

Kerning definitions

Brief definitions of the variety of terms related to kerning.

Letter spacing	Adding or decreasing the same amount of space between all the letters. Letter spacing is applied to a range of text; kerning is applied to individual pairs.	Usually used to change the spacing of a large amount of text to open the face or tighten it, depending on the natural characteristics of the typeface and its purpose on the page.
Kerning	General term for adjusting the space between letters.	Kern to create a visually consistent look.
Pair kerning	The special kerning built into certain combinations of letters when the typeface was designed. You can also use special programs to add more kerning pairs to your fonts.	This is built into your fonts—don't worry about it.
Auto kerning	When an application is capable of automatically finding and using the pair kerns built into the font.	You can turn auto kerning on or off in your application. Leave it on.
Manual kerning	Adjusting the fit of two characters by "hand" (computer "hand").	Use this for the final fine-tuning.
Range kerning	Selecting a range of text and applying an overall kerning value to all the pairs of letters.	Use this to tighten a range of text in preparation for manual fine-tuning.
Tracking	Means by which the computer adjusts the letter spacing, depending on the point size of the type and the auto kern pairs (PageMaker only; XPress tracking" is really "range kerning").	Use this for large or very small type as a start for better letter spacing. For large type, you will still have to manually fine-tune the type.