

[http://www.virtualplacebo.com/halloween/props/graveyard\\_stones.htm](http://www.virtualplacebo.com/halloween/props/graveyard_stones.htm)

## The Graveyard Gravestones

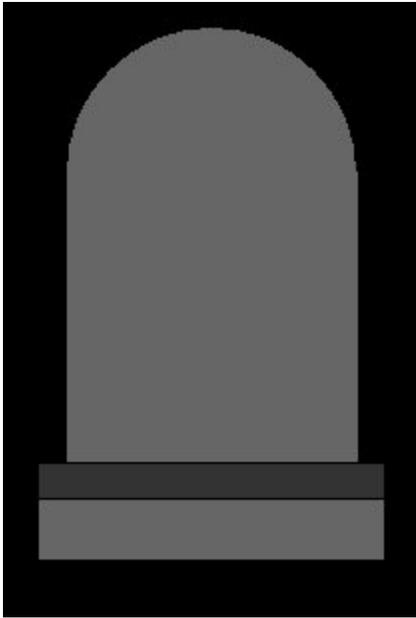
One of the grave jumper gravestones. 2002 I've given in and bought fake granite paint for all of the gravestones. It cost me about \$2.00 per gravestone to paint them with that way, but it was a heck of a lot easier than trying to make it look like marble. If you want to spray paint your gravestones, remember that Styrofoam and spray paint do not mix. Coat your gravestones with plenty of latex based primer and let it dry thoroughly first.



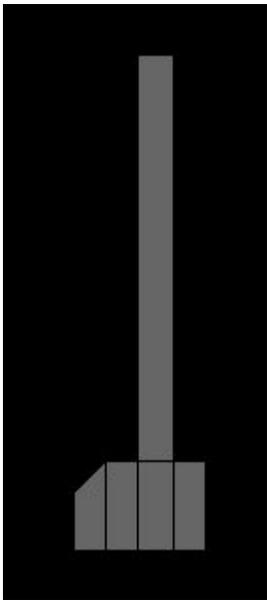
Grave jumper gravestone

Most of my gravestones are shaped in a classic arched style. I have made them square in the past, but the arched top is easily recognized by everyone as a gravestone and is not that much extra work to make.

I've seen some people make head pieces (like crosses, bats, etc.), but for my purpose (a grave jumper gravestone) I can't put anything on top that will get in the way. The rounded shape seems to expose the most of the grave jumper when it's extended and hide the head well when it's retracted.



Gravestone assembly illustration  
(front view)



The sketch on the left shows the multiple layers that I add to the base of the gravestone. It adds stability and makes the stone look much more realistic.

Gravestone assembly illustration  
(side view)

Extruded foam insulation board cut to length and rounded off at the top.



Blank, cut foam board

Some lettering that I carved into the face of the foam board.  
At this point the foam board has been painted with a good coating of dark gray flat latex paint. I used a roller for most of it and then came back and filled in the letters with a small hobby brush.



Lettered and primed foam board



Here's another work in progress. Notice that the bottom is crooked and nothing has been smoothed out yet.

A foam board with some extra pieces added

The black lines on the Styrofoam were just sketches of some other prop ideas. I like to sketch things out real big and the Styrofoam makes a good drawing board. Once it's painted nobody will know... ;)

### ***Additional fun with the gravestones.***



This year (2002) we have some glow in the dark gravestones too. We found some glow in the dark fabric paint and used it to make our own fun designs.

Glow in the dark gravestones

All of my grave stones are made from various types of foam insulation board. There are 2 main types that I have found useful:

The first type is extruded foam insulation board (the pink or blue stuff) that is fairly high density and produces some nice smooth looking gravestones. It's a bit more expensive, but for faux marble or polished granite type stones you pretty much have to go with this type.

The second type is the cheap Styrofoam type (the white stuff). It's good for rough gravestones that have a very weathered appearance. It's harder to carve lettering into this type of foam because small pieces tend to break off while carving. It also makes a pretty big mess when you cut and sand it.

Both types have their usefulness - if you want to make some quick gravestones, use the cheap stuff and paint on any lettering. If you want to go a little more realistic with carved lettering/relief and take your time, use the denser type of foam.

I cut out the main stone first and then add some additional layers to the front and back to make a base (see side view).

Once all of the pieces are glued together (I use liquid nails for foam board) and have dried overnight, I start cleaning up the shape with a sanding block. I can never seem to get all of the edges to line up perfectly, so I make everything line up by sanding the high points down to meet the rest.

Once I have everything sanded down and looking pretty good, I move on to lettering.

Lettering is time consuming, but looks great when done right.

I print out whatever I want to put on the gravestone on my computer in large letters and then tape the printout on the gravestone.

Then I cut along the edge of each letter at a 45 degree angle (with the tip of the razor knife toward the inside of each letter) all the way around the outside. If you cut deep enough, you can get nice clean "chiseled" look.

The next step is to put a base coat of primer on the gravestone. Use latex primer. I mix a bit of extra flat black latex paint in to get a darker shade of gray for the polished granite look. Leave it light for marble effects.

both the granite and marble paint can be bought in a kit at the local hardware store. If you want to try it yourself, get some black, white and rusty brown and spatter it on with a stiff brush for the granite look. Use the same colors and a big feather to make the marble grains and finish with a soft slightly damp finishing brush. To make it look polished, use satin or semi-gloss paint (gloss paint looks too shiny). For weathered granite or old marble, use flat paints.

I found a little trick by accident... If you bend the dense foam towards the face quite a bit (not to the breaking point of course) you get some convincing looking "hairline cracks" in your stone.

Obtained from  
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