

# Baseline Shift

**C**HANCES ARE THE SOFTWARE YOU USE every day offers some very useful features that you seldom take advantage of. Typical of these underrated functions is baseline shift. True to its name, this feature shifts a character (or group of characters) up or down relative to the baseline, in tiny increments.

Generally speaking, baseline shift settings use positive numbers to shift characters up, and negative numbers to shift them down. Baseline shift is a great tool for fine-tuning your typography. Try using it to:

- create fractions manually. Use baseline shift to raise the numerator in diagonal fractions.
- optically position symbols, such as register, copyright and trademark (®, © and ™).
- tweak the position of parenthesis, braces and brackets relative to the type they enclose.
- be expressive with type by raising and lowering individual characters to create a jumpy, jittery effect.
- adjust the position of bullets, ornaments and other font-based graphics.

Most software provides several ways to access baseline shift. Learn the keyboard shortcuts; it's the fastest way to

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I feel jittery.  
I feel jittery.

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Before and after: baseline shift can help fine-tune your typography in a variety of ways.



try different adjustments when you're unsure of the final value. Fractional values can also be inserted manually in a dialog box or palette.

Note that baseline shift does not change the actual line spacing of a character. When making overall changes in the leading, the baseline-shifted position will be preserved proportionally.