



Printable Grids in Illustrator 9

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How to Make Printable Grids in Illustrator 9

[Vector vs raster?](#)

Note: This tip also works in Illustrator 10.

There's an overview and tips for the new [Rectangular Grid Tool in Illustrator 10](#) [here](#).

[Tips and Tutorials](#)

The alignment grids in Illustrator (**View > Show Grid**) are non-printing grid-lines, customizable by the user, to aid in layout and design. It's great for alignment and designing, but what if you want to print one (for instance, you're making a tutorial and you want the grid to show in the graphics, or you want a grid for part of the graphic)? They don't print and no matter what options you set, it still won't print. That must why it's called a non-printing grid! But we can get around that. **Illustrator 10** has a new grid tool. You can read about that [here](#).

[Resources](#)

Here's how to get a printable grid without drawing every line in **Illustrator 9**.

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Set the colors in the toolbox to no fill and black stroke (depending on what you will use the final grid for, make your stroke color choice now. I'm using black because it shows up well but if you can use any color. Black is rather overpowering to anything you want to put on the grid in the final image. A nice soft gray works well, or maybe graph paper blue. Up to you!)



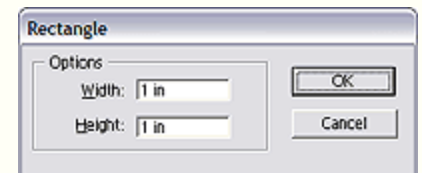
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Select the rectangle tool in the toolbox, and then click once on the artboard to open the Rectangle options dialog box.

[Expression](#)

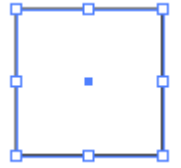
Set the width and height both to 1" (If you have your program preferences in Edit > Preferences > Units and undos set at anything other than inches, you'll have to type "1 in" to set the measurement to inches.)



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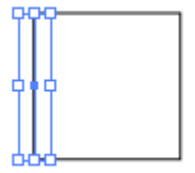
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Click **OK**, and the 1" square appears on the artboard. Press **cntl+c** to **copy** the square and then **cntl+f** to **paste in front**. When you use **paste in front**, it won't look like anything changed, because it lines it up perfectly on the top of the original.

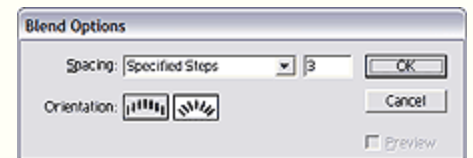


Grab the center node on the right side of the square, and drag it to the left until it becomes a line. This is easiest with Smart Guides turned on (**View > Smart Guides** or **cntl+u**)

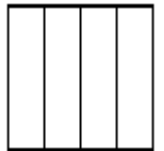
Using the move tool (black arrow), make sure the line and the square underneath it are both selected (or, more correctly, both squares). In this illustration only the line is selected. When both are selected, you'll have a blue node on each corner of the square. The easiest way to select both is to drag a marquee around them with the black arrow tool. (**V**)



Double click on the blend tool in the toolbox to open the blend options. In the Spacing dropdown box, choose "Specified Steps" and 3 for the number. For Orientation, choose "**Align to Path**" (the one on the **right**. The left one is "Align to Page" in case you're wondering.)

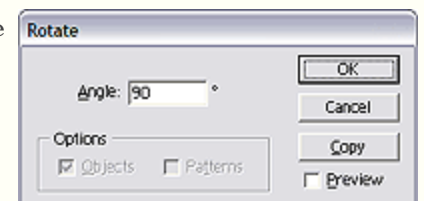


With the blend tool, hover over the the bottom left node of the line until the little square in the blend cursor turns black, and then click once. Now hover over the bottom right node on the square until the blend tool's little square in the cursor turns black again and then click once. The line will blend into the square, making a square with four vertical columns. After blending the two objects are one object.

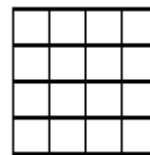


Select the blend, and **cntl+c** to copy and **cntl+f** to paste in front. Once again you won't see a change, but there is a second blend on top of the first one. Now we need to rotate the copy. Without clicking on the artboard (to keep from de-selecting the copy you pasted in front) click on the **rotate** tool in the tool box. Type 90 for the angle, and click **OK**.

Drag a marquee with the black arrow to select both squares then go to **Object > Group**.



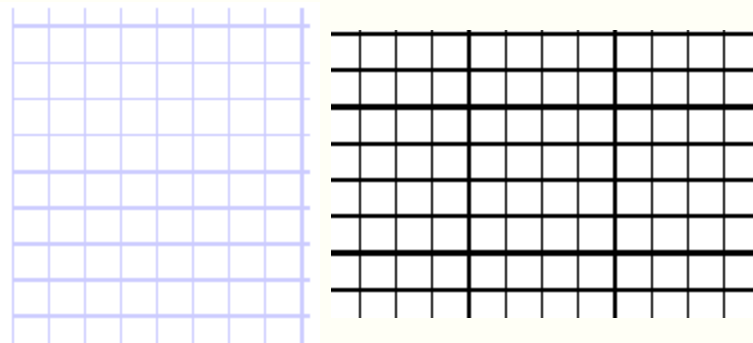
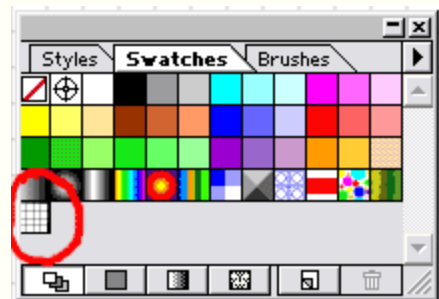
And there you are...a 1" printable grid, with ¼" squares. You can use it as a pattern fill for a rectangle the size of your document. Or you can change the math and do a larger square. (A 4" square, for instance, would take blend steps set to 15).



To make it into a pattern to use as a fill for other shapes (or to make a full size page of graph paper), go on to the next step.

To make it into a pattern, go to **Edit > Define Pattern**. Type a name for the grid pattern and click **OK**. It will appear in the **swatches palette** for use as a pattern fill.

Now it can be used to fill any shape, at any size...and you'll always get 1" squares. For instance if you want a full sheet of graph paper, in the rectangle options set the size of the rectangle to 8.5" X 11.0" and fill with the grid pattern you made. I like a light gray or light blue for graph paper.



This grid makes a great pattern brush. If you want, use the tile you made to continue on to the [Pattern Brush tutorial](#). The pattern brush tutorial is for **Illustrator 9 and 10**.

Download this tutorial as a PDF file

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