

RCD Getting Started

by David Baker davidbaker@rcdriver.com

Are you short of work space?

"Get that off the kitchen table." "How long will that be sitting there?" "Do you have to rebuild those shocks in bed?" Such statements are not uncommon around my house.

I do have workbench space, but sometimes, I need a change of scenery while I build or repair one of my RC trucks. Late-night maintenance is frequent, so I like to set up my work area on the floor in front of the TV so that I can catch a little "Law & Order" or "CSI" while I work. If I don't complete the task, the tools, parts and vehicle stay on the floor where I leave them until I get back to them. With a 3-year-old son scampering about and a spouse who prefers to keep things tidy, this presents a problem. The solution that kept me out of the doghouse came to me as I was enjoying a leisurely stroll through the local dollar store. Its total cost was less than \$15, and it requires hardly any effort to set up.

THE CONCEPT

My objective was to find a way to set up shop anywhere in my house without having to leave things strewn about between work sessions—something that would keep my things safe from my son's curious paws and not subject my wife to the sight of greasy gears and shock parts all the time. It would, however, have to be easy to clear away because I knew that if it wasn't, I would just leave it out.

If you are new to the hobby, you will soon find out that plastic storage bins of various shapes and sizes have unlimited uses for RC stuff. I use them for everything from scrubbing tires and cleaning engines to storing entire vehicles and spare parts. Small, inexpensive drawer units make nice secondary toolboxes. For \$6, I picked up a bin large enough to hold a 1/10-scale truck. My idea was to work inside the bin and then replace the lid when I had finished for the day. In theory, it was a good idea, but having to reach over the walls of the bin was awkward. The solution? I flipped it over and use the



lid as a bench top and put the bin over it as if my parts and pieces were a chocolate cake.

The plastic lid is slick, so parts and hardware slide around and could bounce off onto the carpet. A large \$3 bath towel laid across the lid does a couple of things: it keeps parts where they're put and acts as an extended work area outside the lid. If I don't complete a task before it's time to clean up, I can put loose items on the lid around the vehicle and flip the towel up and over top to keep things where I need them.

TOOL TROUGH & SCREW KEEPERS

A second set of the tools you most often use is essential to a portable work area. I found small oblong baskets—three for \$1.25. They keep my tools handy and help make cleanup quick and painless, and that's essential if I'm actually going to clean up.

We all hate to lose screws, locknuts and E-clips when we work on our vehicles. Cat-food dishes like the ones I found are ideal for hardware and small parts. A couple of strong neodymium magnets taped to the bottom will prevent metal items from jumping out when you move the dish. Cut non-slip drawer liner to fit the inside of the dish and prevent things from sliding around too much at cleanup time.



Inexpensive plastic pet food dishes and miscellaneous baskets are cheap accessories for a portable workspace. I spent \$2.25 on these. Put a piece of non-slip shelf liner inside the dish to limit the movement of small parts.