

Building the Thomas the Tank Engine Layout

The Thomas the Tank Engine H.O. Set comes with Thomas the engine, the Anne and Clarabel coaches, a circle of track and a power pack. The set is Bachmann part # 00642. Two 9" sections of Bachmann E-Z straight track (item #44411) were added to make the layout an oval.

The table was made using 1"x 3" planking with 1x2's glued and screwed on top to form an upside-down L for strength. You may also use 2x4's for the frame. The table top is 1/2" plywood cut to 40"x 60". This allows for room at each end of the layout for scenery and moves the track away from the table's edges. Once the L-girder sides are fabricated, cut the sides and end pieces to length with 45-degree mitred corners, or butt joint the corners. **Be sure there are no screws where you need to cut. If there are remove them before cutting the corners.** Finished sides are glued and screwed to the bottom of the plywood around the outside perimeter. Once the glue has dried you will have a sturdy surface to mount the track. Sand the edges of the finished table so no one gets splinters.

The table is mounted on legs from a folding table. You may find a used table on an online marketplace for \$15-30 or buy new legs for \$30-40. If you buy a used table, make note of where the leg brace mounting locations are to allow the legs to fold up properly. With the legs installed you will have a layout height of about 30". We used folding legs for ease of movement and storage of the layout, but you can make fixed legs from 2x2 or larger lumber with diagonal bracing from the leg to the edge of the table side L girders.

Paint the top and the sides of the layout before installing the track. Paint the table an earth tone or green. For a winter scene, paint your table white! You may find a clearance can of paint at a local building supply store or at a Habitat for Humanity supply store.

Lay out the track on the table ensuring that all the track rail joiners are connected properly and that the track is where you want it. Make sure the power feed track is where you want to put the power pack before you fasten the track. Pick a corner or end of the layout for this. After ensuring that everything is where you want it, secure the track using 1/2" finishing nails. Don't hammer the nails in too far as this could damage or distort the track. Use a nail punch carefully. Once you are finished laying the track, run your train around several times to make sure that everything is working properly before starting on the scenery.

For scenery use your imagination. Look at other layouts in person, in magazines or online. Inexpensive used model railroad magazines full of ideas can also be found at your local hobby shop. You can model mountains using discarded pink rigid Styrofoam insulation scraps and economical buildings and scenery items such as trees can be found in the bargain bins at the Frog and Diamond hobby shop. To fasten your scenery items, white glue is very easy to work with, and is easy to clean up.

Get the whole family involved and have fun building and operating your new Thomas the Tank Engine layout! If you have any questions, please contact the Winnipeg Model Railway Club at wmrc.trainclub@gmail.com.

NMRA



THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS
is a registered trademark of Gullane (Thomas) Limited, a United Kingdom limited liability company
Maple House 149 Tottenham Court Road London W1T 7NF UNITED KINGDOM



Upside down "L" sides and ends are made from 1" x 3" planking and 1" x 2" pieces glued and screwed on top.

2" x 4" pieces could also be used.

The 2 side pieces will each need to be at least 60 inches in length; the 2 end pieces each at least 40 inches.



Use 1/2-inch plywood to make a table top measuring 40" x 60". Note which side looks better and make it become the top. Cut the side and end "L" pieces to length with 45° mitred corners, or butt the joints. Be sure there are no screws where you cut. If there are, remove the screws first.

The four finished sides are glued and screwed to the underside of the plywood around the perimeter. After the glue sets sand the edges to prevent any splinters.

The table shown is mounted on four folding table legs, with a table top height of 30". Legs can also be made using 2" x 2" or larger pieces with diagonal bracing.



Paint the top and sides before installing the track and scenery. Earth or green tones work best. For a winter scene paint the table white! Clearance cans of paint can often be found at local building supply stores or a Habitat for Humanity store.

Lay out the track ensuring that all the track joiners are connected properly and the track is where you want it. Before starting to fasten the track to the table top, make sure that the track power feed is where you want to put the power pack. Pick one corner for the location of the power pack.

After ensuring that everything is where you want it, secure the track with $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch finishing nails. Don't hammer the nails in too far as this could damage or distort the track. Use a nail punch carefully.

Once you are finished laying the track, run your train around several times to make sure that everything is working properly before starting on the scenery.

When using paint or glue make sure to cover the track with painter's tape.



For scenery use your imagination. Get the whole family involved!

You can model mountains and hills using discarded pink rigid Styrofoam insulation scraps. Economical buildings and scenery items such as trees can be found in bargain bins at Frog and Diamond Hobbies. Fasten your scenery items with white glue. It's easy to work with and also clean up. When using glue make sure to cover the track with painter's tape.

Note that the "concrete" road crossings have been very, very, carefully painted to avoid getting any paint on the track itself.



One end view of the finished layout. The handrail doesn't need to be part of your layout. On our layout, which is shown in multiple locations throughout the year, it is really a handle to help load and unload the layout in a vehicle. There are wheels at the other end under the layout to make this job easier.



The finished layout viewed from the other end.

At the right can be seen where the power pack will be located and the wires to connect to the power connection on the track.

**Have fun building and
operating your
Thomas the Tank Engine
layout!**

THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS is a registered trademark of Gullane (Thomas) Limited,
a United Kingdom limited liability company
Maple House 149 Tottenham Court Road London W1T 7NF UK