

Adobe Customer Services

Anchor Points

Anchor points determine where a line or path segment begins and ends. In Adobe Illustrator, all paths have at least two anchor points. The anchor points on a path appear only when the path is selected. This technical note describes various considerations in using anchor points.

SMOOTH POINTS VS. CORNER POINTS

Adobe Illustrator uses two types of anchor points: a *smooth point* and a *corner point*.

A smooth point joins two continuous paths and lies on a straight line between the paths' two direction points. For example, the four anchor points in an oval tool drawn using Adobe Illustrator's oval tool are smooth points.

A corner point joins two straight lines, a straight line and a curve, or two curves that are non-continuous. An example of a noncontinuous curve is the letter *m*; in Adobe Illustrator, the point where the two humps of the *m* meet and the curve changes direction is a corner point.

CONVERTING SMOOTH POINTS TO CORNER POINTS AND VICE VERSA

To convert an anchor point, use the convert direction-point tool. (This tool is located in the toolbox pop-up menu to the right of the scissors tool, and looks like a corner anchor point with direction handles.) Select the tool in the toolbox, and click the point you wish to convert. If you are converting a corner point to a smooth point, drag away from the point to adjust the shape of the curve as needed.

OVALS AND RECTANGLES—GROUPED OBJECTS

In Adobe Illustrator 3.2.3 and earlier, objects created with the oval and rectangle tools are grouped objects. Before manipulating these objects, you may want to ungroup them to solve problems caused when using the Join or Average commands or when creating compounds with other paths. You may also want to remove the center point of the rectangle or oval after ungrouping to simplify the document.

JOINING AND AVERAGING

When joining or averaging the ends of two paths, select the first point with the direct-selection tool; then hold down the Shift key and click to add the second anchor point to the selection. Using the direct-selection tool ensures that you don't accidentally select more than two anchor points. If one anchor point is directly on top of the other, select the top anchor point with the direct-selection tool and move it slightly to one side; then Shift-click to select the second anchor point.

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