

Tombstone Symmetry

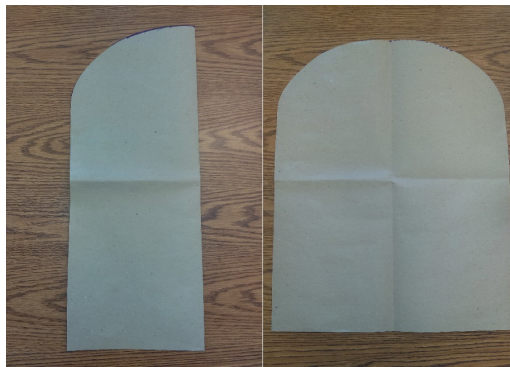
Having trouble keeping your tombstone symmetrical? Here's an easy tip!

Items needed:

- Construction Paper
- Scissors
- A bowl or something with a round edge (optional)
- 2" inch sheet of Styrofoam. (Home Depot or Lowes sells 4ft x 8ft sheets of insulation foam, or you can buy smaller sheets of foam [here](#).)
 - Always have proper ventilation when cutting XPS foam with heat or sanding *any* foam. (Check with the manufacturer of the foam to be sure.)
- Cutting tool. We used the [Short Hot Knife](#).

Steps:

1. Fold your construction paper in half and draw draw one half of your tombstone.
2. Keep the paper folded and cut along the lines.



3. Open it up and voila! Beautiful Symmetry.
4. Pin or tape the pattern to your foam and cut! We used the [Short Hot Knife](#).

* If you don't have a hot knife, trace the shape, onto the foam with a sharpie or pen, then make cut it out. (Don't worry about writing on the foam, your paint will cover it!)

Pro tip: Don't limit your self to one curve. Get creative! Use a bowl or something with a round edge to create multiple arches and curves. Click [here](#) to get different tombstone shape ideas.

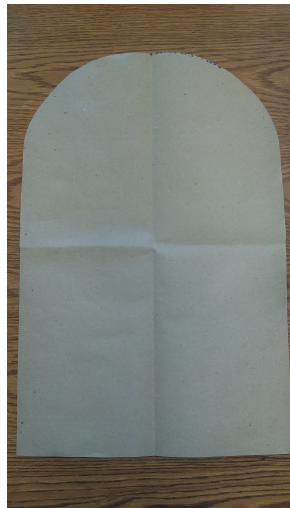
3D Designs Through Layering

Whoa there, Tombstonian!

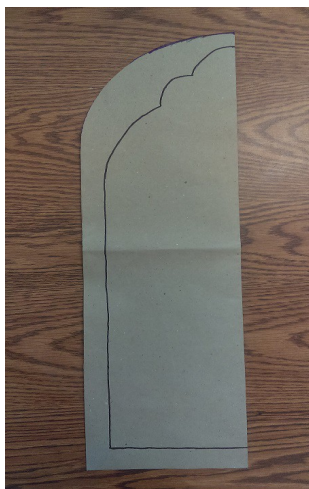
Foam is all-forgiving and 3D effects can be achieved through layering.
(Don't worry, we won't tell them how you *really* did it.)

Steps:

1. Trace your pre-cut tombstone onto a sheet of construction paper. (If you have a tombstone shape drawn onto construction paper already, you can use that.)



2. Use a ruler to mark 1 inch inside the outline, then trace out the 1 inch border. (Remember, you can fold your paper in half, down the center, and draw on one side to save time and have symmetry!) Get creative and add some curves to the top!



3. Get ta' cuttin'. Use those handy dandy scissors to cut out your border.



4. Trace your cut out onto sheet of foam that's thinner than your tombstone. (1/2 inch foam works nicely on top of a 2 inch thick tombstone, but you can vary thicknesses between borders and embellishments and find what fits best for you.)

5. Cut out your foam border and glue it onto your tombstone. (We used the 2.75" Short Hot Knife to cut out the border, and Styrogoo to glue it on. The Freehand Router was used to carve into the foam to create a "broken stone" look *after* the border was glued on.)



By the time your tombstone is coated and painted, you'll think it was carved from one solid piece of stone!

Stenciling

A fun way to transfer font onto your tombstone.

Items needed:

- Computer/Laptop
- Printer
- Pencil
- Ruler (or tape measure)
- Tape
- Spooky background music (to set the mood)

1. First, find out which font you want to use. Some sites have spooky Halloween fonts that download right into your word processor (Sweet, huh?), or you can go with a more traditional tombstone font.

2. Adjust the font size to what you want, then print it out. I used font size 150.

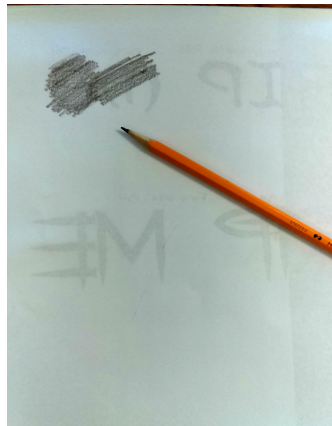


3. Use a ruler or tape measure to mark a guide line. This will be for lining up your letters.

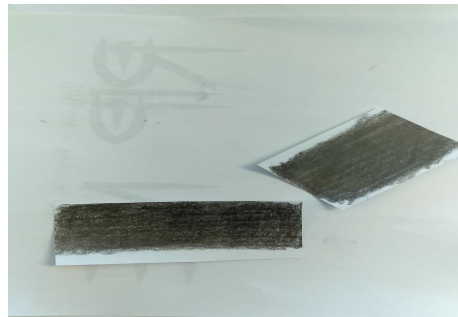


***Note: If you plan on painting your letters on, make sure your base coat is on first.**

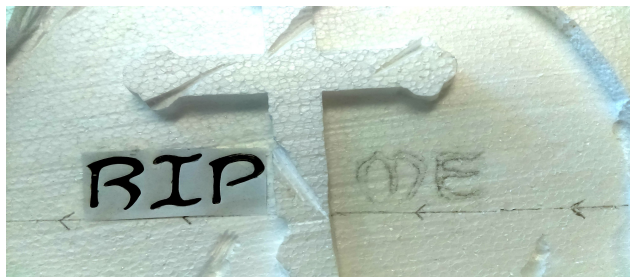
4. Turn the paper over and place another blank piece of paper beneath it. (This helps you see where the font is) Shade **heavily** behind each letter using a pencil. (Use a softer pencil if you have access to one.)



5. Use the scissors to cut out your words. Make sure the spacing from the bottom of each word, to the edge of the paper is the same for every word so that when you line them up on the guide line, the letters will rest at the same height.



6. Tape the words to the foam, font side *up*, using the line you drew as a guide. Trace the outline of the each letter with a pen or pencil, pressing down **firmly** to transfer the lead from the back of the paper onto the foam. When you remove the paper, the font will remain on the foam.



7. Carve out or paint on your letters! The Precision Engraver is a great tool for carving out intricate font or designs.

You can use this same technique for embellishments and designs!

Dry-Brushing

Want your tombstone to look old and weathered? Here's how!

Items needed:

- Water based acrylic or latex paint – NEVER use oil based paint on foam. (Some of the common accent colors are green, brown, white and black.)
- A wide paintbrush.
- Papertowel
- Spraybottle of water (optional)

- 1) Apply your base coat. (Black and grey are most commonly used)
- 2) Choose your accent color. (You can use as many as you like!)
- 3) Dip *just* the tip of your paintbrush, **sparingly**, into your accent color of choice. (Try to keep the paint on the bottom of the bristles, not the sides.)
- 4) Dab off the excess paint on your paper towel. (Remember, you can always add more if it's too heavy, but you can't take away!)
- 5) *Lightly* – No, really. *Faintly* brush the tip of your paintbrush against the surface of your tombstone. Keep your brush strokes going the same direction (Vertical looks more organic.). You should do this **each** time you apply more paint to test how much is on the brush first.
- 6) Brush gently over cracks and flat surfaces or along “chipped” edges to bring them to life.
- 7) As a final touch, or between coats, you can spray the wet paint lightly with water. This will make the paint run and create the natural look of rain weathering.

Use multiple colors for more depth and realism. Use reference photos if you have to, or imagine where distressed and weathered tones might be on a real tombstone, then have fun with it! The good thing about dry-brushing is it dries *fast* because the paint is so thin, so you can get right to the next accent color with little to no wait!