



by Jenifer Juris

Secrets of Terrific Type

Lesson 02-02: Leading—Photoshop Elements

In this big world of type, there are a lot of terms that get thrown around. My goal is to spend some time helping you learn about some of these terms and how to use them to create beautiful type.

Many lessons have separate versions for Photoshop and Photoshop Elements. Photoshop Elements is a powerful program and it can do so many things very well. However, the type tool is one place where having PSE can be a slight disadvantage. But, don't worry! When necessary, I'll show you work arounds and give you insider tips on how to make PSE do what you need. Not every work around will be as slick as the PS version but I will do my best to provide you with steps to help make the process as smooth as possible.

The first topic we are going to cover in Lesson 4 is Leading.

What is Leading?

Leading in it's most simple form, is the spacing between two lines of type.

Here's a visual example. Both paragraphs of text have the same words but one takes up more space than the other because I changed the leading.

Hi! My name is Jenifer and
my husband's name is
Andy. We met in college
and were best friends for
3.5 years before we started
dating. Once we started
dating, we were engaged
in 5 months and married 4
months after that! We've
been together for 14 years
and I'm so glad he's mine!

Hi! My name is Jenifer and
my husband's name is
Andy. We met in college
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Why is Leading important? There are a couple of reasons why leading can really impact our type.

#1. Space

The amount of space a paragraph of text takes up in a digital project can be highly impacted by the leading or the space between the lines of text.

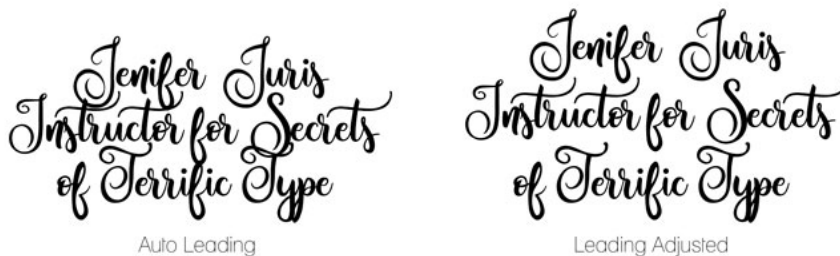
Let's say you have a specific shape you need a paragraph of text to fit to, you don't have to only adjust the font size. You can also adjust the leading in order to help your text fit nicely.

Hi! My name is Jenifer and my husband's name is Andy. We met in college and were best friends for 3.5 years before we started dating. Once we started dating, we were engaged in 5 months and married 4 months after that! We've been together for 14 years and I'm so glad he's mine!

#2. Script Fonts & Readability

When using script fonts, I find that some fonts (Auto) leading settings aren't large enough. The bottom of the top row of letters is overlapping the tops of the bottom row of letters which can make things harder to read.

Here's an example of what I mean. The text on the left is using the (Auto) Leading setting and the text on the right is using a specific number I set the Leading to. The one on the right is easier to read.

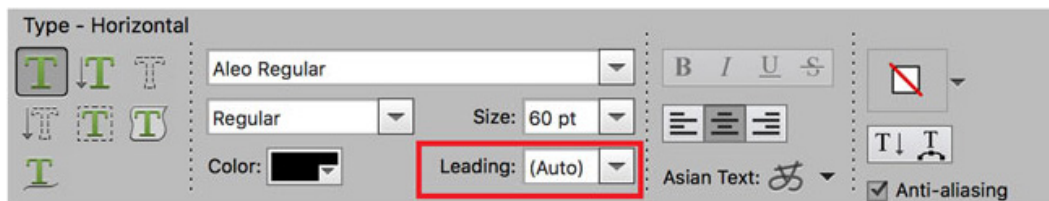


So now that we know WHAT leading is, let's take a look at how to change the Leading settings in PSE.

- Create a new document that is 12 inches by 12 inches at 300ppi with a white background.
- Get the Horizontal Type tool. In the Tool Options, set the font, size, and alignment to your choice. I'm using the font Aleo, with a size of 60 its and a center alignment.
- On the document, click and drag to create a text box and once it's the size you want, let go of the mouse.
- Start typing something. I'm going to type the first few lines of an old hymn. Once I'm done, I'll click the check mark to commit.

Amazing grace,
how sweet
the sound.

Leading is one of the options that PSE gives us so go back to the Tool Options and you'll see that the Leading drop down box is located just under the font size drop down box.



The first thing I usually do is try changing the Leading size to match the Font size. This does different things for different fonts. So in this case, when I change the Leading to a size of 60 pts, for Aleo, this makes the space between the lines smaller. But, thankfully, it's not too small.

Amazing grace,
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- Change the Leading to 48. You can see that the space is still keeping the lines separate but only just.

Amazing grace,
how sweet
the sound.

- Change the Leading to 30. You can see that now the lines overlap.

Amazing grace,
how sweet
the sound.

- Change the Leading back to 60.

Just so you're aware, you can manually change the number instead of using the preset numbers in the drop down box. Click where the 60 is and type a new number. For this example, type 65 and press Enter (Mac: Return).

Amazing grace,
how sweet
the sound.

Ok, that looks pretty good. It's just enough space that each line is clearly readable without there being too much space between each line.

Now that we've seen what Leading is and how we can change it, let's spend a little time talking about some do's and don'ts.

The biggest mistake you can make with Leading is to not go too far in either direction.

If your Leading is too small, everything runs together and two things happen.

#1. It's hard to read.

#2. It's visually distracting.

**When the leading of
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can be hard to read and it
is visually distracting.**

If your Leading is too large, you get a feeling of disconnection and that's visually distracting in a different way.

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When it comes to Leading, there's a range of spacing that is optimal. All three of these paragraphs have a different leading setting but they are all acceptable.

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Leading Shortcut

Besides manually typing in a number to adjust the Leading, or by using the Leading dropdown box to select a different number there, another way you can adjust the Leading is this:

First, double click on the thumbnail of the type layer so that all of the type is selected. Now, make sure you have the Type tool with the Tool Options open.

Then, hold your mouse over the word Leading and you'll see a double sided arrow appear. When this happens, you can then click and drag the mouse left or right to adjust the Leading larger or smaller.

Now it's time for some homework! The next video will give you a small project to work on that will give you a better understanding of Leading and how it can help you when you design your next digital project!