



REVERSE RUNNING

commentary



Model Railroad Hobbyist | April 2018 | #98

JOE FUGATE ASKS IF THERE
ISN'T A SIMPLE WAY TO GET MORE
LAYOUT FOR NOTHING...



IN THIS ISSUE'S EDITORIAL, I DISCUSS LAYOUT
design selective compression — how to get more layout into less
space, if you will.

But there also is another way to get more layout for nothing —
and that's by running slower.

As Lance Mindheim has pointed out, this is a hobby, so if we're
enjoying operations, why are we in such a hurry to get the fun
over with?

► **STEPPING OUTSIDE THE BOX WITH A CONTRARY VIEW**

Lance makes a good point. Is there a place for selective compression of speed? We selectively compress other things, why not speed — make scale speed to be 15-25-35-45-55 mph to represent 30-40-50-60-70 mph? You get more or less 40% more layout doing this ... for no cost!

Once you get used to running at the slower speeds, they will seem normal.

With that said, there's also the problem that the mainline trains on the model tend to get where they're going a lot sooner than they do on the prototype because almost all model railroads have a much shorter mainline than the prototype.

The end result is switching operations proceed closer to prototype speed, while the mainline trains come way too often because of the foreshortened main. The poor yard crews are almost always struggling to keep up because the trains get where they're going so much more frequently.

So my proposal would be this: drop the speed of the mainline trains by 50% to keep the crew engaged longer and need fewer trains. Meanwhile, keep the switching operations at full prototype speed or no more than 25% slower. That way the mainline trains take longer and the crews are engaged longer, so you're less tempted to run another train just to keep the crews busy. The switching jobs have a better chance of keeping up that way, too.

The bottom line for me would be to compress the mainline train speed more than the switching train speed. If that's being done with DCC speed curves and max speed CV settings, then this might be an argument for separate dedicated locos for switching vs mainline runs. Or at least have rules for the mainline guys to *slow it down* when they're running on the main.

So again, what's the rush? Selectively compress train speed a bit to make the ops fun last longer — and make your layout seem larger in the process. ✓

