

Build a "toe pincher" coffin out of blue construction foam



Introduction

There's something really unsettling about these old fashioned toe-pincher coffins. Up until the 19th century carpenters built them to-order for the newly deceased. The newer rectangular-shaped coffin became the standard after companies began producing them in quantities.

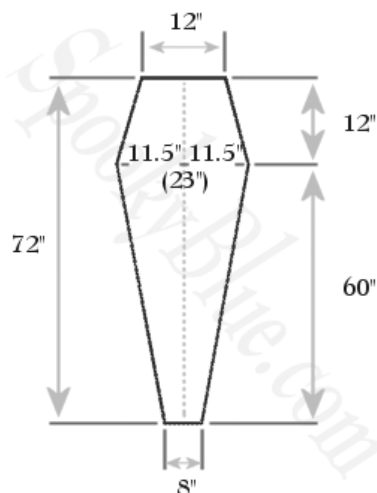
They were generally marketed by furniture stores. Okay, enough of the history lesson. With your very own coffin, you can put a corpse prop in it, shake it up with a vibrating motor, or do lots of other devious things to scare the boots off your trick or treaters. The entire project takes about 4 hours, less if your paint dries faster.

Parts List

- 1/2" foam board Get this at Home Depot. Blue or pink doesn't matter. You'll need two 4x8 sheets to complete a 6' coffin.
- Duct tape Really. Honest.
- Paint Gray and black. You won't need much.



Construction



The toe-pincher shape basically hugs the human body. The entire box is 6' long by about 12" deep. Cut the top and bottom first to get the classic shape. After the top is cut, lay it on another sheet of foam and trace for an exact match. Then cut the walls. A more detailed plan appears to the right.

Note: If the foam is covered with a plastic sheet, peel this off first!

When cutting the walls, measure along the lengths of your top piece or use the measurements supplied above. Cut each piece 12" wide by whatever length. If you want your coffin to be deeper, just cut the walls a little wider. Duct tape the walls to the bottom inside and outside. It's surprising how well the whole thing holds together. Just try to keep from wrinkling the tape. It's kind of hard to cover up wrinkles with paint.



Detailing

Using a wood file, or even just a blunt pencil, scribe a wood grain on the coffin lid. Make the grooves slither around all over the place, and don't make them appear to be too straight. Cut deeper grooves between the "boards". Just be careful not to cut too deeply or you go all the way through.

Of course, you can cut right through and tack all the "boards" together underneath if you wish. Or make a few holes that go all the way through. If you cut holes, make sure not to compromise the structural integrity of the lid. Cut or chip away splinters, make a few gouge marks and worm holes, and generally sculpt out a worn out wood look.

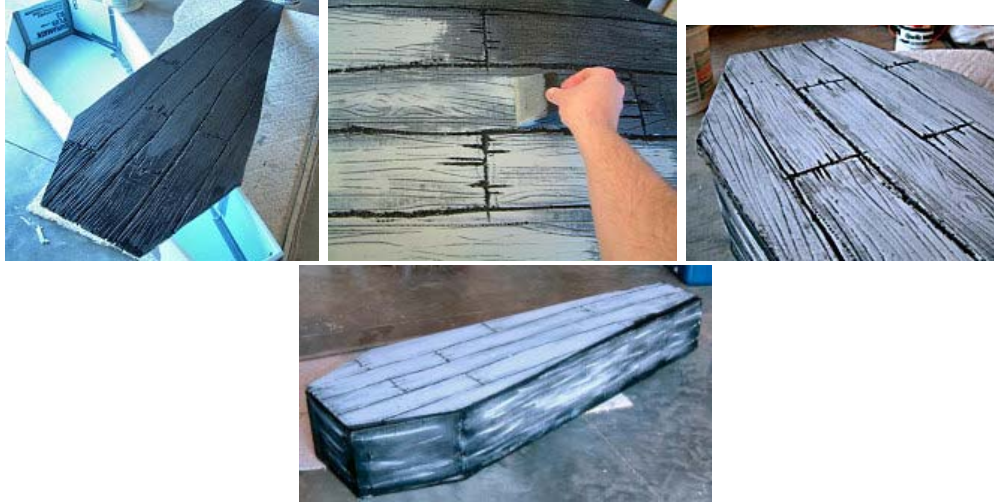


Paint

Paint the lid flat black. I used cheap latex paint from Big Lots. When the black paint is dry go back with a sponge and dry-brush with gray or light brown. Don't load up the sponge. Just drag it across the surface so that the paint doesn't go down into the cracks and crevices. Repeat the same procedure on the sides, or do what we did and just smudge some paint on there.

The lid is the focal point, and it's going to be dark anyway. Paint the inside black. If you want to place a light inside then paint the inside a lighter color or splash different colors to give the light something to reflect off of. The end result is fairly rugged but will not hold up to real actors climbing in and out of it. It will, however, hold a bucky, a corpse, or any other nasty surprise you may have in mind.

Go all out if you want and stuff satin bed sheets (preferably red) with news paper, then tack this in. Your corpse will be riding in style. Have fun haunting!



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