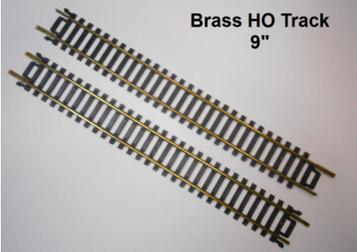


# Replacing Old Brass or Steel HO Track Rails

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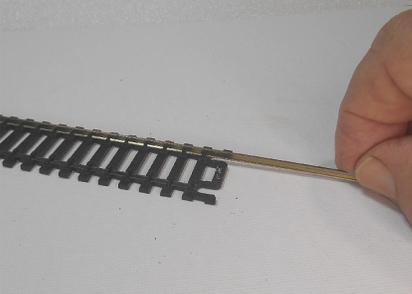
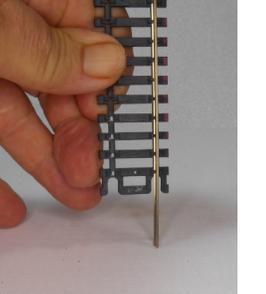
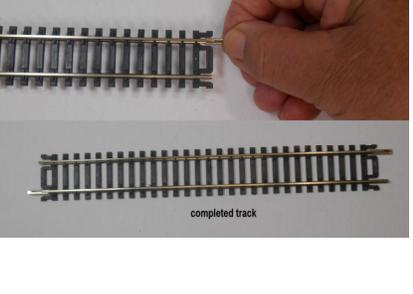
Old HO tracks with brass or steel rails have mostly been replaced by nickel silver (N/S) rails which generally matches the electrical conductivity of brass but appear more aesthetic. Used track is still abundant and cheap. These metal rails can be replaced on the same ties with nickel silver rails at a fraction of the cost of buying new N/S track. However don't expect 100% retrieval, An inability to remove the rails, breakage of the plastic track or bending the rails are the major problems encountered . New track runs around \$2 /piece. So undertaking this project depends on the cheap supply of old track and the economics.

 <p>Brass HO Track 9"</p>	 <p>Atlas Pack of 24 Nickel Silver rails #802 at eBay.</p>	 <p>Items needed, pliers, hot near boiling water, soaking tub. Add some Dawn<sup>(R)</sup> to the soak.</p>
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The process of rail replacement is fairly straightforward. The old rail is slid from the holding ties and the new rail threaded back through the ties. This process is facilitated if needed by soaking the old track in hot, near boiling water to soften the plastic so that the rail can be extracted using pliers.

 <p>Start by removing the rail joiners with pliers</p>	 <p>Try extracting the rail. If it does not release soak in hot water for up to an hour.</p>	 <p>Extract the rails using the pliers to carefully extract the rail. Force is required..</p>
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The new rail is inserted and pushed between the plastic rail spikes . A nickel silver rail joiner is added at each end and a new piece of 9" straight N/S track is complete. Although Atlas<sup>(TM)</sup> no longer lists this item #802 on it's website packs can still be found online at ebay or at train shows and swap meets for around \$6-10 for a pack of 24 rails covering 12 pieces of track.. This should yield one piece of your track for less that \$1 verses over \$2 for new 9" N/S code 100 track.

 <p>Thread the N/S rail between the holders in the ties. Pressure can also be used by holding the</p>	 <p>track vertically and carefully pushing down.</p>	 <p>Once the rails are lined up add N/S rail joiners on both ends. The track is now finished .</p>
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## A few tips.

Make an extraction platform from spare wood to help hold the track while doing the extraction. This platform also helps when reinserting the rails

The track is held down with one hand while the extraction is made with pliers. Wear gloves while doing this. Careful but forceful pulling on the rail is required. If it wont budge try these method below.



Use a baking dish and heat in the warm water solution in the oven at 250 degrees for 30 minutes. This will soften the plastic and may make extraction possible using the pliers. An alternative is to carefully rock the rails out of the plastic rail spikes without breaking the spikes.



For stubborn track use a petroleum based penetrant product such WD 40 or Acetone/Alcohol to unglue the rails  
I found that soaking the track in a solution of Acetone 2 parts and 91% Isopropyl Alcohol in a glass bottom container for an hour softened the glue enough to release the rails. Acetone alone will quickly evaporate but the mix helps prevent this. Nail Polish remover is mostly Acetone. **It is also highly flammable so use extreme caution..** Once rails are removed rinse off the track bed in water and dry. This technique worked well on Atlas brass track.



When reinserting the rails use a file or disc diamond cutter to angle up the base of the end of the rail. This will help the rail glide over small plastic bumps. Also applying a light lubricant to the rail track helps with the insertion process.



If you have any other suggestions for removing rails please let us know and we will include them here. Send suggestions to [modeltrainsounds@aol.com](mailto:modeltrainsounds@aol.com).