

Illustrator Utility Tools

These last group of tools in the Illustrator toolbar are utility tools. Here they are:



Slice (Shift+K)

The Slice tool is used to cut up images for web design. The theory was that rather than creating one big image to download, you would make a bunch of smaller ones. The smaller ones will load individually, rather than having to wait for the entire big one to load, giving our viewer the illusion of progress. What is good for is to cut parts off an image, again for web use. But I am really getting off on a tangent here. The slice tool lets you create the slices.



Slice Select

The slice select tool is a direct selection tool for slices. The slices are grouped as you create them, so this tool is needed to select the individual pieces.



Scissors (C)

The Scissors tool is used to split paths. When you click on a path with the Scissors, two anchor points are created as endpoints for the newly cut segments:



Knife

The knife is used to cut objects, as opposed to paths. Dragging across an object will separate it into two:



Hand (H)

The Hand, or Grabber Hand, is used to move the entire document around in its window. The Hand tool is always accessible (except when using a Type tool) by pressing the Space bar.





Page

The page tool allows you to move the printed area from centered. It uses the current page setup setting (for page size, orientation and printable area). You can use the Page tool to tile a large image, printing it in sections. Use caution with this tool, as the printing area will stay where you put it. The printing (or printable) area shows as a dotted rectangle, looking like a margin on the page.



Zoom (Z)

The Zoom tool zooms in either by just clicking, or by drawing a marquee around part of a document. I find the Zoom tool generally only useful when I really want to zoom way in on a particular spot. There are various other ways to move around Illustrator, and I mostly use Command + to zoom in, Command - to zoom out, and Command 0 (zero) to center the page. It's just easier than selecting the Zoom tool.