

## Making mountains and cliffs out of foam rubber using the ‘Soft Rock’ method

1. Get some old sponge rubber or rubber foam (I used an old mattress).
2. Shape foam to make rock faces by tearing out big pieces lengthways and plucking out smaller pieces to give the texture you want (the removed pieces can be used for making foam foliage).
3. Buy cheap acrylic house paint the colour you want your rocks to be (I got mine from Bunnings, look for mis-tints going cheap)
4. Pour some of the paint onto a flat tray and push the foam rock face into it to wet the foam.
5. Get some fine sand (I used ‘Sydney Sand’ from Bunnings but brickies/sandpit sand will do) and spread it out on another flat tray and press the wet foam paint side down into it so it sticks to the foam.
6. Shake /scrape off any excess paint soaked sand into a container for use later and allow it to dry; it will dry to a hard crust.

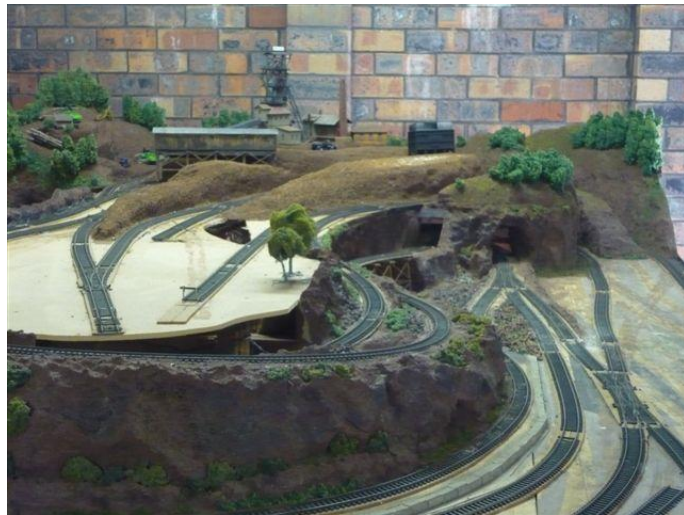
The saved excess sand can be used as a gap filler to fill in any joints and to blend around the base of the rocks where the scenery glues to the baseboard.

Mix the excess paint soaked sand in a sealable container (old ice cream tub) with some ‘No More Gaps’ type acrylic filler (from a \$2 shop) and PVA (Aquadhere) glue, both diluted with water, to form a paste and keep it moist.

If it dries out and goes hard it will be no good but if still mouldable then adding water will improve its workability.

Below are some pictures of my old HO layout showing cliffs that I made using this method.





## **Cheap foam foliage for model trains**

1. Using the saved foam from the soft rock, break the foam into real small pieces (good therapy in front of TV) or alternatively break foam into slightly larger pieces and put through an old meat mincer, electric or hand (got one from a garage sale). I have heard suggestions of using an old food processor but have not used one.
2. Put foam pieces into an old blender (again got mine from a garage sale).
3. Add some diluted acrylic artists paint the colour you want the foam to be ('Chromacryl' students from the newsagents or acrylic craft paint from \$2 shop)
4. Blend them together till the foam is chopped up (the longer the time the finer it gets so length of time depends on how fine or coarse you want it)
5. Empty blended foam and paint mix into a sieve and drain off any excess paint into a container (this can be used for the next batch)
6. Spread the wet foam thinly onto a piece of plastic and let it dry (it will dry all caked together by the paint)
7. Put the dried foam back into the blender with no liquid to fluff up the foam, again the longer it is in the blender the finer it will be.
8. One blender full will make about half a bought bag of foam at a fraction of the cost.

## **Trees made using old plastic Christmas tree foliage.**

1. Place foliage foam in a take away type container.
2. Take plastic green Christmas tree foliage and remove from the brown “branches”
3. Insert a trimmed bamboo skewer into the ‘socket’ at the bottom of the foliage with the pointed end facing out.
4. Prepare some diluted PVA (Aquadhere) glue diluted 1 part water to 3 parts glue.
5. Dip foliage into glue and roll in the foliage foam till the plastic branches are covered.
6. Allow them to dry, then push pointed end of skewer into scenery.

Group the “trees” closely together and use different skewer lengths to give the impression of a thick forest.

Use a mix of different colour foams to give a more natural look, either mixed together or separate colour in the trees mixed in the scenery.

Fine foam can even be sprinkled over the first layer to give different colours to simulate autumn colours, to do this mist the tree with a fine spray from an atomiser of a 50/50 glue mix.

