

TERRAIN ESSENTIALS

FIFTY SHADES OF BASING

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HELPING YOUR MINIS FIT IN ADAPTING TERRAIN TECHNIQUES TO BASING



When it comes to the build materials, techniques, colours and scenics used, making a base is exactly the same as making a table. It just uses smaller brushes, less materials and takes a lot less time to complete. Table making and model basing follow the same principles, and an understanding of creating large and varied landscapes for the tabletop goes a long way when applied to base making.

With that in mind, this PDF has been designed to show you how to take terrain-making materials and techniques to create a wide array of themed bases, with each section building on the information in the prior sections. So, we haven't just given you 50 examples to follow, but we've provided you the core knowledge to tackle any of the common landscapes our models battle across.

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However you are going to use your bases, it's important to remember that anything good needs to be built on a strong foundation. Anything less will bring down the model placed on it, so always ensure the standard of your base making matches the standard of the model that's going on it.

It doesn't matter whether you're building a diorama base for a special model, wanting to make your general stand out a little more on the battlefield or the shelf, or you just want your army to have great looking bases, all the techniques and knowledge you need is on these pages. All it takes is a little planning and attention to detail, and you will have great looking bases no matter what you need them for.

Don't let perfect become the enemy of good!

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PLANNING, PREP, AND KEY COMPOSITION

How many bases and what are they for? – A single diorama base? A handful for a skirmish game? A couple of dozen for one type of army or hundreds for a horde army? Knowing how many bases and the purpose of them is key to working out what's achievable with regards to time and scenic materials, as there's nothing worse than running out of tufts three quarters of the way through.

Are you going to theme them or keep them generic? – Theming makes it easy to pick scenics and looks great on the matching themed table but it can also limit how good they look on a table without a matching theme. Generic bases will be less dramatic but will look alright on more tables. The decision on theming can come down to the tables you commonly play on, specific themed terrain you might have, as well as army type or game setting.

How detailed are they going to be and are they all going to be the same? – The less you have to do, the easier and more rewarding it is to invest in the base. Large armies benefit from simple, coherent schemes to tie the different elements of the army together, so you can save your more detailed basing for leaders, specialists, and support models.

Where are these models in the 'world'? – Deciding on the location helps to determine the best choices for texture, colours, scenics etc.

How are you going to do your rims? – To stand out or blend in, black rims, colour specific rims, fully textured, green, brown, and bleh!* Black rims define the model as above the base, coloured rims help tie the model into the table surface, and fully textured is as dedicated as you can go.

**Bleh! is a mix of a medium green, brown and grey to produce a colour that doesn't stand out on green, brown and grey tables but seems to feel right because it contains all three colours (right).*

Time to test base – Basing is often considered an afterthought, with the colours and scenics being selected and fixed into place as the final stage in getting a model ready for the tabletop. This can lead to all sorts of problems visually and can be tragic if the scheme is applied across

an entire army's worth of bases before any problems are spotted. Imagine picking the perfect summer field style of basing, adding clump and flower tufts, to later find out the clash with your soldiers' clothes, ruining the look across an entire army.

Considering every model in the army is likely to have a similar scheme, it makes sense to put a couple of test bases together first so that you can try them out with your test models and get the right feel before you commit to applying the scheme across your entire army!

To get the look you want, take time to work out what's going on what base – for large armies, working out scenic composition on a 'per base' basis stops you creating an entire army with all the same scenics in the same quantity on every base.

Questions answered. Test bases built. Theme, style, colours and scenics decided. Base groupings sorted. It's time to crack on!



IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Bases – When we were working through the different ways we could present these bases, we decided that we'd use 40mm round bases from Games Workshop. They're a little bit larger than most infantry bases, but at the same time considerably smaller than many regiment and monster bases. If you can make a convincing base at this size, it won't take too much effort to scale them up or down to match the rest of your army.

Structure – Once we get into the 50 different examples of bases you could make, you'll see that each description is presented in a particular format. First you'll read bullet points that cover the build, the painting, and the scenics. Occasionally there'll be a fourth bullet point that covers any additional painting after the scenics stage. Then we jump into a look at Mel's thoughts about that particular build or technique being used.

Paint – There are quite a few different companies out there making acrylic hobby paints, and we wanted to make sure we could provide specific paint names using a range that is now widely available around the globe. Whenever you see a paint name used, it will be from The Army Painter range. Some, but not all, of the scenics used throughout this guide are also from The Army Painter range.

**THE
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TOOLS AND MATERIALS

Compared to terrain-making, you only need a small assortment of basing scenics to meet most of your basing requirements, enhanced with a few feature scenics such as flowers and leaf scatter etc. The rest is covered by the usual paints, glues, putties, tools etc.

Tools – Your standard hobby brushes, a set of craft brushes for the messy work, tweezers, kitchen scissors, clippers, a metal ruler, a cutting mat, and some sculpting tools. These things will help you create the most magnificent bases.

Glues – I use PVA (white) glue for pretty much everything, and hotglue or gel superglue for when things have irregular surfaces and getting a bond with PVA will be tricky. They also dry faster than big blobs of PVA, so they help speed up the process. Just remember not to use hot glue and superglue together as the resulting fumes are dangerous!

Two glues – PVA is the king when it comes to basing, but you want it nice and thick for fixing down the larger aggregates, clump, tufts and other feature scenics, and you also want it nice and thin for sealing down all those light, loose and fluffy scenics. Rather than constantly thinning blobs of PVA down for sealing, it's much quicker to simply have two bottles of PVA on hand – one nice and thick, the other nice and thin. This not only reduces the need to constantly thin PVA down, speeding up your process, but it also ensures your sealing mix is always the same consistency, meaning it's a win-win for basing!

Reactivating PVA – even worse risk than on terrain boards as the plastic bases don't soak up any moisture unlike MDF terrain bases, can leave your texture and scenics sliding around, so wet it, then move on and don't come back till the PVA has dried again.

Aggregates - Make sure your collection includes: fine sharp sand, coarse sand, crushed breezeblock or brick, dried earth, small rock chippings, slate, cork granules and chunks, and some composite upholstery foam.

Putties – Filler, ceiling stucco, Milliput, and greenstuff are all the putties you'll really need.

Paints – A decent range of hobby paints and, for basecoating hundreds of bases, a colour-matched sample pot of interior house paint. This will work out a bit cheaper, especially when most (if not all) of the basecoat is going to be covered anyway.

Scenics – Scatter, grass, foam flocks, clump foliage, tufts, and the fancy, flowery bits. A collection like that will see you a long way.

Bases - Bases come in lots of different shapes and sizes. Make sure you check the base sizes you'll need if you are using a ruleset that requires such things. Otherwise, go to town! Bases are primarily plastic or laser-cut MDF, but can also be cast from resin. Resin bases often already contain a lot of sculpted detail that is ready to be enhanced by your painting and scenics.

Throughout the examples in this document, we've abbreviated the names of some of the companies who produce the scenics we used. AP - The Army Painter, GF9 - Gale Force Nine, WWS - War World Scenics, and WS - Woodland Scenics.





TECHNIQUES



When creating bases for miniatures, we use the same techniques as terrain building but without the room to lay down a full landscape, you need to select landscape features to suggest a suitable setting.

A wood elf on a gravel base is 'wrong', a wood elf on a greenfield base is alright, and a wood elf on a woodland base with fallen logs, scattered with leaf foliage, is perfect. Deep in the woods without an actual tree in sight.

CREATING A TEXTURE

Gritting with PVA – Thinned PVA works great with fine aggregates as it soaks up through them to bond them in place. Thick PVA is good for large aggregates but they need to go down before the fine, as thick PVA won't soak up through the gaps to bond.

Filler and a sprinkle – Filler can bond small and medium aggregates layered on to it but doesn't soak up through like thinned PVA. Instead, as long as the filler surface is layered with water, the aggregates will sink in and create an embedded look that works well for exposed groundwork.

Fixing down big bits – Larger aggregates and small plastic bits need a stronger bond than PVA can provide. If the surfaces roughly meet, thick PVA can be used but gel superglue or hot glue is better. If very irregular, hot glue has the volume to bridge the gap between base and the surface of the feature being bonded. Other benefits include a quicker drying time, so you can keep working on your base,



and superglue/hot glue don't reactivate, so your larger bits aren't going to start moving later in the build.

Embedding in filler – To create a look of larger aggregates embedded in the earth rather than sitting on top of it, they can be contoured into the base with filler. Once big bits are fixed in place, apply a few blobs of filler and smooth out with water and a flat soft brush, cleaning off any excess as you go. Once dry, create the rest of your rolling landscape.

Simple soft putty effects – Filler, when wet can be prodded to create depressions, from puddles holes to creating wavy sand. The softness of filler means it can be left to smooth out as it settles. Ceiling stucco is the opposite, it can be etched into but when stippled, it holds its peak perfectly, making it great for choppy water

Putty work – Soft putties like filler and stucco are great for surface effects and low-level landscaping but for more dramatic and defined work, the firmer, two-part epoxy putties like Milliput and greenstuff are ideal. Easily worked, they can be used to create larger landscaping features, such as hillside slopes and wedges of ice. As they are firm and designed for sculpting, they can be shaped and detailed in a way the soft putties simply can't. Solid substructures or a detailed surface texture like sand or cobblestones can be sculpted with a little time and attention to detail. When applied under a base, they can form a solid foundation that can be cut and drilled into to create puddles and craters that penetrate beneath the base surface, making a realistic effect without any need to build up the base surface.





PAINTING IT UP

Basecoating – Of course, you can just glue down grit or dried earth to a base and skip the basecoating because it already looks like ground or its going to be completely covered with scenics later, but basecoating has other benefits. Grit and earth can change colour over time but a basecoat is a fixed pigment which means it doesn't change like raw aggregates can. It also acts as a sealing layer, bonding the aggregates from the top down, much like thinned PVA does. It also primes the surface for more painting effects. The bonus is if you miss a bit of flocking or it wears thin over years of gameplay, there's good looking ground below it.

Overbrushing & Drybrushing – These techniques are used in much the same way as on your miniatures but focus on hard edge highlighting and good contrasts. Subtle effects such as soft, fine drybrushing becomes lost on most model bases unless they've been made specifically for being viewed up close, such as diorama bases. For bases on the tabletop, a harder contrast shows the details on the base clearer from a distance and so improves the look of the model when it's on the battlefield.

Washes – Washes work best when there's subtle detail that needs enhancing – craggy rocks, scratches in planks, gaps in pavements. Thinned paints or stains don't flow into the recessed details quite as well, but provide a soft, broad tinting over an area, so are perfect for weathering and adding mould to things.



GETTING SCENIC

Scatters - Standard, mixed, three-tone, flocks, grasses, and foam flocks. Sprinkle these on to thinned PVA so that it can soak through it to fix it firmly. Thick PVA will only bond what touches it. Start small with flocks, then sprinkled grasses, then the loose foam flocks. The looser it is, the more it needs to be sealed with thinned PVA.

Tufts, clumps, and fancy things – Tufts typically have a 'self-adhesive' but always glue them down. Dip them in thick PVA, place them on the base, and press down right in the middle with a probe or cocktail stick. This will fix it down and spread the tuft fibres outwards more naturally. Clump foliage is best placed onto a spot of thick PVA to bond it, as dipping soaks up too much PVA. Gel superglue and hotglue bond faster than PVA but can be a bit messy.

Clumps and tufts can be cut up into smaller tufts and clumps. Once fixed to the base, scissors can be used to trim overhangs and trim the length of the tuft fibre to make them appear less uniform in height.

Fancy scenics such as flower tufts, leaf scatters, long grass fibres, standing flowers and laser cut paper plants all enhance bases but best to use them sporadically so the special doesn't become the norm. Instead, use them to highlight special models on larger bases with the space to.

FINISHING IT OFF

Sealing - You should always seal your bases when they have a lot of loose materials, if it's a large base on a small model that will have extra handling, when the base is going to be drybrushed for a final effect (like frost) afterwards, or when scatters are sprinkled onto clump etc at the end for blending. If final scenics are too loose for the thinned PVA to soak in without disturbing them, add a flow aid like as a tiny drop of dish detergent or commercial flow aid. Alternatively, drip on water first, which will soak in and hold the loose material together, then drip the PVA into the water and let the water carry the thinned PVA through the scenics to bond them firmly.

Final touches - Once sealed, they're ready to go but can be enhanced further as your bases are now solid and can be painted with washes, overbrushing, and drybrushing to help blend scatter edges with bare ground, to weather foliage splattered with mud, and to highlight tufts to give them a dried out look.



MODEL PLACEMENT

Make sure the model fits – If the model is going on before the base is built up, it's not a problem as the scenics are applied around the model. If the model is being added later, then you need to factor in room for the model to be fixed flush with the final base surface. A single piece of aggregate on a flat surface or a scenic clump in the wrong place can make the base unusable or results in a less than ideal, or even awkward, positioning on the base. When basing just a few models, it's easy to keep the relevant model with the base and check as you go. For larger forces, group the models based on leg and foot placement, then trace the base size on a piece of paper, put model on and draw round footprint, then keep all the allocated bases for that leg style on the piece of paper, or use a dot of colour on the rim as a reference so you can quickly check as you work through a large number of bases.

Fixing models to a base – Starting by fixing a model to a base before the base work is done is a good way to ensure a well-positioned model and a good bond with the base. The downside of the 'foot first' approach is that unless the base has nothing but a scattering of fine aggregates and simple scatter, it will seem like the feet are sinking into the ground as the basework builds up. Worse still are PVA overlaps, where the glue can run up a boot and sometimes over it. Once the aggregates and scenics are down it will appear as though the ground is quicksand rather than solid footing.

'Sunken foot' is an easy condition to treat, all your models need are some risers. These are either small squares of 1 or 2mm plasticard, or little blobs of greenstuff pressed under foot to the desired height. The model can then either be fixed to the risers, allowing the aggregates to get under the edge of the foot. Alternatively, the risers can be fixed to the base before its textured but without the model being fixed to them, allowing the ground texture to be laid down, paint and even scenics to be applied inline with the riser height where the foot will be fixed. This method still gives a strong bond to the base indirectly through the risers but also makes the foot appear like its actually standing on the ground rather than sinking into it, and it also avoids 'hover foot' which can be a problem if you leave fixing your model onto your base once its finished.

Attaching a model to the bases once the bases are complete is, in my opinion, the best way to work. You don't have to compromise the work on your bases or the paintjob on your models. Without clear risers, however, the model is actually being glued to the basing work itself and not the

base. This is fine for simple grit and small scatter effect, but when the going gets rougher and the scenics are lighter and looser, even well-sealed scenics aren't the best to bond a model to. A rough surface texture can cause weak joins due to a lack of good contact surface area. The model's feet can't be placed flush to get a strong bond or, worse still, a single oversized aggregate can cause a model's feet to hover in the air. Above all, if you loose track of your placeholder areas and it gets a bit irregular for your trooper, don't be afraid to get the clippers out and trim it down a bit. No one is going to see it. It's under the its boot, remember.

Finally, there's always a chance that no matter how hard you try, there's no way of getting a solid bond between the base and a model's dynamic pose. In this case, the join needs reinforcing with a bit of pinning. It may sound complicated but all that's required is a small hole drilled into the bottom of a model's foot, typically on the heel so it can go up into the ankle rather than straight through the model's toe cap. Once a hole is drilled, a bit of strong wire – like a paper clip or brass rod – is glued in. A corresponding hole needs to be drilled through the base, which the wire (or wires if both feet at being pinned) are fixed with a strong glue under the base before any excess wire is trimmed off, leaving a join that's as strong as being fixed directly to the base itself. Above all, when it comes to fixing models to a base with a strong bond that doesn't spoil the realism of the miniature, plan and prepare properly, and get used to pinning or you'll have models popping of bases left right and centre.





COMPOSITION TIPS

Harmonising the stages – The key to a cohesive looking theme on a base is ensuring that each stage works harmoniously with those before it. This means ensuring the ground texture matches the base theme, and so on, through painting, and adding scenics. A single stage that doesn't fit will throw off the look of the entire base. A light ground colour doesn't work with luscious deep green vegetation, or a dark moorland base doesn't work with light coloured tufts. If you are not sure, use Google to gather your reference photos.

The 1-2-3 of Placement – When placing larger scenics such as tufts or clumps, position is the key to making it realistic. If you are placing a single item, you can put it anywhere but in the middle of the base. If you're placing two items, ensure you place them so they don't mirror each other's position. Vary the distance between each item and the base edge, so it appears irregular and asymmetrical. When placing three items, do not place them equally apart from one another in a triangle, pull one closer to the another and leave the last standing away. By following these principles, you will avoid any artificial regularity in your scenics placement that could give it an unnatural feel.

Irregularity – Unless it's been planted by man, the chances are that pretty much everything, especially scenics will be irregular in some manner, so trying to keep to this and avoid regularity when it comes to the scenics and their placement. A good technique is to always ensure the base you are working on doesn't match the few that preceded it.

Two and a spot colour – When it comes to working with the larger scenics, pick two complimentary colours as your main elements and then a strong, contrasting scenic that can be added in key spots to break up the base and provide more visual interest.

Size matters - unless model is hiding behind it or interacting with it, keep the taller elements towards the back of your base so it doesn't obscure the model. This also includes the placement of clumps and tufts, so they don't obscure themselves. One large clump at the front of the base and you won't see anything else, so keep it towards the back or at least to one side. Its not just the height of the bush or rock that matters. How much space its footprint takes up on the base is important as well. Large footprint items should be positioned first, making sure they don't compromise the necessary footprint for the intended model. Ideally, they should be towards the back or off to the sides. This limits the amount of space needed to blend the large element into the base with aggregates or scenics. Imagine it like a halo around the element that expands its footprint. A single element that's larger than a quarter of the base size can make a base unusable with poor placement, so position it to minimise its final footprint on the base.

Carefully crafting an ultra-realistic base that can't have a model placed on it has failed in its actual function. Keep the final purpose of your work in mind, or get comfortable with making a lot of objective markers!



Unless you are recreating a garden scene. the only time your tufts should be arranged this regularly is on their carrier sheet.



GREENFIELD BASES



GREEN 'N' GROUND

- Gritted for Grip.
- Basecoat with Leather Brown, then a light drybrush of Banshee Brown.
- Patches of AP Grass Green scatter, AP Field Grass tufts and 4Ground Foam scatters, then sealed with PVA.

When putting your PVA down, avoid doing lots of spots as this can result in a "leopard spotting" look. Instead, put your PVA spots down and join them randomly to create channels of bare ground.

Green 'n' Ground has been a standard of wargaming since the first time a wargamer decided to base their models. Whilst it is the simplest greenfield technique to achieve, a little attention to detail can really make even this standard technique pop with realism.

Thinned PVA is best as it soaks into the scatter, gluing it down and sealing it at the same time. After that, any range of scenics can be added; static grass sprinkled down or stood up in the form of tufts, or foam flocks added to help break up the look of the base. Once everything is down, a few drops of thinned PVA is all it needs to seal it up and keep that base looking good for years of gameplay.



MEADOW

- Gritted for Grip
- Basecoat leather brown
- Jarvis light green clump, homemade tufts and AP summer meadow tufts layered on top of each other before being sealed with PVA.

Layering tufts on top of tufts is the perfect opportunity to use any off cuts, naff or slightly dodgy homemade tufts first, you don't need to see the whole tuft, just be sure there's the right look in any of the gaps of your top layer of good looking tufts!

Not all fields are cultivated, there's whole expanses of our battlefields that wander across wild green field lands like meadows, natures overgrown garden. With plants of all sorts growing without restrictions, meadows can become so overgrown, grasses often outgrow bushes!

Replicating this look is easy, it just requires a little creative scenics laying. Whilst a substructure can be used, creating a look of unrestricted and unregulated grow is easy to achieve by laying down layer of scenics in a slightly random method. First fixing down any clump foliage before adding tufts, and then a few more tufts randomly on top of the first layer. Once done, it's sealed up with thinned down PVA, leaving an irregular meadow landscape that looks like you could lose someone in it.



MOORLAND

- Gritted for Grip.
- Basecoat of Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green.
- WWS large Swamp tufts, WS Clump foliage, and AP Steppe Grass, sealed with PVA.

Size matters! Moorland plants are short, so put down your largest scenics first, whether its clumps or tufts, and then work down in size from there to keep control of the 'low and windswept' look you're trying to achieve.

Not all greenfields are cultivated farmland and colourful pastures. In higher elevations you can find areas such

as moorlands, where things are more drab and bleak. Exposed to the elements – harsh winds, relentless rain, and cloud cover – moorland foliage has adapted well to this environment, giving it a distinctive look.

Recreating this feel isn't about the techniques, its about selecting the right scenics, both in colour, type and size. Moorland skies are often overcast, meaning the foliage is primarily dark evergreen. The harsh elements mean plants are short and tough by nature, and as they're completely wild and often very wet, there's a considerable amount of ground foliage. Dark tufts, ragged swamp tufts, and a heavy layer of a dark mix grass is all that's needed to give a base that bleak moorland look.



PARCHED

- Gritted for Grip.
- Basecoat of Monster Brown, the drybrush with Troll Claws.
- Light scattering of 1:1 mix of light green and mid-green Jarvis flock, dark green tufts, sealed with thinned PVA, then drybrushed with Troll Claws.

Gritted for grip. With bases that are going to be completely flocked, there's not really a need to apply a ground texture or colour. Even so, a basic layer of fine aggregates glued down and painted up can go a long way to make sure your base turns out right. The aggregates give a texture that scatters, flocks, and other scenics can grip to better than the smooth plastic of your standard base. One other benefit is that if you miss a bit when putting your scatter down or a little

flock gets knocked off during gameplay, you get to see textured earth rather than a bare base.

The summer sun and warmer climates can dry out the ground as well as the greenery, leaving only the toughest foliage behind. Dried greenfield bases need a combination of elements to pull off a parched look off but they're relatively easy to achieve.

First, a lighter brown basecoat is used to establish the drier feel to the base. This is then drybrushed to highlight the texture, as the lack of scatter in some areas will mean the ground will show through. The parched feel is enhanced by applying a mix of light and mid green scatters sprinkled across the base, ensuring the ground is still showing. Tufts are then added and sealed with thinned PVA to fix them in place (and in preparation to be drybrushed). For this base, I used the same colours as the ground to complete the feel.



LONG GRASS

- Gritted for Grip.
- Basecoat of Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green
- Hornby Long Harvest Grass, trimmed into clumps and glued in place with gel superglue. Light WWS tufts, 4Ground foam flocks to fill the gaps and chopped long harvest grass sprinkled to blend scenics together, then sealed with PVA.

Remember, as you start to peel away your tufts from those strips, you have the strips left to make your own scenics. A 4" natural-bristled brush – its bristles stained with either a green, brown or yellow – some hot glue, and a pair of scissors, and you'll have your own scenic strips in no time!

Sometimes soldiers find themselves stalking (or being stalked) through long grass, be it fields of wheat or the tiger

grass of the South East Asia. Either way, tufts simply will not cut it, and taller tufts need to be created.

Long grass tufts can be made from commercial synthetic fibres, brush bristles, or even the tips of dried grass, collected up and stripped of their seeds in Autumn. Whatever material is used, it's a simple matter of grabbing a bunch, trimming it with scissors so the bottom of the clump is flat and sits flush on the base. Then they can either be glued directly to the base with gel superglue or hotglue. Once in place, all that's left is a heavy scatter to hide any messy glue joins of the tall tufts, and a little chopped grass across the ground scenics to blend the elements together.



HILLOCK

- Build a concave putty substructure, blended with base edge. I prefer Milliput because it softens and smooths with water. Once set, sand the edges of the putty and glue down a layer of sand with PVA.
- Basecoat of Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green.
- Jarvis scatters – light on the flat ground, dark on the bank, mid sprinkled all over – sealed with PVA. WS Evergreen Clump foliage and WWS light tufts added at base of hillock, sprinkling of 4Ground foam flocks to break up the clump and ground without overloading the base. All sealed with PVA.

Not all grassland is flat going. There are plenty of steep, grassy hills for our models to have to slog up and over on their way to the battleline. It might not seem that easy to represent hills on a base, but you can certainly represent a start of one.

Creating the foot of the hill is a simple matter of shaping in a wedge of Milliput, smoothing it roughly to shape before

letting it cure slightly and sanding the 'back' to line up with the base edge. Once cured, it's the scenics that complete the look. Three tonal scatters are used to give the look of different grasses, and then clump foliage and tufts are used to hide the line where the curve meets the base, whilst leaving the top of the bank showing. This breaks up the unnatural line and leaves the impression of a rising bank instead of a wedge on a base.





WOODLAND

- Gritted for Grip, with a twig and WS clump foliage added.
- Basecoat of Oak Brown. Twig and foliage given a heavy wash of Strong Tone, and a subtle wash of Military Shade.
- A layer of Jarvis crushed, dried leaves and silver birch seed pods, spot placement of green dyed silver birch seeds, seal with PVA.

Making your own leaf scatter is easy. Grab some leaves, dry them out, stain one side of them dark with a black-brown wash mix and, once dry, crunch them up in a bag, or use a hole punch if you want to be posh!

Woodlands are magical places. In heavily wooded areas, the ground foliage mainly falls from above rather than growing up from the ground. With logs and leaves scattered over the ground and a host of bushes and brambles growing between them, a woodland scene is like no other.

Setting up a woodland theme is all about the right selection of materials. Twigs and dried roots both work well, needing nothing more than a quick coat of thinned PVA and a wash to set the scene. Evergreen bushes help reinforce the idea that it is a dense woodland with the canopy blocking out most of the light. Switching from normal scatters to leaf scatters – whether commercial, made with a leaf hole punch, or crushed, dried leaves – brings it all together for a woodland scene any Elf would be proud to stand on.



PATHS

- Use PVA to glue down grit at edges and sharp sand in between to form path. Lay down the grit first.
- Basecoat the rough ground with Leather Brown and the path with a 1:1 mix of Fur Brown and Leather Brown.
- Medium and light green Jarvis scatters laid over the rough ground with lightest closest to the path. Tufts added on top of the scatter with a small amount of foam flock used to hide the bottom of the tufts. Finally, overbrush the path and scatter with Fur Brown to break up the harsh edge.

If you're going to put a squad on path bases, draw out the path on paper, lay your bases over the path irregularly and note which bases have just one edge and which have both, and model the bases from there, it really helps to avoid being 'pattern set' when creating your paths.

Footslogging models aren't always trudging through fields and meadows. Sometimes they find a path that makes the going easier. Through green fields, exposed moorland, or deep woods, the easiest way to travel across the landscape always results in a well-trodden path.

Recreating the look of a path on a base isn't hard, it just takes a little planning. Whether you are adding just one side of the path on the base, or in the case of narrow paths, both sides (as with this example), the two important things are to build up the banks and blend the edges. Building up the banks just requires keeping the smaller scenics towards the path and increasing your scenic size as you move away. Blending the edge just requires a quick drybrush of the main path colour over any adjacent scenics to break up the harsh edge and give them a well-trodden appearance.





MIXED SCENIC ELEMENTS

- Use small blobs of putty to create feature spots, a few feature rocks and mid aggregates glued with PVA. Fence hotglued in place
- Basecoat the rough ground with Leather Brown and the fine ground with a 1:1 mix of Fur Brown and Leather Brown. Basecoat the fence with Ash Grey, then a subtle wash of Fur Brown all over and a Military Shade wash on the lower half of the fence.
- Jarvis light green and mid-green scatters laid down on 66% of the base. Flower tufts glued down, then add a mid-green foam scatter at the front and dark clump foliage at the back for contrast. Standing flowers fixed to the fence with gel superglue added as a spot feature to breakup the uniformity of the other foliage. Seafoam tree trimmed to fit with the overall base dimensions and glued to back of fence with gel superglue for stability.
- Overbrush Fur Brown on the scatter to break up the edge.

If you're planning to have a feature base, make sure you hold back some of your fancy scenics for it, otherwise you'll have nothing to add to make your hero's base stand out from the rest.

Most of the time, basing is about setting a scene or defining a location for your models, presenting an impression of the battlefield it's traveling across. With feature bases, it moves from simply setting a scene to framing the entire model, placing it directly into a well-defined theme. Defining that theme is all about pulling everything else in this section into the perfect, planned composition.

For this base, the initial concept was a garden path, meaning pulling in the groundwork and scatter techniques from the Paths base but keeping the path to one side. The fence is a piece of Mantic fencing, and is used to establish the idea that it's a garden. This was reinforced by adding flower tufts and clump foliage in a cultivated way. Finally, the seafoam tree was cut and added to the back of the base in a way that it will frame the model, rather than dominate it. None of the techniques are new, its just a matter of planning their composition in a way that highlights the model you are placing on it.



ROCKY BASES



ROCKY GROUND (BARE EARTH)

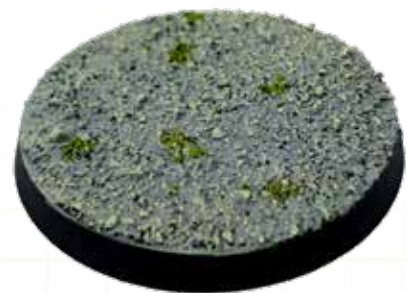
- Glue down mixed earth aggregates with PVA, then seal with PVA to avoid losing the aggregates.
- Basecoat with Leather Brown, then drybrush with Uniform Grey. Follow this with a light drybrush of Ash Grey, and finally a very light drybrush of Banshee Brown.
- Tufts added next to larger aggregates and cut down to match rock height.

Some going isn't as soft going as others. Sometimes the ground is simply rockfields, making it hard on any footslogging model. This doesn't mean that there's no earth, just that the amount of scree/gravel/rocks vastly outweighs the earth, consigning it to occasionally peeking through the rock carpet that covers the ground.

Whilst creating the physical look is simply a matter of sealing down a mixture of aggregates, it's the painting and the scenics that reinforce the look. First, a base of a brown that's heavily drybrushed with grey gives the 'rocks covering the ground' look.



In these environments, plants can usually only get a footing to grow where they're protected, so it's important to place any tufts next to the larger aggregates, and cut them down to match the height of the rocks. This will reinforce the exposed feeling, as the grass is protected from the elements by the rocks they'll sheltering next to.



GRAVEL

- Use small blobs of Milliput to vary the ground elevation. Use PVA to layer on crushed breeze block.
- Basecoat with Ash Grey, then give it a light drybrush of a 1:1 mix of Troll Claws and Arid Earth.
- Use tiny spots of PVA and Jarvis light green flock to break up the grey.

Gravel tends to be industrial, which means bases can include the odd bit of rusting scrap metal. The benefit of this is that the orange rust often taints the ground around the metal, giving you a great opportunity to break up the greyness of your bases. Just remember to keep it subtle.

Whether it's a quarry or a far flung world, sometimes your troops will find themselves slogging across bleak and featureless gravel fields. Replicating gravel fields is simple but, as with all simple bases, the realism comes with the subtle details rather than large features.

Whilst the gravel is simple matter of layering on fine and mid-sized aggregates, a little prep work adds a lot of detail. A few small blobs of putty pushed down and smoothed out can create subtle undulations in the ground, breaking up the flat look of the base. Once the grit is down and painted up, just a few tiny spots of scatter is all that's needed to break up the grey of the gravel for a great looking effect.



BROKEN GROUND

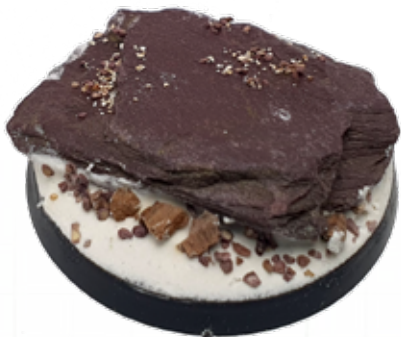
- Large rocks glued with hotglue, filler smoothed over the base and mid-sized aggregates added.
- Paint the rocks with a Uniform Grey basecoat, drybrush with Ash Grey, then a light drybrush of Banshee Brown. Wash them with Dark Tone and Military Shade. Basecoat the ground with Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green.
- WWS Heather tufts, 4Ground dark green foam flock, sprinkling of AP Steppe Grass.

Occasionally your troops will find themselves battling in the highlands, where the ground can vary from from large rocks to damp earth with every step. In these environments, the rocks don't sit on the ground, it looks like they are erupting from it, giving the landscape a specific look.

Creating this look is easy. First, the feature rocks need to be fixed in place with hotglue or superglue. Then smaller

aggregates can be glued down before filler is applied and smoothed with water. A stiff bristled brush can be used to clean the filler off the fixed rocks, leaving them looking like they're embedded in the earth.

Once dried, a dark coloured paint and flocking scheme with reinforce that highland damp look, and a few heather tufts helps nail it.



ROCKY – SLATE

- A large piece of slate is hot glued first, then filler is smoothed around the edges and aggregates are embedded.
- Paint the slate as with *Broken Ground* (above) and go heavy on the washes. Basecoat the ground Leather Brown.
- Jarvis light green clump and GF9 Meadow Blend flock.

Finding the right sized slate for your base can be tricky. You can always smash up some larger pieces, but watch out for those razor sharp edges. If you're worried about drawing blood, the easiest way to dull the edges of slate is to drag them across XPS foam. There's a reason it dulls blades so quick!

Whilst the rocks that are typically used for basing aren't particularly suitable for creating large rocks, slate just happens to be perfect! Consisting of stratified layers of rock, it can be broken into smaller pieces, is commonly

found as a ground covering material in gardening centres, and it can be carefully drilled to allow for models to be pinned to it.

Whilst pieces can be placed flat, you can also angle them slightly so that the trailing end appears embedded in the base, which helps give a realistic feel to the base and makes for some great heroic posing opportunities!





ROCKY – CORK

- Small pieces of cork bark hot glued together, with the gaps filled with filler, then brushed over with a stiff brush and water. Once dry, aggregates were glued, especially over noticeable patches of smooth filler.
- Paint the rocks as with *Broken Ground* (above) but without the washes. Basecoat the ground as with *Broken Ground*.
- Jarvis dark green clump foliage, WWS light tufts, and AP Field grass.

When working with cork bark, there's no such thing as waste. Whilst you're cutting the larger chunks, put a binbag down and catch all bits, you'll be surprised how much you get!

Sometimes, replicating the broken, jagged ground of the highlands isn't enough and the base needs to be even more rocky, particularly for incredibly heroic leaders. Normal rocks aren't going to cut it, so it's time to swap materials, with the 'go to' being cork.

Whether it's cork mats or cork bark, when broken up, they give a realistic rock texture and appearance whilst keeping the base lightweight. Pieces of cork can be glued together (hotglue is the ideal to bridge any gaps between pieces.

Once the cork pieces are in place, filler can be pushed in the gaps and smoothed off with a stiff bristled brush. Once dry, a few aggregates on any overly-smooth filler bits and its ready to be painted

Cork gives a heavily textured surface and drybrushing leaves a good contrast. This means washes aren't essential and a lighter, drier look can be achieved quite easily when complimented with a light scenics.



DESERT BASES



SAND

- Apply a layer of filler, wet it and drag across it with a palette knife or brush handle. Leave the filler to dry smooth.
- Basecoat with a 2:1 mix of Troll Claws and Desert Yellow, then a heavy drybrush of a 1:1 mix of Troll Claws and Arid Earth. finally apply a light drybrush of a 1:2 mix of Troll Claws and Arid Earth.
- No Scenics.

Filler ripples aren't just for sand, it's a great technique for water as well, especially when combined with a stucco stipple for harsh waves, just let the filler ripples dry first before tackling the stucco stipple!

Sandy bases, by their very nature, lack detail which often leads hobbyists to scratch their heads trying to come up with something that looks better than just sand thrown onto a base. The trick is to go with subtle details that create interest without overpowering the look of the base.

The simplest way is just to add enough detail so that the base is no longer flat. We have thinned down some filler and left to settle. As it is drying you can drag a palette knife or brush hand across it in parallel lines. Once settled, it gives a very subtle, rippling effect that when painted up with a good drybrush, gives an great (and realistic) sand effect that doesn't overpower the base.



PARCHED W/TUMBLEWEEDS

- Filler layer with a scattering of various aggregates embedded.
- Basecoat with a 1:1 mix of Barbarian Flesh and Leather Brown, then drybrush with Banshee Brown.
- Small patches of chopped dried grass to break up surface, fixed with PVA.

This technique isn't just for parched bases. When used with the greenfield basing techniques, it can be used to create amazing looking paths!

Not all Parched earth is found in the hottest regions of the globe. A hot summer in a more temperate region can also result in a parched ground surface. With so little vegetation, its important to get the look right with the ground itself, including the all-important aggregates.

Replicating this look of rocks embedded into the ground is easy, it just needs a ground the aggregates can embed into, filler being perfect for this task. Simply smooth out a layer of filler across the base, smooth it off with water leaving the surface wet, then sprinkle on the aggregates. As the filler dries, the aggregates will soak into and be fixed in the filler, leaving a perfect dried earth look.

After that, a light brown colour scheme, a little drybrushing and some dried scenics can be added to complete the look.



CRACKED EARTH

- Layer filler onto a baby wipe (with a plastic backing so that it doesn't stick to your table), smooth it thin with water, and sprinkle on aggregates. Once dry, crack it, cut out your base shape and glue it down. Stretch it a little to open the cracks, and seal it with PVA.

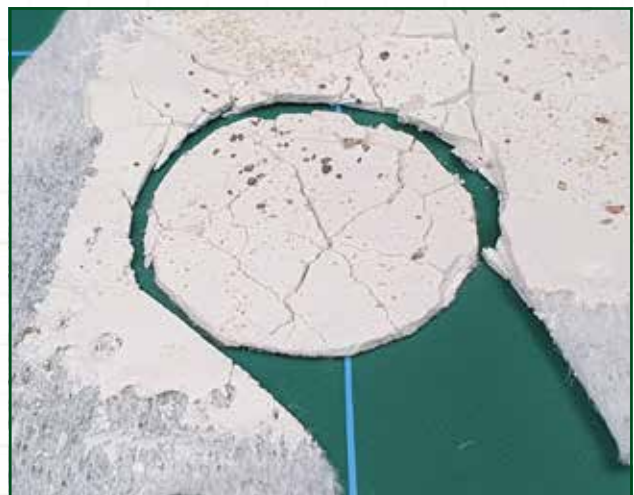
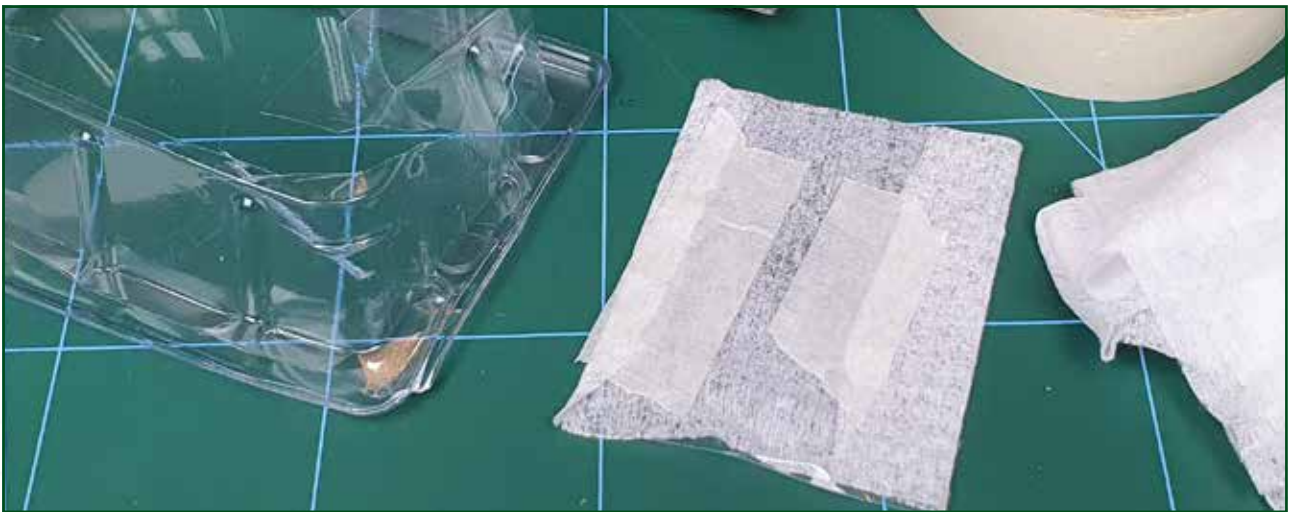
- Basecoat the ground with Barbarian Flesh, then drybrush with a 1:1 mix of Troll Claws and Arid Earth, wash with thinned Strong Tone.

- Add some lichen to reinforce the dried out look.

It's easier to create large cracking sheets of filler and then cutting out shapes that can be glued to a base than it is to cut hundreds of little pieces of plasticard and gluing them to bases to create the same look.

Dried up earth riddled with deep cracks shows where the sun has evaporated every last drop of moisture from the surface. Creating a cracked earth effect is a great way to theme your bases without the need to add any other features or theming scenics to get that dry feeling across.

Filler is a great 'earth material', especially when it has had a few aggregates mixed in. When its dry, it can be easily broken up to create a cracked earth effect, but to stop it just becoming a collection of random filler flakes, it needs a substructure to hold it together. A simple baby wipe taped to some plastic is all that's needed to hold it together. Once dry, it can be cracked to your hearts content, then cut out and glued to the base for a perfect cracked earth effect.





EXPOSED SANDSTONE

- Milliput is shaped using the Press and Score technique. Once dry, fine sand was glued into appropriate areas.
- Basecoat the base with a 1:1 mix of Fur Brown and Mars Red, then drybrush with Kobold Skin.
- Use brown lichen and AP Mountain tufts

Less is more when you're creating sandstone, there's no need for every base to include a big sandstone rock. Just sculpt a handful and the rest can have a few little ones or simply bare sand. Using a number of the same elements across a base set will keep everything looking consistent. Just what you need for an army.

Whilst deserts and other sun-baked locations are often flat and featureless, they can also be mountainous, with huge, stratified sandstone peaks as common as the sand. It's not practical to put a mountain on a base, but plateaus and exposed, flattened stones are a great way to give the impression of a hot, rocky setting.

Creating the sandstone is quite simple, with a blob of Milliput pressed into the base to represent the rock. This was then pushed down unevenly to create steps and the edges were scored gently to create a stratified look before being smoothed off with a damp fine brush to remove any sharp edges that don't suit the sandstone look.

After that, it's simply a matter of painting it up with a suitable scheme which can range from sandy cremes and ochres all the way to terracottas and deep, rich reds.



WINDSWEPT SAND (or Ash Wastes)

- Create a substructure with thin 'worms' of putty and blend them into the base. Once dry, you can glue down a layer of sharp sand with PVA.
- Basecoat with Desert Yellow, then drybrush with Troll Claws, followed by a light drybrush of a 1:1 mix of Troll Claws and Arid Earth.
- No Scenics

If you're making sandstone bases, don't throw away your putty offcuts. Make them into wiggly worms and whack them on a spare base, doubling your basing efforts and not wasting a single bit of putty in the process.

Whilst some sandy bases warrant a subtle effect, there are others where the wind sweeps the sand up more significantly, creating dramatic, windswept effects. The most common of these are sand waves.

Creating these waves is really simple. All that's needed is a little putty, rolled into 'worms' and applied to the base, using two fingers and water to press them down and smooth them into waves that blend into the base. It's better to have a few that start and finish off the base and some that are half on the base to give it a little variation.

After that, it's just a matter of layering on a fine aggregate and painting it up in a suitable scheme, whether that be the yellow sands of a desert or the greys of a futuristic ash waste.

WATER BASES



MUDDY

- Mixed-sized aggregates mixed with filler, left to dry but crumbled slightly when half dry. These chunks are glued into place before more filler is applied and thinned with water. As filler cures, depressions for puddles formed with a brush handle.
- Basecoat of Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green, followed by Dark Tone and Strong Tone washes. Repaint the soft ground with Oak Brown mixed with Gloss Varnish for a wet and shiny look.
- No Scenics.

Anytime you have some leftover filler, stick it a container and mix it with some aggregates, and leave it to dry. Crumble it up into smaller pieces and by the time you've finished a terrain table, you'll have enough chunks for an entire army trudging through the mud.

Churned-up, muddy ground is a bizarre landscape. Hard chunks of sun-baked earth that could crack a kneecap if you fell on them, all embedded in a sea of soft mud that would swallow a boot given the chance. A landscape of such varied texture is a challenge to replicate, unless you use the same method as Mother Nature, that is.

Filler is used here in two quite different ways. The first is to create the hard chunks of dried mud. Scraps of filler are mixed with a few fine and medium-sized aggregates and left to dry. As they dry, they are crumbled, creating a random collection of irregular mud chunks, that can (once fully dry) be glued to a base. Between these, slightly thinned filler is laid down and smoothed out, setting the hard, dried chunks in the ground. As the ground filler dries, troughs and channels can be pushed into it with a damp brush handle. Once dry, it is a simple matter of painting it up in a suitable muddy colour, and making sure you can tell the difference between the hard chunks and the soft mud.



SWAMP/MARSH/BOG

- Add a layer of filler to build up the ground level, smooth out the surface, then make small holes with the end of a brush handle.
- Basecoat of Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green.
- GF9 Marsh Blend scatter, AP Swamp tufts, and acrylic water effects in the holes.

If you're puddle water isn't going to be clear, it doesn't matter how deep your puddles are, its easier to colour your water effects with a bit of paint than it is to dig through a base!

If you're looking for that marsh effect and don't want to go digging through the base, a quick layer of filler and a brush handle will give you enough of a depression to get the wet look right without any hassle.

First, smooth over a layer of filler with wet fingers, bevelling it with the bases edge and as it cures, poke a brush handle in, give it a little wiggle, and let it dry. In this case, a simple marsh flock mix, some marsh tufts and a couple of drops of acrylic water mix, is all it takes to give a distinctive wetlands look.



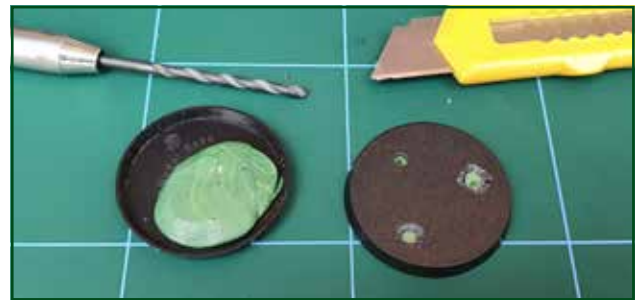
PUDDLES

- Place blobs of greenstuff under the base. Once cured, drill into the base and greenstuff. Widen the puddles with a blade. Apply a thin filler layer and add small aggregates.
- Base of Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green.
- 4Ground loose brown leaves scatter and homemade tufts. Use acrylic water effects with touch of Fur Brown for the puddles.

Either plan to avoid capillary creep or plan to use it. Scatter placed around the edge of acrylic water effects and resins can suck the liquids out of the hole they've been poured into. Either use this effect, dabbing around the sides of a puddle to ensure it travels onto the scatter or don't put scatter down until it has cured. It's indecision that'll ruin the effect when it comes to capillary creep.

No one likes stepping in a puddle but adding them to a base certainly enhances the look in a positive way. The big challenge with them is how do you add deep puddles to a flat base without it looking like a crater. The trick is to put the work in under the base first.

Puddles and depressions in bases can be easily achieved without any need to build up the base. Instead, all that's needed is to add a little putty under the base so you can dig down into it. Greenstuff works best as its easier to carve into when set. All you need to do is to put a couple of blobs of putty under the base where the puddles will go, then wet the greenstuff and push the base down onto a cutting mat, ensuring the base sits flush with the table. Once the putty is cured, it can be drilled into, clipped or cut away to make the perfect puddle depressions that just need painting up and a drop of acrylic still water to complete the effect.



STEPPING STONES

- Hot glue some small pieces of slate to the base, then add a stucco stipple for the water.
- Basecoat the rocks with Uniform Grey, then wash with a thinned 1:1 mix of Oak Brown and Cultist Robe. Basecoat the water with Dark Sky. Give it a Blue Tone wash, then a drybrush of Matt White, and finally a coat of Gloss Varnish.
- No Scenics.

When doing river ford or stepping stone bases, remember the ford and the stones do start at one bank and run across to the other, so don't miss out a few banks if you're doing a big set of bases. A couple of banks for one side, a couple for the other and stepping stone bases all put together gives a great visual of the ford in action. Just make sure you have more stepping stone bases than banks if that's the visual you want.

Water can make for dramatic looking bases, and they're not limited to pirates heading for the beach or tiny battleships. You can get them into your greenfield settings quite easily. All you need to pull off the look is a reason for the model to be standing in the water or, with stepping stones, very close to it.

The two key elements are the stones and the water, but the priority is the stones as these need to be placed in a way so that your models can stand on them before any other work is done. Slate is perfect for stepping stones, because it's flat and ideal for model placement, but also, once you've smoothed out its edges, it reinforces that 'worn smooth by water' look. For the water, a thin layer of ceiling stucco and a quick stipple to give the water a choppy look is all you need. And that stipple takes a white drybrushing perfectly.



BEACH – WATERLINE

- Create a sloping Milliput and add striations using the end of a brush handle. Create a stucco stipple for the water.
- Basecoat the sand with Fur Brown, layer Troll Claws as you move up the beach, drybrush a 1:1 mix of Troll Claws and Arid Earth at top of beach. Basecoat the water with Elemental Bolt, apply a wash of Dark Sky, drybrush with Matt White for foam and stipple the water's edge. Paint Gloss Varnish on the water.
- No Scenics.

Remember, your waters edge does not need to be straight across the middle on every base, its perfectly fine to have some models deeper in the water and some further up the sand.

Creating a waterline beach base is about combining two techniques to pull off a specific look. In this case, it's a mixture of sloped sand and water. The key is to make sure the transition between the two looks right. On a base with this type of effect there is not much room to get it wrong, as there are no scenics going on top to hide any imperfections.

Before attempting a waterline base, its important that both the sand effect and the water effect can be done with confidence. The sand is a thin sloped wedged of Milliput, scored with a damp brush handle to get a simple, wavy sand effect, painted up gradually from light browns at the water's edge, to light cream drybrush at the top of the slope. The water was created using the stipple method (like the *Stepping Stone* base) with a light, tropical teal used as the base colour, giving it a warmer look. Once painted up, a quick stipple of white across the waterline is all that is needed to break up the harsh brown edge and bring the base to life!



BEACH – SEAWEED & DRIFTWOOD

- Apply a thin layer of filler, scraped like the *Sand* base, twig embedded in the filler and sprinkled with sand to appear partially buried.
- Basecoat the sand with Troll Claws, then a heavy drybrush with a 1:1 mix of Troll Claws and Arid Earth, followed by a light drybrush with a 1:2 mix of Troll Claws and Arid Earth. Basecoat the log with Oak Brown, drybrush it at the same time as the sand. Paint thinned Fur Brown around the log for a damp sand effect.
- Mixed herbs are glued down with PVA, stained with thinned Greenskin.

Never underestimate the power of mixed herbs in your scenics set. Used to create everything from woodland ground foliage, to jungle paths to seaweed on a beach, they are great for small plant matter. Just make sure you paint or seal them, or you could end up growing your own small plant matter.

Bases don't have to have water modelled onto them to give them a beach feel, the right composition of elements can make it clear that this sand belongs to a beach and not a desert. Elements such as a damp sand, driftwood, and seaweed at the tide line all help to reinforce the theme and, when used together, leave no doubt that it's a beach base.

In this case, a simple wavy sand effect was achieved by dragging a sculpting tool through thinned filler and letting it settle. The twig was added with a bit of PVA before the filler had completely set. Once dry, the base was painted up a sandy scheme, a thinned mid-brown layered around the log and across the base, before mixed herbs were fixed down with PVA and stained with a dark green wash. With these few simple effects, the base is firmly placed by the waters edge and it only takes a couple of bases with these features for the rest of the bases without them to be pictured in the same setting on the tabletop.

SNOW BASES



FROST

- Glue down some small and mid-sized aggregates.
- Basecoat of Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green
- Scattering of Jarvis dark green scatter, a few standard dark green tufts and clumps. Seal well with diluted PVA.
- Drybrush lightly with Matt White

A cold night can bring a frost to any landscape. It has even been known to snow in the desert. So, when doing frost bases, the landscaping and scenics don't have to be specific to cold regions and can be as varied as your narrative for the basing allows.

For the more typical greenfield frost themes, its best to go for darker coloured paints and scenics to represent darker, damp ground, dark green evergreen plants that survive the

Autumn and are typical of that theme, but also it provide a good contrast to the frost effect.

The frost effect itself is very simple to achieve, as it's just a light drybrush of white over the entire base. The key to getting an effective frost effect look is in the preparation for the drybrush – sealing the base well with PVA. Scenics, even when fixed, are somewhat light and fluffy, and can in no way standup to a drybrushing without half them been dislodged. To remedy this, the entire base is sealed with watered-down PVA, either dripped directly on the base or, in the case of clumps and tufts, brushed lightly over them. Once dry, this will hold the scenics in place and prepare them for the perfect frost effect drybrushing!

Sealing like this will reactive the PVA bonding the scenics, so soak and go, but don't go back until it is completely dry or you'll regret it!



PATCHY SNOW

- Gritted for Grip.
- Basecoat of Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green.
- WS Dark green clump foliage added. Diluted PVA applied thinly across the ground and top of scenics. AP Snow sprinkled lightly across entire base.
- Metal sculpting tool used to scrape the snow before the glue dries, creating patches and making little clumps of snow.

Reactivating the PVA while sealing the base can end up spoiling the effect, so spray-on and brush-on varnishes are best used to avoid ruining your hard work.

Creating patchy snow ground on a terrain board is relatively easy because of the amount of space you have to create a

decent patching effect, but on a base it's much harder. Just a little PVA spread on a base can cause a complete white out when snow scatter is applied.

The simple solution to this is to not even try to make the patches when you're laying your glue down. Instead, accept the whiteout and then dig at the snow to make your patches. In this case, the same dark ground and scenics as the *Frost* base were used, then a thin layer of PVA was applied before a thin layer of AP Snow scatter was sprinkled over it. Immediately after the scatter was applied, a metal sculpting tool was used to scrape at the snow, creating patches before the PVA had chance to set. The scrapings of PVA and snow scatter were gently patted into the base, rather than brushed off, to create a more irregular look. Although the results look random, getting them is all about control and, in this case, that's easier to achieve after the flock has gone down!



DEEP SNOW

- Milliput to get the bulky snow substructure on the ground, boot impressions made as a way of indicating snow depth.
- Basecoat with Ash Grey, layer on Matt White. Add WS Evergreen clumps for contrast. A little Demonic Yellow added to hole near base of stone for giggles.
- PVA layered on and AP Snow scatter applied liberally to ground. PVA mixed 1:1 with AP Snow scatter then applied in blobs on rock and clumps to give impression of heavy snow.

When it comes to laying down snow thick, the trick is to let it seal itself rather than risking it all afterwards. After applying your PVA, drip and spread on a quick layer of water across the PVA and then sprinkle on your snow. The fine snow particles will soak into the PVA better and absorb between them, achieving a solid bond for your snow from the start, often meaning sealing is unnecessary!

Many of our games are played on battlefields so cold and snow-covered, no bare-footed mini should touch them, but recreating that deep snow feel can be a challenge on a base. The key is to create the illusion of deep snow with a little prep work at the start and a little detail work at the end.

An illusion of depth can be created by making holes in the snow to show how deep it is. This is easily done with a little milliput fashioned in a small hillock to blend with the base edges, into which impressions can be made for footprints and whatever else comes to mind. Once the snow is layered on, you immediately get holes in the snow, and the illusion of depth is achieved. Additionally, heavy snowfall can be replicated by mixing up a snow gloop of snow scatter and PVA in a 1:1 ratio which, when blobbed across the tops of rocks and bushes, looks like a heavy snow fall.

Combining the two techniques gives a feel to the base that its certainly a bit nippy for any exposed parts!



CRACKED ICE

- Thinned filler is applied unevenly across the base in blobs that are blended together by a very thin, uneven, wet layer of filler. Once dried, this gives an irregular surface with slight cracking due to the evaporation process. Scratch out the cracks with metal sculpting tool.
- Basecoat with Ash Grey, paint Deep Blue into the cracks, followed by a heavy drybrush of Ice Storm, and a light drybrush of Matt White.
- No Scenics.

Hitting the filler with a blast of hot air from a hair dryer can drastically improve your cracking. Just wait for your water to evaporate a bit first, you don't want to blow your ice off your base before its even cracked!

Battles on the ice don't only take place on solid chunks of pack ice. Sometimes the ice gets a lot thinner for our models. There's a host of techniques and materials that can be used to create a cracked ice look – from cracked

screen protectors to specialist modelling materials – but uneven filler is well known for cracking, so it makes it a go-to material for cracked ice.

Creating the cracks couldn't be simpler. The key to success is to apply the filler to the base unevenly to vary the ice chunks. Put down small blobs of filler, then saturate and smooth them with water and then leave them to dry. As they dry, the slightly uneven blobs will contract together leaving a cracked surface that can be drybrushed up quite easily, or scratched out with a metal sculpting tool to make the cracks more pronounced.





ICY ROCKS

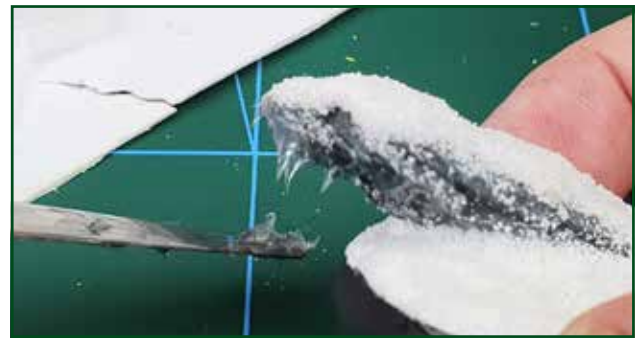
- Slate fixed with hot glue and Milliput used to create a snow rise, then blended with filler.
- Basecoat ground with Ash Grey, layer on Matt White. Basecoat the rock with with Dungeon Grey and drybrush Uniform Grey
- Layer AP Snow scatter on ground, snow gloop on flat rock surfaces. Once set, apply a thinned Gloss Varnish across the base and lightly resprinkle AP Snow scatter to give the appearance of wet/frozen snow.
- Use transparent silicone stippled underneath the rock to create icicles.

Getting the look of icy snow can take some practice. Luckily, if you overdo the sprinkling after the gloss, you can always give it another go by reglissing and resprinkling. I'd spread your practicing across your base set rather than on a single base, or you might end up with one like a snow cone.

Whilst crisp, fresh, sparkling snow is like a winter wonderland, once the sun hits it and it starts to melt, it's a whole different story. Getting the look of ice right can be more challenging than creating the snow it came from. The

techniques used are exactly the same as with the other snow bases to form the foundation of the ice work, after that, it's a couple of simple techniques.

The first is using Gloss Varnish. Thinned down and applied over the base, it'll give the snow a glistening look. By sprinkling a little fresh snow scatter on, it'll break up the polished surface, giving a half-frozen, half-fresh look common to snow melted by the midday sun before refreezing. Another simple touch are icicles made, in this case, by simply stippling the underside of the rock with a little transparent silicone, dabbing it on and pulling it down to create the perfect icicles. Nice and easy!



ICEBERG/GLACIER

- Build a Milliput glacier, use a clay shaper at water's edge. Crevasses are made with sculpting tools and smoothed with water. Water is made with a stucco stipple as it holds the peaks better than filler.
- Basecoat the water with Dark Sky, the wash with Blue Tone. A light drybrush of Matt White, followed by Gloss Varnish. The ice is basecoated with Royal cloak. Thinned Dark Sky was painted into crevasses, followed by a Blue Tone wash. The snow surface is then layered with Matt White.
- Use PVA glue to attach some AP Snow scatter.

Campaigns can take your models to the frozen ice floes of the polar regions or to entire planets of ice. Replicating the look of ancient glaciers and icebergs can be achieved with

a palette of blues and a few greens for tinting, and for a realistic look, it's the preparation that matters. Nothing gives the impression of deep, solid ice than cracks, crevasses and fissures that give the impression of depth reinforced by the deep blues and teals of ancient ice.

These can either be created under the base work (much like when creating *Puddles* or *Craters*, but base substructure work suits itself to icebergs particularly well, as it gives you the opportunity to add water to a base. Our iceberg was created with Milliput, and smoothed off with a wet finger before the crevasse was added with a sculpting tool. The water was created with a simple stucco stipple to give the impression of rough water. The ice itself can vary greatly, but light blues to teals work well, once they are on the edges and in the cracks, it's just a matter of overbrushing it white and adding any snow.

URBAN BASES



CRATERS

- Much like the *Puddles* base, greenstuff putty was applied under the base. Drill and carve into the base, then putty up the crater rim. Add medium-sized aggregates and seal with thinned PVA.
- Basecoat of Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green. Wash heavily around the crater with thinned Matt Black with a touch of Oak Brown blending out toward the edge.
- No Scenics.

The idea of large craters sounds visually stunning but the only way to replicate this on a base is with a partial cut away. It sounds impressive but don't do it. Any crater that crosses the base edge will end up reminding you of Swiss cheese whenever you look at it. Keep your craters on your base. Trust me, it's better that way.

Whether it's trudging across a torn up muddy battlefield or down urban alleys, artillery strikes can churn up the ground, leaving holes you could lose your foot in, or hide an entire squad inside. No matter the size, the method of creation is pretty much the same. A munition strikes into the ground, blowing what's around it much further out, and compressing whats below it into a concave dip in the ground.

As craters are an effect that's both above and below ground at the same time, it needs a little putty work on both sides of the base. First, putty is added on the underside of the base in the location of the desired crater. Once it has cured, a hole can be drilled in to start the bowl of the crater much the same as when creating *Puddles*. On the top surface of the base, a small rim is created around the hole, replicating the build up of debris around the edges. Once the putty work is done, all that's needed is some suitably large aggregates added around the edge and a bit of dark staining to pull off the perfect crater.



RUBBLE

- Start with a greenstuff substructure. Features such as panel, pole and large rubble are glued in place with hot glue or embedded in putty. Debris (trimmed sprue) and mid-sized aggregates sprinkled on before being sealed in place by dripping thinned PVA on them, before a final sprinkling of sharp sand.
- Large rubble pieces basecoated Uniform Grey. Basecoat the ground with Oak Brown tinted with Commando Green. Drybrush the entire base with Ash Grey, then a light drybrush of Banshee Brown. Wash of with spots of red and green tones to vary the colours. Thinned Matt Black is painted into recesses for definition.
- No Scenics

When the battle enters urban areas, the streets rarely stay flat. Instead, they become a crazed collection of mini-mountains created in seconds from the buildings that used to stand proud above them. While it may seem a random collection of haphazard bits in a pile, recreating it on a base requires a little more planning than it does on the battlefield.

Its not practical to build your rubble pile up in bits, so a putty substructure with larger elements embedded in it allows for the small aggregates and debris to be easily and firmly glued to the smooth putty surface. Key elements are fixed down first, then small bits are piled up randomly and, while loose, lightly brushed off any features you dont want to be obscured before being sealed with thinned PVA. Once it's all fixed down, a simple, contrasting paint scheme is all that's needed to dirty it down.



WOODEN PLANKS

- Balsa strips glued down, clipped at edges, and distressed with a pointed sculpting tool.
- Basecoat with Leather Brown, then drybrush with a 1:1 mix of Leather Brown and Banshee Brown. Overall wash of thinned Strong Tone, applied heavily in distressed areas before a thinned wash of Cultist Robes to break up the base.
- No Scenics.

When doing lots of plank bases, remember they don't have to completely run across the base, boards can stop half way across and another one started, all that's needed is a clean cut and either a couple of nail holes in the wood, or a few clipped in pin heads pushed in and fixed.

Whether hiding on the upper floor of a building and standing proud on a pirate ship, sometimes our models find themselves a wooden floor. Replicating this wooden look is easy to achieve. It can be sculpted in putty with enough attention to detail, but the easiest way to create a wooden base is to use wood.

Balsa wood, coffee stirrers and lollipop (popsicle) sticks all make great planking. Balsa is the softest to work with, so details and distressing can be done quite easily. Coffee stirrers are a little bit tougher, with lollipop sticks being tougher still leaving them as the last option, wood-wise. Glued in strips overlapping the edge, they can easily be shaped to fit with a pair of clippers before being sanded flush with the base. You can enhance the gaps between planks with a ballpoint pen or sculpting tool, and create distressed areas with a wire brush or sculpting tool.



COBBLES

- Lay down a thin layer of milliput and smooth with a wet finger. Cobbles created by using different plastic brush tip protector tubes squashed into oval shapes, then wetted and pushed into putty. Once cured, apply a thin layer of filler to the entire surface and wipe it off with a damp cloth to leave it in the recesses between the cobblestones.
- Basecoat with Uniform Grey, then overbrush with Ash Grey to highlight cobbles. Paint individual cobbles painted with thinned Abomination Gore, Dark Skies, or Dark Stone. Overall wash with Strong Tone.
- Add a few small spots of a light scatter to represent weeds trying to grow between the cobbles.

They may harken back to Roman times, but cobblestone streets have been marched along and battled across for centuries. There are many different ways to create this look: from commercial putty rollers, to bits of embossed wallpaper, to individual lentils glued in place to make the cobblestones. Whilst they all work well (even the lentils), the results can be a bit standardised. For something unique, you have to sculpt your own.

Sculpting up your cobbles is easier than it sounds and with a little practice, a base can be done in a couple of minutes. All that's required is a thin plastic tube or two, distorted so they're no longer round and then repeatedly press them into a layer of firm putty.

Try to keep the gaps to a minimum. If you can't avoid them, leave till the putty is cured before picking them out with a sculpting tool so that you don't deform your cobbles. After that, a quick skim of filler and a wipe to fill the gaps and they'll be ready to paint as dirty and worn as you desire.





PAVEMENTS

- Cut 1mm plasticard into squares and glue them down to replicated paving slabs. Mantic Terrain Crate mailbox and Airfix dog glue in place at back of base. Binbag sculpted from GS. Paper squares were soaked in thinned PVA, scrunched up and put down. Leaf scatter bunches against mailbox and sealed with thinned PVA, whilst also being spotted on base.
- Basecoat the pavement with a 4:1 mix of Ash Grey and Demonic Yellow. Mailbox - AP Darks Skies, dog - AP Fur Brown, binbag - Dungeon Grey, papers - Banshee Brown, leaves - thinned Fur Brown. Overall wash of Strong Tone, thinned down for the pavement.
- No Scenics.

Mass producing pavement bases is easy as all the slabs you need can be cut out in advance. The trick to a

quick turnaround is having all your small scenics in little piles, making mass production a simple matter of fixing down the slabs and sprinkling on your "street garnish".

Urban warfare doesn't always mean streets covered in rubble, many skirmishes break out over perfectly fine roads and pavements, the only sign of battle damage being the odd bullet hole. The pavement is probably as dirty as it was before the battle broke out.

Creating a simple pavement is easy, but making it a little more interesting than some grey slabs takes a few subtle, and occasionally not so subtle, additions. Any number of urban elements – from mailboxes to binbags, and all sorts in between – can be added to tie those grey squares into a certain theme or period. It's the little details that really reinforce a theme and help tie it together across multiple bases. Newspapers sheets, leaf litter, plastic tubes as drinks cans and even putty twisted into dog poop can do the job.



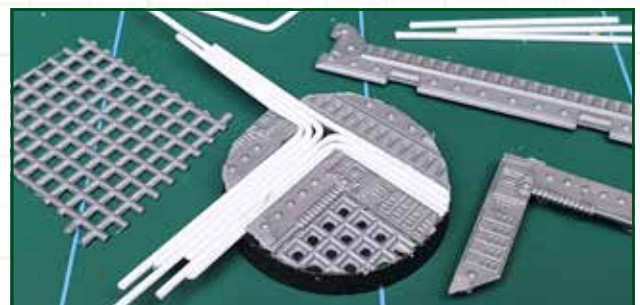
SCI-FI/INDUSTRIAL DECKING

- Large pieces from scenery kits hotglued down to form metal decking. Embroidery grating used for the mesh. 1mm styrene rods bent and glued in place.
- Basecoat the decking with Gun Metal, rods painting in various vibrant colours. Basecoat the mesh with True Copper. Overall wash with Dark Tone to define the details, separate the coloured cables, and give the decking a dirty, oily look.
- No Scenics.

Nothing says industrial like the clank of a boot on metal, whether its the gantry of a WWII factory or the corridors of a starship, metal brings a whole new theme to basing that's quite simple to pull off, as long as its well-planned.

The simplest of metal bases is a grid or grate, replicating an old gantry. Other than the odd strip of plasticard, all that's needed is some embroidery meshing and a bit of glue,

but it can be taken much further. Detailed flooring, grates, cables and pipework all running below our models' feet. The easiest way to achieve this look is to build it up in pieces, first the textured metal strips, either repurposed from terrain kits or bought as commercial sheet. Fix down the largest parts and see where the others will fit logically. Then decide how you'll fill your gaps between them. Once everything is decided, you just need to fix down your other metal strips and start filling the gaps with all your little bits.





ELABORATE SCI-FI

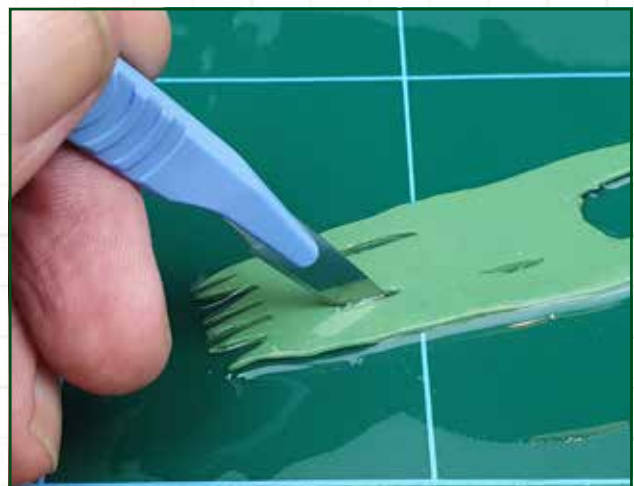
- Ground is a brickwork-embossed plasticard sheet, glued down and then trimmed flush. The arch is kitbashed with terrain kit accessory pieces, trimmed to narrow the archway so it fits on the base and pushed back as far as possible. A Mantic barrel was added as a spot feature to break the symmetry. Ground broken up by sprinkling of mixed fine and medium aggregates, whilst not covering all of the brickwork texture. The greenstuff banner was made by smoothing out greenstuff on a wet cutting mat (so that it doesn't stick), cutting the rough banner shape out, then distressing it with a blade, before being folding it and hanging it over the arch.
- Basecoat the ground and arch with Dungeon Grey, barrel - Army Green, banner – Dragon Red. Light overbrush of Fur Brown on arch, ground, and barrel. Light drybrush of Uniform grey, then lighter drybrush of Ash Grey on arch, ground and barrel. Banner was washed with a thinned 3:1 mix of Matt Black and Oak Brown, then glazed with Dark Tone around the tears, creases and folds and along the bottom to give it a dirty and worn look.
- Javis Autumn string ivy was superglued around the arch opposite the barrel to help break mirroring. Small bits of the Autumn string ivy were glued to the ground.

Nothing shows how bleak something is than a spot of bright colour. Not enough to brighten the scene but just enough to highlight how bleak it is.

When it comes to giving your leader a base to frame their heroic nature, urban themes offer a wide array of backdrops. However, nothing stands out quite like elements of the dystopian gothic battlefields we all know so well. With such a huge collection of terrain kits and accessories from a wide range of manufacturers, creating an impressive scene is easier than you imagine.

As with all good feature bases, it's about getting just enough of the right elements on the base in such a way that it doesn't look 'standard'. In this case, the arch was formed using one kit, the ground texture from a railway supplier, the accessory barrel from Mantic, and the ivy vines from Javis. Hobbists can usually recognise common elements from a range, so combining different elements from different manufacturers is a great way to leave people unsure of how certain looks were achieved.

Adding the greenstuff banner was the key step in creating something unique, but also blocked off the archway, reinforcing the backdrop function without having to be a modelled as a solid structure, giving an impression of openness without actually being open. After that, all it takes is a drab paint job and some spotting scenics in the form of ivy to highlight the drab, distressed, dystopian paint job. You'll have a feature base for your hero that frames them without distracting the eye from their heroism.



SPECIAL BASES



MARS

- Push some small cork bits in a mound of putty, layer with PVA and mixed aggregates to give your hard ground a dry, rocky appearance.
- Basecoat with Mars Red, drybrush with Kobold Skin, then apply patchy washes of Oak Brown and Dark Tone to break up the ground and rocks.
- No Scenics.

There's no soft, damp earth on Mars for the rocks to embed themselves in. The only way those rocks are going to look embedded is after a dust storm, so covering them is fine, as long as it looks dusty.

Mars is a dry, rocky, hostile landscape littered with jagged, dust-covered rocks, much like many of the hot and hostile places on Earth. It has a rich, red landscape and, much like Earth, it's a lot more varied than most people realise.

The dry and jagged rock look is achieved by first placing down the large rocks stuck in a putty mound so that they stand proud above the rest. The more irregular the rocks are, the better. Cork bark chunks are best. After they're fixed into place, a few different sized aggregates can be placed down and sealed in place to create a hard-edged landscape. After that, a solid red coat, a simple highlight and a few washes will help define the rocky details and break up the base, giving you a great looking Martian landscape.



JUNGLE

- Mixed herbs are glued down with PVA and then sealed with thinned PVA due to their loose nature.
- Basecoat with a slightly thinned Fur Brown.
- Jarvis light green clump foliage and AP Spring tufts used to give a warm environmental feel, and placed to form a jungle path. The edges of the scenics were overbrushed with Fur Brown to tie them into the basing.

Troops can find themselves travelling across all manner of green landscapes but there's one they have to fight through. Jungles are dense, topical landscapes where the

plants grow swiftly and often block the path of the troops moving through them, something made more challenging in monsoon season, when the ground turns to a sea of mud.

Whilst the large plants and tall trees can't be represented in on a standard base, there are a few elements that can be applied to present the theme. Plants don't have to be large but the right coloured foliage gives the feel of warmth but not parched. The jungle floor is a mix of mud and dead leaves, so mixed herbs with a brown wash works perfectly. Finally, overbrushing the plants around where they meet the ground helps blend them in an give that muddy look, much like blending the edges of normal paths.



LAVA FLOW

- Chipped composite upholstery foam was used for the volcanic rocks, hotglued down and given a heavy filler wash. Once dry, they were given a coat of PVA to firm them up. The lava flow was created by layering ceiling stucco in strips and shaping them with a wet brush as each flow dried.
- Basecoat the lava with Uniform Grey and the rocks with a 1:4 mix of Alien Purple and Matt Black. Give rocks a light drybrush of Uniform Grey. Pre-highlight the lava with Ash Grey, then Matt white. Paint the lava with Mars Red, then a highlight of Lava Orange. Give the lava a wash of Abomination Gore followed by a wash of a 1:2 Mix of Mars Red and Matt Black, wiping the wash off the tips of the flows after each application.
- No Scenics.

It's easier to clean off a bit of fresh paint that has just been layered onto a dried color than it is to wet blend.

Nothing says dramatic like a volcanic board and an army themed around around it. Strange jagged, black rocks a stark contrast to the bubbling hot liquid that flows between them. You instinctively get the impression of a hostile environment. Luckily, modelling volcanic effects for your troops to be battling over is a lot easier than trying to cross it in real life.

The two key elements are the distinctive rocks and the lava flow itself. The rocks are older lava eruptions that have cooled, giving a unique appearance that upholstery foam matches perfectly. Plucked to shape, glued down and firmed up, they make the perfect volcanic rocks. These rocks have tiny purple crystals embedded in them, which is easily mimicked by adding a touch of purple to the black basecoat. Stucco is firm enough to lay down in the shape of the lava flow, letting it firm up before laying the next flow on top of it. Paint it up hot, with a dark reddish layer to give the appearance of a hard, cooling crust.



LAVA BUBBLES

- The rocks were made and painted as for the *Lava Flow*. Lava bubbles were made small balls of greenstuff glued into holes drilled into the base before blending them in with filler.
- The lava was basecoated with Uniform Grey, then highlighted with Ash Grey and Matt White. The lava was then painted with Mars Red and highlighted with Lava Orange. The bubbles were highlighted with Lava Orange and then highlighted up to Matt White. The red and orange were overbrushed on the nearby rocks to give that glow effect.
- No Scenics.

The best thing about using upholstery foam for rocks is that it has a flat side. You'll never find a rock that sits more flush and bonds as well with a base. Plus, you can glue a big bit down and pluck it to your hearts content before firming it up. Foam is the easiest rock to work with.

Sometimes the lava doesn't flow between the rocks. Instead, it pools together into super-hot cauldrons of liquid magma, bubbling away and creating a very unique look. Making a bubbling lava effect requires the right combination of modeling and painting to pull it off and only takes a few simple steps to achieve.

Modeling the bubbles from little balls of putty is quite easy. Once you recess them into a hole and blend them in with filler you have a perfect liquid magma look.

For your colours, it's all about blending from reds to oranges to white, which is achieved by highlighting from darkest to lightest and feathering the edges with a damp brush along the way. For breaking up the pool surface, a simple thinned orange is all that's needed. Just apply it little by little and let it dry, to control the effect and keep it subtle. With these simple techniques, you can make your bases look as hot as you like, just don't burn yourself as you play with them.



RUSTY SCRAPYARD

- Larger elements were added first, before medium sized items, and any gaps were filled with various offcuts.

Aggregates sprinkled over and sealed. Tarpaulin made by flattening some green stuff, cutting a square shape, and draping it over the larger elements to bring them together as a collection of elements.

- The elements were basecoated in various drab colours including Army Green, Dragon Red and various metallics. A single pipe was painted Crystal Blue as a spot colour. Heavy washes of Dark Tone and Strong Tone were applied. The rust effect was achieved by desaturating Oak Brown, Leather Brown, Lava Orange, and Basilisk Brown with Uniform Grey, then stippling thin layers, spotting and streaking them randomly across the pieces. I repeated the process through the colours listed, applying less and less at each stage. Although it sounds complicated, its just a matter of having the colours all in a palette and dripping and mixing between them as you are stippling the bits on your bases.

Get yourself a bits tub and throw any plastic offcuts into it. Then, when you need a junkyard flooring, just sprinkle it down like an aggregate, which it is!

Waste, war, and dereliction all bring mountains of scrap, piled together for convenience before it's processed or simply left to rot. These random piles of scrap form a collection of strange shapes and colours held loosely together by dirt and decay.

Creating a scrapyard look can be a bit tough sometimes, as we want to throw lots of cool bits on each base. These cool bits tend to be large, and you can quickly find you've left no space for the model going on the base. The key is to limit the large items and push them as far towards the back of the base as possible. Once fixed, putting the medium items around the sides can create a random pile of scrap in a way that doesn't hog all the ground space for the model. Once formed, its just a matter of painting the pieces up in drab colours before giving it all a heavy weather and applying rust effects to bring the pieces together as a collection.





NECRON PYLON

- The main structure is cut from XPS foam, sanded and engraved to match the Necron style. An upholstery pin was used for the globe, and the grid on the base was made with styrene rods and plastic tile spacers.
- Basecoat the pylon in a 1:4 mix of Snake Scales and Matt Black. The energy lines and globe are basecoated in Greenskin, then highlighted with Jungle Green and Poisonous Cloud.

Creating out geometric shapes for each individual base can be time consuming. Instead, cut out larger shapes, then cut them up for your bases.

Necrons have a style all of their own; dark geometric shapes, glowing energy globes and powerlines running across their structures and along the ground they sit on, bringing a very distinctive look to any Necron tomb world.



This distinctive look makes it easy to apply this theme to a base, as long as it includes the key elements. In this case, XPS foam was used for the pylon, with the lines engraved with a ballpoint pen and simple plastic shapes used to create the power grid.



ALIENS/GIGER/TYRANIDS

- The tentacles were created by rolling out greenstuff worms and first laying them down consecutively to form the floor, then more randomly to break the pattern up.
- Basecoat everything in a 1:4 mix of Alien Purple and Matt Black, then highlighted with a 1:2 mix of AP/MB, followed by a coat of Gloss Varnish.

Keeping your tentacles similar length can be a challenge when you have to make so many of them for a bioworld base, The best way to keep them all similar is to draw two lines on a bit of paper and then, as you

roll them, keep going until they fit between the lines and they'll be ready to put on the base.

Bioworlds may seem like complicated landscapes to create as they are so detailed. This level of detail puts most people off, but they can be created quite easily with lots of simple little bits of putty collectively placed in a creative way.

The trick with most special bases, especially alien landscapes, is to make sure the functional element is sorted first and then get stuck in. The rising tentacles were placed so as not to interfere with model placement and the base layer of tentacles was laid down in a simple but slightly irregular pattern around the features to cover the base.



ELDAR WRAITHBONE

- EPVC foamboard was used for the ledge and the wraithbone structure. They were cut out and rounded off with sandpaper before the pattern was etched into the ledge surface with a ball point pen. 1mm plasticard was used for the detail in front of the ledge, then thinned filler was used to blend the joints.
- Basecoat with Kobold Skin, wash some thinned Fur Brown into the recesses. Overbrush with Kobold Skin to blend in the Fur Brown, then drybrush with a 1:1 mix of Kobold Skin and Matt White.
- Small polished stones glued on as scenic scatter.

When it comes to Eldar scatter scenics, plastic jewels, glass gems and polished stones are perfect, just check out a craft store. They usually have tons of little bits that will fit the Eldar aesthetic.

Landscapes based on Eldar craftworlds are full of curves, the wraithbone grown as needed and challenging us mere mortals to get the curves right.

Using plastic templates to draw out the shapes on EPVC foam board is the easiest way of replicating the wraithbone look. The key is to ensure any joints aren't angular, so using fillers or putties to smooth out these angles is an important part of creating a good Eldar base, along with the bone colour scheme and gemstones.



ROTTEN/NURGLE

- Cork bark was used for the rock due to its high texture. It was fixed down with hot glue and blended with filler before fine aggregates were added across the base. Greenstuff was used for the mushroom-like growths.
- The ground was basecoated in Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green. The rock was basecoated in Cultist Robe. Washes of Strong Tone, Green Tone, and Red Tonewere applied to the rock and ground. The growths were basecoated in Uniform Grey, then highlighted with Jungle Green and Poisonous Cloud.
- 4Ground dark green foam flock was added, along with AP tufts.

Pushing a brush handle into putty tends to squash your blobs into a bowl rather than making a hole. The trick is to make a channel by poking a pin in first and then expanding the hole with a brush handle.

It may seem strange to have a diseased rock but the perversions of Chaotic magic can change landscapes in ways we can only imagine. Luckily, when it comes to the imagination, there's no right to get wrong. You just need to go with the feel of it. In the case of a magically distorted world, its about identifying key textures, colours, and scenics that complement that distortion.

Dark diseased greens, the purple of blood under the skin forming bruises, the yellow of pustules, the growth of mold and fungi. All of these elements are well defined as diseased and rotten, and using these colors reinforces the theme.

The growths were created from greenstuff by making simple shapes and pressing brush ends into them to make the holes. Added to the mottled rock, they enhance the diseased feel. Once in place, they were paint in a diseased yellowy green to work as a spot contrast against the drab colours of the rest of the base.



KHORNE/SKULLS

- Plateaus were created with Milliput shaped into wedges with faces sculpted into them and the sides scored before plastic riveted strips fixed in place once completely dry. Skulls were recessed into the base the same way as the *Lava Bubbles*. Additional skulls were piled at the back.
- The ground was basecoated in a 1:3 mix of Mars Red and Matt Black, then overbrushed with Mars Red, followed by a Strong Tone wash. The riveted strips were painted with True Copper. The skulls were basecoated with Fur Brown, drybrushed with Banshee Brown, then with Matt White. The blood pool was basecoated with Dragon Red and washed with Strong Tone to break it up a little.

Not every base has to have all the key elements. As long as there are one or two that do, the rest of the bases can get away with only having a couple of them. This makes basing much simpler whilst keep them all the same theme.

When it comes to the Chaos God Khorne, it's all about the blood, skulls, and brass. Combining these elements will always place the base definitively in Khorne's dominion.

Whilst any normal rocks and basing material can be used, putty offers opportunities for a really chaotic landscape to be sculpted. Just ensure rock structures are angular, embedding random metal bits, and using skulls in place of tufts and clump to hide your little mistakes as you go. And never miss an opportunity to add a little blood pool!



CHAOS/WEIRD

- The slate rock was 'levitated' by using a paper clip hot glued to the underside of the rock and then through a hole in the base to fix it underneath. Milliput was used to hide the join and create a segmented understructure. The tentacles were used to disguise the support wire. The eye stalk/tail was created using a wire, covering it in greenstuff, and sculpting it to be segmented like a scorpion. Skulls were recessed into the ground as with the *Khorne/Skulls* base.
- The skulls and rock were basecoated with True Copper and the ground was basecoated with Mars Red. Both were then washed with Strong Tone. The tentacles and eye were painted with Warlock Purple and washed with Purple Tone.
- No Scenics.

When it comes to levitating rocks that models are going to stand on, it's best to use a strong support. Keep it to steel or brass otherwise, at some stage, your rock may come tumbling down with the model on top of it during a game!

When it comes to Chaos, anything goes. All that matters is that it fits with the theme you have decided on and it works as a functional base.

For bases with a complicated feature, it's best to start with the structure, make sure it's functional, and then detail it up. For the flying rock, slate was used to keep it as flat as possible for model placement. The steel wire was bent to shape and fixed in place with hot glue to ensure a strong bond for the model's stability. After that, Milliput and greenstuff was used to alter the rock in a suitably chaotic manner.



LIZARDMAN/MESOAMERICAN

- XPS Foam was cut and embossed with a sculpting tool (waves with the end of a brush). Mixed aggregates and mixed herbs were used for the ground texture.
- The stone was basecoated with Uniform Grey, drybrushed with Ash Grey, then stained with Blue Tone and Red Tone. The ground was basecoated with Oak Brown with a tint of Commando Green. The water was basecoated with a 1:3 mix of Elemental Bolt and Dark Sky, then given a heavy wash of Blue Tone.
- 4Ground autumn loose scatter, lily pads from Secret Weapon Miniatures, and a plastic plant trimmed off an aquarium plant washed with Strong Tone.

If you're going to paint your plastic plants, you don't want them bending and cracking your paint, so adding a bit of PVA to your basecoat will keep it flexible and stop and flaking.

A jungle is a jungle but to theme your bases to the fantasy jungles of the Old World, they need something to tie them in, such as a statue, worn flagstones, or a spawning pool.

XPS is perfect for adding these little details, as it's easy to work with. Cutting into it with a blade to separate sections before impressing an area, such as the individual bricks, allows it to be impressed without dragging the adjacent foam with it.



FINAL THOUGHTS...

I hope you've enjoyed this "50 Shades of Basing - The Terrain Tutor style!" and I hope you feel that it's much more than 50 examples of different. The plan all along was to make it more about the foundations of base building, and to show you a variety of different ways to mash the different methods together. It has been great finally getting all of these terrain-building thoughts out and on to these plastic bases, 40mm at a time.

So, were 50 bases enough or are you wanting a little bit more? If you do want to dive deeper into basing, join me every other week for a regular basing masterclass with more tips, techniques and tutorials to up both your basing and your terrain game!

As always, you can find me on YouTube at www.youtube.com/c/TheTerrainTutor/

Hope to catch you in the comments!

– Mel Bose, The Terrain Tutor