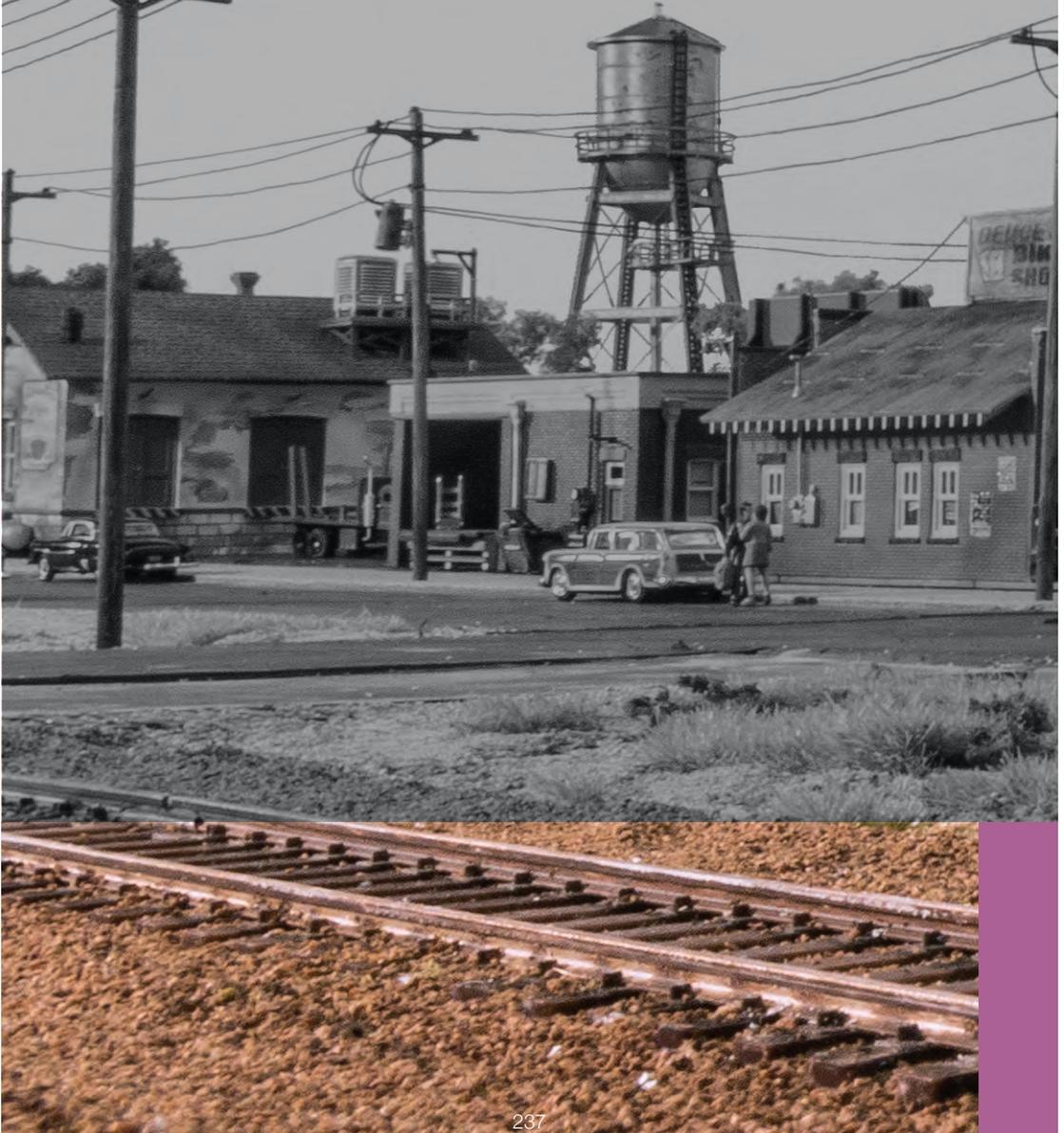


Chapter 5

Cleaning & Maintenance



Now that your layout is built, you will want to display your hard work. Layouts look the most impressive and realistic when they are free of dust, dirt and grime. While your layout may not be dirty when you finish construction, it is not immune to accumulating dirt and dust. Just like the top of a bookshelf, dust will eventually settle onto your layout.

Whether you have track, a water feature or ground cover that needs cleaning, there are several ways to clean your layout without causing any damage. However, it's important to note that being proactive and taking preventative measures is always the best option. Cover your layout with cloth or a tarp to protect it. Use the techniques described in this chapter on a regular basis to prevent heavy dust accumulation. These are the best ways to keep your layout in optimal condition.

As with previous chapters, products will be introduced prior to any instruction. Be sure to read the entire chapter before cleaning features on your layout.





CLEANING TRACKS AND WHEELS

Over time, dust and lubricant residue can build up and create grime on tracks and train wheels (trucks). This grime can cause the loss of conductivity, arcing, unreliable DCC operations and premature motor failure. To keep trains running, model railroaders must perform regular track maintenance.

It is important to clean and maintain track with the proper tools and materials. Overly abrasive products scratch track and damage rails, while applying oil inhibits engine performance. The Tidy Track Rail and Wheel Maintenance System provides quality products that make regular track and train maintenance easy.

TIDY TRACK® RAIL AND WHEEL MAINTENANCE SYSTEM

ONLINE
VIDEO

Tidy Track is a complete system that includes all the tools you need for corrective and preventive maintenance of your track and wheels. This system is easy, efficient, thorough and safe for your equipment. Use Tidy Track to improve conductivity for optimum performance, extend the life of your train and track, and protect your investment. Tidy Track will not harm rails and removes oil for improved engine traction.



Product Overview

Rail Tracker™ Cleaning Kit

The Rail Tracker Cleaning Kit includes the Rail Tracker and Rail Tracker Handle, Clean Track Solution, Maintenance Pads, Rescue Pads, Cleaning Pads and Finishing Pads. The pads attach to the Rail Tracker, which is a cleaning tool that follows the track and hugs the rail while you clean. Attaching the handle makes it easy to clean hard to reach areas like inside tunnels, around structures and under power lines.

The package doubles as a tray for storage, and the pads can be replaced as necessary. The Rail Tracker Cleaning Kit was designed to work on N, HO, HO_{N3} and three-rail O scale track.

Patent Product



Perfect for hard-to-reach areas



Ergonomic design

Maintenance Pads

Use Maintenance Pads with the Rail Tracker for routine cleaning to remove grime and oxidation.



Rescue Pads™

Use Rescue Pads with the Rail Tracker for semi-annual cleaning to remove heavy build-up.



Cleaning & Finishing Pads

Use Cleaning & Finishing Pads with the Rail Tracker and Clean Track Solution to remove dirt and make the track ready for operation.



Clean Track Solution™

Use Cleaning & Finishing Pads with the Rail Tracker and Clean Track Solution to remove dirt and make the track ready for operation.



Rail Pal™

Keep the two-sided Rail Pal handy for quick fixes. Use the Rail Pal to smooth track imperfections and remove dirt and track contaminants, such as paint, adhesives and grime. The Rail Pal does not crumble and is two-sided for light and heavy cleaning.



Roto Wheel Cleaner™

The Roto Wheel Cleaner is a fast, easy way to clean rolling stock wheels. There is no scratching and all wheels are cleaned at once. The Roto Wheel Cleaner can be powered via a transformer or track and works with both analog (DC) and digital (DCC) control systems.

N scale accommodates locomotives up to 6 3/8" and rolling stock up to 5".

HO scale accommodates locomotives up to 12" and rolling stock up to 10 1/4".

Patent Product



Roto Pads™

Roto Pads are easy-to-apply replacement pads for N and HO scale Roto Wheel Cleaners. The Cleaning and Scrubbing pads will not scratch wheels.

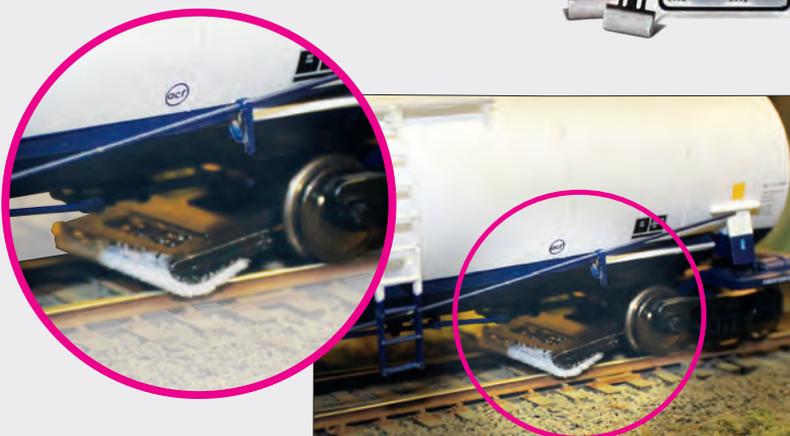
N Scale Cleaner: 6 sets of Cleaning Pads, 2 sets of Scrubbing Pads

HO Scale Cleaner: 3 sets of Cleaning Pads, 1 set of Scrubbing Pads



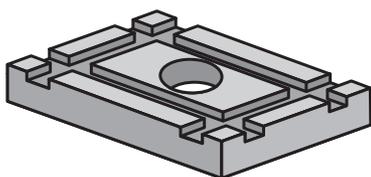
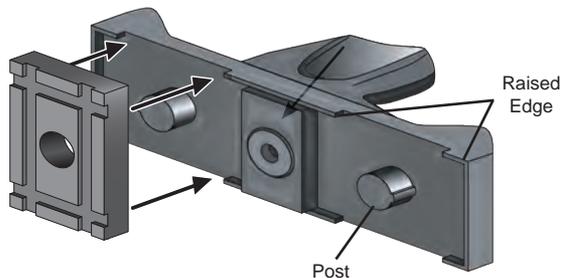
Dust Monkeys®

Dust Monkeys are a convenient way to remove dust from track and stop further accumulation during regular train operation. They hang from rolling stock axles out of sight.

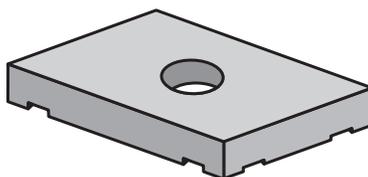


HOW TO CLEAN THE TRACK ONLINE VIDEO

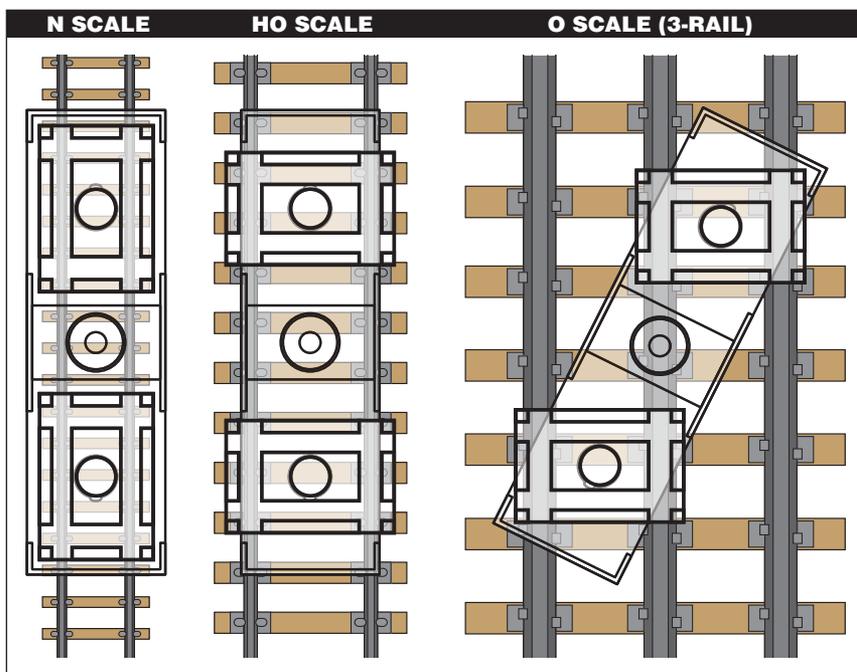
Get started cleaning your track by installing the Pads on the Rail Tracker. To install, simply slide the Pad over the center post. Position the pads differently depending upon what scale you are modeling in and whether you are cleaning curves or straightaways.



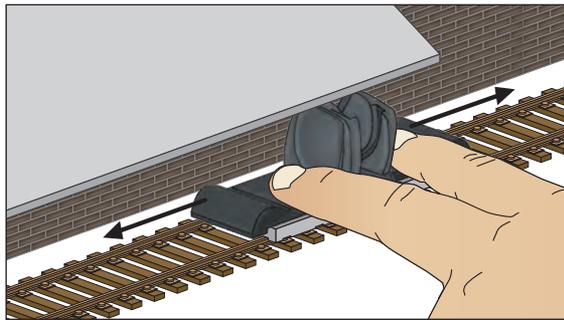
GROOVED SIDE
straightaways and
curves



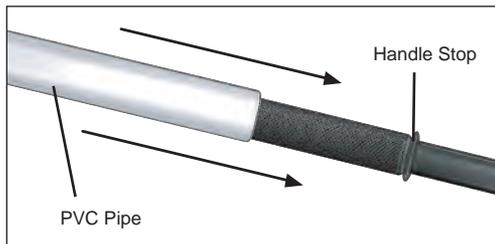
SMOOTH SIDE
switches, turnouts
and road crossings



Now you can begin cleaning. Slide the Rail Tracker over the track. On curves, unlock the Rail Tracker.

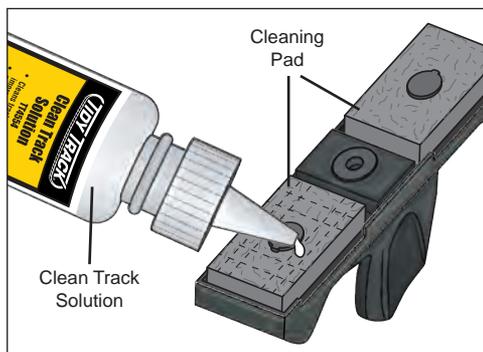


Use the Rail Tracker Handle to guide the Rail Tracker along hard to reach sections of track. Extend the handle with a piece of 3/4" PVC pipe, if needed.



Use Cleaning Pads with Clean Track Solution to remove oil, grime and dust from the track. Place one drop of Clean Track Solution on left and right side of both Cleaning Pads. Run the Rail Tracker over the rails. Then remove the Cleaning Pads and install the Finishing Pads to dry the track and ensure track conduction.

Maintenance Pads are for monthly general cleaning to remove grime and light oxidation for improved track conductivity. Rescue Pads are for semi-annual cleaning to remove heavy build-up and oxidation, and smooth rough spots on the track. Use them after landscaping your layout to remove adhesive and paint.



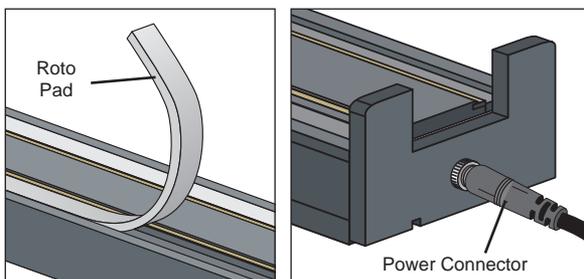
CLEANING LOCOMOTIVES AND ROLLING STOCK

ONLINE
VIDEO

If your tracks are grimy, it is likely that the wheels on your train are, too. Part of regular track maintenance should also include cleaning the wheels on locomotives and rolling stock. The Roto Wheel Cleaner makes this an easy task.

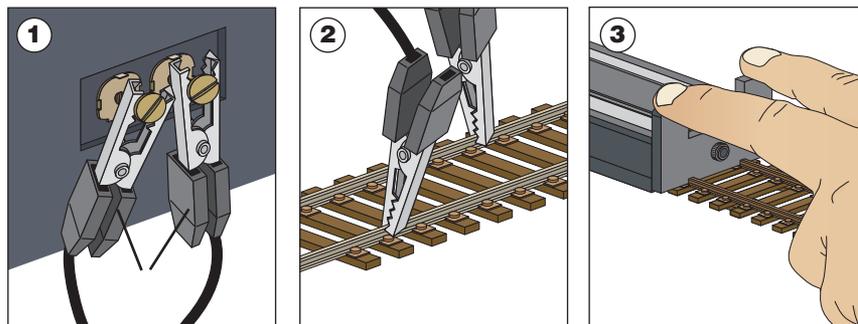
Locomotives

Install the Roto Pads in the channels on either side of the center rail. Use Cleaning Pads (light colored) for general cleaning. Use Scrubbing Pads (dark colored) for wheels with heavy grime build-up. Position the Pads so they are flush against the outside edge of the channel. Press the Pads in place. The Pad should not touch the contacts on the center guide. Then, plug in the Power Connector.



Set your train transformer to off and speed controller to 0. Then, power the Roto Wheel Cleaner in one of three different ways:

- 1 Attach the alligator clips to a DC track connection on the transformer.
- 2 Attach the alligator clips to working track.
- 3 Place the whole Roto Wheel Cleaner on working track.

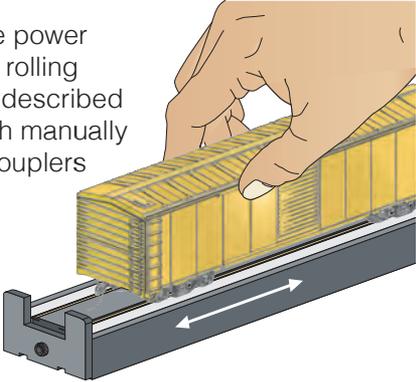


Place the locomotive in the center of the Roto Wheel Cleaner so the wheels make contact with the power rails on both sides of the center guide. Turn on the train transformer and increase the speed slowly (do not operate at high speed) until the locomotive bumps against the end guard. Manually pull the engine back to the rear end guards, applying slight downward pressure. Then release the train. It will roll forward. Repeat this process for approximately 10-15 seconds. Adjust the speed to 0 and turn the transformer off. Manually inspect the wheels. Repeat if needed. If the grime on the wheels is very thick, try putting a few drops of rubbing alcohol on the Roto Pads. This will help lift thick, stuck-on grime.

Always use Cleaning Pads after Scrubbing Pads to remove residue. Rotate the Pads 180 degrees when they begin showing signs of excessive wear along the inside edge. If the adhesive on the Pads wears out, apply double sided sticky tape to the back of the Pad to refresh. Do not throw away Pads between uses. Replace the Pads when they begin to show excessive wear.

Rolling Stock

To clean rolling stock, disconnect the power to the Roto Wheel Cleaner. Place the rolling stock on the Roto Wheel Cleaner, as described previously. Roll the car back and forth manually for approximately 10 seconds. The couplers should clear the end guards. Apply enough pressure to depress the center guide and allow wheels to roll along the top of the Roto Pads. Do not apply excessive pressure. Manually inspect wheels and repeat as needed.



CLEANING WATER FEATURES AND HARD SURFACES

Dust build-up is especially noticeable on hard surfaces like water features, buildings, road surfaces and vehicles. Your first instinct may be to mist some glass cleaner on a paper towel and begin wiping, but this can cause scratches, discoloration and leave behind residue on the pristine mountain lake you worked on for days. Use the Dust Dabber to prevent damaging your features and clean hard surfaces safely.

Product Overview

Dust Dabber®

The Dust Dabber safely removes dust, dirt and debris from your water features and other solid surfaces.

ONLINE VIDEO

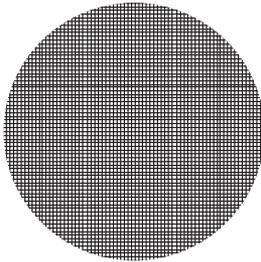


To use the Dust Dabber, pinch off a small piece and dab it over the hard surface you want clean. Do not rub the Dust Dabber across the surface; a rubbing motion will not pick up dust and debris. Knead the pinched off piece of Dust Dabber back into itself once it begins to fill, and keep cleaning until it no longer picks up debris. Discard the used piece in the trash. Do not put the used piece back into the jar.



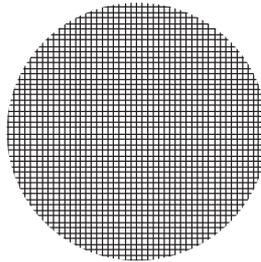
LOOSE MATERIAL

When your layout is under construction or being remodeled, there will likely be loose landscaping material that needs to be cleaned up. You can do this easily with the Model-Vac, which is designed to pick up loose material without causing any damage to your layout. It has three different sized screens intended for a specific purpose. Pick the appropriate screen and install.



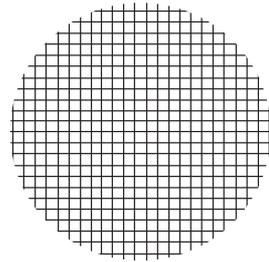
(SM)

Use **(SM)** for tiny particles
e.g. 2mm Static Grass, Fine Turf



(M)

Use **(M)** for average particles
e.g. 4mm Static Grass, Coarse Turf



(L)

Use **(L)** for bigger particles
e.g. 7mm-12mm Static Grass,
Underbrush

Press the Vacuum IN button on the handle to begin vacuuming. Keep the Vacuum IN button depressed until you are ready to empty it. To empty the Model-Vac, point the Model-Vac nozzle down toward the trash or a storage bag and release the Vacuum IN button. Gently shake the Model-Vac to release the loose material from the nozzle or remove the nozzle tip to release larger material from the tube.



CLEANING PERMANENTLY INSTALLED FOLIAGE

Foliage products are very porous and have tiny fibers that easily catch and hold dust. The best way to maintain permanently installed foliage on your layout is to keep the layout covered with cloth or plastic. Yet, even dioramas that are covered will begin to build up dust over time. There are two options to clean dust off of foliage; you can either vacuum it or wash it with wet water.

WET WATER

Wet water is a mixture of soap and water that, when applied, pulls dust and dirt away from the surface of foliage materials. For a light amount of dust, we recommend cleaning foliage with wet water.

Start by covering your water features to prevent soap residue. Cover Deep Pour Water or E-Z Water features with soft cloth and Realistic Water features with aluminum foil, shaped so that it doesn't touch the water feature. Then, make wet water. Mix 2-3 drops of liquid dish soap with 8 fl oz of water in the Scenic Sprayer. Mist the wet water over the foliage or turf. The foliage will be instantly refreshed. Reapply as needed. If any soap residue is left behind on the Deep Pour Water or E-Z Water, use the Dust Dabber to remove it. Soap residue cannot be removed from Realistic Water.

Realistic Water features may turn cloudy. If this happens, place a fan on in the room (do not aim it directly at the Realistic Water) to circulate the air and reduce the humidity. The cloudiness will dissipate as the water evaporates.



VACUUMING

If a thick layer of dust covers the foliage, we recommend vacuuming. Wrap a piece of soft, smooth fabric over the nozzle of a vacuum cleaner and secure it with a rubber band. Gently press the nozzle into the foliage and vacuum the dust up. If needed, finish cleaning with wet water. Always test the suction on a small area on your layout before you vacuum large areas.

IF DUST REMAINS

These cleaning methods may not always work. You can try to breathe some life back into your foliage by re-applying Fine or Coarse Turf over the still dusty areas. The next step is to tear out the foliage and reapply. Replacing foliage is only required on the worst dust-encrusted layouts.