

Removing Rust from Large Scale 2 Rail Metal Track (G,S)

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Most suggestions for removing rust from rust contaminated track is to soak for 24 hours in a 4-5% vinegar solution (weak acetic acid), neutralize with a Baking Soda solution, rinse in water and dry with heat. I used this method on my G scale track that was showing some rust due to rain. Although much of the rust was removed using this technique the track, after a period of time, developed recurrent spots of rust. On searching the aisles of Home Depot I came across a large spray bottle from Rustoleum^(R) labeled 'Rust Dissolver - Gel Formula' so I bought the product. When used according to the instructions this product greatly improved the look of my G scale track as can be seen from the before and after picture below. Happy with the results I decided to try it on some rusted 3 rail O Scale Lionel Tubular with similar results in removing the rusts but a problem with the insulation points were causing a shorting of the electric current. So this system is not recommended for O scale 3 rail track but will work for Large Scale 2 rail track with good results. I have compiled some photos to illustrate the method of cleaning. Some other enhancements are also recommended in reconditioning the 2 rail Track.



BEFORE	AFTER
<p>Rusty 2 rail G scale Bachmann^(TM) tubular steel track that had rusted after being left outside. This track has plastic ties for electrical insulation.</p>	<p>Track after treatment using Rustoleum Rust Dissolver. Note that the track appears grey rather than the original silver.</p>

The graying also occurs when non rusted track is treated with this product. The acid appears converts the rust iron oxide to ferric base. The color change is due to this and the loss of the outer coating of the tin plate.

To further expose and smooth the bare metal of the railhead contact surface a very fine Sand Paper of 1000 Grit is used. This was based on a recent article in NMRA magazine October 2025 where Mark Juett MMR recommended it' used..

<p>1000 Grit Sandpaper* is used here while 2000 Grit is used on HO and N track</p>	<p>The sandpaper is rubbed over the track railhead including rail till smooth to touch</p>	<p>A stainless steel washer may also be used to burnish the railhead surface,</p>

USING RUSTOLEUM^(R) RUST DISSOLVER*

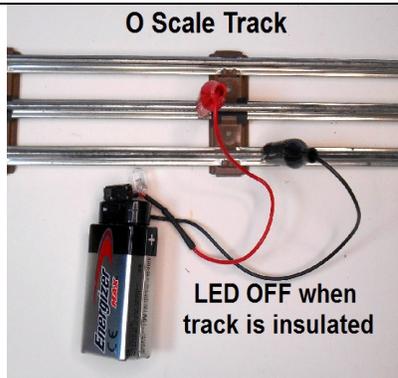
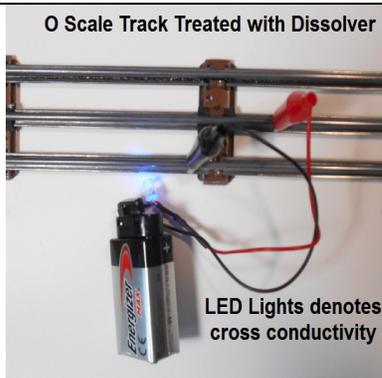
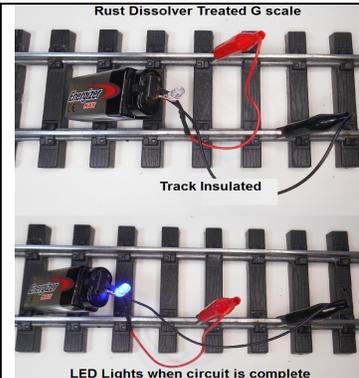
The instructions call for cleaning the metal of any dirt grease etc and that the surface be wet with water so that the gel spray adheres to the track. Washing with soap and water , rinsing and leaving the rails wet accomplishes this. The rails are sprayed with the gel and a brush or sponge is used to spread the gel over the surface. The spray is left on wet for 10-30 minutes depending on the amount of rust, reapplying to keep the surface wet if needed. I used a scouring pad to gently scrub the rails. Wash off the product with water and dry the track. A repeat or spot application and scrub may be necessary on heavily rusted spots. After drying use the sandpaper and washer method to expose and smooth the railheads.

		
<p>1. Clean the track with soapy water . Rinse off but leave the track wet</p>	<p>2. Liberally spray the Dissolver onto the metal rails and disperse over the entire rail with a brush or sponge.</p>	<p>3. Leave on for a desired time (5 to 30 minutes) then rinse off and dry thoroughly.</p>

* You can buy these items at your local Home Depot, Lowe's or local Hardware store .

NOT FOR 3 Rail O Track.

We do not recommend this technique for 3 rail O scale steel track that has rusted as the chemical components interfere with the insulation used on the middle track that can cause a short circuit. Here both 2 and 3 rail track are tested with a circuit tester.

		
<p>Regular O Scale 3 rail track tested for conductivity between the middle rail (Pos+) and the outer rail (Neg) Shows track is insulated.</p>	<p>3 rail that has been treated with "Rust Dissolver" tested for conductivity shows cross conductivity indicating a potential short circuit.</p>	<p>2 Rail G scale test for cross conductivity across shows none present. The lower picture shows a closed circuit on same rail.</p>