

Benchwork!!!

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Photos by Mike Frieders

I am going to offer a series of articles on building an indoor full sized G Scale layout. As you may remember I have just purchased a new home. My old indoor layout from Minnesota, the Frost Bite Falls Railway, is now being reconstructed in my new house and will obviously be renamed. My layout is all European, with LGB and Playmobil kitbashed rolling stock and Piko, Pola, and Playmobil buildings. This first article is devoted to the benchwork I designed and built for my layout.



The new room dimensions are as follows. The room itself is 20' X 14'. Then there are some difficulties to work around. The first of which is that this room is what is considered the "utility" room of the house. One corner being taken up with a washer, a dryer, and a utility sink. Then the opposite corner of the room has the main electrical panel, an electric well pump, and water softener. Also taking in to consideration, two steel floor joist support poles and one extremely heavy excess wood stove in the middle of the room.

The overall dimensions of each one of the tables are 6 foot long, by 35 inches wide, and 28 ½ inches tall. I used the cheapest grade of bulk lumber available. Most of the benchwork will never be seen so overall look was not a consideration. Only brute strength matters here. For fasteners throughout, I have used 1 and 5/8 inches Galvanized Deck Screws, fastened four to a joint.



There are six legs per table. Each leg is a 2 X 4 cut 28 inches tall. 1 X 4's are used as cross braces with each cut at 33 inches long. These are placed on edge and fastened across the top edge of the legs and then an addition brace at exactly 12 inches from the bottom of the leg. Three sets of these legs were placed on their edges and a 6 foot 1 X 4 screwed in with one leg at each end and the middle leg placed in the middle with 36 inches from each outer leg. An additional 6 foot 1 X 4 is fastened at the 12 inch mark, from the bottom of the legs.

Then the tables are turned up right and an additional 1 X 4 brace is placed on edge in the space between each of the legs. So that long the top of the table there is an exact 18 inch space between each cross brace. The table, standing at 28 inches tall is then topped off with a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch sheet of plywood, cut to the overall dimensions of the table, which makes the table a total of 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches tall. Scraps of leftover plywood are used to place across the braces under the table at the 12 inch mark. This makes an excellent area for keeping all the empty boxes of train parts, buildings, etc. They are out of sight under there yet up off the floor so dampness is not a worry. The benchwork itself stands directly on the concrete slab of the house.



I have 10 of these tables fitted into the room in the space available, with two additional tables cut at slightly shorter lengths to fit the odd spacing between the metal posts. This table design is so strong that a person (or several!) can easily walk across the tops. Therefore I don't have access areas cut into my layout to reach farther back areas. Instead I have strategically placed foot spots designed into the layout along the tops that I use to simply walk across to wherever I need to go! This maximizes the amount of space available.

After getting 10 tables into the room, I made the decision that the wood stove was going to have to go. Thanks to the help of Mike and Twila Frieders, between the three of us we got that incredibly heavy stove moved to the edge of the room and then I was able to get 2 additional tables into the freed up space. Know anyone who wants a wood stove?

Now that I have all the benchwork in place, Watch the newsletter for future articles on track layout, scenery, and those Playmobil buildings!