

city



Sidewalks

To sidewalk, or not to sidewalk, that is the question.

Even though I refer to them as Sidewalks, what I'm going to show you today is basically a styrofoam base for your houses to stand on. I know that sidewalks or bases are not everyone's cup of tea when it comes to setting up a display, I have viewed many villages where the houses are laid out on a flat surface with no sidewalk or base underneath the house. Some of my earlier displays were done on a flat surface, and then to give a building a little height I used to wrap a book of the needed thickness (height) in tissue paper. It was so simple in the early years but as, Frendoville grew and with the addition of wired accessories like, *Traffic lights* and *Street lights*, some kind of cover was needed to hide the wires.

Today not only do sidewalks enhance the overall appearance of my display, but they are a crucial aspect when it comes to hiding wires and in supporting the street lights..

Take a look at some of my earlier hand made sidewalk and cobbled pathways that were made over fifteen years ago and are still used today.



We also use the cobble and brick plastic rolls. We either cut them up into strips or cut them to size to fit in a certain area.

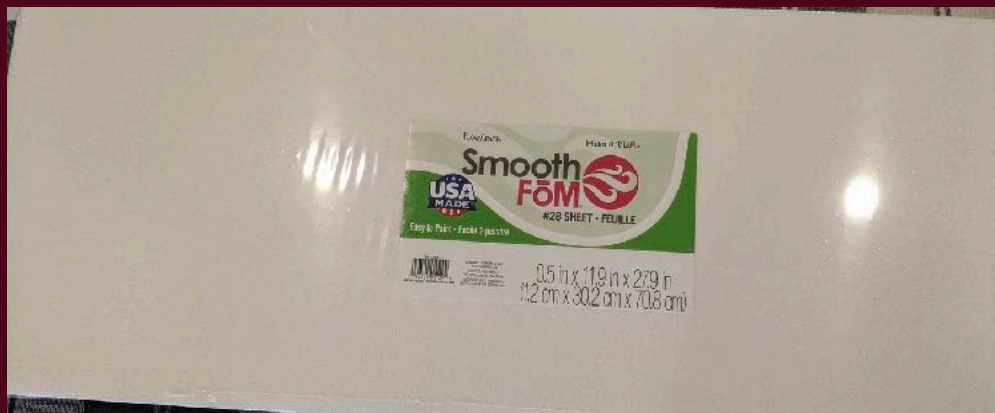


These sidewalks, pathways and covers are great for hiding wire, but not so great with the street lights. Gravity and street lights do not get along! No matter how much *Blu Tac* or *Tacky Wax* I put down some of the lights would ultimately lean in one direction or other. As long as I could get to the lights and adjust them there was no problem, but as the Village

grew in size and depth, the leaning lights in the back became a real P.I.T.A. because there was no way that I could get to them without disrupting numerous things in the display. I used to joke around and say that the lights were made in Pisa, Italy. There was a good chance that no one noticed the leaning lights, but I did and it bothered me! Styrofoam was the perfect solution for me.

Today ninety percent of the sidewalks or bases in, *Frendoville*, are made from styrofoam and I'm going to show you my method of how I prepare my sidewalks.

When using styrofoam for a standard base I prefer to use half inch styrofoam. It is sturdy enough that you can work with it without fear of it snapping ...like quarter inch.



Half inch is also the ideal thickness if using an, *Air Bright*, light system. I use these pieces of styrofoam as whole sheets or cut up to a specific size to accommodate an individual house or two.

Each piece is scored with an Xacto blade and heated with a heat gun to create the paved look on the sidewalk that comes through once the styrofoam painted.



Once I have figured out the spacing of the street lights I use an apple corer to cut out the hole for the base of the street light. Now I don't know if all apple corers are of the exact same size, but the diameter of this particular one shown fits snug to the base of the light pole allowing me to adjust the light and allowing it to stay in place without using any kind of wax or sticky stuff. I also use my blade to cut a fine opening into the styrofoam from the end of the hole closest to the edge.

Before finding an Apple corer as my perfect tool to notch out these holes, I used to use one of the tips that came with an icing bag kit for baking. It's been a while and I can't remember the size, but you can measure one to the base of the street light.

These pictures were taken in January when the village was being taken down.



To prolong the life of the street and to avoid breaking a wire at the base, I suggest that you hold both wires together about three inches beneath the base and you gently ease the wires into the cut that was made. The flat end of a wooden skewer or lollipop stick are great for tucking the wires under the styrofoam.

Use care when removing the lights, once again try not to stress the wire at the base of the street light.



Even though these bases and sidewalks are cut and designed to suit my village, you can cut and shape them any way you please.

Another great thing about these styrofoam sidewalks is that they give you the room to place figurines on the sidewalk in front of a house and not on the street in front of a house.

Also they can be reused multiple times.

Obviously, the sidewalks and the bases are never a major focal point of a display, but I think that they do a lot to improve the overall look.



Any questions or comments feel free to ask,

Until Then
Happy Villaging

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