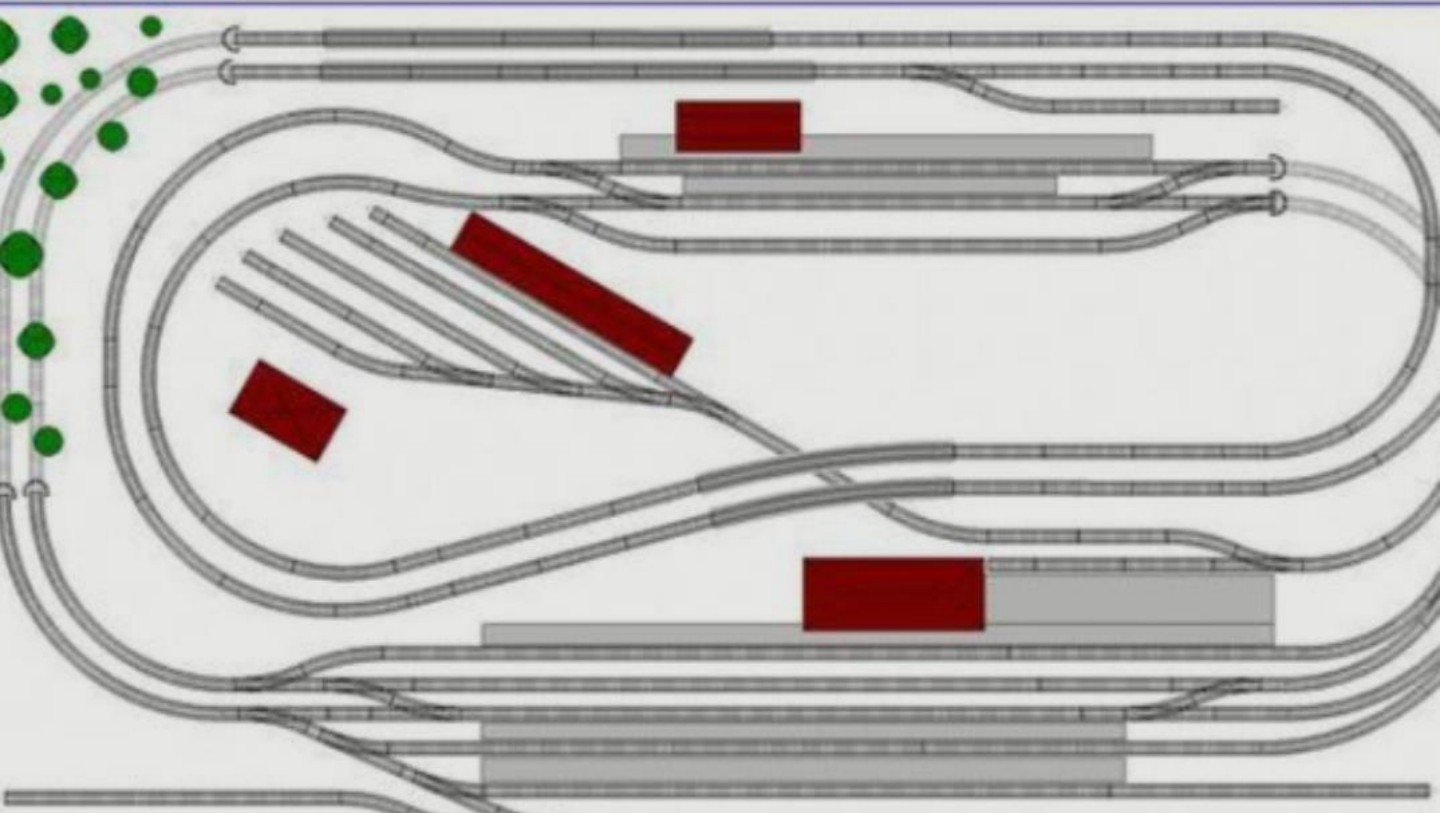


MODEL RAILWAY TRACK PLANS FOR BEGINNERS



By James Model Trains



- Things to Know Before Getting Started
- Model Train Track Plans for Beginners
 - Continuous Running (Loop to Loop)
- More Advanced Track Plans for Beginners
- Easement
- Glossary of Terms



Things to Know Before Getting Started

Many model train beginners get stuck in the initial phase of planning their model train layout. One of the most important questions before getting started, is how much space do you have available for your model train layout?

The answer to this question dictates the size of the layout along with the scale and track plan that will allow you to thoroughly enjoy your model railroad.

Remember, the question of "what is the best track plan for beginners?"

The right answer is that there is no one size fits all track plan. It all depends on your end goal, the space that you've available and what things matter for you to consistently enjoy your layout.

Have you chosen a scale yet?

As stated above, choosing a scale is totally dependent on the space you have available and the level of detail you'd like within your layout.

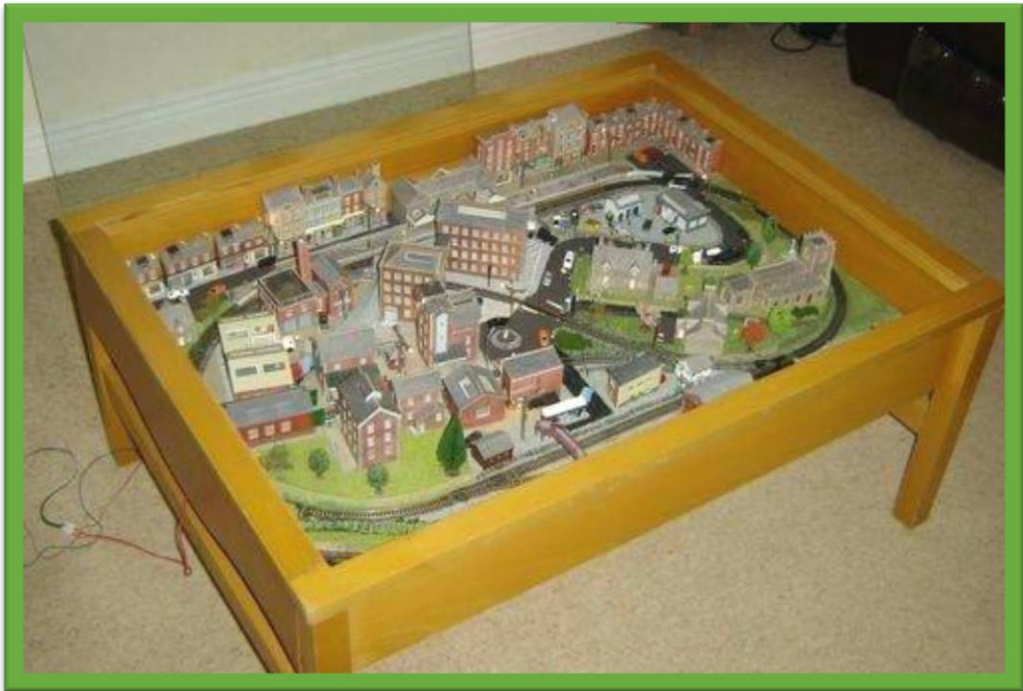
There's a perfect example on the next page...



Things to Know Before Getting Started

For example, if the only available space is the size of a coffee table then you're better off running an N scale layout because it will give you a higher level of detail and more freedom to add loops onto your track plus run more trains!

Example of an N Scale Coffee Table Layout



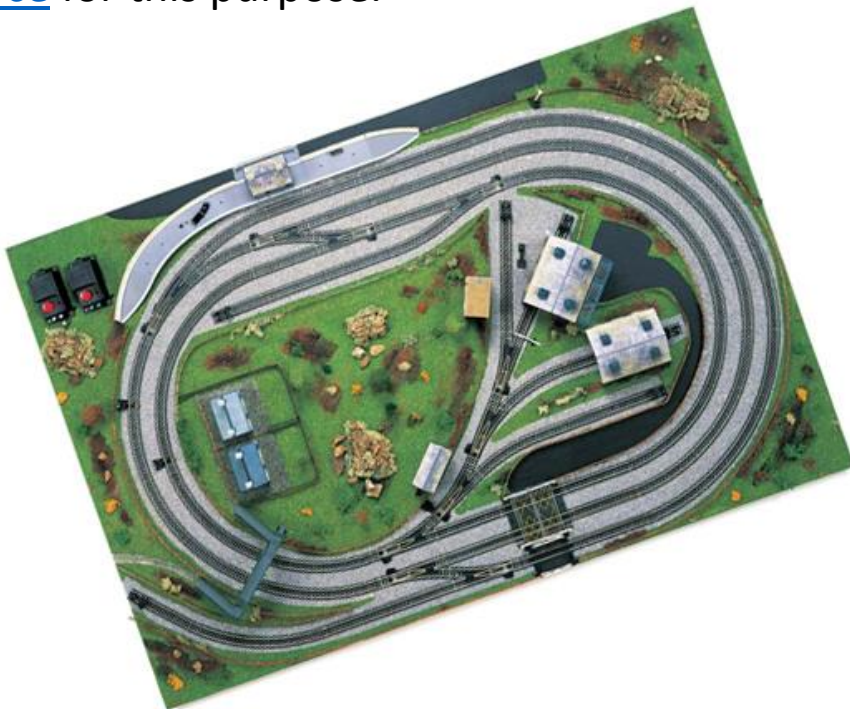
Now that you've chosen scale of your layout based on your available space and detail level, the next step is to start finding track plans for maximum enjoyment.

Next, let's jump into different ways to discover track plans and view actual ones you can use immediately!

Things to Know Before Getting Started

There is several different ways to find track plans that fit your needs, including:

- ✓ Looking at examples of layouts within magazines or [finding track plan ideas online](#)
- ✓ Using track plan software such as Anyrail, Railmodeller and RR Track but this is very time consuming and not necessarily designed for model train beginners.
- ✓ Laying track without gluing or nailing it down to see what actually works within your given space here's a time-tested [resource](#) for this purpose.



Here's basic model railroad track plans that any beginner can get started with...

Simple Oval

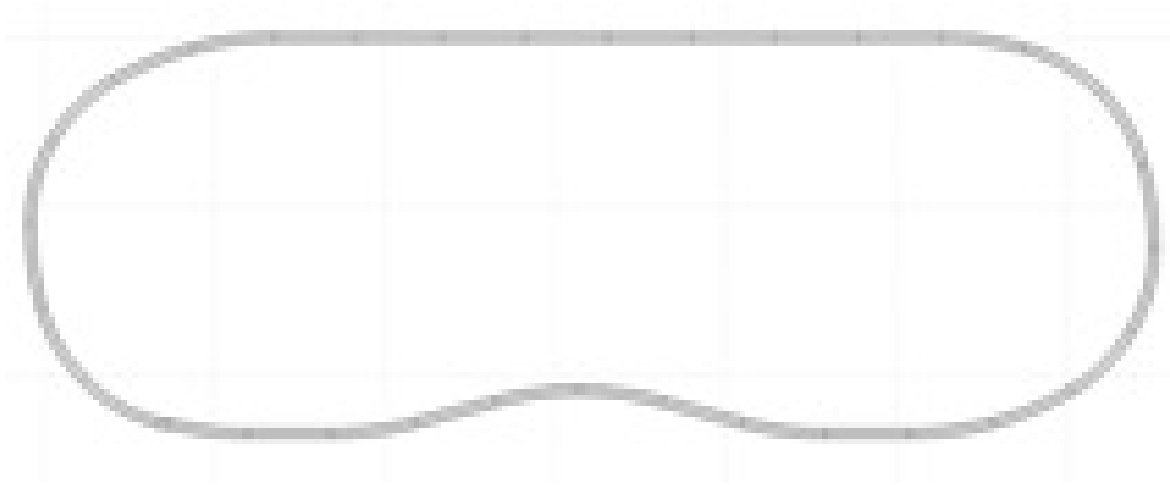
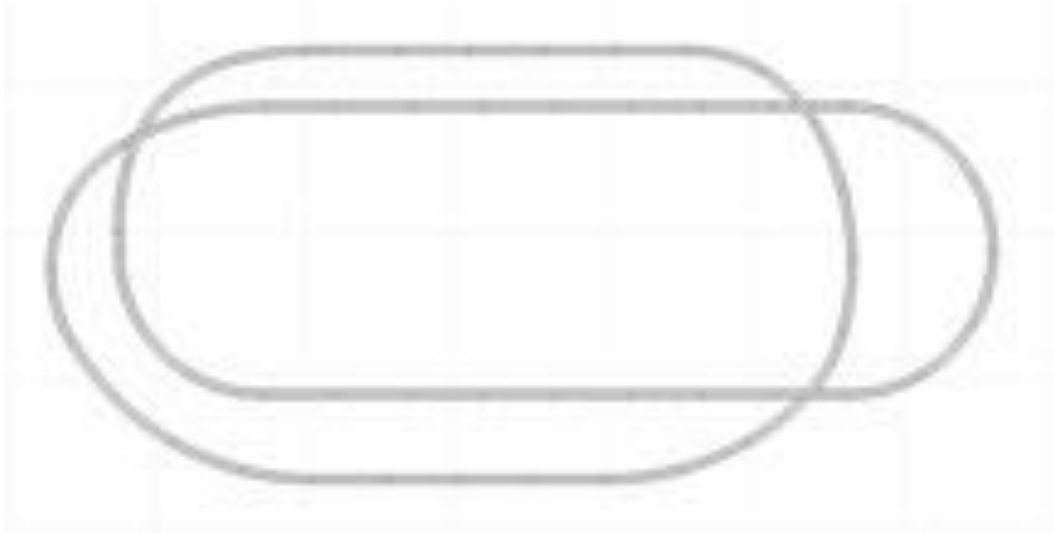


Figure Eight



Continuous Running Loop to Loop

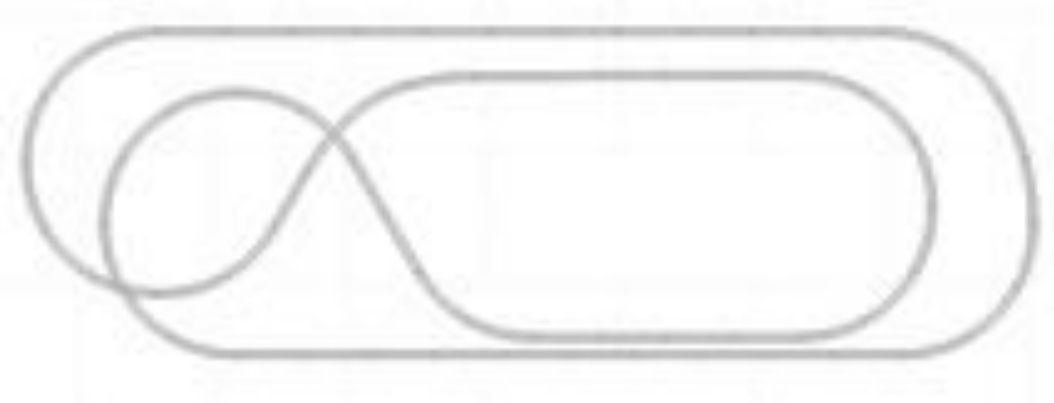
Twice Around



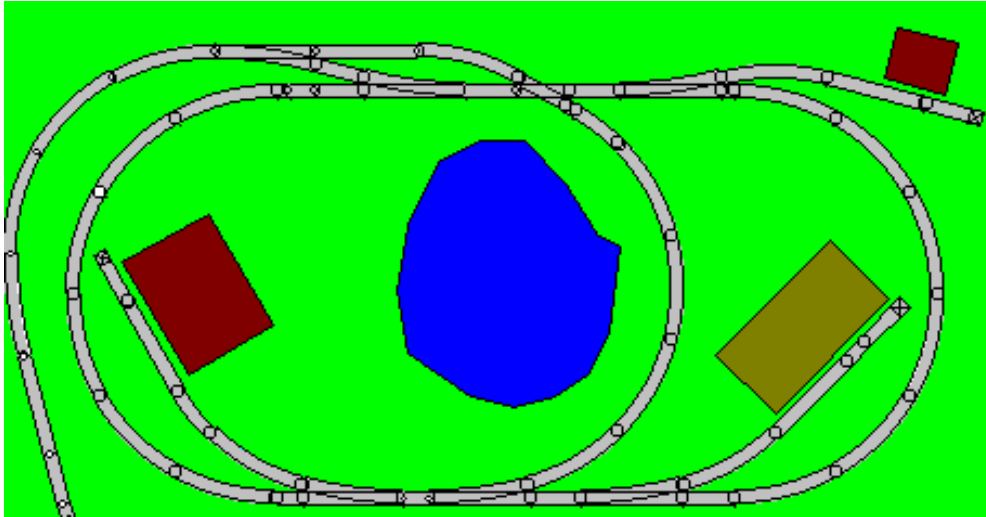
Dog bone



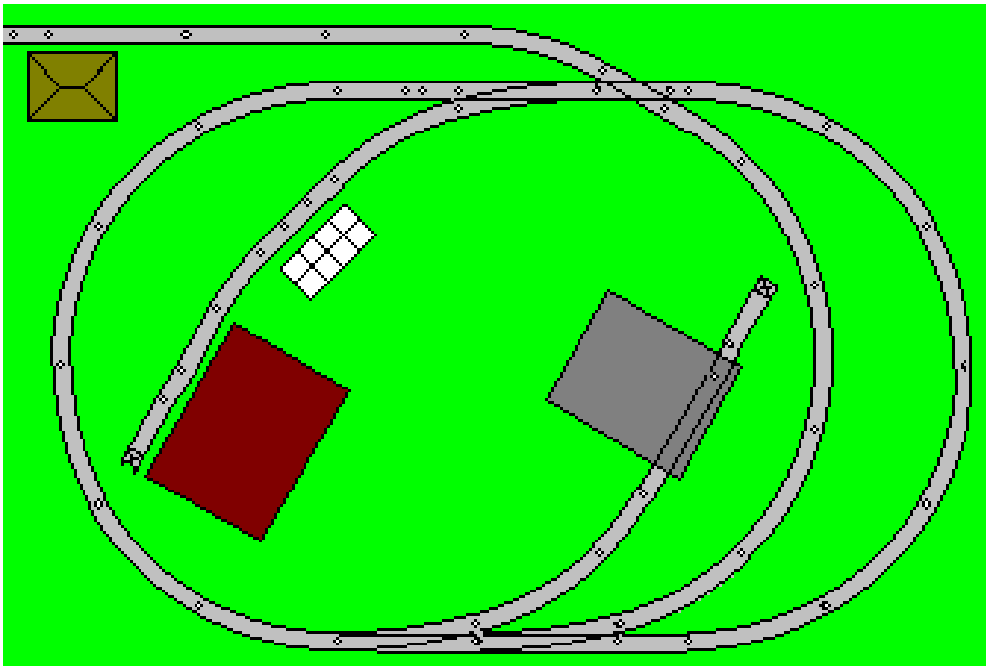
Folded dog bone



Basic Shortline Track Plans – 2x4' Table



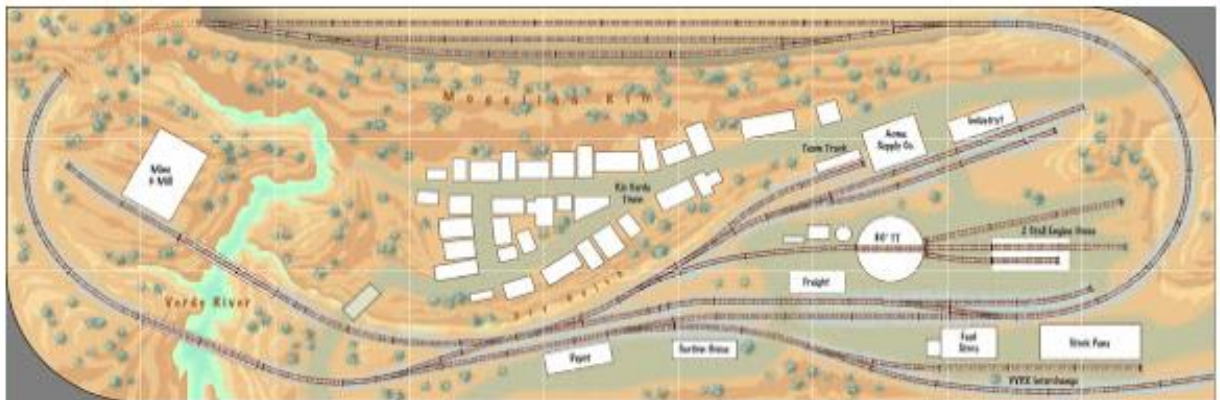
You can run a rural shortline with this plan. It looks like there's no runaround track, but the center cutoff track can be used to run around cars so you can switch all the spurs.



This simple-looking plan may meet your needs. The upper-left interchange track connects to three industries on two spurs, and the freight station can serve as a fourth industry.

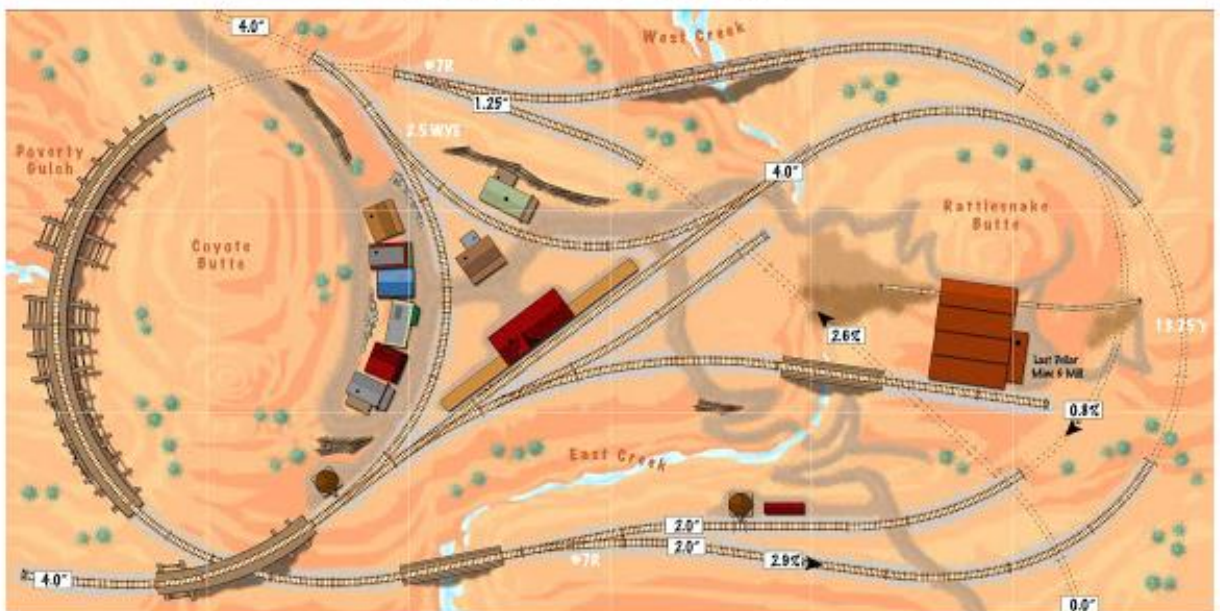
More Advanced Track Plans for Beginners

Tonto & Sudinero



A 3'x9' layout with a western mining theme. This one is loosely based on the Verde Canyon Railroad near Jerome Arizona. Minimum radius is 12". Track is Atlas code 55. By the way, in spanish, *tonto y su dinero* means "a fool and his money." A good name for any model railroad in my wife's opinion.

The Wye Knot & Western



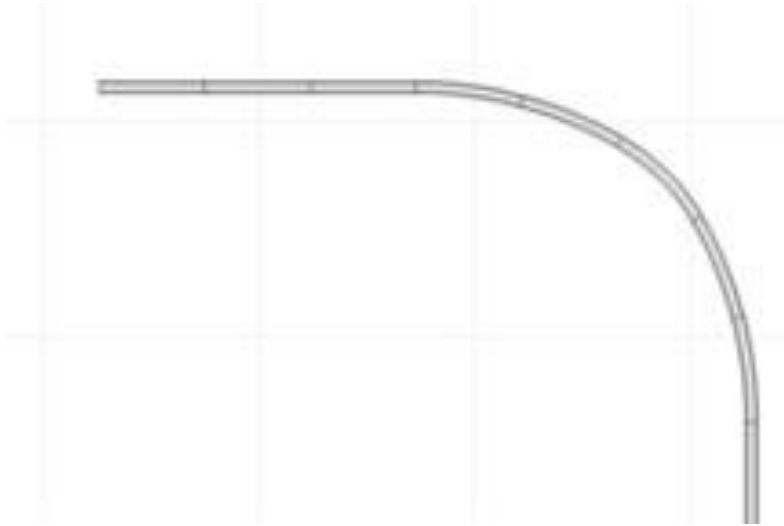
One of my favorites. A lot of layout in a small space. Deep canyons, tall bridges and room for expansion in just 3'x6'. Themed as a mining layout here but might be even better as a logger. Track is Atlas code 55. The hidden track at lower right can connect to staging. Unmarked turnouts are #6s.

Easements – Special Tip

When laying curved track, you should use an easement, which smoothens your way in and out of the curve.

In other words, start your curve with a larger radius, then ease into the tighter radius, then come out of the curve again with a larger radius. Your trains will look better going around the curve that way.

Easement



No Easement



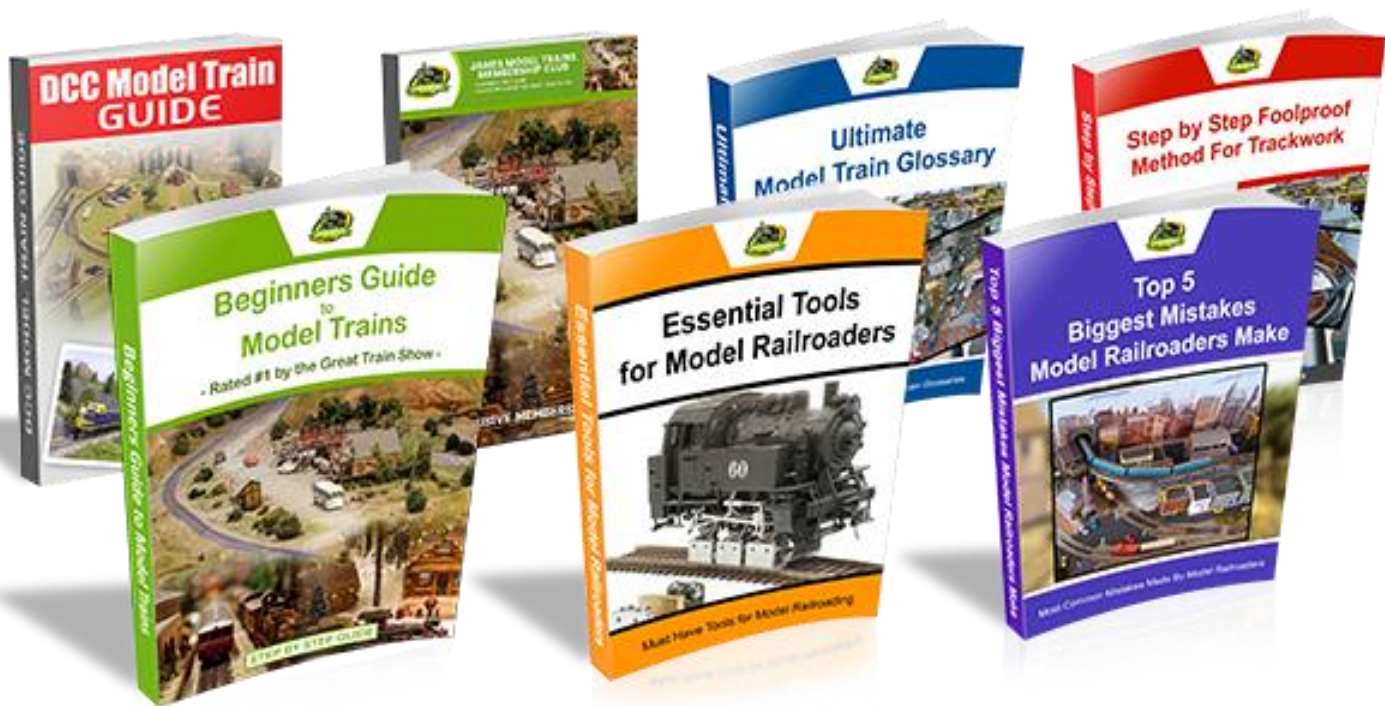
- **Shortline**
A shortline railroad is a small or mid-sized railroad company that operates over a relatively short distance relative to larger, national railroad networks.
- **Runaround Track**
It is two tracks side by side, connected by turnouts at each end.
- **Cutoff Track**
A railroad (or railway) cutoff (or cut-off) is a new railroad line built to replace or supplement an existing route, typically one where the old line is deficient for some reason.
- **Easement**
Instead of your train having a tight radius when turning, the track radius is much wider, which helps provide smooth turning for the locomotive
- **WYE**
Convolutted wye or turning star / reversing star is a special wye layout used in places where the space is tight.



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