How to work with graphics frames

In Adobe InDesign CS6, you locate all graphics within *frames*. A graphics frame determines what parts of the frame's content (such as TIFFs, JPEGs, PDFs, PSDs, and AIs) appear on a page. You can also change the size and shape of the frame's content.

This guide covers the following topics:

- Drawing graphics frames
- Adding content to a graphics frame
- Applying a stroke to a graphics frame
- Changing the size or shape of a graphics frame
- Changing the size or shape of graphics frame contents

Creating a rectangular graphics frame

1. Start InDesign and create a new document.
2. Select the Rectangle Frame tool in the Tools panel (**Figure 1**) and drag the pointer to create a graphics frame.

   The frame has a crossbar through it, indicating that this is a graphics frame.

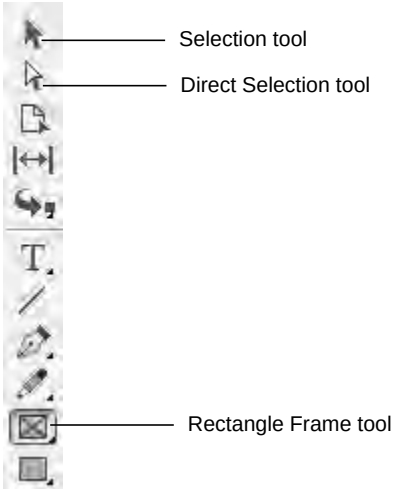

Figure 1 Tools panel

Creating a nonrectangular graphics frame

To create nonrectangular graphics frames, such as ellipses or polygons, use the Ellipse Frame tool or the Polygon Frame tool.

To create an elliptical graphics frame:

1. Click the Rectangle tool in the Tools panel, hold down the mouse button, and then select the Ellipse Frame tool (**Figure 2**).

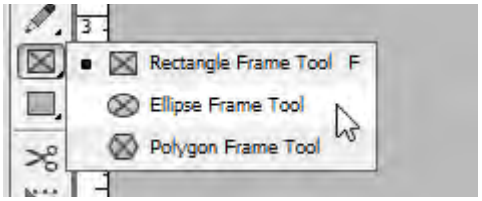

Figure 2 Ellipse Frame tool

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2. Drag the pointer to create an elliptical frame (**Figure 3**).

   Observe that the frame has a crossbar through it, indicating that this is a graphics frame.

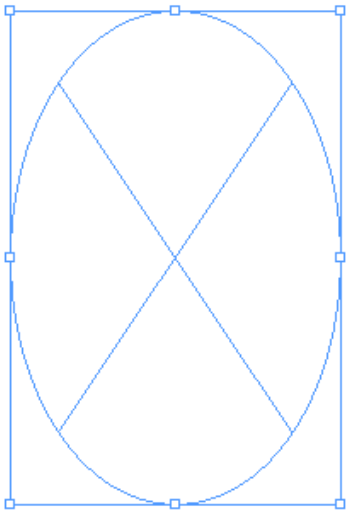

Figure 3 Elliptical frame

Adding an image to a graphics frame

The Place command is the primary method used to import graphics into InDesign because it provides the highest level of support for resolution, file formats, multipage PDFs, and color.

To add an image to a graphics frame:

1. Click the Selection tool in the Tools panel (**Figure 1**).
2. Select a graphics frame.
3. Choose File > Place.

   The Place dialog box appears (**Figure 4**).
4. Make sure the Show Import Options option is deselected.

   The Show Import Options option is generally unnecessary for images such as JPEGs and TIFFs.
5. Select the Preview option (Windows), and select the Replace Selected Item option (**Figure 4**).

   When the Preview option is selected, a thumbnail of the image appears in the lower-right corner of the Place dialog box (Windows).

   When you select the Replace Selected Item option, InDesign replaces whatever content is in the currently selected frame with your new image.
6. Browse to the location of the file you want to place.

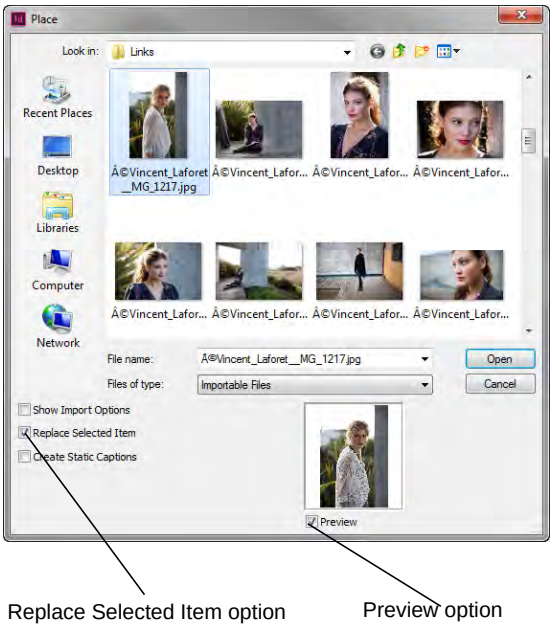

Figure 4 Place dialog box

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7. Select the file and click Open.

   The graphic is added to the graphics frame. If the graphic is larger than the frame, only a portion of the graphic shows.

8. Select Object > Fitting.

   This menu provides several options for fitting the content to the frame or the frame to the content (**Figure 5**).

   If the new image is smaller or larger than the frame, you can refit the frame by choosing Object > Fitting > Fit Content To Frame.

   The placed object is fit to the frame (**Figure 6**).

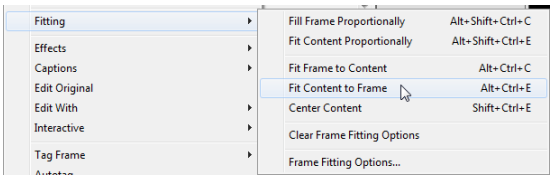

Figure 5 Object fitting options

Figure 6 Placed object fit to frame

Applying a stroke to a graphics frame

A *stroke* is the border around a frame. By default, frames have no stroke. You add one by using the Stroke panel. You can also change the color of the stroke by using the Stroke box in the Tools panel.

To add a stroke to a graphics frame:

1. Click the Selection tool in the Tools panel (**Figure 1**).
2. Click the edge of a graphics frame to select it.

   If you do not have a graphics frame created, create one by using one of the Frame tools.

3. Choose Window > Stroke to display the Stroke panel (**Figure 7**).

   Note: You can display the Stroke panel with either limited options or expanded options (as is shown in **Figure 7**). To hide or expand the options, choose Hide Options or Show Options from the Stroke panel menu.

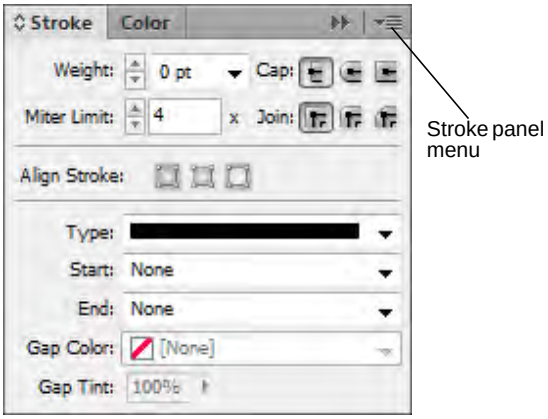

Figure 7 Stroke panel

4. Enter 5 pt in the Weight text box.

   A 5-point stroke is applied to the graphics frame (**Figure 10**). The more you increase point size for the stroke, the thicker the stroke will be.

5. Double-click the Stroke box in the Tools panel (**Figure 8**).

   The Color Picker appears (**Figure 9**).

6. Choose a color in the Color Picker by clicking somewhere in the square on the left side.

7. Click OK to close the Color Picker.

   The stroke is now the color you chose in the Color Picker (**Figure 10**).

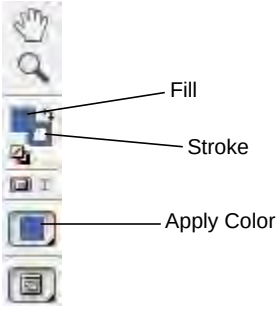

Figure 8 Tools panel

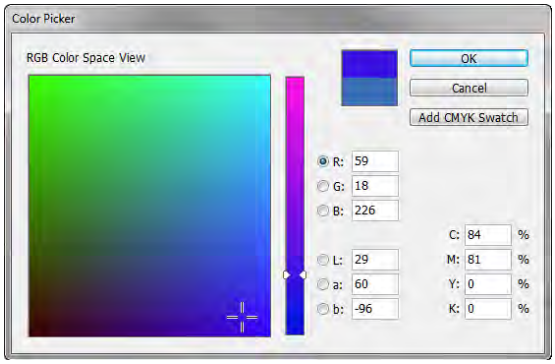

Figure 9 Color Picker

Figure 10 Stroke applied to graphics frame

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Changing the shape of a graphics frame

InDesign provides a number of options for changing the shape of a graphics frame. As you change the shape of a graphics frame, it restricts the view of the image contained in the frame.

To change the shape of a graphics frame:

1. Select the Direct Selection tool in the Tools panel (**Figure 1**).
2. Drag one of the corners to change the shape of the frame (**Figure 11**).
3. Release the mouse button to accept the change.

   The frame's shape has changed what part of the image you see.
4. Move the pointer over one of the frame's edge segments (not over a selection handle).

   The pointer changes to an arrow with a bar (**Figure 12**).
5. Drag the edge of the frame to change its shape .
6. Release the mouse to accept the change (**Figure 13**).

Figure 11 Dragging a corner to change frame shape

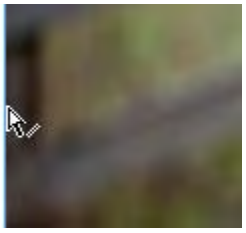

Figure 12 Move Segment pointer

Figure 13 Move edge applied

Changing the shape of an image without changing the frame

You can change the shape of a frame's content—its image—independent of the frame itself.

To change the shape of an image but not the frame:

1. Select the Selection tool in the Tools panel (**Figure 1**).
2. Select the frame.
3. Choose Object > Select > Content to select the graphics frame's content (**Figure 14**).

   A brown bounding box appears in the shape of the original image.
4. Drag a corner of this bounding box to change the size of the image independent of the frame (**Figure 15**).

   To change the image uniformly, hold down the Shift key as you drag the corner.
5. Release the mouse to accept the change (**Figure 16**).

Figure 14 Frame content selected

Figure 15 Dragging a corner to change frame shape

Figure 16 Image shape changed

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