

Making Removable Table Tops

There are a wide variety of gaming table designs to choose from and each has its advantages and disadvantages. This article covers how to make a very common table top that I'll call a Flat.

A Flat is basically any flat surface covered in a grass-like material. Flats are very popular table tops because their advantages outweigh their disadvantages for many gamers. Most gamers are very familiar with a Flat table top as they can be seen in almost every store that hosts gaming, and nearly every garage, basement and 'hobby' room occupied by a gamer.

Flats are very useful because the terrain is independent from the table top. This allows you to use the table for many different settings and game systems, as long as you have the appropriate terrain pieces and the basic setting is grassy.

Flats do tend to lack a certain sense of realism be caused by their 2D nature. The surface itself is flat and the separate terrain features such as hills and rivers are placed on top rather than height and depth. However, based upon their popularity and usefulness, these shortcomings are easily overlooked.

The table top described here is designed to be used on a supporting surface. Form more information on building a supporting table; see the first article in this series - Building a Gaming Table.

Some notes about this table top

This table top is designed to be removable and easily stored. It also needed to be relatively cheap and easy to construct. The foam is divided into 2'x2' sections to make them easy to carry and stack. This takes up less space than a 4'x8' board, is easier to remove and has the added advantage allowing you to use the pieces to create a board in all of the common ranges (4'x4', 4'x6', and 4'x8').

The vinyl floor tiles are used to provide a sturdy, break-proof playing surface. The foam is much too pliable to stand up to regular use. Vinyl floor tiles range in price, but since you'll be finishing over it, I'd suggest you buy the cheapest you can find. For example, Home Depot sells them for as little as .08 cents each.

Materials

- 1 - 4' x 8' x 2" Pink Insulation Foam
- 32 - Self-Stick Vinyl Floor Tiles
- 2" Black Duct Tape

Tools

- Long Hobby Knife
- Yard Stick (Metal)
- Marker

Steps

1. Lay your foam on the ground. Measure and mark a point 2' down from either short side and mark a line across the board.

2. Use your hobby knife and Yard Stick to cut along the line you just marked, giving you a 2' x 4' piece of foam.

Repeat steps 1 and 2 until you have 4 2'x4' pieces of foam.

3. Measure down from both short sides 2' and draw a line connecting the points.

4. Use your hobby knife and Yard Stick to cut along the line you just marked, giving you a 2 2'x2' pieces of foam.

Repeat steps 3 and 4 until you have 8 2'x2' pieces of foam.

5. Lay all of your 2'x2' sections together to recreate the 4'x8' sheet and use the marker to indicate which side is to be the top.

6. Starting with a single piece, remove the backing off a vinyl tile and place it in the corner of the piece. Press the tile down firmly.

Finish covering the piece with the floor tiles and repeat the process for each foam piece.

7. Finish the table top using the materials that appeal the most to you. You can simply paint the tiles green or white to create a grassy or snow themed table. However, using thinned white glue and the excellent flocking products available from Woodland Scenics, you can quickly create a nice looking table and also hide the divisions between the tiles.

8. Once the table top is decorated and dried, use the 2" black duct tape around the sides of each piece. This will protect the sides from incidental damage, and hide the pink.