



TIP OF THE MONTH

Sooner or later you'll want to use special characters on your pages, such as ampersands (&) and copyright symbols (©). Unfortunately, like every other computer language, HTML is far from perfect. One of the little glitches arises when you want to use non-standard characters in your text. HTML does not look kindly on this, so you are forced to take special measures.

Although characters such as the double quotation mark (") and the 'greater than' (>) and 'less than' (<) signs are part of the regular character set, they have special meanings in HTML, so you must use special codes rather than just typing them in. These codes begin with an ampersand (&) and end with a semicolon. Here

are a few of the more common ones:

```
> &gt;
< &lt;
& &amp;
" &quot;
```

Other special characters include accented letters, some punctuation marks and trademark symbols.

```
é &eacute;
® &reg;
™ &copy;
```

For others, you can use the ASCII character set number. For example, a pound sign is:

```
£ &#163;
```

For more on special characters and their ASCII equivalents, see the Top Advice Sites section.

PARAGRAPH BREAKS

When you are entering text into the <BODY> section of your page, remember that your Web browser will not recognise normal line breaks or multiple spaces. Instead, it will wrap the words around the window as it sees fit, ignoring your beautifully formatted text documents. Don't worry, though, because you can get in there and set things straight using:

```
<P>
```

Call it Mr P, Paragraph boy, the mighty P, Super P, Wonder P, or just Sir. Learn to love this command, because you may be seeing a lot of it. Predictably enough, it tells the browser to make a nice, clean, one-line paragraph break in the text. The remaining text will be shifted downward and continued from the left margin.

But what if you don't want to leave a gap in between your paragraphs?

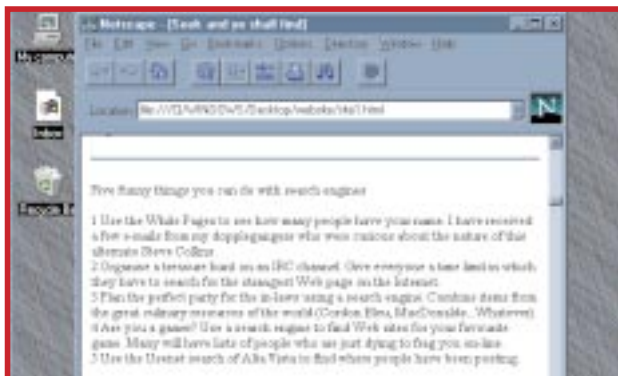
Bung in one of these:

```
<BR>
```

You can then break a line without adding a blank space which – when you pick the right moment – is absolutely smashing.

Note that both these tags are an exception to the 'tags come in pairs' rule – you just need the one.

The <P> tag leaves a gap between paragraphs (top), whereas
 just takes you back to the margin.



ADDING HORIZONTAL RULES

You have created your page and the text is sitting there in its full glory, thanks to your gruelling formatting session. But you are hungry

for more, so why not add some instant style and pizzazz to your page? Alternatively, you could place some horizontal rules.

The use of horizontal rules can add a special look to your pages as well as providing the reader with visual cues to the location of

information on the page. The command for the horizontal rule is simply:

```
<HR>
```

```
<HR WIDTH=50%
ALIGN=LEFT>
<HR WIDTH=234
ALIGN=RIGHT>
```

These jolly additions make the ruler take up either a certain percentage of the browser window or a set number of pixels. The ALIGN command will push the rule over to the specified side of the page.

```
<HR SIZE=5 NOSHADE>
```

The number associated with the SIZE command is the thickness of the ruler in pixels. The NOSHADE command forces the line to be solid instead of bevelled.

If you want a coloured rule, you'll have to insert a picture – more on that next month.



This creates a default shaded rule that, when it is viewed on a grey background, looks like an inset 3D bar drawn across the width of the page. Note that there is no closing tag for the (HR) command.

Netscape has added four extensions to the horizontal rule, enabling you to specify the thickness, width, alignment and shading of these lines. This is a relief because on its own, the horizontal rule is – dare we say it – a bit boring.

Rules, rules, rules. Nobody could call them sexy, but they do break up your page.