

# Styling Text for Web

Hello and welcome to the Divi Stylist Academy typography lesson on styling text. In this video, I would like to share a few tips, a few do's and don'ts when it comes to working with text on a website. In the lesson on choosing fonts, I mentioned the most common typography mistake - which is using too many font families, too many font styles and sizes. That is why I think that we all should realize that it all comes back to planning.

## Define a Type Scale System

My first tip for working with text, which kind of requires to stop and think ahead - is to create a Type Scale. Take the time at the beginning of the project to create a sizing system. Choosing font sizes with a system is a great idea for two reasons. First, it saves your designs from annoying inconsistencies and also it speeds up your workflow.

How do you define a type system? The most practical approach is to simply pick values by hand. You have total control over which sizes exist instead of, you know, outsourcing that job to some mathematical formula. Here's an example of a scale that works well for most projects and aligns nicely with the spacing and sizing scale I recommended in the lesson about spacing. It's constrained just enough to speed up your decision making, but it's not so limited as to make you feel like you're missing a useful size. Whenever you need to choose a font size - just pick a value from your type scale - if it's not exactly right the next value will probably be perfect. Taking the time to make all these decisions

upfront will save you loads of time afterwards and it will make sure your design is consistent. Ok, now, when we are styling text on a website, a marketing landing page, or a blog article, or maybe some documentation page - it's important to make the active reading effortless for the user.

## Limit the Line Length

One of the most common mistakes I see being made is zero consideration for the line length. For some reason, there's this desire to fill in the entire space and it can be problematic because in most cases page width is too wide making it difficult to track your progress while reading. The last thing you want is your users skipping lines or worse - re-reading lines of text because their eye has too far to travel to get to the beginning of the next line of text. For the best reading experience make your paragraphs wide enough to fit between 45 and 75 characters per line. Decreasing the line length - it not only improves the legibility but it also gives the impression of a more professional layout.

## Use Correct Line Height

The next important aspect for improving text legibility is space and this includes line-height. The reason we add space between lines of text obviously is to make it easy for the reader to find the next line when the text wraps. Similar to when the paragraph is too wide, when lines of text are spaced too tightly, it's easy to finish reading a line of text at the right edge of a page then jump your eyes all the way back to the left edge only to be unsure which line is next. The problem is even magnified when lines of text are long. The further your eyes have to jump horizontally to read the next line, the easier it is to lose your place. That means that your line-height and paragraph width should be proportional. Using the same line-height across the entire site is a subtle but common mistake.

Narrow content can use a shorter line-height like 1.5 but wide content might need a line-height as tall as two. The paragraph width should be considered when defining the line-height but the font size is just as important. The font size has a big impact on the line-height as well. When the text is small, extra line spacing is important because it makes it a lot easier for your eyes to find the next line when the text wraps. The larger line-height works well for body copy, but as the text gets larger, your eyes don't need as much help. This means that for large headline texts you might not need any extra line spacing, and a line-height of one is perfectly fine. Line-height and font size are inversely proportional. Use a taller line-height for small text and shorter line-height for large text.

## Text Alignment

The next important aspect of the reading experience is text alignment. Well, in general, text should be aligned to match the direction of the language it's written in. For English (and most other languages), that means that the vast majority of text should be left-aligned. Other alignment options do have their place though, you just need to use them effectively.

Center-alignment can look great for headlines of short, independent blocks of text. But if something is longer than two or three lines it will almost always look better left-aligned. Next, we have justified text. Justified text looks great in print and can work well on the web when you're going for a more formal look, but without special care, it can create a lot of awkward gaps between words. To avoid this, whenever you justify text, you should also enable hyphenation. Justified text works best in situations when you're trying to mimic a print look, perhaps for an online magazine or newspaper.

You know even then left-aligned texts work great too, it's really just a matter of preference.

## Establish Visual Hierarchy

You should always consider different methods for emphasizing and deemphasizing text. Now, the simplest way to establish hierarchy is by using font size. Size is not the only way to emphasize or deemphasize text. If text is important, like the heading - try making it bolder. If text is secondary, like the body copy - try making it lighter color. It makes the page much more scannable. These are the elements that influence how visible a text is. Its size, font weight, font case because uppercase font will be more prominent than using lowercase letters and also color. You can make text lighter to deemphasize it, but you should be careful with using colorful text. In general, it is best to stick with grey text, and use color on accent elements. If you will be able to achieve the correct visual hierarchy without using colorful text - adding it later won't be

a problem. But if you rely on color to make the text prominent - you might end up with too noisy and unprofessional looking design. When trying to establish the correct visual hierarchy with text-heavy pages you should also make sure to use correct spacing and add the proper amount of white space in between elements. Keep the proximity rule in mind, make sure that the related content is closer together so it is clear to users what content is associated with another. Remember, that rule that the outer spacing within the content "group" should be greater than inner spacing.

## Styling Links

Let's talk about styling links. When you're including a link in a block of otherwise non-linked text, it's important to make sure that the link

stands out and looks clickable. Inside a paragraph, you should consider emphasizing your links and it is one of the places that it is actually ok to use colored text. Some links might not even need to be emphasized by default at all. If you've got links in your interface that are not a part of the main path a user takes through the website, consider adding an underline or changing the color only on hover. They will still be discoverable to any users who think to try, but won't compete for attention with more important actions on the page. When talking about underlining links - I think this goes without saying - but the underlined text should be only used for links. You do not want to underline anything that is not a link, ok?

## Styling Text

When styling text, a lot of effort is put into getting the weight, the color, the line-height just right, but it's easy to forget that letter spacing can be tweaked too. As a general rule, you should trust the typeface designer and leave letter spacing alone. That said, there are a couple of common situations where adjusting it can improve your designs. When someone designs a font family they design it with a purpose in mind. A family like Open Sans is designed to be highly legible even at small sizes, so the built-in letter-spacing is a lot wider than a family like Oswald which is designed for headlines. If you want to use a family with wider letter-spacing for headlines or titles, just as the display text it can often make sense to decrease the letter spacing to mimic the condensed look of a display font. Avoid trying to make this work the other way around though - font designed for headlines probably won't work well at small sizes even if you increase the letter spacing. Another thing about letter spacing is that in most font families it is optimized for normal "sentence case" text - a capital letter followed by mostly lowercase letters, right?

If we are using fonts in All-cap the text and letter shapes are not as diverse as lowercase letters. With all caps, every letter is the same height which makes it harder to distinguish. That is why using uppercase and the default letter-spacing often leads to the text that is harder to read, so it makes sense to increase the letter-spacing of all cap stacks to improve the readability.

## Designing Lists

Let's talk about designing lists. When it comes to bulleted lists the very common problem is that the distance between each list item is the same as the line-height, so the bullet points become harder to skim through. A good approach is to make the space between each bullet point about twice the size as the font size. And also, consider using some generic icons like arrows or check marks instead of the standard bullets, just to make the simple lists a little bit more interesting. These little details add up and give the overall feel of a better-looking and professional website.

## Quotes and Testimonials

When displaying a quote or a testimonial, you don't want it to look like a boring block of text. A nice way to change the voice of a quote is to choose a serif font. Serifs come across as a bit more formal and as a result more trustworthy so they are great for using on a quote. And in addition to changing the typeface to serif, a good idea may be to change it to italics too, this gives it much more of a conversational tone and makes it feel a little bit more authentic. A nice way to make the quote symbol interesting is to use them as the visual elements instead of just wrapping the text in them. By simply increasing size, adding color, and offsetting it a bit we can create something that looks much more interesting on a page and makes the quote much more distinct.

## Adding Drop Caps

Another text styling tip, which can give your pages more "designed" fill is adding a drop cap. A drop cap is a large initial letter that drops below the first line of paragraph, much bigger in size than the rest of the letters that follow. It is a stylistic choice often used as a marker for the beginning of a section or a chapter of a book. Drop caps or initial caps are often used to great effect in printed magazines and newspapers but they are very straightforward to implement in Divi and WordPress. You can style your drop cap easily with different fonts or even a contrasting color. It does work great on single post pages and add this sort of editorial feel to a page.

That was my last text styling advice, I hope you'll be able to apply some of these tips next time you are working on a text-heavy page layout. And I hope you just kind of start to pay more attention to how you style your text, what fonts you're using, and how you align the text and the space around it.