

Custom Signature Shape from Text (directions for other custom shapes at end of tutorial)

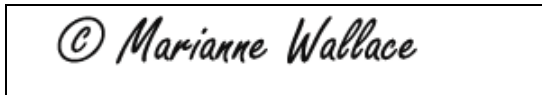
1. Create a new document by going to FILE > NEW. It doesn't really matter what size you create. It should be 8bit RGB, though. The other settings don't matter either since this will ultimately be a "vector shape".
2. Select the Type Tool. Choose a font. Because this will end up as a vector shape, you don't need to worry about the font size because you'll be able to make it as large or small as you want without any loss of quality. Make it large enough for you to see, though. It also doesn't matter what color you choose (except white, of course) because you will be able to change it to any color once you use the shape.

Start your signature off with a copyright symbol. The procedure is different for Windows and Mac.

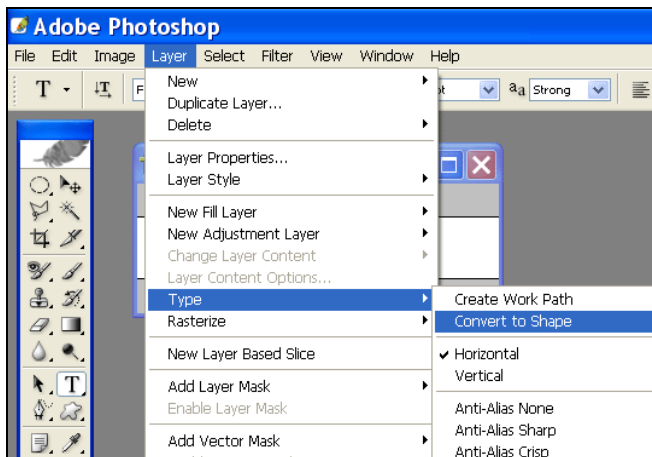
Windows - Hold the ALT key. Press 0169 on the numeric keypad. Let go of ALT and the symbol appears.

Mac - Hold the OPTION key. Press G. Let go of the OPTION key and the symbol appears.

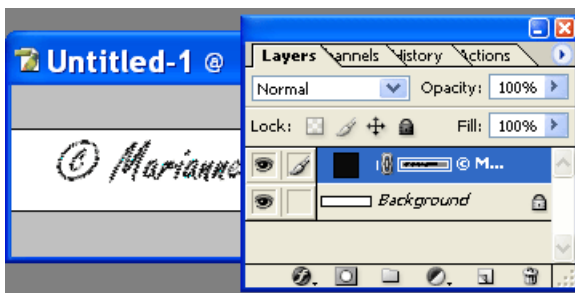
NOTE: Not all fonts will create a copyright symbol so you might have to choose a different font just for the copyright symbol. Once you have it, change your font if needed and type your signature.



3. Go to the Top Menu and select **Layer>Type>Convert to Shape**.

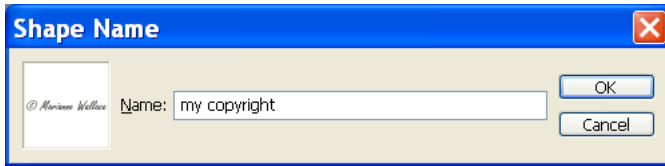


4. Look at your Layers Palette and note that you have a new Layer. Note, also, that the type in your document is selected (outlined).



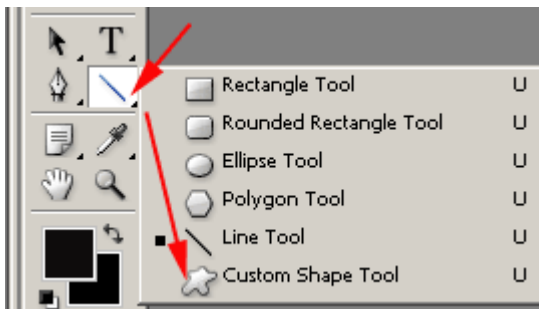
"Advanced Users Only" Tip: At this point you can modify your signature shape. Click on the "Direct Selection tool". This will activate the path and you can now use the "Path Selection Tool" to edit it. This is an opportunity to make your text or any shape available, completely unique. This is very advanced and can get you into trouble if you're not familiar with the pen tools so be careful!

5. Now Go to the Edit menu and choose "Define Custom Shape". When the box comes up, type a name for your custom signature shape. Click OK.

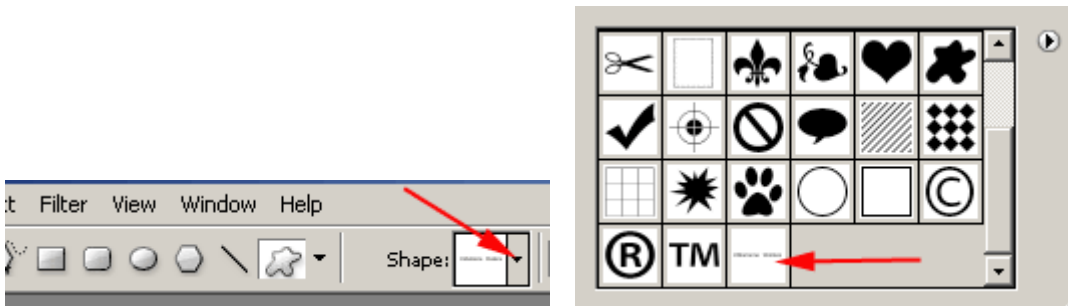


6. That's it! You have now created a custom shape out of your signature.

Go ahead and test it. Click and hold the Custom Tool icon on the Tools Palette (right below the T). Choose the Custom Shape Tool at the bottom of the list.



Look on the top toolbar. Click on the little down arrow beside the word "Shape". A big dialog box will appear. Look for the very last shape in the box. It should be your signature. Click on it.



7. Look at the top toolbar again for the Options of the shape tool. Click on the FIRST option ("Shape Layer").



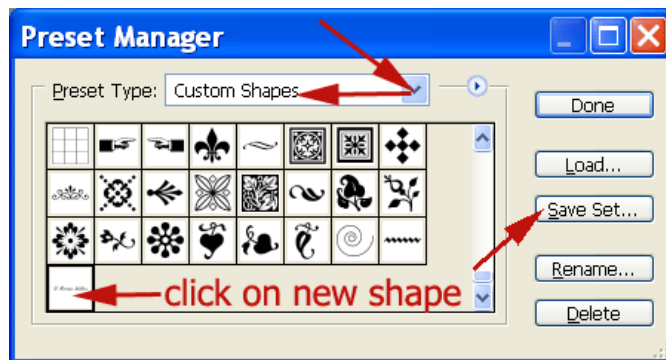
Now that you have your signature shape active, move your mouse over to a photo (or blank document) and CLICK/HOLD and DRAG out the tool on your document. You'll see your signature.

TIP: To control the size while creating your shape, don't let up on your mouse until you are done. Move the mouse in/out/up/down to get the size you want and then hold the space bar to reposition it. Remember not to let go of the mouse while you are doing this.

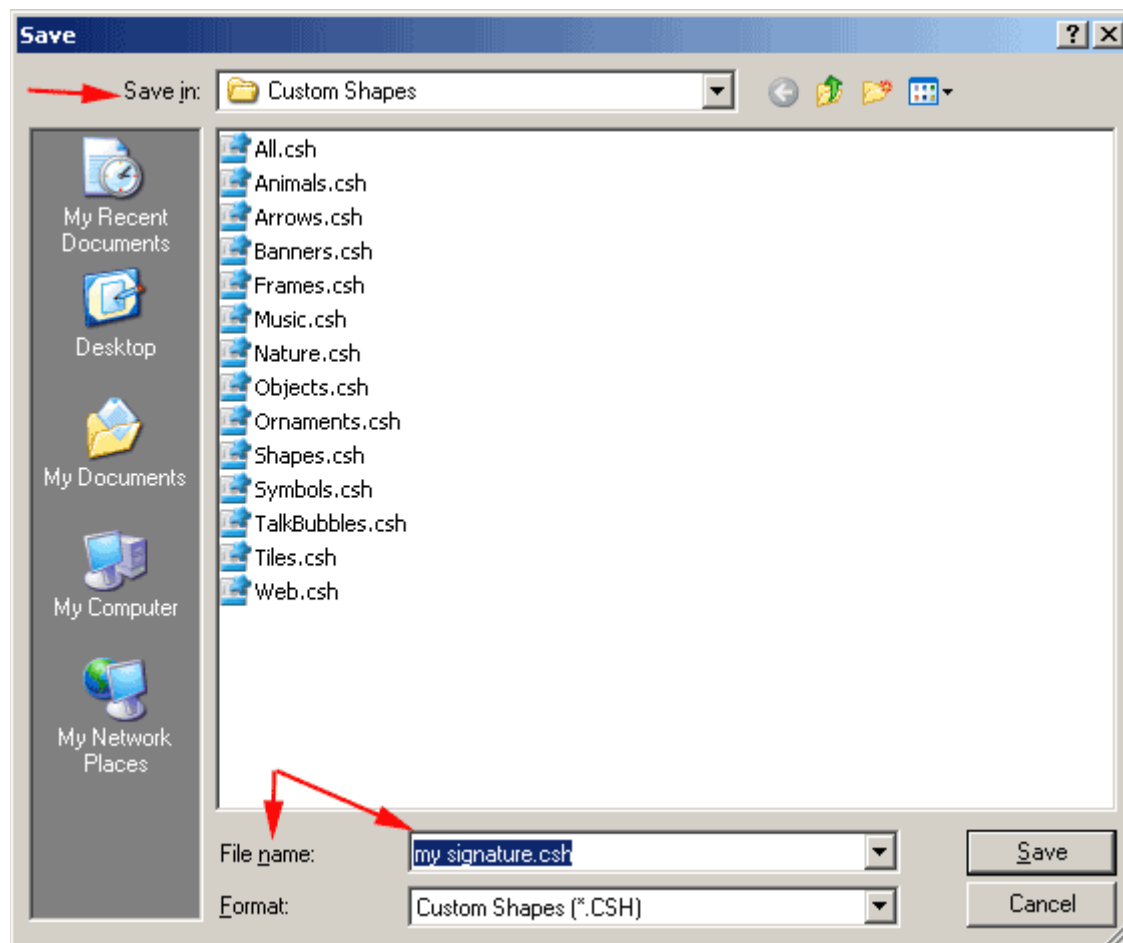
Once you let go of the mouse and your shape is set, you can still make adjustments. Just bring up the Transform Tool to adjust it to your heart's content! You will also be able to rotate it if you want.

SAVE YOUR CUSTOM SHAPE!!! Your Custom Signature Brush must be saved to your "Presets". Complete the steps that follow or you risk losing your new shape!

1. Go to the Top menu bar and click on Edit >Preset Manager. The following dialog box comes up. Starting at the top of the box, first click beside "preset type" and choose "custom shapes" from the menu. Now locate your shape in the box and click on your new shape. Finally.....Click "Save Set".



2. The following box comes up (will be slightly different on Mac). By default, the first "Save In" box will show the Custom Shapes Folder. You can choose to save it anywhere you want. Just remember where it is. Next, name your shape and then click "Save".



The Preset Manager box will come up again. Click "DONE".

USING YOUR SIGNATURE SHAPE:

1. Open any image. Select your new Custom Signature Shape. On the top Options Bar, set the Option to “**shape layer**”. This will put your shape on a separate layer which is preferred. Now “click and drag” out your new shape. (fig1)
2. You can now use the Move tool or the Transform Tool to resize and/or reposition your shape if necessary. You can also add any style or color you desire. To change the color, just click on the color swatch which brings up the color picker. To add a style, click on the little “F” at the bottom of the layers palette. This will bring up the Layer Styles box when you can add special effects like a bevel. (fig2)



fig 1



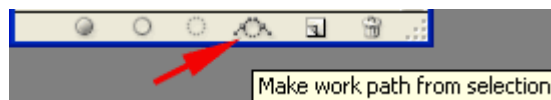
fig 2

ADVANCED OPTIONS:

1. Create a **custom shape** from one of the many fun “**dingbats**” or “**icons**” available in Text Fonts. Just choose one and follow the above tutorial directions.
2. Create a **shape from a drawing or a selection of an object** in a photo. Keep in mind, though, that your ultimate shape will ONLY be a SILHOUETTE so make sure it’s interesting enough to make sense.

For drawings or selections, you will need to create a **PATH** before you can convert it to a shape. Here’s how:

- a. Make a selection of an object or drawing....I selected a cat. (Don’t forget that you’ll only get a silhouette!)
- b. Open the “**Paths**” palette (not in Elements, sorry) and click on the “make work path from selection” icon at the bottom of the palette. This puts a line all around your image.



3. Now just go to “Edit” and choose “define custom shape” as in Step 5. Continue with other steps.



Here is my cat custom shape:

CREATE A GREETING CARD.

 Here’s how mine was done:

1. Create a new document. 2. Click on “View>show> grid”. 3. Create a new blank layer, make a selection of one square on the Grid and fill it with a color. 4. Repeat step 3 9 times so that you have a layer for each colored square. 5. Use the Transform Tool to distort the colored squares making them more interesting. 6. Put in the text and apply a gradient overlay to each text layer. 7. Find holiday “dingbats”, and use tutorial to create each into a shape. 8. Add a metallic “style” and position them.

Since all elements are separate layers, you can edit everything!

