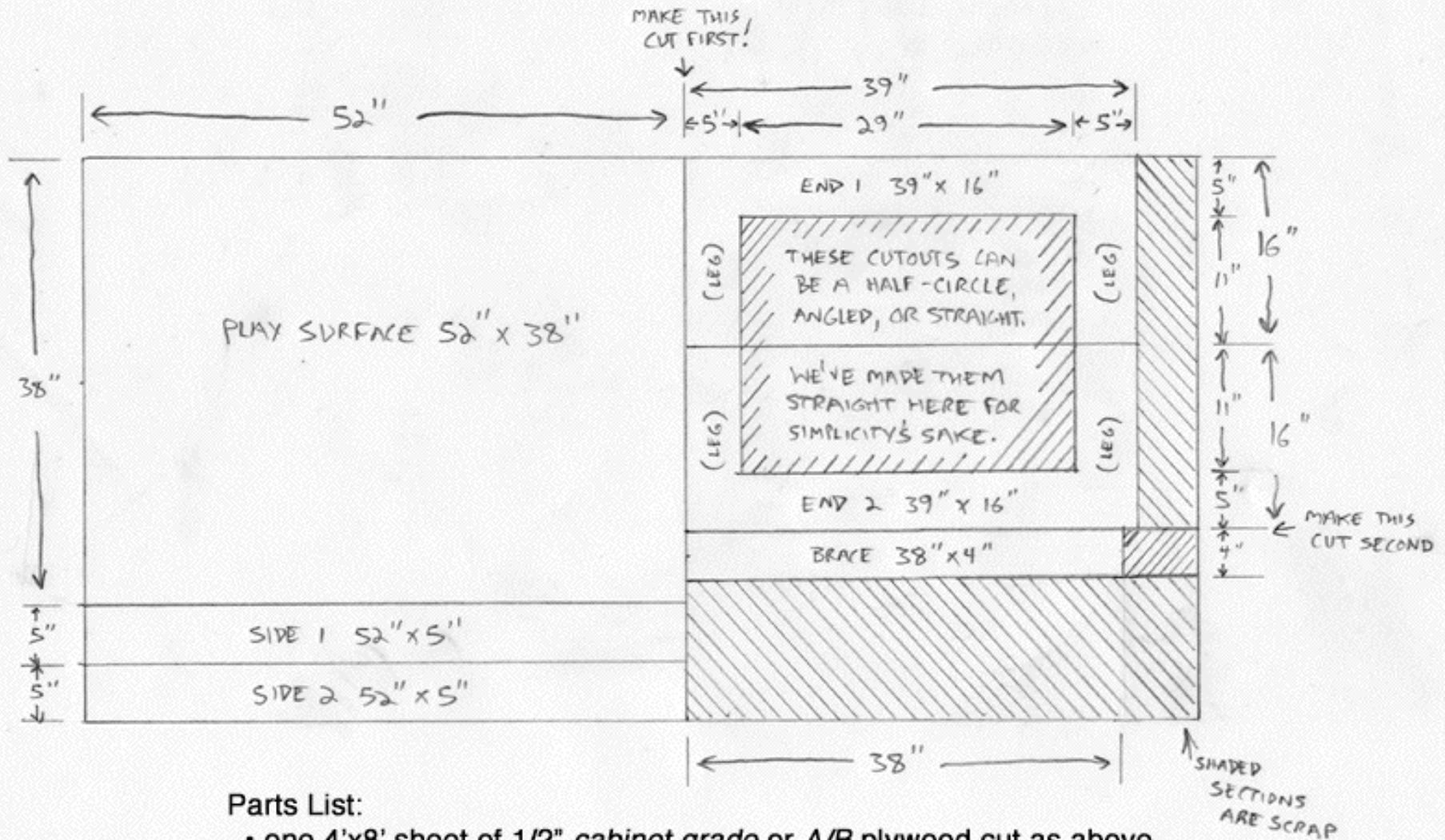


Simple Train Table

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Parts List:

- one 4'x8' sheet of 1/2" cabinet grade or A/B plywood cut as above
- scrap 2"x4" lumber to yield six 4" lengths to join corners
- screws
- paint

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Our Simple Train Table design makes a 53" long by 39" wide by 16" high table that will fit most any wooden train layout. The play surface is 52"x38" and there is a half-inch lip around the edge to catch runaway trains. There's plenty of clearance under the table (11") for storing extra trains in store-bought plastic bins if you wish.

This train table was designed to be simple. One sheet of half-inch plywood, some scrap 2"x4" lumber, some screws and some paint is all you need. Well, that, some tools, and a free afternoon... Since a picture is sometimes worth a thousand words, you may wish to refer to the pictures of this train table on our web site in addition to these instructions.

Measuring and cutting: Start by measuring the length of the play surface (52" in this case). Don't measure or mark anything else yet. Then cut the plywood sheet where the plan says "Make this cut first!" Cut all the way across the plywood sheet. Then cut where it says, "Make this cut second", again cutting all the way across the sheet. Doing these two cuts first will make life easier in terms of measuring things out and not cutting into a piece that you don't want to cut into. After that, you can measure and make the cuts in any order you wish.

The end pieces of the table incorporate the legs. As noted on the plan, the cutout between the two legs of each end piece can be any shape you wish. You could cut half circles, or angle the legs so they are broader at the top than the bottom. Do whatever pleases you. As marked in the plan, the cutouts would yield simple, straight 5" wide legs.

After all the pieces are cut and sanded smooth, cut six 4" lengths of 2"x4" lumber. All the screws used to assemble the train table will go through the half-inch ply and into the 2"x4"s. There will be one 2"x4" in each corner and one at each end of the brace. The 2"x4"s hold the table frame together and support the play surface. The play surface does not need to be screwed down.

Assembly: It's a good idea to apply a bit of Elmer's® or similar wood glue between any two pieces you want to screw together. Screws and glue together make for a very strong joint that will withstand lots of pushing, pulling and leaning-on.

The quick way to screw the pieces together is to use drywall screws and simply drive them in where you need them. Since you're not countersinking screws with this technique, the surface of the ply crushes a little bit and occasionally exposes a short splinter around the screw head. Be sure to remove any splinters. The proper way to screw the pieces together would be to pre-drill and countersink the holes and then use wood screws. You can buy a countersink bit at any hardware store for a few dollars. Save a step: some countersink bits drill the screw pilot-hole at the same time they countersink!

Screw one 2"x4" on each end of the same face of the side pieces ("side 1" and "side 2") so that the narrow face of the 2"x4" rests on the face of the side piece and the broad face of the 2"x4" is flush with the end of the side piece. When the table is finished, the 2"x4"s will sit one inch below the

top of the sides and end pieces, so position them accordingly before you drive any screws. (Read that over a couple of times if it's not clear at first!) When finished, the 2"x4"s will support the half-inch play surface and leave a half-inch lip around all the edges.

The cross-brace is a little different.. Screw the remaining two 2"x4"s on opposite faces of each end of the cross-brace with the broad face of the 2"x4" resting on the face of the brace and the narrow face flush with the end of the brace. Because the brace is 4" wide, the ends of the 2"x4"s on the brace should be flush with the sides of the brace.

We recommend painting everything before the final assembly. Our favorite colors are green for the play surface and white for everything else, but you can, of course, do anything you like. Adding a blue pond or river (a simple circle or line) or a patch of brown for sand can really bring the play surface to life.

Once the 2"x4"s are in place and the paint has dried, you can do the final assembly. The easiest way to get the tops of the sides and the tops of the ends to match up is to assemble the table upside-down on the floor (or workbench). The side pieces will end up with their outer faces flush with the sides of the end pieces. (Again, it might be helpful to read that over once or twice.) The brace supports the play surface by spanning the width of the table about halfway along the length of the table. Like the 2"x4"s in the corners of the table, the brace should sit one-inch below the tops of the side rails.

After it's all screwed together, lay the play surface in place (no need to screw it down), get out your trains, and enjoy! We'd love it if you sent us a picture of your finished table.

Additional notes:

- * You can use the less expensive B/C grade plywood if you like, but it will probably require a lot more sanding to get nice, smooth edges.
- * This plan can be adjusted fairly easily to make any size train table. Sides 1 and 2 should be the same length as the Play Surface. Ends 1 and 2 should be one inch wider than the Play Surface. The Brace should be as *long* as the Play Surface is *wide*.
- * If you have some experience with carpentry, you might notice that the measurements for Side 1 and Side 2 on this plan don't allow for the width of wood that "disappears" when wood is cut due to the thickness of the saw blade. Technically, Sides 1 and 2 would come out to somewhere between 4 15/16" and 4 7/8". As long as the table is constructed with the top edges matching all the way around, it doesn't much matter if the height of the side is 5" or 4 7/8", so for the sake of simplicity we just called it 5".

If you have any questions or comments about this train table or anything else, please let us know. We love to chat about wooden trains and kids! Email me ("Pa Squirrel") at desmond@squirreltracks.com or Ma Squirrel at helena@squirreltracks.com. "We're nuts about trains!"



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