

## Introduction

Light stands hold lights and other equipment and are instrumental when setting up a photo or video shoot. The UD/Art Lighting Studio and Equipment Cage have a large selection of light stands and grip equipment to use. The proper and safe set up and, after the shoot, pack-up and storage of the light stands are important to make your shoot go smoothly and to keep the equipment in good working order for everyone to use. This article will provide basic information on the use of the two types of light stands you will find in the UD/Art Lighting Studio and Equipment Cage – “C” stands and folding studio stands.

## Folding Studio Stands

Folding studio stands are handy because they fold up into a fairly compact size that is easy to store and pack up for traveling.

### Unfolding and setting up a Studio Stand

Most studio stands unfold by loosening the screw at the top of the set of legs. Once that screw is loosened, the collar with the leg hinges slides down the central pole and the legs pivot outward from the hinges. Rest the stand on the floor on its legs and let it settle to where it naturally wants to go. It will probably rest with the central pole a few inches off the floor and the stabilizing arms will be pointing slightly upward from the central pole.

It's unnecessary, but you can widen the stance of the legs further but go no further than when the stabilizing arms are parallel with the floor.

You definitely do not want to raise the central pole so far that the leg hinge collar is really close to the bottom of the central pole. This will narrow the legs and make the stand **LESS STABLE!** You will also not be able to hang sandbags on the stabilizing arms of the legs.

Use caution when loosening the clamp levers to extend the central pole sections! The segments are spring-loaded and will pop up. Keep your eyes, etc. clear! Once the studio stand is set up, it will look something like the following figure.

### Sand bags for stability

The equipment that you mount on a studio stand adds weight at the top. This weight will make the stand less stable. To counteract this affect, you can add weight to the bottom of the stand by draping sand bags over the stabilizing arms.

### Proper light attachment



Light stands in general have a mounting pin at the top of their central pole. This pin normally has a groove to help a light's clamp screw grab onto the pin. If the light's clamp screw is not loosened enough, the mounting socket will not be fully seated on the pin.

## Packing up the studio stand

When you are finished with a studio stand, you pack it up by reversing the process of setting it up. You first should loosen up the central pole's clamp screws and compress the pole segments down so the stand is as compact as possible, tightening the clamp screws back up as you compress each section.

Loosen up the clamp screw on the collar with the leg hinges and slide it back up to fold up the legs.

## C Stands

C Stands are heavy duty light stands. The stands themselves are heavier than studio stands, and they are also more stable. They get their name from the shape of their legs.

### Setting up a C Stand

C Stands are set up by rotating the legs until they are evenly distributed. There are bumps that will "click" into place into notches on the collars that the legs are attached to on the central pole.

Do not loosen the screw down where the legs are. That is for removing the leg assembly.

### Sandbags for stability

The equipment that you mount on a studio stand adds weight at the top. This weight will make the stand less stable. To counteract this affect, you can add weight to the bottom of the stand by draping sand bags over the legs.

### Proper light attachment

Light stands in general have a mounting pin at the top of their central pole. This pin normally has a groove to help a light's clamp screw grab onto the pin. If the light's clamp screw is not loosened enough, the mounting socket will not be fully seated on the pin.



Studio Stand with legs settled to a good, stable width



Studio stand with leg stance widened with stabilizing arms parallel with the floor



DON'T SET UP A STUDIO STAND LIKE THIS!



Studio stand set up



Studio stand with sandbags for stability



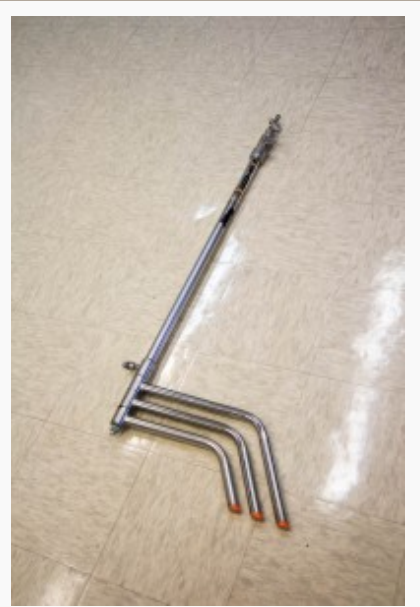
Don't do this! — Light's mounting socket not fully seated



Do this! — Light mounting socket is fully seated and the screw is clamped in the notch in the pin



Central pole segments fully compressed



A folded up C Stand



A C stand with its legs set up



Do not loosen or remove the leg removing screw



C stand with a sandbag to add stability





Mounting pin on a C stand



C stand with the mounting socket of a light firmly seated on the pin of the stand. The clamp screw is tightened into the groove on the pin.

## Packing up the C stand

You pack up the C stand in the reverse order that you used to set it up. After removing any mounted lights, you loosen the clamp screws of the sections of the central pole to shorten it as much as possible. Tighten these clamp screws back up sc

the sections do not slide. The light stands are hung on the rack in the equipment room of the studio, so the clamp screws should be tight enough so that the central pole sections don't slide open on the rack. After tightening the clamp screws, you would rotate the legs so that they are together.

## **Conclusion**

Here are some important things to remember about lighting stands:

1. Make sure that the legs of a studio stand are opened to the point where the central pole of the stand is a few inches off the ground, perhaps up to the point where the stabilizing arms are parallel to the floor.
2. Use sandbags on the light stand legs to stabilize your setup.
3. Make sure the light equipment is fully seated on the mounting pin of the stand with the clamp screw tightened into the notch on the mounting pin.