

Light at the End of the Tunnel

Supplies (listed for each component)

Rock Arch

- ▶ tape measure
- ▶ 48"x96" cardboard sheets (or recycle flat boxes from a bicycle, large TV, or assemble-it-yourself furniture)
- ▶ utility knife
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ Stone Wall Plastic Backdrop*
- ▶ clear packing tape
- ▶ pencil
- ▶ marker
- ▶ cutting mat (optional)

Black Plastic "Tunnel" and Light

- ▶ 10'x15' piece of black plastic (3mm or thicker; find at a home improvement store)
- ▶ black duct tape or gaffer's tape
- ▶ cardboard box (at least 12" tall)
- ▶ clear packing tape
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ 4" battery-operated push light
- ▶ Squeeze Clips* or binder clips (or pipe and drape)
- ▶ rock arch made in the previous step
- ▶ tape measure

Railroad Ties

- ▶ 48"x60" piece of cardboard
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ clear packing tape
- ▶ yardstick
- ▶ pencil or pen
- ▶ utility knife
- ▶ Wooden Plastic Table Cover*

Rails

- ▶ 48"x96" cardboard sheet
- ▶ cutting mat
- ▶ utility knife
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ pencil
- ▶ tape measure
- ▶ straightedge
- ▶ black paint
- ▶ small paint roller
- ▶ paint tray
- ▶ dropcloth (optional)

Stone Boxes

- ▶ cardboard boxes (use a variety of sizes; printer paper boxes work well)
- ▶ clear packing tape
- ▶ scissors
- ▶ Stone Wall Plastic Backdrop*



Step 1: Rock Arch

Measure your hallway to find out how wide and tall it is.

Once your hallway is measured, cut each piece of cardboard to the correct height for your ceiling.

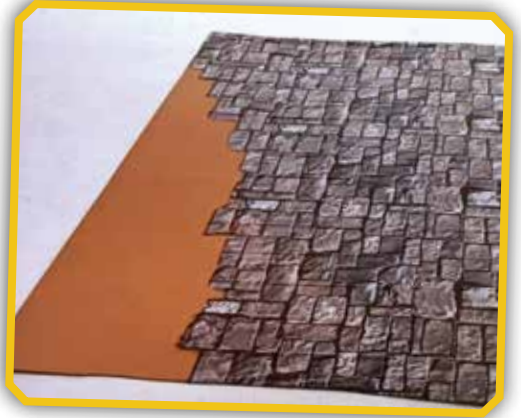
Cover each piece of cardboard with the Stone Wall Plastic Backdrop. Tape the ends and corners to tack down the backdrop.

Lay out the cardboard pieces the width of the hallway; they should overlap slightly. (Ours overlapped about a foot.)

Measure to find the center point of the width of the hallway, and mark that point on the prepared cardboard.

Use a marker to create an arch by drawing the opening on the Stone Wall Plastic Backdrop; the opening for the tunnel should be about 30 inches wide at the floor; at the top, the opening will need to be about 5 feet tall and slightly curved to resemble an arch.

Using scissors, cut the arch through the plastic layer first; then use the utility knife to cut the cardboard to match the plastic cut edge.



Step 2: Black Plastic “Tunnel” and Light

Find the bottom two corners of the 15-foot side of the black plastic, and attach the corners to the bottom corners of the rock arch with black duct tape. To get the best effect, it's important to attach the black plastic close to the cut back side of the cardboard.

Attach the finished rock arch to your ceiling using Squeeze Clips or binder clips, or attach to pipe and drape. Drape the plastic back so it's gathered in the center and goes all the way back as if it's inside the tunnel; it should extend down the tunnel about 8 feet.

Tape the cardboard box closed, and attach the push light to the box so that when you set the box on the ground with the light facing out, the light is about 6 inches off the ground.

Set the box on the black plastic with the light facing out to look like a train is coming out of the tunnel.

When the placement of the light is correct, cut a hole in the center of the black plastic just slightly bigger than the push light to allow the light to shine. Then push the light through the cut hole and tape the plastic securely around the light so no light can sneak through the edge of the plastic. (See photo at right.)

TIP: To get the effect of a train coming out of the tunnel, you'll want to allow about 8 feet behind your tunnel to position the light correctly.

Step 3: Railroad Ties

Cut 10 rectangles out of cardboard, each 44 inches x 6 inches.

To create the illusion of a train track going off into the distance, the railroad ties need to get smaller as they get closer to the light inside the tunnel. To do this, each rectangle will need to be trimmed down so it's smaller in length and width than the previous one; trim each one 2 inches shorter and about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch narrower than the last one.

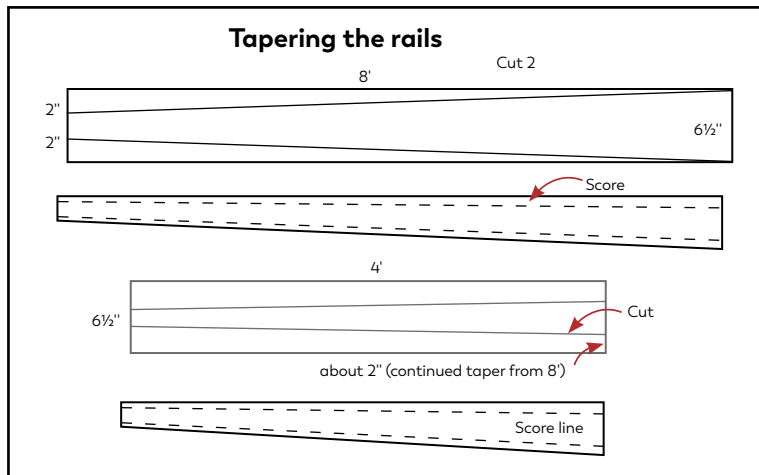
Wrap each railroad tie with Wooden Plastic Table Cover, and fasten it with clear packing tape.

Place the longest railroad tie on the floor about 8 feet in front of the tunnel opening, and continue placing them until you get to the train light, positioning the railroad ties in order from longest to shortest. The spaces between the railroad ties will need to get smaller as the ties themselves get smaller.



Step 4: Rails

Cut three 8-foot pieces of cardboard, each 6½ inches wide. Cut one of the 8-foot pieces in half to get two pieces that are each 4 feet long, and cut two pieces that are each 8 feet long.



Taper the two 8-foot pieces from 6½ inches to 4 inches wide.

Cut along the line.

Score both 8-foot pieces of cardboard 1 inch away from the long edges.

Taper the 4-foot pieces in the same manner, continuing the taper from the 8-foot pieces.

Cut along the line.

Score both 4-foot pieces of cardboard ½-inch away from the long edges.

☀ Using a roller, paint all the rails black. Allow time to dry.

After the pieces are dry, fold at the score marks to create a 3-D rail. Lay the 4-foot tapered pieces at the ends of the 8-foot tapered rails to create 12-foot rails.

Step 5: Stone Boxes

Wrap six boxes with the Stone Wall Plastic Backdrop.