

How to do a T-TRAK *Module*

John Rumming.

Firstly a quick note: This is the way that I do them. There are plenty of different ways to do the modules.

Since the N scale Convention in Adelaide, South Australia, I have taken the T-TRAK idea and really gone mad with it. In 2 days when I returned I had my T-TRAK layout up and running in my own lounge room. I decided to use 6mm MDF (Craftwood) as it is stronger than the 3mm, and easy to cut out and use.

T-TRAK is an excellent idea which involves small table top layouts to be interconnected to create a large layout with minimal set up. I had heard of the T-TRAK idea but until I saw it in action at the convention, I did not realize how simple it was. It is a perfect thing for teaching people how to do layouts, perfect for dioramas and a perfect system to interconnect modules to make a large layout.

This tutorial is one of many I have prepared to teach people the ideas and concept on model railways. I hope you find them informative. If you find this or any of my PDF files helpful, please contact me and I will try and expand my range.

The T-TRAK in Australia website can be found at:

<http://users.picknowl.com.au/~austnscale/ttrak.htm>

And the official T-TRAK site can be found at:

<http://www.t-trak.org>



Here are some of the basic tools I use. Hammer, nails, glue, 6mm MDF, sharp pencil, a 1m metal ruler and G clamps.



Firstly, mark out your wood to the size that you require. On the last page of this are the 'alternate' sizes that I use. As the tolerances are pretty tight, I find that cutting 1 item at a time is the best way to go to reduce errors. Most people mark all the wood then cut it, but this may create slightly smaller pieces. In the second picture you can see all the pieces cut out. There are enough pieces here to create 2 single modules. I use 6mm MDF (Craftwood) as it is light and also strong. I also try and use as much of the wood as I can in one go. If this means cutting a 308mm strip to get the base and front & back sides the same width, then do it.

The pieces above are as follows:

- (2 x) 308mm x 300mm (6mm Thick) for the top
- (4 x) 308mm x 64mm (6mm Thick) for the front and back
- (4 x) 288mm x 64mm (6mm Thick) for the sides
- (8 x) 30mm x 30mm (54mm long) for the adjustable legs
- (8 x) 15mm x 15mm (60mm long) for underneath bracing

Once all the pieces are cut and you are sure that the pieces fit together well, then continue to the next step.



Drill a 3/8" (8mm) hole through the center of the 30mm x 30mm wood. Using 5/16" (M6) Tee Nuts, hammer them carefully into the wood. If you hammer them in gently where the spikes are, they go in nicely. Be careful not to split the wood when you hammer them in. Sometimes this can not be helped, and you can still use them anyway. Screw the bolt (all threaded) into the Tee Nut and your adjustable legs are ready.



Once the legs are ready, you can attach them to one of the side panels. Use the shorter panels and it is easy to line them up with the edges of the legs. This means that you can put the front and back panels flush to the sides of the legs and side panels. Glue the two pieces together and nail them so they are secure.



In this picture you can see the basic box outline coming together. If you put the leg tops the same height as the top you can use this to nail the top securely together. The adjustable feet should sit inside the box as shown just below the base. This will also bring the adjustable feet just below the base so they will be ready if required to be used for leveling up. Glue and nail the other two panels so the box takes shape.

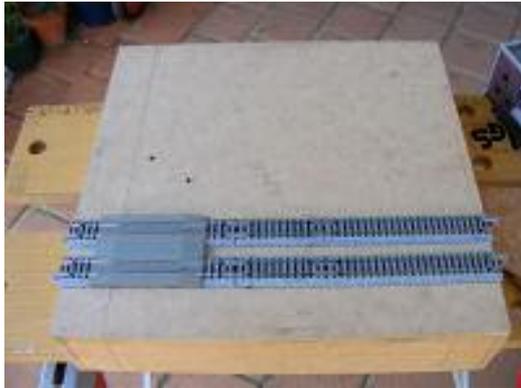


Here you see the top with the strengtheners on. I used a spare piece of 6mm MDF to space them out in the correct dimensions. I nailed and glued these so they will support the top to the sides as extra strength. Glue all connecting edges and put the top onto the box with adjustable legs. Nail and/or clamp them until dry.



The above Pictures show the box complete and ready for the track sections. Please note that these are single modules.

The following pictures will show the progress of the scenery that I use. You will see that it is easy to do, and you can put scenery of this type on the module in a matter of about 10-15 minutes.

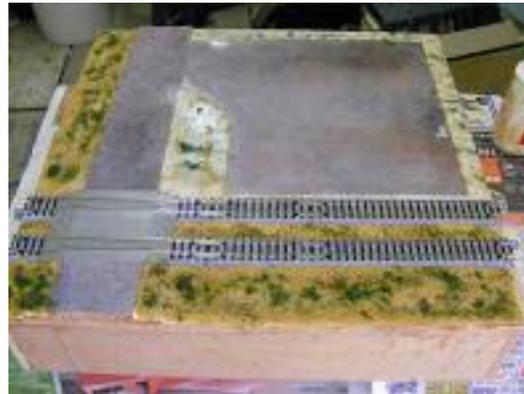


Nail down the track 38mm from the front of the board to the ballast section of the first track. Get your blue railer tool and using it, check that the spaces between the tracks are 33mm apart. There are grooves in the blue railer that are the correct widths. I have used 2 road crossings above. The add-on straight part that you get with the track makes them 33mm apart. Perfect! Place your road and see if everything fits. Notice the 1mm overhang for the connecting sections on each side. Please refer to the T-TRAK booklet for further information on exact positioning.



Test fit your buildings for positioning. Then colour your road and glue them into place.

I use ordinary beige sand to do the ground with. It looks realistic and you can get it from practically anywhere at a minor cost. I bought a bag of it and used less than 2% on this module. Use a cup and carefully spread it in all the places ground would be.



I then use Woodland Scenics Blended Turf to green the sand. Using a spoon, get a small spoonful and gently tap it onto the layout. You will get the result on the left. Use “wet water” (water with a small drop of detergent in) in a spray bottle to break up the surface tension of the sand and green spread. Then use a 50/50 mix of water and white glue (wood glue) and use another spray bottle to apply this to the soil and greenery. The photo above shows the wet soil and 50/50 mix on. This bonds them together into a hard shell. You can also drip on the 50/50 mix using an old glue bottle or similar. Now just let it dry.

You are now ready to display your first T-TRAK module.

Congratulations.

Below are some photos that have been taken of the layout you have just seen being built.



Here are the standard measurements I use for the T-TRAK.

Single Module:

308mm long x 300mm wide x 70mm high.

Double Module:

618mm long x 300mm wide x 70mm high.

Triple Module:

928mm long x 300mm wide x 70mm high.

Corner Modules:

365mm long x 365mm wide x 70mm high.

Track Distance:

33mm apart as per the track gauge on the blue railer.

Distance From The Front:

38mm

If you look at the T-TRAK in Australia booklet from the link on the first page, you will understand where the odd measurements come from.

Thank you,

John Rumming.