

# Ken's Page O' Wonder

<http://www.kennymester.com/tombstones.htm>

## How to Make Foam Tombstones

Tombstones are the main part of any cemetery, but getting real ones for your own haunt is quite expensive and you can't make them the way you want. In this how to I'll show you how to make your own tombstones using foam insulation and simple cutting tools.



### **1st Step - Prep**

The first step in any project is to design what you want to build. If you don't have any ideas on what kind of tombstone you want to make I suggest you either go to your local cemetery or take a look at other peoples designs. The sky is the limit for your design.

What you'll need:

-Foam Insulation Board



Foam insulation can be found at most home improvement stores such as Lowe's or Home Depot. The board comes in many different thicknesses ranging from 1/2" to 2" and come in 8'x4' sheets. For my stones I use 2" because you can make deeper designs with it and it looks more real.

## -Cutting Tools

For cutting foam there are many tools you can use. I find that for cutting out the basic shape a band saw is the best, they cut through the foam like butter. Also I have seen people use professional foam cutters which are basically hot wires that melt through the foam. Any other stationary saws also work very well. For the more detailed carving for the words and such either a exacto knife or dremel with a sanding point work the best. For making cracks and fractures I find that compass saw work the best.

## -Paint



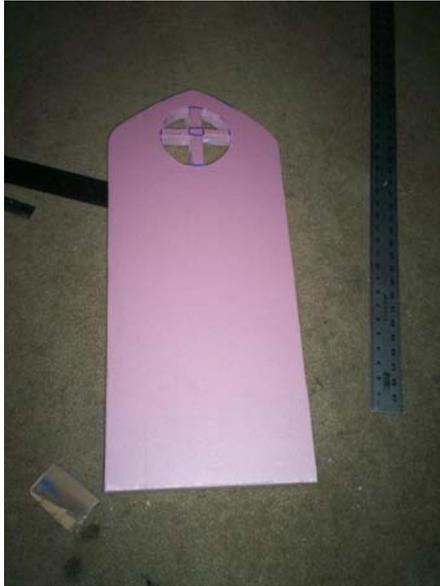
When it comes time to paint your stones you want to make sure to use latex paint. If you use oil based it melts the foam. You can either use brush on or spray latex paint. For ease of use I use the spray paint, but if you are doing a lot of stones then brush on is the way to go. I suggest using a base coat of either black, gray, or beige. For a top layer to make it seem like stone I use Krylon Make-It-Stone spray paint.

It comes in a variety of colors and works very well. I like to mix and match bases and topcoats to get different looking stones. I've also seen people get paint texturizer and brush regular paint on, but then you don't get as much demension that the spray paint gives you.

## **2nd Step - Cutting & Carving**

The next step to making a tombstone is to cut it out and carve it. First what I like to do is draw it on paper and figure out what you are going to say on it. Once you have done that you can draw out your stone in the foam. Sharpies usually work the best, I like blue so I use that color. When drawing it you may want to use a square or striaght edge to make it even, but that is not required you can make them any way you want. Once you have it all drawn out use your cutting tool to cut out the shape. After cutting you may want to sand the edges a bit to make them a little rounded to show age. After the cutting I suggest getting on your computer and using wordart to make a saying. Print out your saying and tape it on your tombstone. You can also free hand it depending on what you want. After taping it to the stone outline the lines of the letters. After you have the letters outlined you can proceed to carve out the letters. You can use a dremel for a more curvy cutout or use an exacto knife for straight lines. When the carving is done you can choose to make cracks in the stone. To do this you can use your knife, compass saw, or you can use your sandpaper to scratch out a crack. I use sandpaper and the compass

saw the most. After all that you can proceed to painting.



Here is an example of one that has been just cutout using my bandsaw. You can see the extra cutout in the middle I did and this kind of detail really makes the stones seem more authentic.

### **3rd Step - Painting**

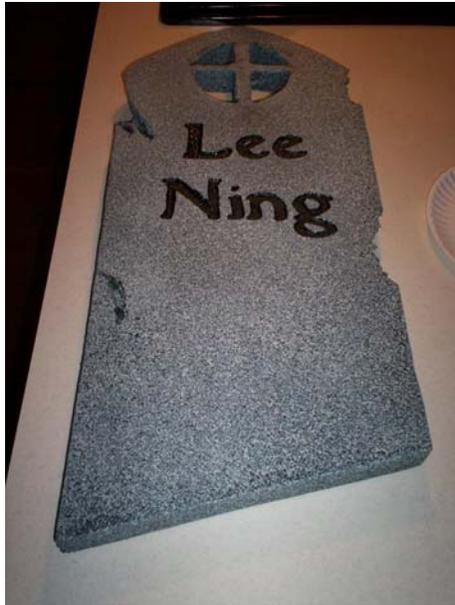
Paint is what really makes your tombstone. After you have sanded down the edges and gotten off the extra bits of foam you can put down your base coat. Using your latex paint either spray it on or brush it on. I only put enough paint on to cover the pink. Latex paint dries very fast. After an hour you can handle the stone and at this point you can paint the other side. After both sides have been painted you can put on your topcoat. Again either spray it on if you are using Make-It-Stone or brush it on if you are using paint texturizer. You should allow the topcoat to dry about three hours before handling. After the front is done you can do the back. Now that the front and back is done you can either choose to let it be done or you can paint your saying. I've always painted the saying so people can read it easier, but that is up to you. For the letters I find that black semi gloss or high gloss work the best. For bigger and smaller letters use an appropriate brush. After the letters you can at that point choose to add stains to your stone. To do this get a dry brush and get a little paint and make sure to wipe the brush on a paper plate because you want hardly anything on the brush. Then to stain it I usually follow the cracks I put in the side going down to simulate water stains and such. You can also stain under the letters as well. Once all that is done you just have to wait for it to dry and you are done. Since you used latex paint it seals all the pores in the foam so you can put your stone out in any weather. For staking it down you can either drill a hole in the stone and stick in a rod or you can use a rod behind it and use zipties or tape.



Here is one of my stones after the base coat.



This is the stone after the topcoat and staining.



Here is the one I cutout before all done.

Obtained from  
Omarshauntedtrail.com