

Making Wraps Sing

One of the most important things about any layout program is how it handles the interaction of text and graphics.

Because of this, one of the features I get the most questions about from artists who are switching from QuarkXPress® to InDesign is something called Text Wrap. Their first question is usually, "How do I create a Runaround in InDesign?" I then have to explain that Runarounds are called Wraps in InDesign. The hardest part of making the transition to InDesign is learning the language. Runaround is Wrap, Text Box is Text Frame, Item is Object, Get Text is Place, and so on. Once you learn the difference in terminology, the concepts they're describing are very much the same.

The other big difference between Quark and InDesign is that so much of what you need to do in InDesign is controlled by palettes instead of dialog windows. So you won't find Text Wrap under the Item (Object) menu. InDesign has a whole palette dedicated to wrapping text.

The following tutorial will take you, step by step, through the in's and out's of making your Wraps sing.

STEP 1: Select the Object You'd Like to Wrap.

Just like Quark, the first step in creating a Wrap is to select the object you'd like to wrap.

Then take a look at your Text Wrap palette (Window menu > Text Wrap).

The palette has five buttons across its top section under the Text Wrap tab. These buttons allow you to select the kind of Wrap you'd like. The icons for these buttons do a good job of visually describing what will happen with your lines of text. Once you understand what each button does, the purpose of each is easy to remember.

By Default (unless Defaults have been changed), an object will have no Text Wrap, so the first button in the Text Wrap palette is selected automatically with all Offsets at the bottom of the palette grayed out.

STEP 2: All Wrapped Up - the Most Common Wrap.

To Wrap around the outside of a ENTIRE frame, select your object and click the second button from the left - "Wrap Around Bounding Box." The type will run around the Bounding Box of the Frame. Why the Bounding Box and not the Frame itself? The Bounding Box includes any Stroke applied to the Frame. So no matter how thick the Stroke may be or how it is Aligned to the Frame (Centered, Outside or Inside the frame), no type will be covered.

STEP 3: Pushing Your Type Away.

Once you choose to Wrap an object, the zeros in the Offset area of the palette are no longer grayed out (see above). So you can type in your exact Offsets for the Top, Left, Bottom, and Right sides of your Object to move the type away from the Bounding Box. Or just use the Up or Down Arrows next to each Offset to increase or decrease the amount in 1/16" increments. The size of the Offset will be indicated by a box that's the same color as the Bounding Box, only thinner.

Quick Tip: If you prefer using your keyboard, click in the Top Offset box in the palette, and then use the Up or Down Arrow keys on your keyboard to raise or lower your Offset. Then hit your Tab key to proceed to the next Offset box and repeat for each Offset.

STEP 4: Wrapping the Shape.

Wrapping a Bounding Box is fine when you're applying the selection to a rectangular shaped object. But how about an oval, a polygon, or some irregular shape? That's where the next button in the palette, Wrap Shape, comes in. The difference is easy to see in the screenshot. The top object uses a Bounding Box Wrap, the bottom a Shape Wrap.

STEP 5: When a Shape's Not a Frame.

Not all shapes are Frames. What if you want to Wrap a shape that's part of a Placed image? No problem!

But first, you have to uncover the Wrap palette's hidden options. Like a lot of palettes in Adobe applications, there are extra, less frequently used features that are hidden to save screen space. To use these "extra" features, go to the Options (Arrow) menu of the palette and select Show Options. The palette will expand to reveal Contour Options for your Wrap.

STEP 6: Wrapping Hidden Shapes In Placed Art.

There are all kinds of shapes hiding in placed art that can be used as Wrap objects by InDesign. To reveal them, simply click on the button next to "Type" to get a pop-up menu.

STEP 7: Seeing the Invisible.

One very useful choice is Find Edges, which uses the edge of non-transparent areas in Photoshop or Illustrator to create a Wrap object. Your text can then be Offset an exact amount from that path.

Quick Tip: The Find Edges Wrap object is an actual path that can be altered with your Direct Selection tool (White Arrow) if you're not totally satisfied with the line breaks of the type. And there's no need to be concerned about "messing up" this path. It's easy to recreate it by simply clicking the No Text Wrap button and reapplying Wrap Around Shape Options.

STEP 8: Follow the Path to a Perfect Wrap.

One incredibly useful Contour Option of Wrap Shape is Wrap Photoshop Path. When you choose this, another pop-up menu becomes available so that you can select any path in a placed Photoshop image. If you want to Wrap just a part of an image, this can be a great choice.

After selecting the path, just apply your Offset. Keep in mind that with Wrap Shape there's only one Offset available that is applied all the way around the entire Wrap Path.

STEP 9: A Hop, Skip and a Jump.

The fourth and fifth buttons in the Wrap Text palette are very similar, so I will discuss them together.

The fourth button, "Jump Object," causes the type to jump by the Wrap object so that there's no type to its left or right in any column or columns that contain any part of this object.

The fifth button, "Jump to Next Column," takes this jumping a step further. When the text in a column reaches the Offset on top of the Wrap object, the next line of text jumps to the next column. If there's only one column in the Text Frame, the copy will jump to the next Linked Text Frame.

STEP 10: A Final Wrap Up.

While it's not possible to discuss all of the in's and out's of Wrapping text in this short tutorial, there is one more very important point has to be mentioned here.

With regard to Wraps, the question I get asked most often is, "Now that I have a Text Wrap, how do I turn it OFF for some of my Text Frames?" People switching from Quark automatically assume that if the Text Frame is in front of the Wrap object then the text will not Wrap. But that's not how it works in InDesign. Text within a Frame will Wrap a Wrap object no matter what its level is in the stacking order.

The secret to turning off a Text Wrap for a particular Text Frame can't be found in the Text Wrap palette. The palette just creates Wraps. Turning off a Wrap is a function of the Text Frame itself. Simply select the Text Frame and go to the Object menu > Text Frame Options... and in the dialog box that opens, simply check "Ignore Text Wrap" in the lower left corner of the window and click OK. Now the Text will ignore all Wraps.

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