



## TOMBSTONES

[http://www.halloweentombstones.com/halloween-tombstones\\_hm1.html](http://www.halloweentombstones.com/halloween-tombstones_hm1.html)

### HALLOWEEN TOMBSTONES - HOME MADE

You can make your own tombstones using simple tools and materials. Our tombstones are made from sheets of foam insulation available from most hardware stores for about \$10.00 per 8'x4'x2" sheet. The basic tools and materials needed to construct these tombstones include:

**Sheets of Foam Insulation**

**Jig-saw with 3-1/2" blade or serrated kitchen knife**

**Marker or Charcoal Pencil,**

**High Speed Rotary Tool**

**Latex paint & black tint**

**Paint brush and 4" paint roller**

**Whisk broom and large metal hooks**

**Yard stick**



Using a charcoal pencil and a yardstick draw out the shape you want the tombstone to be on the surface of the Styrofoam.



Now that you have the designs drawn onto the surface of the foam, use the jig-saw, equipped with a 3-1/2" long blade (BLu-Mol #6402) or a serrated kitchen knife to carefully cut along the markings you've made, cutting out the shape of the tombstone. To make thicker tombstones use thicker Styrofoam sheets or simply glue additional layers of foam cut-outs together until you get the desired thickness. Always wear appropriate safety equipment including safety goggles when working with power tools.



Before priming, screw two large hooks into the bottom of the tombstone so that it can be hung upside-down on a clothesline or cord. For the primer we bought a gallon of flat white latex paint (\$6.00), and added Lamp Black Tint (\$3.00). We added the tint and mixed thoroughly until it was a medium shade of gray. It's important to use only water-based paint or it will melt the foam. While you can use a standard brush to apply the initial paint, using a 4" or 6" paint roller and roller pan really speeds up the process.

Apply the paint liberally over all surfaces of the tombstone. Now use a standard brush to go over it to smooth out the paint and remove any dripping paint. Make sure to fill any dents or nicks in the foam with paint so the white does not show through. If you have carved in an epitaph and/or designs, be sure to fill them well, removing any excess that might run.

Let the paint dry over night , then apply a second coat of primer paint, making sure to seal the foam well. Let the tombstone dry for another day. Once the primer coats have dried thoroughly, you now have a basic tombstone. At this point you must decide how you are going to letter and decorate the face of the tombstones. While the gray primer has brought the foam closer to looking like a tombstone it still does not look like stone. Since we like our tombstones to look as realistic as possible, we apply a special finishing paint to give it a stone like look. "Style Stone" spray kits are available from craft and hardware stores, and produce very nice speckle patterns similar to those of stone.

While this can be a bit expensive, the effect is worth it. Don't try to hold down the spray button down for long periods of time to paint the tombstone. Instead, use short, controlled bursts. This way if you over paint an area you can easily fix it by blending around it. Also, if you will be using the tombstones outdoors for an extended period of time or during bad weather, you will want to weather-proof the tombstones by adding a final coat of clear, non-gloss sealant. This can only be done to already painted tombstones or the spray paint will melt the foam.

#### **Styro Wonder Cutter® Plus**

The new Styro Wonder Cutter® Plus is the professionals' choice for shaping STYROFOAM brand foam into intricate designs. Designed for STYROFOAM brand foam, the Styro Wonder Cutter® Plus makes simple & intricate patterns easy to cut. It is great for event and window displays, and other custom work. Heats in less than 30 seconds and Cuts up to 4" thick STYROFOAM. Available at craft and hardware stores. Investing in this tool is great for home crafters!



#### **EPITAPHS & DESIGNS**

Imprinting the epitaphs and decorative designs onto your tombstones can be accomplished in several ways.

**Method #1** - The simplest way is to use standard craft acrylic paint and brushes to paint on an epitaph and any other designs you want onto the face of the painted tombstone. Lettering stencils can make this

easier, but the lettering will be flat on the surface of the tombstone. Added shading will make the lettering look more realistic. Use contrasting colors along the edges of letters and designs to fool the eye into thinking it's carved in.

**Method #2** - After the tombstone has been primed and has dried completely, you can write your epitaph with a slightly darker colored marker or pencil. Now use an X-Acto knife to carve out the letters in a "V" shape. You could also use a small "V" shaped chisel to do the same thing, just make sure that it is sharp enough that you can carve the foam without tearing it up. Finally, to make the epitaphs more readable, we use acrylic craft paint to shade the inside of the letters. Black is too dark and the color of the primer is too light, so mix a color in-between.

**Method #3** - For the most realistic look you can carve the epitaph and any decorative patterns into the foam with a high speed rotary tool (Dremel Drill or RotoZip). Carving the letters into the surface of the tombstone looks very realistic, but does require more time, energy and a few extra tools. Several different attachments can be used including the wheel grinder, router and small cutting wheel. This can be done freehand or by printing out the epitaphs on paper, then attaching the paper to the face of the tombstone. Then you use the rotary tool to carve right through the paper into the foam. Care must be taken or the spinning tool will dig too deep into the foam or go off the lines of the design. Finally, to make the epitaphs more readable, we use acrylic craft paint to shade the inside of the letters. Black is too dark and the color of the primer is too light, so mix a color in-between.

Always wear safety equipment, including safety goggles when working with power tools.

### GLOW-IN-THE-DARK TOMBSTONES



Black Light Hair Spray from Fun World sprayed evenly over the front and side surfaces of a tombstone shows up very eerily under a black light. We found that spraying the tombstone in the dark with a black light turned on works best to get an even coating all over the tombstone. One can of the Black Light Hair Spray can usually paint between three and five tombstones depending on their size. This product can be found just about everywhere during the Halloween season.