

MICRO TYPOGRAPHY PART 1

MICRO TYPOGRAPHY PART 1: SPACING

Kerning :: Letter spacing :: Tracking :: Word Spacing

KERNING

Kerning is the act of adjusting the space between two characters to compensate for their relative shapes.

It refers to removing space between two characters to restore the natural rhythm found among the characters in the rest of the text. If letters in a typeface are spaced mathematically even, they make a pattern that doesn't look uniform enough.

** Letter spacing: adding space between two characters within a word.*

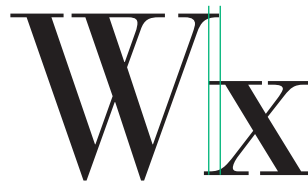
KERNING

The image shows the letters 'A' and 'V' in a serif font. Two vertical green lines are drawn at the right edge of the 'A' and the left edge of the 'V'. There is a significant gap between these two lines, indicating no kerning.

No Kerning — Default Metrics

The image shows the letters 'W' and 'X' in a serif font. Two vertical green lines are drawn at the right edge of the 'W' and the left edge of the 'X'. There is a significant gap between these two lines, indicating no kerning.The image shows the letters 'A' and 'V' in a serif font. Two vertical green lines are drawn at the right edge of the 'A' and the left edge of the 'V'. The lines are much closer together than in the first example, indicating that optical kerning has been applied.

Kerning — Selecting Optical Kerning

The image shows the letters 'W' and 'X' in a serif font. Two vertical green lines are drawn at the right edge of the 'W' and the left edge of the 'X'. The lines are much closer together than in the first example, indicating that optical kerning has been applied.The image shows the letters 'A' and 'V' in a serif font. Two vertical green lines are drawn at the right edge of the 'A' and the left edge of the 'V'. The lines are very close together, indicating that both optical kerning and manual adjustments have been used.

Kerning — Selecting Optical Kerning + Manual Adjustments

The image shows the letters 'W' and 'X' in a serif font. Two vertical green lines are drawn at the right edge of the 'W' and the left edge of the 'X'. The lines are very close together, indicating that both optical kerning and manual adjustments have been used.

KERNING PAIRS

Kerning pairs are a pair of letters whose shapes (and negative space around those shapes) cause them to need a kerning adjustment.

Sample letters which always need kerning:

W, Y, V, T, L, O. Sample letter pairs which always need adjusting: Wy, Ae, Yo, Te, Wo.

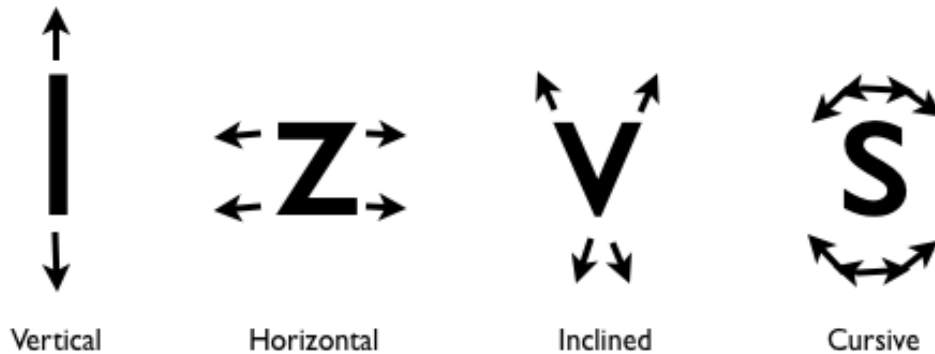
Often kerning happens between upper and lower case letters and between characters and punctuation.

KERNING EFFECTS READABILITY

savvy kerning

carnal doth

HOW TO OPTICALLY SPACE LETTERS



There are four kinds of strokes that make up letter forms. These must be spaced in a logical, consistent manner to appear optically correct. The idea is to maintain comfortable optical volumes (figure/ground) between letter forms. Each letter should “flirt” with the one next to it.

HOW TO OPTICALLY SPACE LETTERS

Small volume:
maximize space
(space the farthest apart)



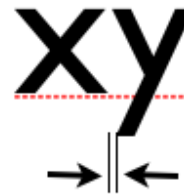
Vertical & Vertical

Medium volume:
adjust space
(space in between)



Cursive & Cursive

Large volume:
minimize space
(space the closest together)



Inclined & Inclined

Here are the extreme spacing limits for combining stroke types. You can build your own letter spacing system for the other stroke combinations.

HOW TO OPTICALLY SPACE LETTERS



Trust Me Trust Me

OPTICAL VOLUMES: Try to make these volumes “look” equal and create an even rhythm. A traditional graphic design standard for determining whether a word is letter spaced correctly is to envision pouring equal volumes of sand between characters | letters.

HOW TO OPTICALLY SPACE LETTERS

Wyoming

WORK WITH THE MOST TENACIOUS STROKE PAIR FIRST. Use determined space for similar stroke pairs. Then work in letter groupings of three. Use determined space for the letter spacing for similar stroke pairs.

* W, Y, V, T, L, O: Wy, Ae, Yo, Te, Wo

HOW TO OPTICALLY SPACE LETTERS

PRINT AND REVIEW

PRINT AND REVIEW

PRINT AND REVIEW YOUR WORK: Try flipping the word upside down. You won't "read" the letters as strongly and so you will be able to focus more easily on the positive and negative shapes created by the letter forms and the spaces between them.

TRACKING

Tracking adjusts the overall space between letters across an entire word or body of text (not just two characters within a word)

TRACKING VS.

KERNING &
LETTER SPACING

TRACKING EFFECTS READABILITY

Tracking effects the evenness of texture for the type within a sentence or paragraph.

WHEN TRACKING IS EFFECTIVE

The smaller the text size the more tracking you need for readability. The larger the text size the less tracking you need.

WHEN TRACKING IS EFFECTIVE

Small type needs more tracking.

Tracking: 0/1000 em

Small type needs more tracking.

Tracking: +10/1000 em

Large type needs less tracking.

Tracking: 0/1000 em

Large type needs less tracking.

Tracking: -20/1000 em

WHEN TRACKING IS EFFECTIVE

Reversing out type from a solid block of color or on a tint of color

When type is being read over a pattern or image

Tracking: +10/1000 em

** Using a typeface of a higher weight can also help compensate for the optical illusion of a smaller and tighter type face*

WHEN TRACKING IS EFFECTIVE

CAPITAL LETTERS

Tracking: 0/1000 em

CAPITAL LETTERS

Tracking: +40/1000 em

WHEN TRACKING IS EFFECTIVE

Condensed Type

Tracking: 0/1000 em

Condensed Type

Tracking: +20/1000 em

WHEN TRACKING IS EFFECTIVE



MINUTE
MINUTE

Potential Problems with Letters on a Curve



FRUITVILLE
FRUITVILLE

Untouched



FRUITVILLE
FRUITVILLE

With Tracking and Kerning

TRACKING: HELPFUL HINT

First track the entire word | sentence, then kern.

** Kern key pairs first, the key kerning pair will define the letter spacing for the entire word. Choose the most intractable pair to start the process.*

WORD SPACING

Try reading a line of text without word spacing to see how important it has become.

WORD SPACING

Word spacing should make all the space intervals between words “look” the same. Volumes are adjusted as in letter spacing by optical examination. Words must not appear to run together or be spaced so widely as to appear to be separate units.

APPROPRIATE WORD SPACING

Word spacing should vary with typeface, type size, and type arrangement. Word spacing and letter spacing should be consistent. Tight letter spacing demands tight word spacing.

wordtspacing word spacing

wordispacing word spacing

wordwspacing word spacing

top is moderate / middle is tight / bottom is loose

JUSTIFIED TEXT

Too many rivers and gaps

Nequi sam experum aliam quasper
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qui conicium elit aturepe kluptae.
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Too many hyphenations

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volo bla dolorpo ribusam, ipit ming-
taqui net quo quam errum audam
derferiam quihe quam veles dolor ac-
erunt, quies snonet rem comnis con-
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que nostrum veritas est.

JUSTIFIED TEXT

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derferiam quihe quam veles dolor ac-
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APPROPRIATE SPACING

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Dendisci picilia volorum a nosape
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del mostrumquid quas plabo. Stis

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boren ducident res simillu pictet
volo bla dolorpo ribusam, ipit minc-
taqui net quo quam errum audam
derf riam quihe quam veles dolor
acerunt, quies snonet rem comnis
conernam quate cor assendae la
sum quuden memoditi isquam, nosed
ut verum volupta dolligendi volupta
quia doluptast ped mo blacerfer-
iotes omnimpe lab in rernate omnis
quis doluptur? Tincipsam re porum
inti consed qui omnist ellabore pedi
ommolorumqui consed qui dendist
iumquis erumats quiduci andandus
que nostrum veritas est.

REVIEW

- ① Spacing is crucial in headlines or display type where the characters are larger and show the optical disparity between letters more readily.
- ② Spacing is good for readability of small text.
- ③ Spacing is good for text on a color background, on a pattern or an image.
- ④ Spacing is imperative for capital letters, condensed type or type on a curve.
- ⑤ Spacing is necessary for justified blocks of text.
- ⑥ Spacing is good for anything with small amounts of text | copy.