

ADOBE *ILLUSTRATOR*

Tracing an object

When creating complex drawings it is sometimes easier to trace an object rather than drawing an object from scratch. You can import scanned images or pictures from a number of different programs. Using a picture as a template, allows you to then go and trace the object in Illustrator using a number of tools.

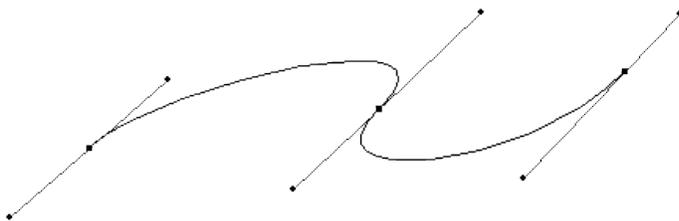
To import a picture to use as a template, use the “place” command under the “File” menu. After placing the object you may want to position this image on a separate layer using the layers menu so it doesn’t get in your way when you are trying to trace it.

There are a number of ways in which you can trace an object. The pen tool, the pencil tool, the paintbrush tool and by combining shapes are just four of the many options.

The Pen Tool

The pen tool allows you to draw straight lines, curved lines or lines that bend. You have total control over how you draw with the pen tool and can go back and modify a pen drawing at any time.

When you use the pen tool to make a shape, it works by creating points along your path, and these points can be connected either by a straight line or a curved line. You tell the pen tool exactly where you want each point (or anchor) and you tell it what kind of line you want to connect these points, either straight or curved.



The pen tool lets you adjust the curve of the line by moving control handles at each point.

See Example.

The Pencil Tool

The pencil tool is similar to the pen tool but it does not give you the ability to control where points are made while drawing an object. The pencil tool basically makes a trail of a path that follows the movement of your mouse. You have less control over the pencil tool and it can create jagged lines.

The pencil tool is perfect for creating quick sketches, traces or drawings. It's a good tool to use when you want to give your illustration a hand drawn look. All strokes created with the pencil tool are of equal weight.

The Paintbrush Tool

The Paintbrush tool is very similar to the pencil tool except that it allows you to add various types of strokes to your path. The paintbrush tool can give the effect of a wet paintbrush, painting an object. You can apply strokes that simulate chalk, crayon and even calligraphy marks.

Combining images

One way to trace an image is to combine smaller more simplistic shapes together. If you create easy to draw circles or squares, and overlap them you can recreate more complex shapes.

To combine shapes together, you first have to select all the shapes that you want to merge. Choose Window > Pathfinder to open the Pathfinder palette. In the Pathfinder pop-up menu, choose Make Compound Shape. The new shape—a composite of the objects you selected—takes on the paint and transparency attributes of the top object.

The Pathfinder pallet can be used in a number of ways. It can be used to combine objects, dissect, divide, exclude and in other ways. Getting use to how

each function on this pallet works can be tricky, but with practice it could be one of your most useful tools.