

Plan a room-size figure-8 layout

THIS 12 X 12-FOOT FIGURE-EIGHT FASTRACK PLAN FEATURES A CHANGE OF ELEVATION AND SCENERY

By Terry Thompson • Illustrations by Kellie Jaeger

Looking for a room-sized layout with space for scenery, room for trains to roll, plus a passenger depot (or freight yard, if you prefer)? Then this 12 x 12-foot O gauge track plan, made with Lionel FasTrack, may be exactly right for you.

While the plan forms an L shape, it's actually a modified figure-eight scheme, with an overpass at the center of the action. The cutoff that runs along the front of the layout lets you run out-and-back, and a passing siding allows for running one train in both directions or two in the same direction. About the only thing this design doesn't have is an area that's filled with accessories, although it would be simple to add a few in the rail yard.

Any track that's on a grade is at the front of the layout, and all the track switches (O-36 and O-48) are within arm's reach. There's one hidden track, under the town area, but you can easily construct the benchwork to provide access to that track from underneath. The town area can be built as a four-track passenger station, a four-track yard, or some combination of the two. Use the two tracks with the "locomotive escape" crossover for arrivals and the other two for departures or as your coach yard.

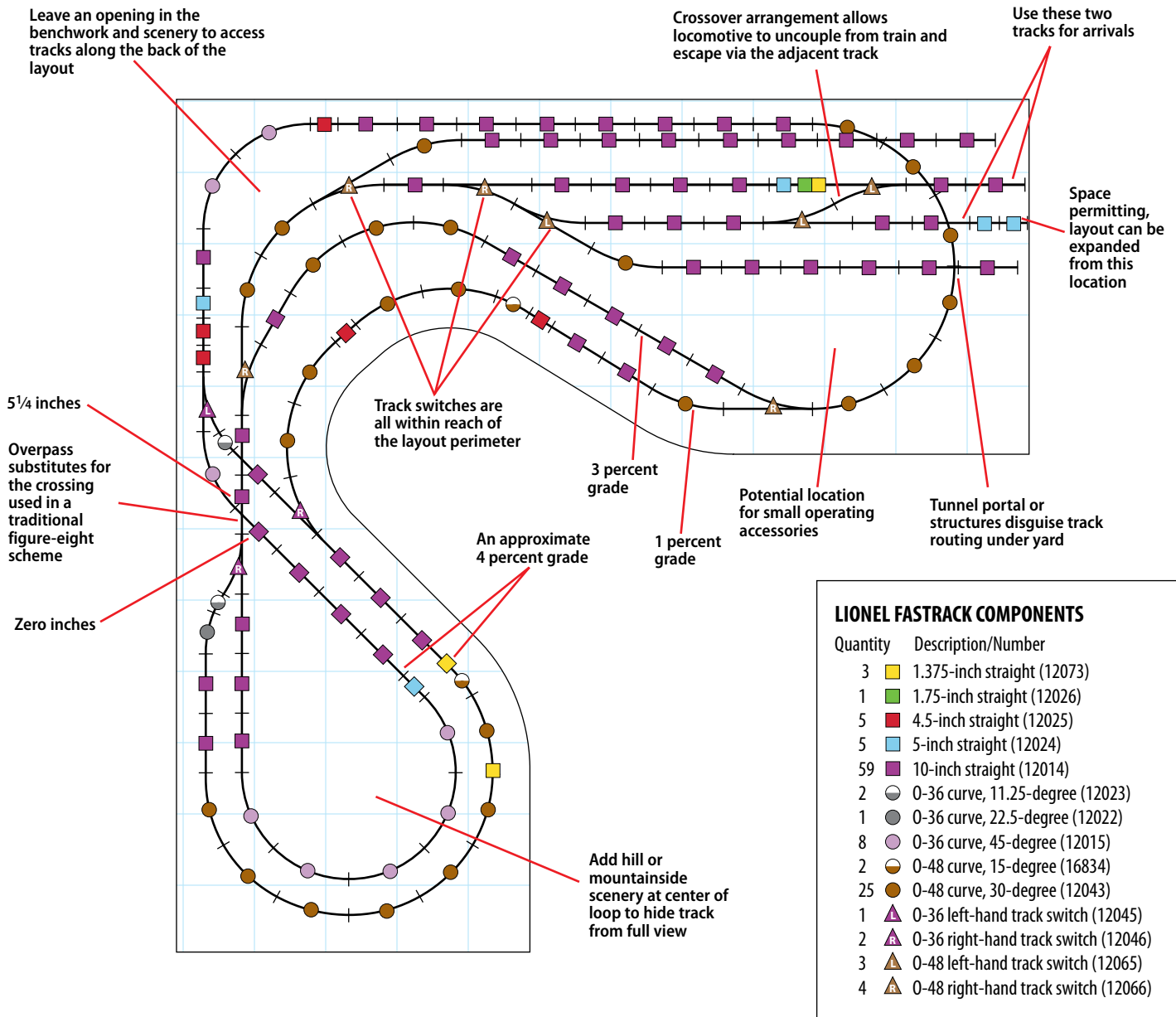
The only way to turn a locomotive is by using the cutoff track and one of the loops. However, it will be a simple project to extend the benchwork a bit on the right and to add a turntable, perhaps with a roundhouse.

To get this much operation into the space, I needed to include a few O-36 curves and design the grade on the inner track of the left-hand loop to nearly 4 percent. The other grades are more forgiving.

The wiring can be nothing more than one transformer with on/off switches for the yard tracks, passing siding, and cutoff tracks. This way you can run two trains, although not at the same time.

Building the layout

If I were building this layout, I would probably choose an eastern theme and use a hill in the center of the left-hand loop to add some interest to the scenery. Of course, western scenery would work just as well.



LIONEL FASTRACK COMPONENTS

Quantity	Description/Number
3	1.375-inch straight (12073)
1	1.75-inch straight (12026)
5	4.5-inch straight (12025)
5	5-inch straight (12024)
59	10-inch straight (12014)
2	0-36 curve, 11.25-degree (12023)
1	0-36 curve, 22.5-degree (12022)
8	0-36 curve, 45-degree (12015)
2	0-48 curve, 15-degree (16834)
25	0-48 curve, 30-degree (12043)
1	0-36 left-hand track switch (12045)
2	0-36 right-hand track switch (12046)
3	0-48 left-hand track switch (12065)
4	0-48 right-hand track switch (12066)

Either way, you'll have a fun, scenic layout that fits in a space of roughly 100 square feet, leaving nearly 50 square feet of room for a desk and chair – or, better still, an easy chair and a TV, so you can watch those trains go by as you catch the game.

When you're ready to start construction, be sure to review the benchwork tips presented in this special section. **CTT**

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FIVE TIPS FOR A MORE SATISFYING SCHEME

To help you understand what makes a good track plan "good" or a decent scheme even better, here are a few layout design factors that I think are significant. – *Kent Johnson*

1 Room to grow

Look for areas on the layout where you can either continue the main line or extend a yard or spur to include new destinations for your trains.

2 More places to play

Adding an operating accessory will enhance the play value of a layout – even when the trains aren't running!

3 Mystery and intrigue

A continuous loop of track keeps trains in constant motion, but hills, tunnels, overpasses, and crossings help break up the monotony.

4 All within easy reach

It's best to keep tracks within arm's reach. On larger layouts, it's tempting to bend this rule, but it's never worth the agony in the long run.

5 Park, pass, and run

Look for plans that have a provision for operating a train around one that's parked – either a yard or siding will do.