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Learning Adobe Illustrator CS4

People new to [Adobe Illustrator CS4](#) often say that they find the program complex and hard work. When we hold [Illustrator CS4 Training Courses in London](#), we acknowledge the need to help delegates get rid of the belief that Illustrator is a difficult piece of software to use. We have found that there are three main aspects to showing users that Illustrator is no harder or more annoying than any other application.

To start with, we show them how to read and understand the extensive visual clues provided by the software as you perform various operations. Next, we keep reminding new users how easy it is to revert your drawing back to the way it was before things started going wrong. And, finally, we keep telling our students that they have to highlight the right tool to be able to perform a give operation.

If you a new user to a sophisticated program like Illustrator, you cannot be expected to avoid making errors: things may go a little awry or even get completely screwed up. The key thing here is to learn the power of the Undo command. For example, if you accidentally resize an object don't try to manually change it back to the original size, simply go to the Edit menu and choose Undo or use the keyboard shortcut (Control-Z or Command-Z on Apple Mac). If you Undo too many times, you can always use Edit - Redo to move forward again. (The shortcut for the Redo command is Control-Shift-Z.)

If your whole drawing has gone seriously wrong, perhaps the easiest thing to do is to take it on the chin and choose the Revert command from the File menu. This is like saying "OK, I give up. This isn't working!" File - Revert will discard every change you have made to the file since the last time you saved it and can be a very useful way of avoiding unnecessary frustration.

Another thing that phases new Illustrator users is when they find they are unable to carry out a certain operation because it can't actually be done under the current set of circumstances or at that moment in time. For example, they might want to resize a shape and they end up rotating it or changing its position instead.

A simple way of avoiding this kind of problem is to keep an eye on the many visual clues that Illustrator gives you and, in particular, those that relate to the cursor. Let's take an example. Say you are attempting to change the size of a circle, you can only carry out this operation if your cursor has changed to a diagonal line with an arrow at both ends thus showing you that have positioned the cursor precisely over one of the resize handles.

When manipulating objects, Illustrator newbies will often forget to first highlight the Selection tool. For example, they will draw a shape with, say, the Line tool and then, while the Line tool is still highlighted, they will attempt to move or resize the line they have just drawn or perhaps click on the page to deselect the line. They are then bemused and cross when little lines keep appearing on the page or Illustrator's shape dimension window keeps on popping up.

This problem is easy to avoid. Always make sure that you are on the right tool. Thus, if you wish to manipulate an existing object, you have to ensure that the Selection tool is highlighted. One of the first keyboard shortcuts that we teach delegates who attend our Illustrator training courses is that you can temporarily activate the Selection tool by just pressing the Control key (or the Command key if you are using a Mac).

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