

The Adobe Illustrator new features cheat sheet.

Ai

List of new features introduced since Illustrator CS3 based on the documentation available in the help files for each version at [Adobe.com](http://adobe.com).

CS3

Version 13.0 | April 2007

Live Color

Explore color harmonies and dynamically apply color at once to multiple vector graphics. With Live Color, you can discover new color combinations, quickly test them, and then save and reuse them. You can preview changes to your artwork, shift an artwork's entire tone by playing with the color wheel, or merely adjust one color with maximum precision.

Isolation mode

Use isolation mode to protect areas of an artwork from being edited. You can group, hide, lock, and restack layers with confidence, knowing that isolated portions of your artwork will not be inadvertently changed.

Path editing

As soon as you select points, the Control panel displays path-editing tools. You can fine-tune your work faster and even hide and show handles with one click.

Point selection

Run your cursor over any anchor point and enlarge it so you can easily see and select it. Your cursor shows a larger square anywhere it detects a point.

Point alignment

Align and distribute points just like you align and distribute objects. When you select more than one point, the whole range of alignment buttons appears in the Control panel. You can also align points to the artboard or a crop area.

Eraser tool

Quickly remove areas of artwork as easily as you can erase pixels in Photoshop. All you have to do is stroke the mouse or stylus over any shape or set of shapes. Illustrator creates new paths along the edges of the erased stroke; the smoothness of your erasure is preserved.

CS4

Version 14.0 | October 2008

Clipping masks with clear simplified appearance and access

Adobe Illustrator now displays only the masked area while you are moving or transforming a masked object. Double-click the masked object to open it in Isolation mode, where you can view and edit the mask independently of all other objects.

In-panel Appearance editing

Select an item in the Appearance panel to view and use the enhanced full-featured controls. Click hyper-links to open option dialog boxes for effects, strokes, and fills. Click a visibility icon for any attribute to easily turn it on or off.

Enriched Graphic Styles panel

The newly updated Graphic Styles panel provides you with a quick and easy way to view and apply styles to objects in your document.

Blob Brush tool for merging paths

Use the Blob Brush to draw paths that merge with existing artwork. The Blob Brush draws paths that are fill only - no stroke - and can merge with existing artwork that has the same fill, and no stroke. The Blob Brush can merge with existing artwork that has complicated appearances (as long as there is no stroke on the artwork and the Blob Brush is set up to paint with the exact same fill and appearance settings). For example, if you've created a yellow filled rectangle with a drop shadow applied, you can set up the Blob Brush with those attributes and then draw a path across the rectangle, and the two paths will be merged. You can easily select and edit the resulting shape. Use the Eraser Brush together with the Eraser tool for truly intuitive vector painting.

Expanded Gradients panel and tool

Using the enhanced Gradient tool, you can interact with gradients on the object itself by adding or changing color stops, applying transparency to color stops, and changing the direction or angle of a linear or elliptical gradient (also new in CS4). The Gradient panel now provides a menu of all your saved gradients, direct access to color panels, and transparency controls for individual color spots, among other things.

Transparency in gradients

Create gradients with two or more colors and define the opacity of any or all individual colors. By specifying different opacity values for the different color stops in your gradient, you can create gradients that fade in or out and reveal or hide underlying images.

Practical smart guides

Smart guides are now even more practical with unobtrusive appearance and behaviors. Instant pop-ups appear with alignment and measurement information, such as deltas between objects and angles of rotation (that you can specify) when moving or transforming objects. Of course, objects still snap to any alignment you choose to make it easy to arrange and transform objects exactly how you want.

Quick, easy, and obvious key object alignment

The Align panel and Control panel now provide quick access to the key alignment option. A key object is the one object that you want other objects to align to.

CS5

Version 15.0 | May 2010

Perspective drawing

The new Perspective Grid tool allows you to turn on a grid that supports drawing directly on planes of true perspective. Use the perspective grid to draw shapes and scenes in accurate 1, 2, or 3-point perspectives. The new Perspective Selection tool allows you to move, scale, duplicate, and transform objects dynamically. You can also move objects perpendicular to its current location using the Perspective Selection tool.

Variable-width strokes

Use the Width tool to draw strokes with variable widths that you can quickly and smoothly adjust at any point, symmetrically or along either side. You can also create and save custom width profiles, which you can reapply to any stroke.

Dashed line adjustments

New options in the Stroke panel allow you to control the alignment of dashes. You can choose to align dashed strokes symmetrically around corners and at the end of open paths or preserve the dash and gaps in strokes.

Precise arrowheads

You can now select and define arrowheads using the Stroke panel. You can also choose to lock the tip or base of the arrowhead to the path endpoint.

Stretch control for brushes

Define the scaling for art and pattern brushes along a path. Choose areas of the brush stroke to be resized in proportion. For example, you can elongate the middle of a banner, while keeping the detailed, curly ends from stretching.

Brushes with corner control

Apply art and pattern brushes to a path and get clean results, even at tight bends or corners. Where strokes of different widths join, or they form obtuse or acute angles, choose options to properly fill points where joins occur.

Bristle brush

With the Bristle brush, paint with vectors that resemble real world brush strokes. You can draw and render artwork just the way you use a natural media such as watercolors and oils, with the scalability and editability of vectors. You can set bristle characteristics, such as size, length, thickness, and stiffness, in addition to setting bristle density, brush shape, and paint opacity.

Crisp graphics for web and mobile devices

Create vector objects precisely on the pixel grid for pixel-aligned artwork. It is critical that raster images look sharp, especially standard web graphics at 72-ppi resolution, when designing artwork for Adobe Flash Catalyst, Adobe Flash Professional software, and Adobe Dreamweaver. Pixel alignment is also useful for video resolution rasterization control. In Illustrator CS5, new web graphics tools include type enhancements. Choose one of four text anti-aliasing options for each of your Illustrator text frames.

Resolution Independent Effects

With Resolution Independent Effects, raster effects such as Blur and Texture can maintain a consistent appearance across media. You can also increase the resolution and still maintain the appearance of raster effects. For low-resolution artwork, you can scale up the resolution for high-quality printing.

Shape Builder tool

The Shape Builder tool is an interactive tool for creating complex shapes by merging and erasing simpler shapes. It works on simple and compound paths and intuitively highlights edges and regions of the selected art, which can be merged to form new shapes. For example, you can draw a stroke across the middle of a circle and quickly create two half-circles without opening any panel or choosing another tool. The Shape Builder tool can also break overlapping shapes to create distinct objects and easily adopts art styles when objects are merged. You can also enable the Color Swatch cursor to select colors for your artwork.

Symbol enhancements

Illustrator CS5 provides enhanced 9-slice scaling support. You can now directly use 9-slice scaling on symbols in Illustrator, which makes it easier to work with web elements such as rounded rectangle.

Path join enhancement

Join open paths in a single keystroke with objects selected. You can also choose to join open paths using corner joins or smooth joins.

Select behind capability

Use a keyboard shortcut to easily select an individual object located behind other objects.

Draw behind and draw inside modes

Draw behind other objects without choosing layers or setting the stacking order. Draw or place an image inside a shape, including live text. The draw inside mode automatically creates a clipping mask from the selected object.

Vector Graphics & Design

User Interface

New document profiles

Speed startup when you open a new document by selecting a pre-built New Document Profile. These profiles are tailored for different kinds of projects—mobile, print, web, and video, for example. You can save custom profiles with startup parameters such as artboard dimensions, swatches, brushes, styles, and color spaces.

Custom workspaces

Customize your workspace with collapsible panels and new icon views. You can save your workspace as a preset and in so doing optimize your workspace for given tasks.

Operating performance

Work more fluidly and efficiently without waiting for Illustrator to catch up with your hands and your thoughts. The underlying architecture of Illustrator has been improved. You'll notice increased scroll and zoom times, snappier refresh rates, and better responsiveness.

Access libraries from panels

Easily access libraries of pre-built brushes, thematic swatches, and graphic styles. Now you can quickly apply just the effect you want by pulling down your library list with an icon located in the bottom bar of the tool panels.

Swatches panel

Save a color group to the Swatches panel so you can quickly refer back to a favorite set of colors.

Control panel

Find the tool you need for the task at hand with the Control panel, which displays the options that are most appropriate for your current selection. You can access anchor-point controls, selection tools, clipping masks, and envelope distortions from the top of the screen. Workspace clutter is reduced because you don't have to keep as many panels open.

Crop Area tool

Draw multiple crop areas with either custom or predefined characteristics. You can quickly create one-page PDFs perfectly cropped to your selection, making it possible to save artwork variations to show clients and colleagues.

Multiple artboards in your documents

Create multi-page files containing up to 100 artboards of varying sizes. You can create artboards that overlap, appear side-by-side, or are stacked on top of one another. You can also save, export and print artboards independently or together. Multiple artboards have replaced the Crop Area tool.

Tabbed document windows and Document Arrangement panel

Display multiple documents in a tabbed view, or open them side by side so you can easily compare or drag items from one document to another.

Application bar and workspace switcher

The application bar at the top of each Creative Suite application provides menus and options in one easy to access place. Use the workspace switcher to quickly jump to different workspace configurations to meet your specific needs. Also along this bar, you can access Adobe Bridge and the document arrangement panel.

Separations Preview panel

Preview your color separations on your monitor before printing to avoid color output surprises such as unexpected spot colors and unwanted overprinting. The Separations Preview panel lets you easily turn colors on and off so you can see how blending, transparency, and overprinting will appear in color-separated output.

Multiple artboards enhancements

The multiple artboards functionality has been enhanced significantly in Illustrator CS5. Some of the new features include a new Artboards panel, which allows you to add artboards, reorder artboards in the Artboards panel, rearrange artboards, and create duplicate artboards. Specify custom names for your artboards using the Control panel and the Artboards panel. You can paste objects at a particular location on the artboard and paste artwork on all artboards at the same location using the new Paste in Place and Paste on All Artboards options. You can also set the option to automatically rotate artboards for printing.

Artboard ruler origin and coordinates enhancement

Artboard ruler origin and coordinates are now oriented from the upper left. Scripts that use a previous coordinate system also work correctly with this enhancement. You can also choose to work with a global ruler that provides coordinates across all your artboards, or work with local, artboard-specific rulers.

Integration & Output

Integration with Adobe Flash

Create intricate vectors, storyboards, and test sequences without having to redraw them in Adobe Flash. Save production time with type, layers, and symbols that maintain their structure and editability when you copy/paste them into Flash. You can move back and forth between Illustrator and Flash, harnessing the strengths of each program.

Symbols

Take advantage of the power of Illustrator with symbols that are now more practical to create, more easily to customize, and can be used in Flash with confidence.

Printing

When printing, preserve native color spaces. Thanks to DeviceN support, you can be assured that your artwork will separate correctly when it is printed.

Support for Flex extensions

Efficiently deliver more editable, workable content to developers for web, interactive, and RIA projects. For instance, use the Flex Skins for Illustrator to create and export vector skins in the Adobe Flex format.

Multiple artboard export support

Creating documents with multiple artboards now makes it easy to create multi-page documents for exporting. You can export artboards to any of the following formats: PDF, PSD, SWF, JPEG, PNG, and TIFF. Or import a multiple artboard Illustrator file into Adobe InDesign or Adobe Flash. You can now easily create multiple-page PDFs. When exporting to Flash SWF format, multiple artboards export as multiple files.

Roundtrip editing with Adobe Flash Catalyst CS5

Use Illustrator CS5 for interaction design, now enabled by new Adobe Flash Catalyst CS5, available with all the Adobe CS5 products.

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+14

+17

Source for Illustrator CS3: <http://rufus.li/mOHwHA>

Source for Illustrator CS4: <http://rufus.li/lz7Cg>

Source for Illustrator CS5: <http://rufus.li/kp8Hxq>

Many times do I hear users asking me "so what are the new features in Illustrator?" or telling me "there is nothing in the new versions that would benefit my workflow". Really!? To make this list, I went to adobe.com and copied the "what's new" section for each of the above mentioned versions of Adobe Illustrator, and I then reordered the new features by areas of interest (which do not necessarily reflect those chosen by Adobe).

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