

CREATING CUT PATHS

FOR VECTOR IMAGES IN ADOBE® ILLUSTRATOR®

GETTING STARTED

This document will teach you how to create a cut path and an offset cut path around a vector image using Adobe® Illustrator®. Once your cut path is created, it can be imported into Wasatch SoftRIP® and used with the Cutting Options feature to create custom pieces.

CREATING A CUT PATH

STEP 1

In Adobe® Illustrator®, open the file that contains your vector artwork (Illustration 1).

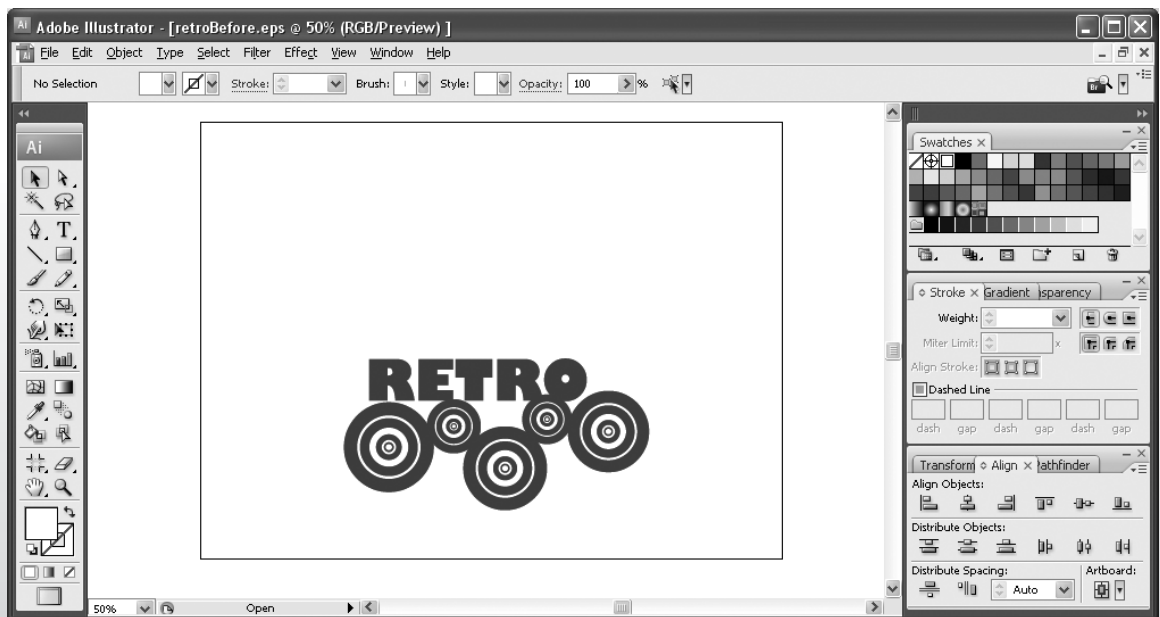


Illustration 1

STEP 2

Select all the objects that you want to create a cut path around and group them together (Object > Group or CTRL+G).

STEP 3

Create a duplicate of the grouped objects, as shown in Illustration 2 (Edit > Copy; Edit > Paste or CTRL+C; CTRL+V).

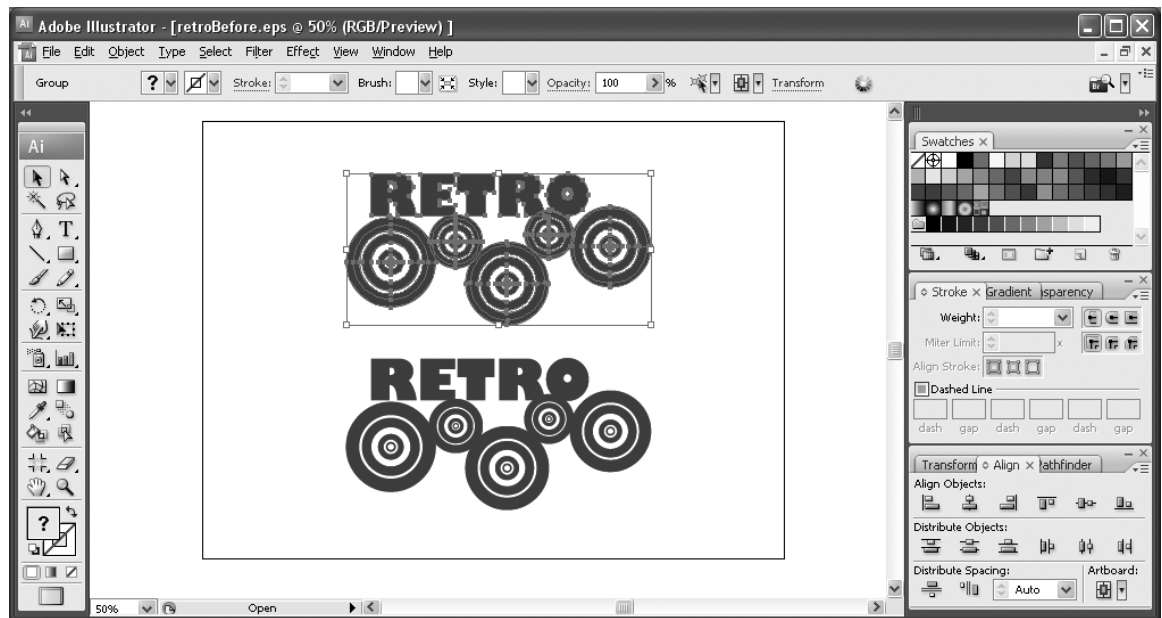


Illustration 2

STEP 4

Move the duplicated group above your original artwork so you can easily work with each group separately.

STEP 5

Select the duplicated group. Go to Window > Pathfinder or click on the Pathfinder tab in your workspace palettes.

Under Shape Modes, click the Add to Shape Area button and click Expand, or Alt-click on the Add to Shape Area button (Illustration 3).

This step merges all the elements of your duplicated group together so you can easily create a cut path around your image.

Note: If Step 5 does not work with your image, follow these steps to merge your group:

1. Select the duplicated group.

2. Go to Type > Create Outlines.

3. Go to Object > Expand Appearance.

4. Go to Object > Expand.

5. Go to Window > Pathfinder or click on the Pathfinder tab in your workspace palettes.

Under Shape Modes, Alt-click on the Add to Shape Area button (Illustration 3).

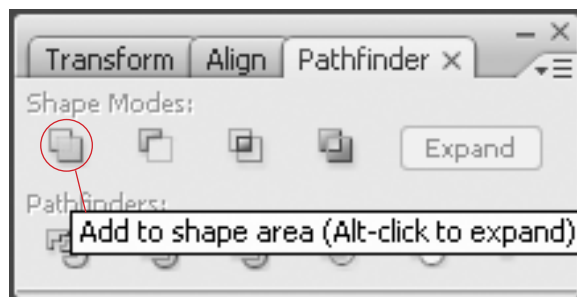


Illustration 3

STEP 6

Make the newly merged shape a path by switching the fill color to the stroke color. This can be done by clicking on the arrow above the Fill and Stroke boxes at the bottom of the toolbar (Illustration 4) or by using the Color tab in your workspace palettes (Illustration 5).

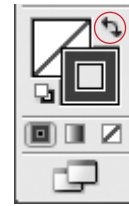


Illustration 4

STEP 7

With the path still selected, go to Window > Stroke or the Stroke tab in your workspace palettes and reduce the stroke to .25 pt.

STEP 8

With the path still selected, go to Window > Swatches or the Swatches tab in your workspace palettes and create a new swatch. You can use the drop down menu or the New Swatch button to do this (Illustration 6).

Note: The Stroke box must be in front of the Fill box in order to create a new swatch for the path (Illustration 4).

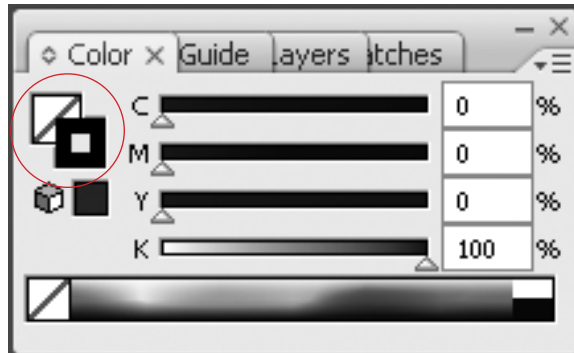


Illustration 5

STEP 9

Name the swatch CutPath. Under Color Type, select Spot Color. It does not matter what the Color Mode is (Illustration 7). **Note: You must name the file CutPath and select Spot Color as the Color Type. If you don't, SoftRIP will not recognize the cut path.**

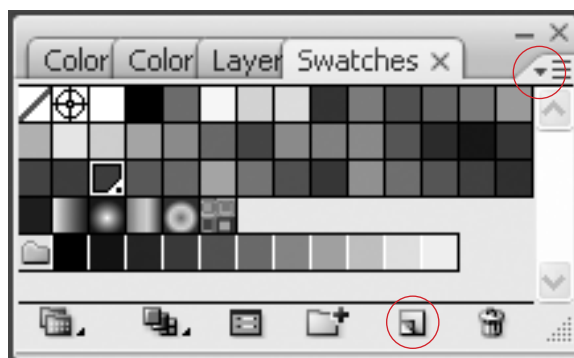


Illustration 6

STEP 10

Select both your original artwork and your newly created path. Go to Window > Align, the Align tab in your workspace palettes, or the properties bar.

Under Align Objects, Select the Horizontal Align Center button and the Vertical Align Center button (Illustration 8).

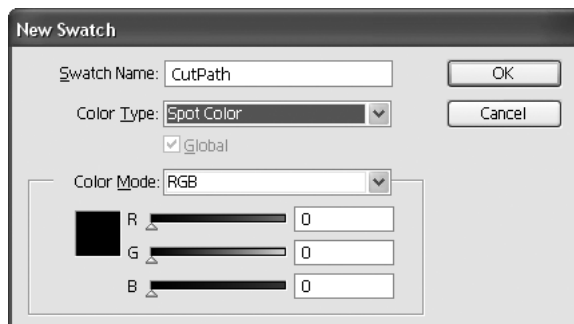


Illustration 7

STEP 11

Save the file as an .eps or .pdf.

STEP 12

Your cut path is now ready to be used in SoftRIP.

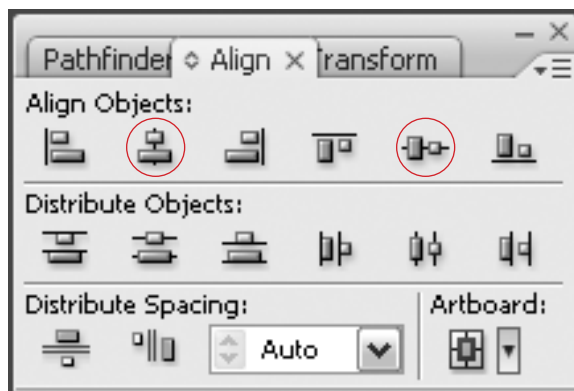


Illustration 8

CREATING AN OFFSET CUT PATH

An offset cut path is useful when you need to create white space around your finished piece or when you are using a bleed.

STEP 1

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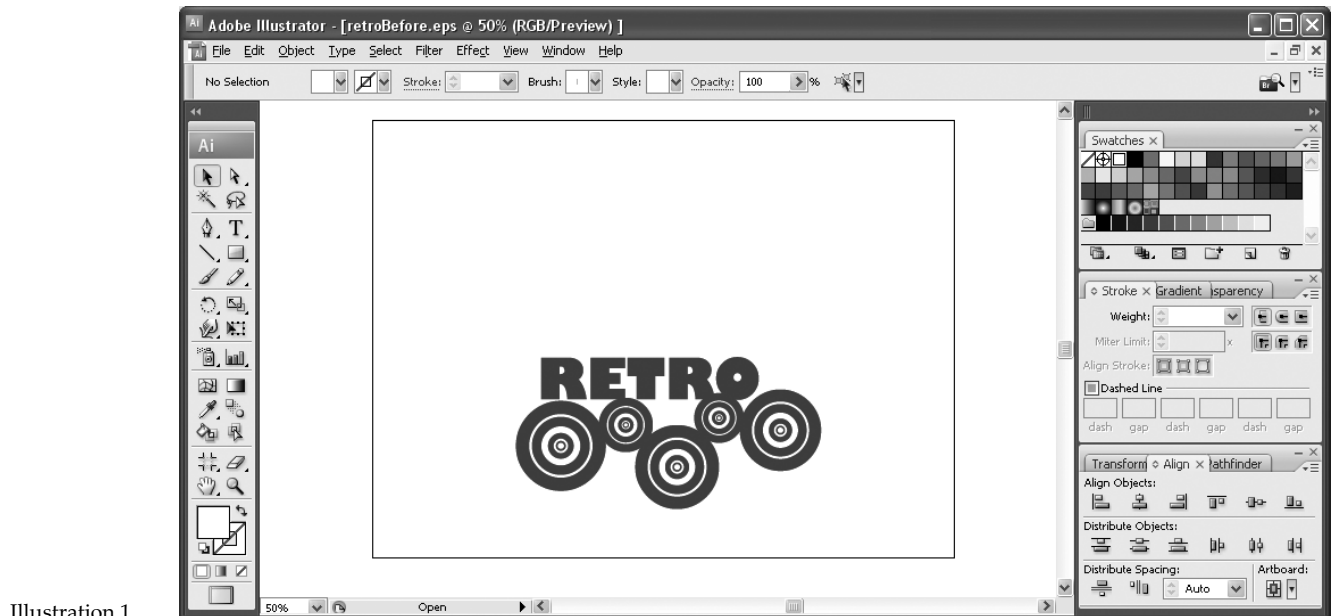


Illustration 1

STEP 2

Select all the objects that you want to create a cut path around and group them together (Object > Group or CTRL+G).

STEP 3

Create a duplicate of the grouped objects, as shown in Illustration 2 (Edit > Copy; Edit > Paste or CTRL+C; CTRL+V).

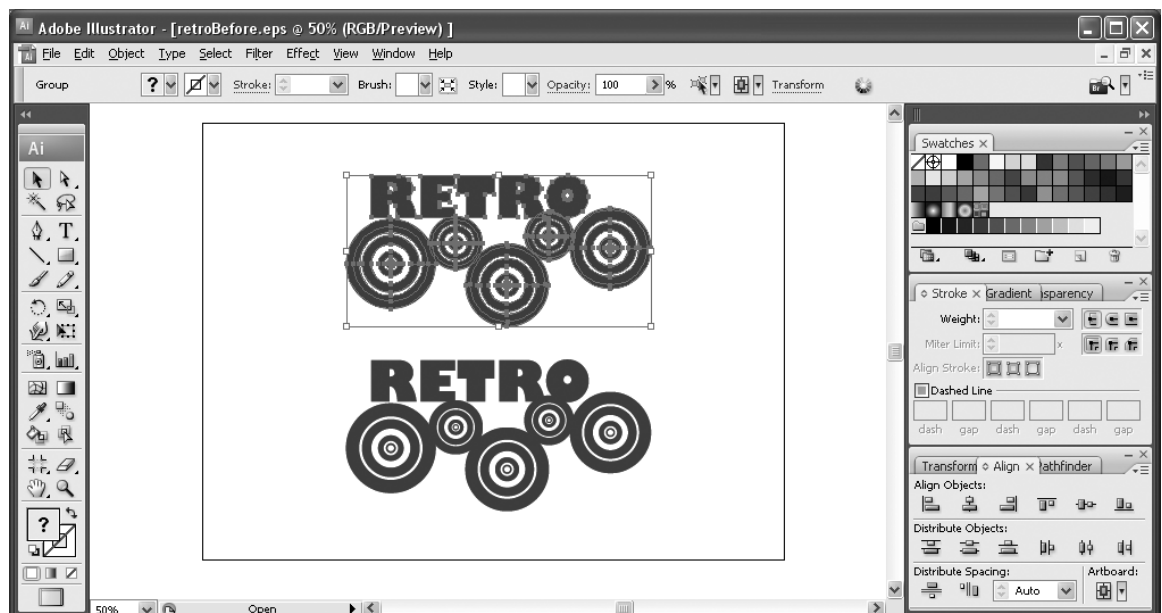


Illustration 2

STEP 4

Move the duplicated group above your original artwork so you can easily work with each group separately.

STEP 5

With the duplicated group still selected, go to Object > Path > Offset Path.

Adjust the Offset to create distance between the edge of your image and your cut path (Illustration 3). In this example, we have used an Offset of 5 pt. You can click the Preview button to view the size of your Offset before you apply it.

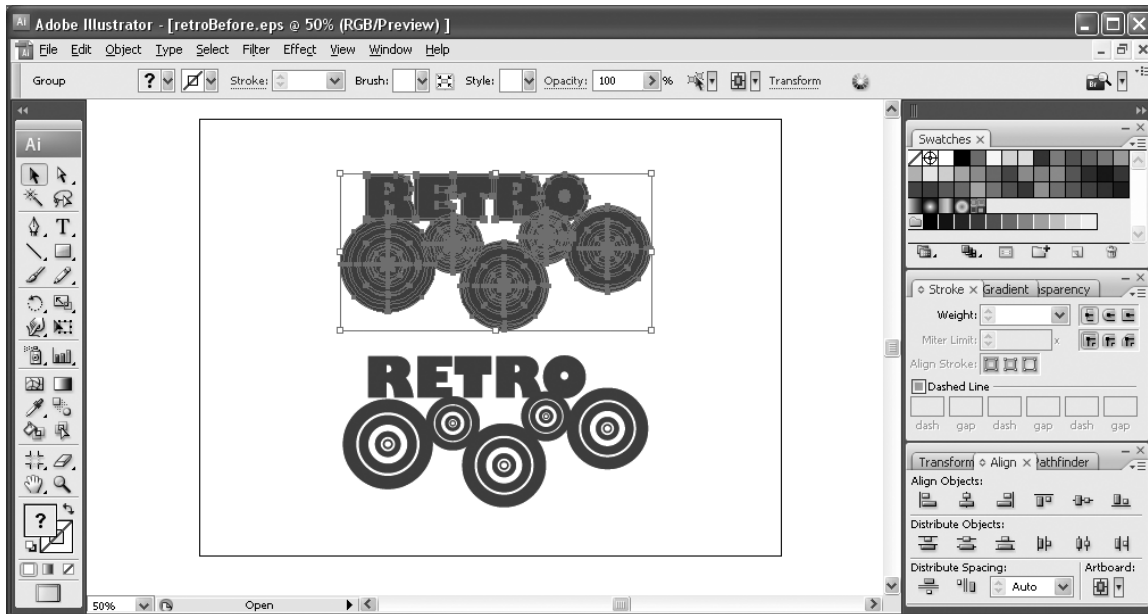


Illustration 3

STEP 6

With the duplicated group still selected, go to Window > Pathfinder or click on the Pathfinder tab in your workspace palettes.

Under Shape Modes, click the Add to Shape Area button and click Expand, or Alt-click on the Add to Shape Area button (Illustration 4).

This step merges all the elements of your duplicated artwork together so you can create a path that is offset from your original artwork.

Note: If Step 6 does not work with your image, follow these steps to merge your group:

1. Select the duplicated group.
2. Go to Type > Create Outlines.
3. Go to Object > Expand Appearance.
4. Go to Object > Expand.
5. Go to Window > Pathfinder or click on the Pathfinder tab in your workspace palettes.

Under Shape Modes, Alt-click on the Add to Shape Area button (Illustration 4).

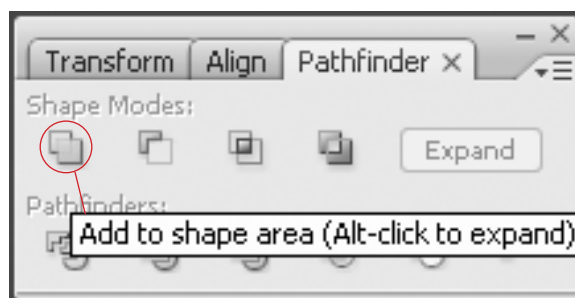


Illustration 4



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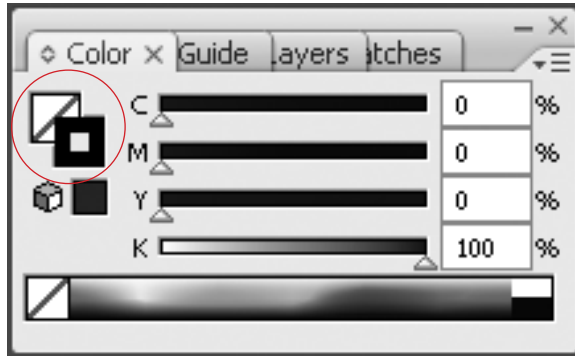


Illustration 6



Illustration 7

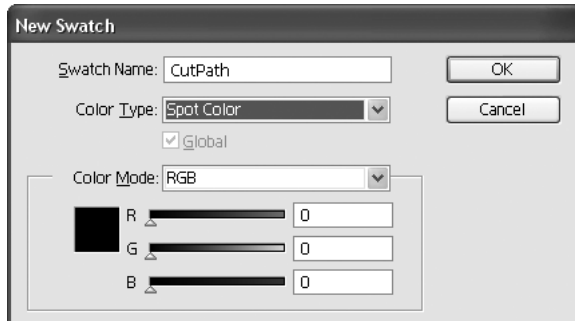


Illustration 8

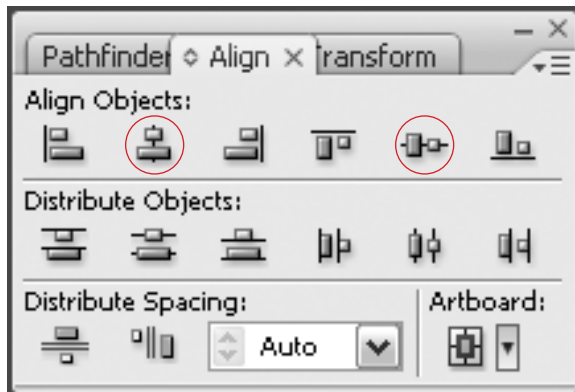


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With the path still selected, go to Window > Swatches or the Swatches tab in your workspace palettes and create a new swatch. You can use the drop down menu or the New Swatch button to do this (Illustration 7).

Note: The Stroke box must be in front of the Fill box in order to create a new swatch for the path (Illustration 5).

STEP 10

Name the swatch CutPath. Under Color Type, select Spot Color. It does not matter what the Color Mode is (Illustration 8).

Note: You must name the file CutPath and select Spot Color as the Color Type. If you don't, SoftRIP will not recognize the cut path.

STEP 11

Select both your original artwork and your newly created path. Go to Window > Align, the Align tab in your workspace palettes, or the properties bar.

Under Align Objects, Select the Horizontal Align Center button and the Vertical Align Center button (Illustration 9).

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Save the file as an .eps or .pdf.

STEP 13

Your cut path is now ready to be used in SoftRIP.