



Layout construction ideas

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Have a construction plan

Have an initial plan for the order of the construction that permits some flexibility to accommodate unanticipated events

Plan should allow at least a portion of the layout operational early on

New freight car and building kits that come to market may warrant changing main industries being modelled

Upgrade the lighting before building benchwork



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Upgrade the lighting before building benchwork

Bright, low wattage daylight colour LED bulbs

Easy to attach to the ceiling floor joists which are on 16" centres if you have a unfinished ceiling, or removable ceiling tiles

Design the bulb hangers to accommodate a lighting valence



Build the benchwork high and shallow

Makes track laying and wiring easier

Makes scenery construction easier

Shallower benchwork reduces the dollars and time required to scenic the layout

You can be closer to your train making train running and switching more enjoyable

Makes layout maintenance easier



Strengthen subroadbed joints

Glue and screw a 24" long (61 cm) splice plate the same width and material as the subroadbed, to the underside at joints

The abutting segments of subroadbed then act as a single piece of material and resist warping

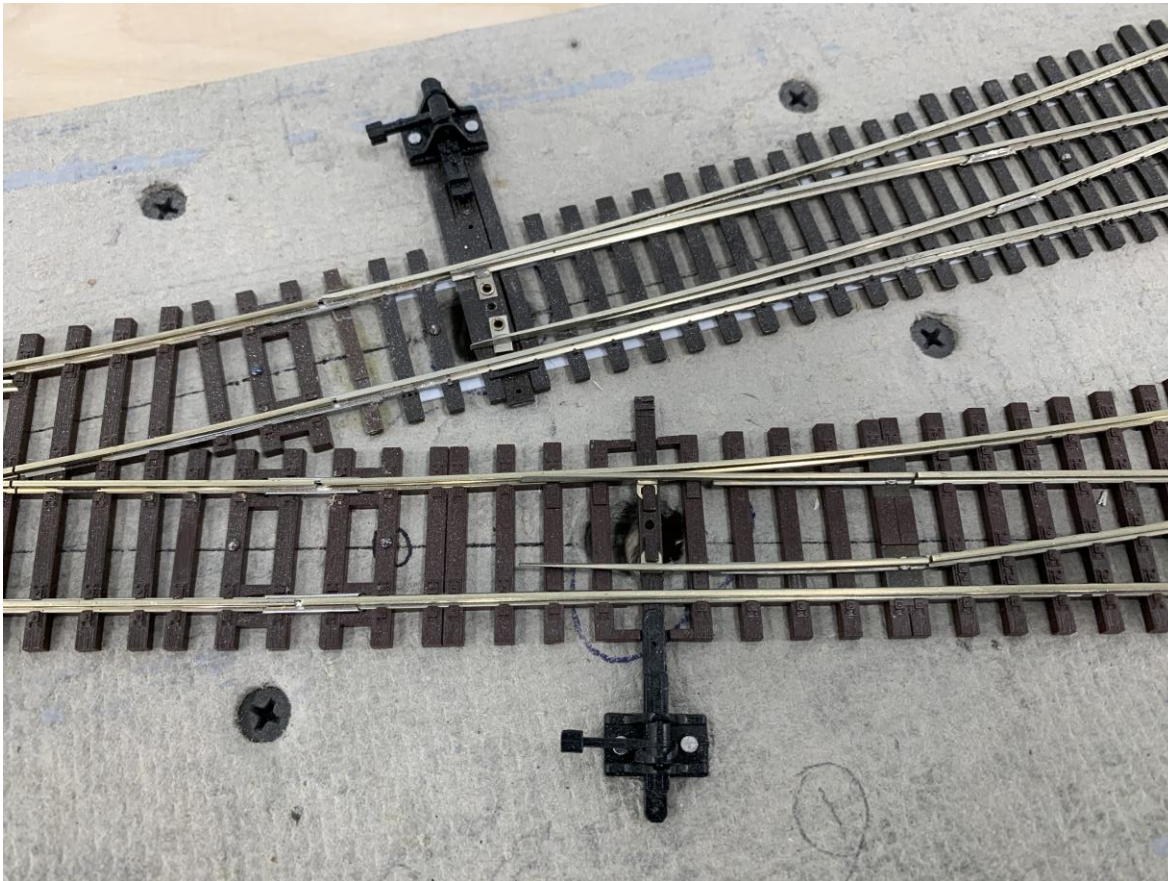


Disperse benchwork and track joints

Stagger the joints in the subroadbed, roadbed, and track

If the benchwork warps in the future staggering the joints will reduce the risk of bumps in the track

Turnout control





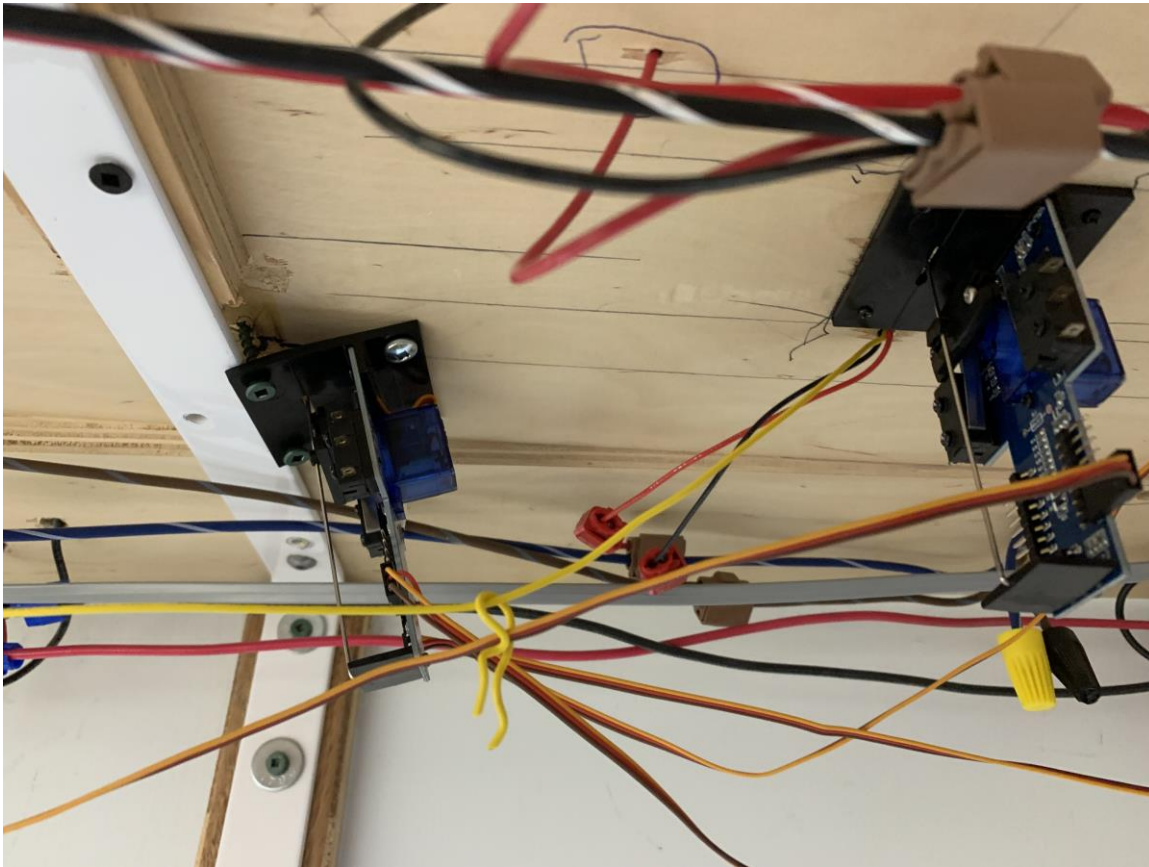
Turnout control

Pre-drill vertical holes in subroadbed and roadbed for all turnout throwbars to accommodate potential changes to turnout control

Much more difficult to drill these holes safely after the track has been laid

I do this even though my intent is to use ground throws for almost all turnouts

Turnout control





Turnout control

Drilling the holes now in the intended turnout locations can identify spots under the benchwork with inadequate clearance

There may be interfering wall brackets, splice plates

Try drilling the hole for the throwbar spring wire at a different angle, or relocate the turnout, or use a ground throw



Turnout control

Consider using ground throws, even temporarily, as an alternative to more sophisticated electronic solutions

Might allow a portion of the layout to become operational earlier, keeping you motivated to complete a big layout

Turnout control





Turnout control

I use Caboose Industries n-scale ground throws on my HO layout spiked into the 1/2" thick (13 mm) Homasote using 5/8" long (16 mm) No. 19 wire nails

I power the turnout frogs using Tam Valley Depot Frog Juicers

I will use the Frog Juicers to flip the DCC polarity on my track reversing loops

Turnout control





Simple storage track power control

I use DCC but I wire the train and locomotive storage tracks using simple household 120 VAC on/off wall switches

In the layout design stage I identified those tracks that I wanted to ensure the power was turned off to eliminate engine sounds and the risk of runaway locomotives

Simple storage track power control





Simple storage track power control

All engine terminal loco storage tracks and all end of mainline train staging tracks – each track has one or more dedicated on/off wall switches, mounted in the layout fascia panel

- I use two 120 VAC on/off 3-way switches to permit that track's power to be turned off or on from two locations