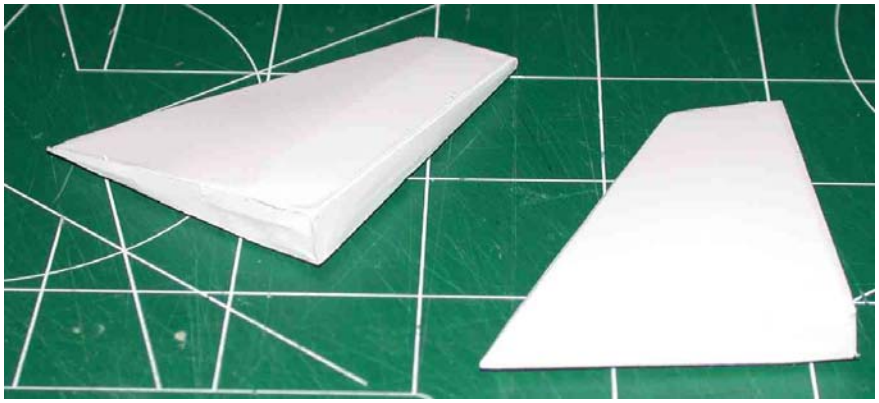
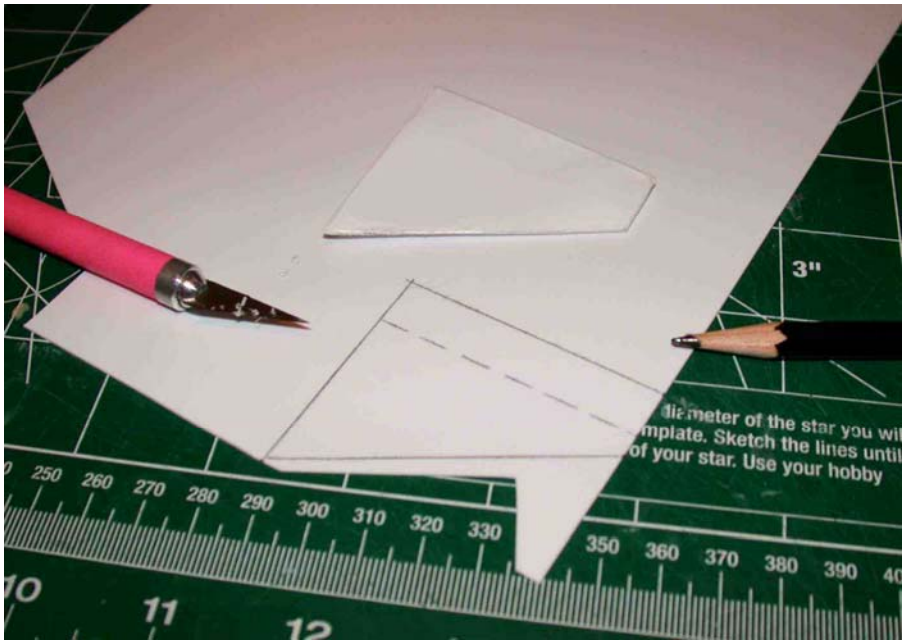
Estes Saturn V Replacement Fins

I thought I would start a new project to keep my busy between breaks in my big projects. I was able to pick up an Estes Saturn V pretty cheap. I started building right away and after about a day's work, I got to the fins. I wanted to build by the plans and well, that's where I went wrong Man I hate those .010 vacuum-formed fins. I built them per the instructions, but...well they just sucked. So I had to do better. The old fins weighed in at 1 gram and the new ones came in at 2 grams. So I'll add 4 grams to the base (meaning the new fins are heavier). Here is what I did:

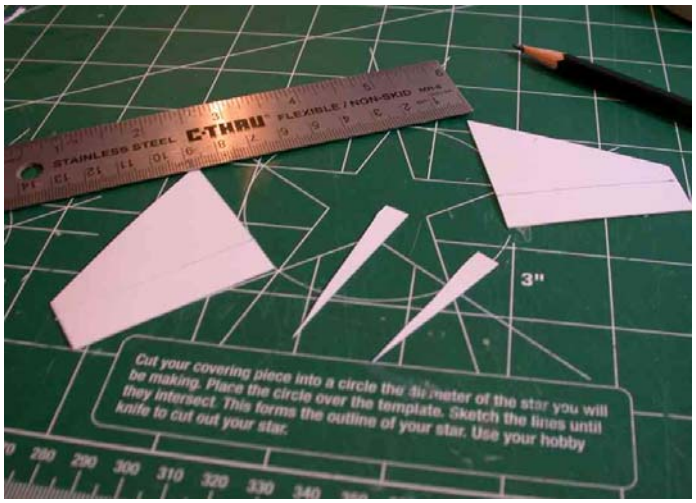
1. Using the kit fins as a guide, cut out new fin sides from .030 sheet styrene.



2. Mark and scribe the contour line on the fins. This will give you the shape of the real fin. The contour is about a 1/2 in up from the base. It's marked in the first picture with a dashed line.

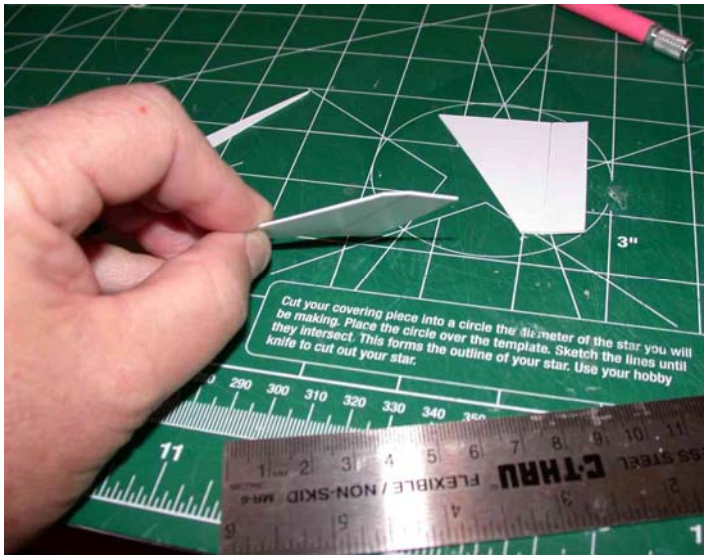


3. Add to the fin sides the triangle shaped bottom and middle support. The middle support will be glued to the contour line once the bottom is glued on to give the fin the desired shape.

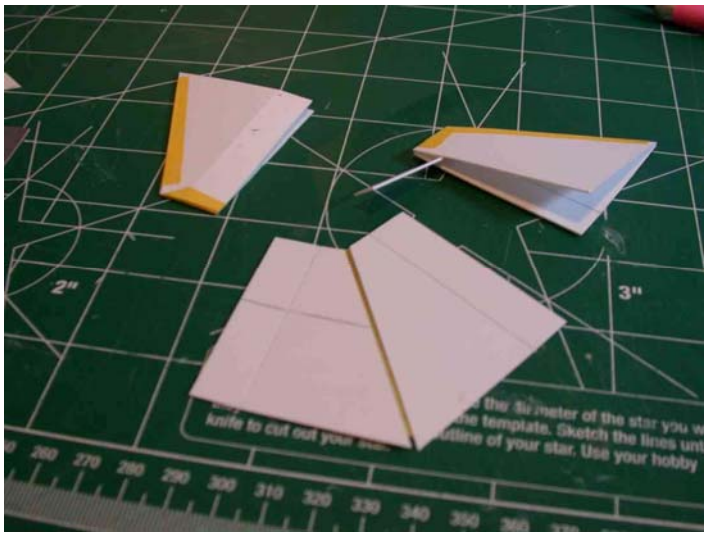


4. Using a Squadron Panel Scriber, scribe the contour line. This will only require one or two good passes. Don't scribe too much or the styrene will cut through.

5. Add a slight bend along each of the scribed lines. It will give the fin the contour shape needed.



6. Tape the leading edge and ends together.



7. I used Tenax-7.R liquid glue to add the bottom triangle shape. Once dry, add the middle support.



8. Remove tape and glue the leading edge and end. Be careful not to pinch the edges. If you do, you might distort the styrene.

9. Four new fins.

