

Creating Color Swatches in Adobe Indesign

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Introduction

The Swatches panel lets you create and name colors, gradients, or tints and quickly apply them to your document. Swatches make it easier to modify color schemes without having to locate and adjust each individual object. The Swatches panel is the headquarters for your document's colors. You can use it to apply, fill, and stroke colors to any object or text on your page. However, not many built-in swatches are provided. Thankfully, there are endless possibilities in creating new colors and adding new colors to your document.

The Swatches panel stores the following types of swatches:

- **Colors:** Icons on the Swatches panel identify the spot and process color types, and LAB, RGB, CMYK, HSB, and Mixed Ink color mode
- **Tints:** A percentage value next to a swatch in the Swatches panel indicates a tint of a spot or process color.
- **Gradients:** An icon on the Swatches panel indicates whether a gradient is radial or linear .

In this manual, you will learn how to create a new color swatch in Adobe Indesign. Let's look at how you can create a new color swatch for your document.

Special Notices

! Deselect all the objects on your page when you want to create a new color swatch. If any object had been selected on the page when you create color swatches, then the last color created will be applied to that object.

! Spot color type should only be used if you're going to be printing on a printing press and you know that your printer is using special Pantone inks, like spot inks or varnishes, things like that.

! Be very careful when picking colors on your screen because the colors that you see on-screen are probably not going to match what you see in print. If your document is going to be printed, you almost certainly want to use CMYK. But if it's mostly for on-screen viewing or maybe printing to a desktop printer, then RGB is fine.

! Swatches you create are associated only with the current document. Each document can have a different set of swatches stored in its Swatches panel.

Equipment

- Adobe Indesign
- Computer
- Mouse
- Patience

Things to Know

Color Types

A **spot color** is a special premixed ink requiring its printing plate on a press. Use spot color when color accuracy is vital; Spot color inks accurately reproduce colors outside the spectrum of process colors. However, the spot color's appearance on print is determined by the combination of the ink mixed by the printer and the paper published, not by the color values you specify. When you select spot color values, you're creating the simulated appearance of color for your monitor and printer only (subject to the limitations of those devices).

A **process color** print combines the four standard process inks: cyan, magenta, yellow, and black (CMYK). It is best to use process colors when a job requires many colors. Using spot inks in these scenarios would be expensive or impractical, like printing color photographs.

Built in Swatches

Registration: Registration is a built-in swatch that causes objects to print on every separation from a PostScript printer. You cannot edit or remove this swatch.

Black: Black is a built-in, 100% process color black defined using the CMYK color model. You can't edit or remove this swatch. By default, all occurrences of Black overprint (print on top of) underlying inks, including text characters at any size. You can disable this behavior.

Paper: Paper is a builtin swatch that simulates the paper color on which you're printing. Objects behind a paper-colored object won't print where the paper-colored object overlaps them. Instead, the color of the paper on which you print shows through. To edit the Paper color to match your paper stock, double-click it in the Swatches panel. Use the Paper color to preview only—it will not be printed on a composite printer or in color separations. You can't remove this swatch. **Don't apply the Paper swatch to remove the color from an object. Use the None swatch instead.**

Things to Know

Color Libraries Installed with InDesign

InDesign installs color libraries for the color matching systems described below. You can install additional color libraries and load swatches from them in InDesign.

- ANPA Color
- DIC Color
- FOCOLTONE
- HKS
- PANTONE
- **System (Windows)**
Includes 256 colors of the Windows default 8-bit panel, which is based on a uniform sampling of RGB colors.
- **System (Mac OS)**
Includes 256 colors of the Mac OS default 8-bit panel, which is based on a uniform sampling of RGB colors.
- TOYO COLOR FINDER
- TRUMATCH
- **Web**
Includes the 216 RGB web-safe colors most often used by web browsers to display 8-bit images. This library helps you create artwork for the web using colors that display consistently across Windows and Macintosh systems.

Things to Know

RGB vs. CMYK

RGB

RGB is an additive color model. RGB uses white as a combination of all primary colors and black as the absence of light. RGB is ideal for digital media designs because these mediums emit color as red, green, or blue light. The white light emitted through the screen blends the three colors on the eye's retina to create a wide range of other perceived colors. With RGB, the more color beams the device emits, the closer the color gets to white. Not emitting any beams, however, leads to the color black.

RGB color values range from 0 to 255.

CMYK

CMYK is a subtractive color model. CMYK uses white as the natural color of the print background and black as a combination of colored inks. CMYK is best for print materials because print mediums use colored inks for messaging. CMYK subtracts colors from natural white light and turns them into pigments or dyes. With CMYK, the more colored ink placed on a page, the closer the color gets to black. Subtracting cyan, magenta, yellow, and black inks create white or the original color of the paper or background.

CMYK ranges from 0-100%.

Step-By-Step

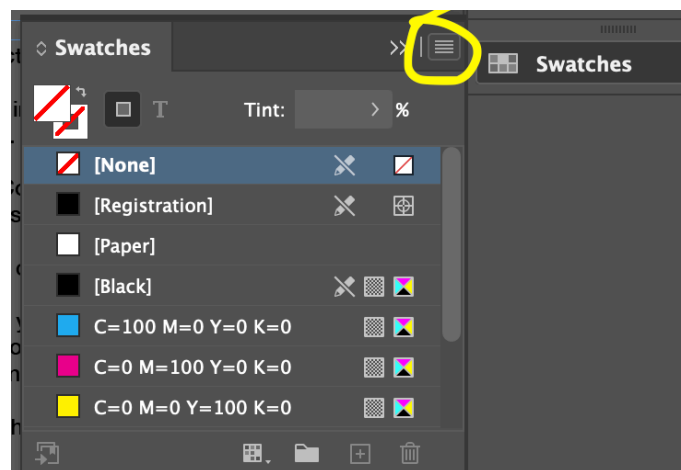
Adobe Indesign should already be opened on your computer.

Move your cursor to the right of the pasteboard and select “Swatches”.

Now you should see a box with different colored squares. These are built in swatches.

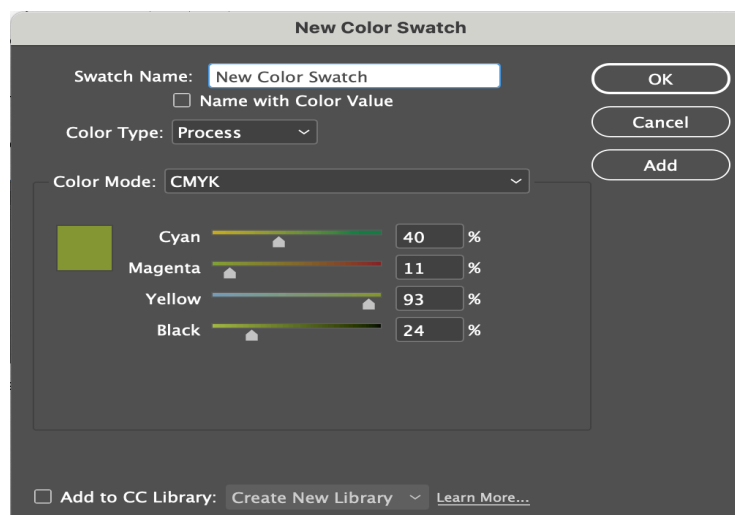
Six CMYK-defined colors appear in the default Swatches panel: cyan, magenta, yellow, red, green, and blue.

Here, you will click on the three lines located in the upper right corner of the box; this will open the **Swatches panel menu**.



Select “New Color Swatch” in the Swatches panel menu.

Now the New Color Swatch dialog box will open.



Step-By-Step

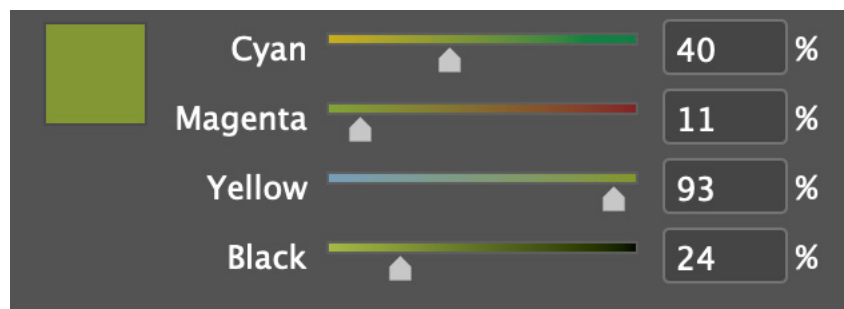
In the New Color Swatch dialog box, choose the color type you need. You can designate colors as either *spot* or *process* color types.

For Color Type, choose the method you'll use to print your document

Then choose a color mode; **CMYK** or **RGB** or another color library.

For Color Mode, choose the mode you want to use in defining the color.

Drag the sliders to change the color values. You can also enter numeric values in the text boxes next to the color sliders. If in a library, select a color by scrolling through the list or typing in the color number in the search bar.



Watch the preview box to the left to see your color.

Create a name for your color by typing it in the “**Swatch Name**” text box. You can also name the color with value by selecting the check box next to “**Name with Color Value**”

Now you have your swatch you can choose “Ok”, “Add”, or “Cancel”

- If you click “Ok” Indesign will add the swatch to the swatches library and close the dialog box.
- If you click “Add” Indesign will add the swatch to the swatches library and the dialog box will remain open.
- If you click cancel the swatch will not be added to the swatches library and the dialog box will close.

Step-By-Step

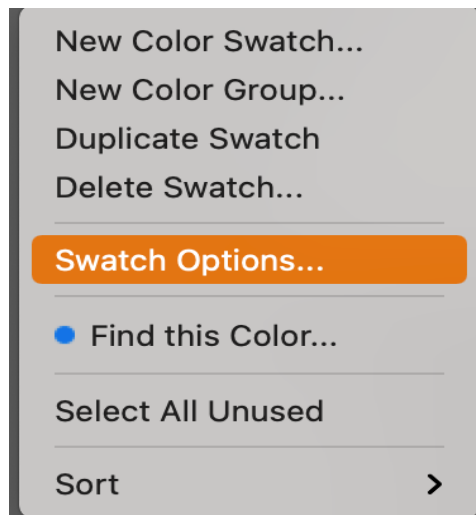
There is a checkbox in the lower left corner of the menu. You may want to check the checkbox to add the swatch to the CC library.

If you only want the swatch on this document, leave it unchecked.

By adding a swatch to the CC library, you can use the color across multiple platforms such as Photoshop, Illustrator, and other Adobe programs.

Editing Swatches

Right-click, or Ctrl+click with a one-button mouse, and up comes this context menu where I can choose “Swatch Options”.



This lets you edit the color.

Now you can choose a different color and click OK.

Now, not only does the color change in the Swatches panel, but any object that was filled or stroked with that color throughout the whole document also changes.

Conclusion

Congratulations. You now know how to create new color swatches and add them to your library in Adobe Indesign. Now you can create beautiful documents with endless color possibilities; Go get creative.

