



## Mannie's How-To page

<http://www.biosci.missouri.edu/liscum/halloween2.html>

### - Foam Tombstone Construction -2003

I decided this year to give the foam tombstones another shot. Last year I made one but it didn't work out so great. I used the directions on Mourning Cemetery's site as a guide for my new stone. (Mark Butler has a number of additional Tombstone construction sites listed at his MonsterList site.)

My approach:

Step 1) get an idea of what you want to make in mind, cut the basic shape from a piece of blue/pink insulation foam.

- *I use a free hack-saw blade to cut my forms.*

Step 2) Trace or draw free-hand any design you wish to carve into the face of the stone. This can include text, cracks, breaks in the stone, whatever makes you happy.

- *Unlike many I go for non-humorous (or very subtle humor) epitaphs. Most relate somehow to gothic/horror literature/films. (see the example below)*

Step 3) Next one needs to carve out the design/lettering.

- *Lots of the tombstone construction sites talk about using a modified glue gun or hot wire to "carve" epitaphs, I use a Dremmel tool. This takes a steady hand but you can get quite nice effects.*



Step 4) Next paint the "carved" regions of the stone with flat black paint. Make sure that you don't use an organic solvent-based paint - it will eat right through the foam. Latex-based paints work nicely. By painting in the carved areas you'll add depth to the final stone.



*Here is how my first stone is progressing. I added some breaks in the stone and cracks. The Epitaph is a nod to the Donald Pleasence character in Halloween.*



Step 5) Paint entire stone with a flat mid-darkness gray paint. Again avoid organic/oil-based paint.

*According to Mourning Cemetery you can use organic/oil-based paints after "curing" (covering completely) with a non-organic/oil paint. I haven't done this but chemically it makes sense as long as you completely cover the foam with the first paint, any unpainted areas are definitely at RISK!*



Step 6) Paint entire stone with a spray-based "stone-texture" paint. *Don't worry, the foam is in fact cured now that you've painted it with a coat of non-oil-based paint. A light coat is all that is needed.*

Step 7) Spray with flat-black paint to "age" the stone. *A little does go a long way (as Mourning Cemetery says!)*

- *I'm currently at this stage...will add the rest of the directions as I progress through my construction*

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