

HO GAGE RAILROAD TRACK CLEANER CAR

The old and original idea is from the National Model Railroad Association. Some people drill holes in the hardboard (or peg board) and insert finish nails dipped in glue. The track cleaning plate is cleaned with sandpaper. Glue gums up sandpaper and the nail would eventually become exposed. On the other hand, the nail glued on top of the board is dislodged easily.

I used cheap, hardboard paneling (no groves) and sanded off the paper pattern.

I found a better material to use in place of the hardboard; Printed Circuit Board (PCB) material. It is lighter, harder and restored with a liquid cleaner. The best advantage is that the nails are soldered onto the single-sided PCB, making a very strong connection.

Steel nails would need to be sanded and pre-tinned before soldering. Copper nails would be the best as these would tin readily.

I haven't made PCB cleaning plates for this track cleaner, but I have tested it with the Vacuum/Track Cleaner (another project).



MY TRACK CLEANER CAR FLEET



This stock car makes an interesting track cleaner as the nails can be seen through the slats.

Accessories include polishing plates for normal cleaning and sponge plates for heavy cleaning.

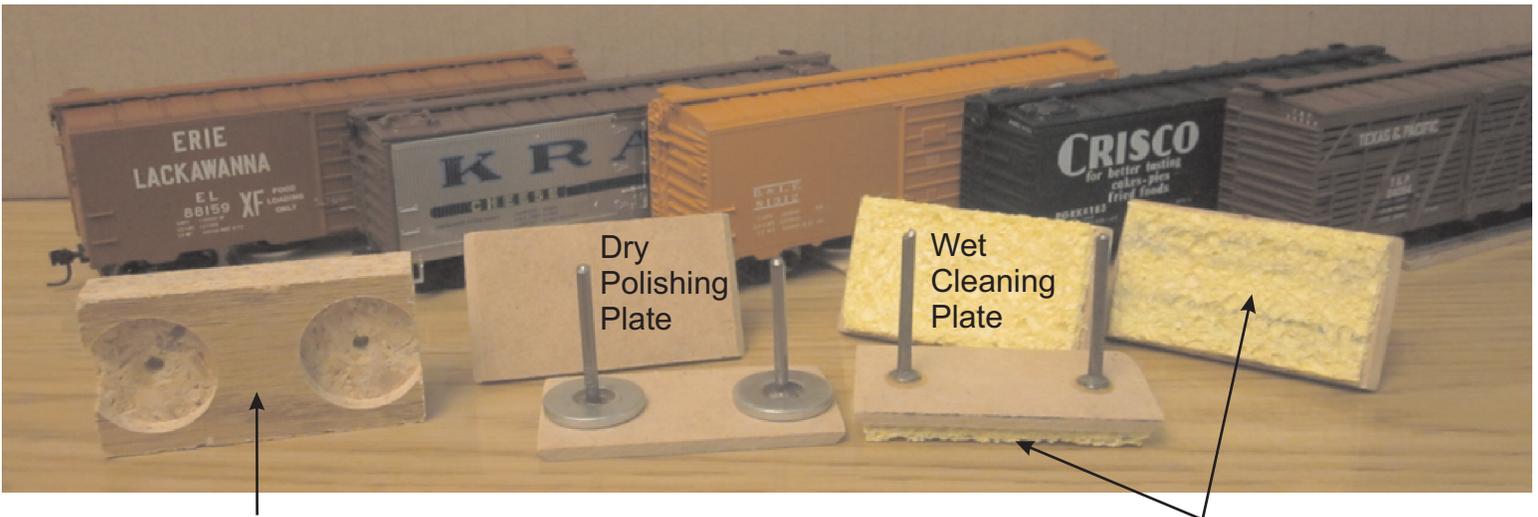
CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

I went a little overboard!



Underframe is modified to make clearance for pad.

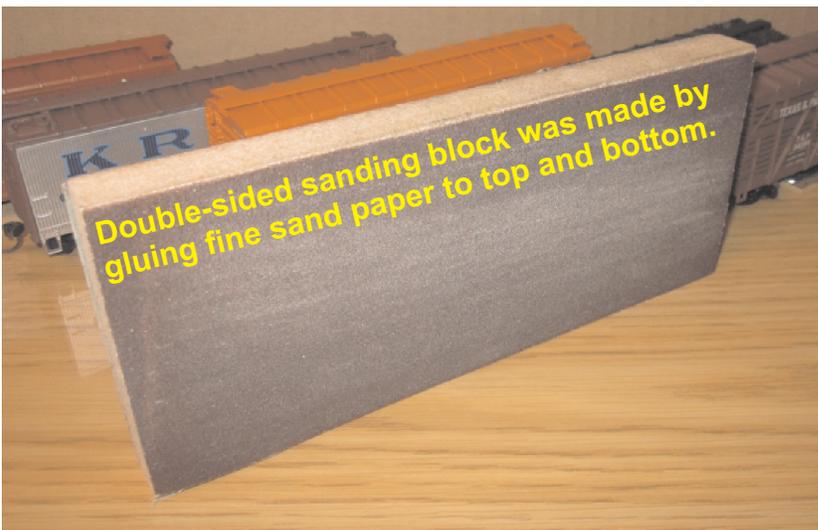
Heavy Duty Cleaning: Apply rubbing alcohol to the sponge of 2 cleaner cars. With 2 or more locos, push 1 track cleaner, while pulling a line of cars with the 2nd track cleaner at the end. If there is enough traction and power, finish with a polishing car. This makes wheel and track cleaning easy and fun.



Gluing jig aids in keeping the nails vertical and correctly spaced.

Optional removable washers add weight.

Wet plates were made by cutting moist sponges on a band saw. Contact adhesive was used to attach moist sponges to board.



Double-sided sanding block was made by gluing fine sand paper to top and bottom.

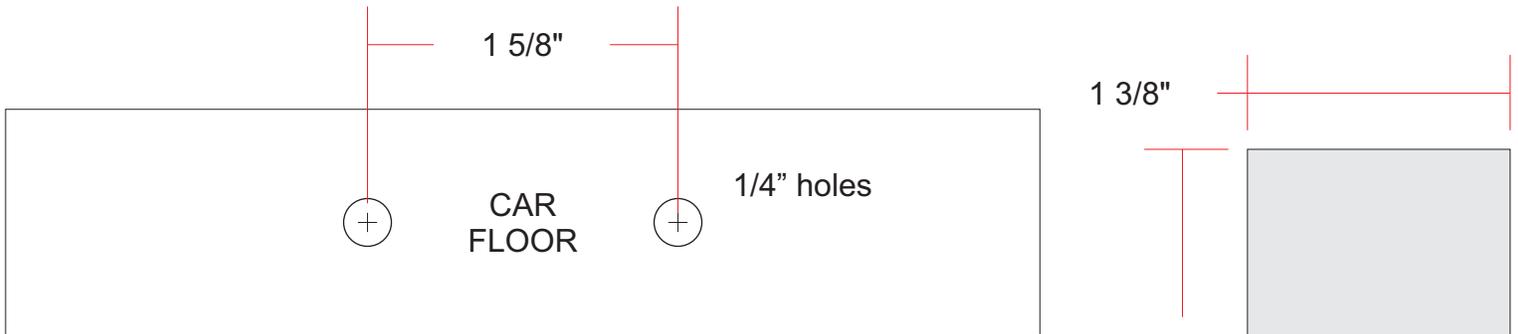


Plates are sanded in an Athearn "blue box" to catch the dust. The brush is used to clean the block.

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

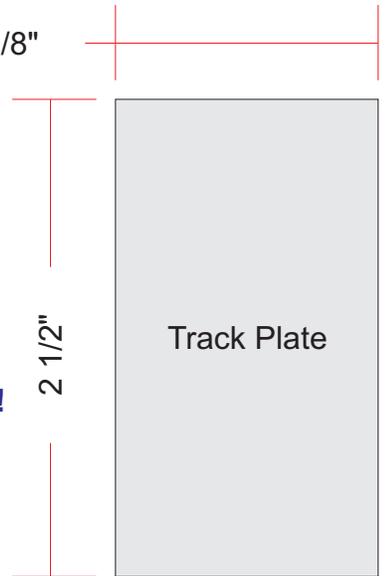


Caution: The methods I used to make these plates, accessories, and car modifications, could be hazardous. It is your responsibility to use care and caution. You assume all responsibility and liability!

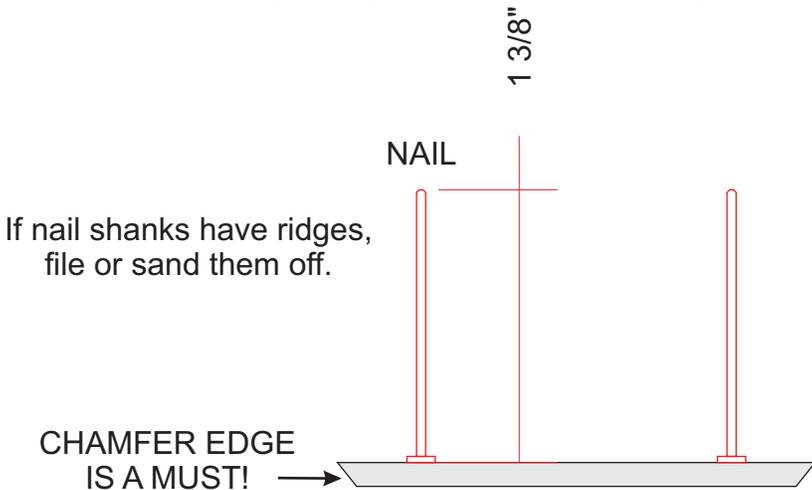


I experimented with:
Scratch pads; not good.
Cloth for wet cleaning; not good.

This is a very inexpensive and renewable way to keep your locos and rolling stock running smoothly!



Bottom View



If nail shanks have ridges, file or sand them off.

TRACK CLEANING PLATE MADE FROM EITHER SINGLE-SIDED PCB OR 1/8" PRESSED HARDBOARD

Nails are glued to hardboard or copper nails soldered to PCB.