Adobe InDesign Tips & Tricks

Flux Consulting can help you make the transition to Adobe™ InDesign. We provide all the software training, template conversion and support you need to help you make the switch with ease. Below are some sample InDesign tips and keyboard shortcuts to help you work faster in CS5, CS 5.5, CS6 and CC! And don't forget -- the best tip for working faster in InDesign is to use the **Flux Eyedropper Plugin Tool**. It will save you hours of time when formatting text and objects!

WORKING WITH OBJECTS

Make multiple objects the same size:
To make multiple objects the same size, set the height and width of one object. Then, select the remaining objects and choose Object> Transform Again> Transform Sequence Again Individually.

Super Step & Repeat:
Select an object, then Opt-Shift (Mac) or Alt-Shift (PC) and drag the object to make a copy. Release the keys, but before releasing the mouse, press either the right arrow or the up arrow to make additional copies between the existing objects. Then release the mouse.

Live Distribute:
Select multiple objects (frames or lines) that are in a row and then click and hold down a side handle of one of the outermost objects. Press the spacebar and then drag the side handle to increase/decrease space between objects vertically or horizontally. Try this with a corner handle to distribute the space between objects diagonally.

Make a fast grid of frames (Gridify):
To create a grid of frames, start drawing a frame, but before you release the mouse, press the right arrow or up arrow to add rows and columns of objects. To finish, release the mouse. To increase/decrease space between objects while drawing, press Cmd (Mac) or Ctrl (PC) and the right/left or up/down arrow.
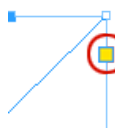
Live Corner Effects:
Click the yellow square on the right side of any frame to activate Live Corners. Once activated, drag a yellow diamond to increase/decrease the corner effect. Opt/Alt-click the yellow diamond to cycle through the other corner styles. Opt/Alt-Shift-click to change just one corner.

Center objects on the page
To place an object on the center of the page, select it, then cut (Edit> Cut), then go to View> Fit Page in Window and then Paste (Edit> Paste.)

Hiding Objects:
To hide a selected object, press Cmd-3 (Mac) or Ctrl-3 (PC). To show all hidden items, press Cmd-Opt-3 (Mac) or Ctrl-Alt-3 (PC).

WORKING WITH IMAGES

Shortcut to open the Links Panel:
Option- (Mac) or Alt- (PC) click the link icon at the upper left of any placed image.

Place multiple images as a grid:
Choose File>Place. Select multiple images to place. Choose Open. The cursor will show a thumbnail of the first image and the number of images loaded . (Press the arrow key to cycle through the images. (Press the Esc key to delete any image from the loaded cursor.) Then, hold down Cmd+Shift-click (Mac) or Ctrl+Shift-click (PC) and drag with the mouse to create a grid of boxes. When you release the mouse, you'll have a grid of images. To add rows or columns to the grid, press the right or up arrow key before you release the mouse.

Replacing one image with another:
Choose File> Place to select a new image. Then Option- (Mac) or Alt- (PC) click on an existing image on the layout to replace it.

Frame Fitting:
To fit a frame to the graphic inside of it, double-click a corner of the frame. Or press Cmd-Opt-C (Mac) / Ctrl-Alt-C (PC). (Also works with text frames).

To open an image in its original application:
Option-click (Mac) or Alt-click (PC) an image on your layout to open it in its original application. Once you edit and save the changes and return to InDesign, the changes will automatically appear!

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SELECTING & USING TOOLS

Switch to the Selection Tool:
-To switch to the Selection tool from another tool, press the "V" key. (When you're in the Text tool, press the "Esc" key.)

Convert any empty frame to a text frame:
-Click on any empty frame with the Text tool to convert it to a text frame. (Example: draw an oval graphic frame and then click on it with the Text tool to convert it to an oval-shaped text frame.)

EFFECTS

Apply an effect from one object to another:
-Select the object that has the formatting you want. Then, drag the "FX" icon from the Effects panel onto the object you want to format.
-To clear all effects from an object: Choose "Clear Effects" from the Effects popup in the Control Panel.

Apply an effect only an object's stroke, fill or text:
Select an object and choose "FX" in the Control Bar. Choose an effect (like Transparency.) Then before changing the values, select Stroke, Fill or Text from the popup menu at the top to isolate that effect only to that attribute of the object.

SWATCHES/GRADIENTS

Swap the fill & stroke colors of an object:
Select an object and then press Shift-X. Just press "X" to swap the Fill or Stroke icon in the Swatches Panel.

Reset to the default fill & stroke colors:
Press "D" (for "default").

Apply the last color used:
To apply the last color used on a new object, press comma (,).

Change the focus in the Swatches Panel from text frame to text:
When a text frame is selected, pressing the "J" key toggles between choosing a swatch to fill a frame and choosing one to color text.

Use the Photoshop color picker:
Double-click the Fill or Stroke icon in the Swatches Panel (or on the Toolbar) to open the Color Picker.

To use a saved swatch in a gradient:
Click and drag a swatch from the Swatches panel onto the gradient ramp in the Gradient Panel.

Creating a color swatch while defining a style:
-If you're creating a new paragraph style and you didn't already create a swatch color for it, go to the "Character Color" section of your paragraph style. The double-click the color proxy to bring up the New Color Swatch dialog box.

PAGES PANEL

Duplicating pages in a document:
To duplicate any page or spread, Option- (Mac) or Alt- (PC) drag the page in the Pages Panel. This works for document or master pages.

Copying pages between layouts:
Open both documents. Open the Pages Panel. In the first layout, select one or more pages in the Pages Panel and then drag them right on top of the second layout. A dialog box will appear asking where you would like the pages to go. Works for master pages, too.

BULLETS & NUMBERING

To convert a bulleted or numbered list to text:
Highlight a bulleted or numbered list, then control (or right-click) the list and choose "Convert bullets/numbering to text."

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Switch units of measurement:
Right-click in the little square at the upper left of your document where the rulers meet. You'll see a list of measurement units to choose from.

Go to Presentation Mode:	Shift-W. To change background colors in Presentation mode, press W (white,) G (gray,) or B (black.)	
Preview a document	W	W
Switch between open documents	Command-~ (tilde key)	Control-~ (tilde key)
Hide/Show all panels	Tab	Tab
Center a spread using the Pages Panel	Double-click the page numbers underneath the page icons	
Fit a selected object in the window	Command-Option-+	Control-Alt-+
Sort all menus alphabetically	Press Command-Option-Shift and select a menu	Press Control-Alt-Shift and select a menu

GUIDES & GRIDS

Temporarily turn off "Snap to Guides"	While you're dragging an object or objects that you don't want to snap to something else, hold down the Control key. (Mac only.)	
Delete all ruler guides on a page or spread	Right-click inside the ruler and select "Delete All Guides on Spread (or Page.)"	
Select all ruler guides on a page or spread	Command-Option-G	Control-Alt-G
Draw both a vertical and horizontal ruler guide simultaneously	Command-drag from the zero guides onto the page	Control-drag from the zero guides onto the page
Snap a ruler guide to a tickmark on the ruler	Hold down Shift while drawing a guide	
Change guides as you're drawing them	While you're dragging a guide from a ruler, change it from horizontal to vertical (or vice versa) by pressing Option (Mac) or Alt (PC).	

OBJECT DRAWING BASICS

Draw a perfect square or circle	Hold down Shift while drawing shape	
Draw a shape from its center	Hold down Option while drawing shape	Hold down Alt while drawing shape
Create a grid of objects ("Gridify")	While drawing a frame or line, press the right or up arrow to add rows and columns of objects.	
Increase/decrease the star inset on a polygon while drawing	Press the left or right arrow key while still drawing with the mouse.	

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Increase/decrease points on a polygon while drawing	Press the up or down arrow key while still drawing with the mouse.	
Reposition an object while still drawing it	Press the spacebar and drag while drawing the object	Press the spacebar and drag while drawing the object
Select an object that is beneath another object or stack of objects	Command-click the stack of objects until the one you want is selected	Control-click the stack of objects until the one you want is selected

SELECTING TEXT		
Select one word	Double-click the word	Double-click the word
Select one line of text	Command-Shift-\ or click inside the sentence three times (quickly).	Control-Shift-\ or click inside the sentence three times (quickly).
Select one paragraph	Click inside the paragraph four times (quickly).	Click inside the paragraph four times (quickly).
Select all text from the cursor down	Command-Shift-End	Control-Shift-End

MISC.

View the history of an InDesign document:
Press Command (Mac) or Control (Windows) and choose InDesign> About InDesign. This displays a document history, listing all information related to the creation, conversion, synchronization, and Save history of the document.
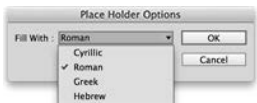
A choice of Placeholder text:
Put your cursor inside a text frame. Then hold down Cmd (Mac) or Ctrl (PC) and select Type> Fill with Placeholder Text. You will see a dialog box that lets you choose from a variety of language types.

To make your own Placeholder text:
-Open a text document (in Microsoft Word, for example) that contains the text you want to use as placeholder text. Save the file as untagged text. (In Word, untagged text is called "Text Only"). Name the file "placeholder.txt" (no quotes.) Save the file into the Adobe InDesign folder on your hard drive.

-To use, launch InDesign and draw a text frame. Choose Type>Fill With Placeholder Text.

EASTER EGGS!

Dashes & Stripes : Custom stripe

1. In the Stroke Panel, choose Stroke Styles from the popup menu. Select "New."
2. Select Stripe for line type and name the stripe "Rainbow"
3. Choose OK and see the rainbow-colored stripe!

Other options: Create a new stripe and name it "Rasta" to get a different colored stripe.
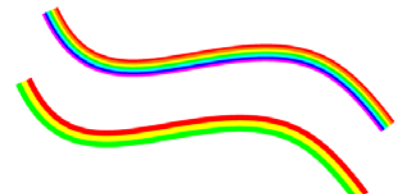
Dashes & Stripes : Custom Dash

1. In the Stroke Panel, choose Stroke Styles from the popup menu. Select "New."
2. Select Dash for line type and name the stripe "Feet"
3. Choose OK and see the little feet dash!

Other options: Name a new dash "Happy" to get a smiley face dash.
Or "Woof" to get a dash made of paws. Or "Lights" to get Christmas lights.
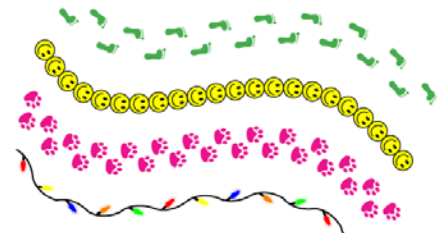
Butterflies!:
Choose InDesign> About InDesign and then type the word "butterfly." Cmd (Mac)/Control (PC)-click the butterflies to pin them in place. Cmd (Mac)/Ctrl (PC)-click again to release them. Option (Mac)/Alt (PC)-click to knock them down. Note: The butterfly Easter egg does not work with InDesign CC.