



Exciting Illustrator Pen Tool exercises

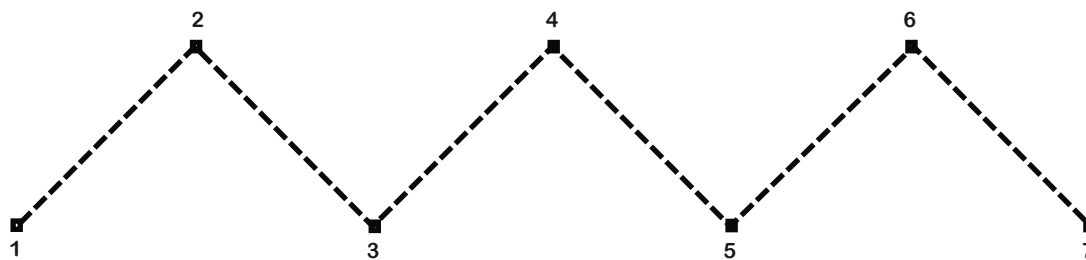
Zig Zag

Select the Pen tool, and in the control bar or palette at the bottom of the tools palette check that it is set for stroke and not fill. Create a new layer in the layers panel, you will draw in the layer you created.

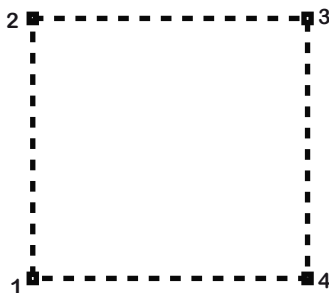


(Left - control panel, across the top of Illustrator document window, Middle - palette at bottom of tools panel, Right, layers panel.)

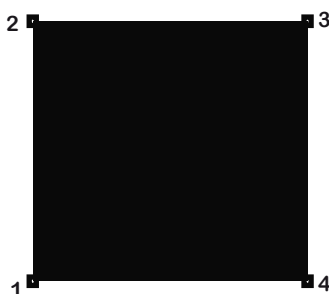
Starting at number one on the line below, click and release the mouse button to create an anchor point. Then moving down the zig sag line, at each square on the dotted line repeat the process of clicking and releasing the mouse button to create an anchor point. This is a line as opposed to a shape. When completed, select the main selection tool.



Square



Starting at number one again, click and release the mouse button to create an anchor point. Then moving around the square, at each square on the dotted line repeat the process of clicking and releasing the mouse button to create an anchor point. Use the smart guides (green lines to indicate when things are lined up with each other to ensure your square is a proper square. When completed, select the main selection tool. Yes it is easier to make one with the rectangle tool, but this is an exercise.

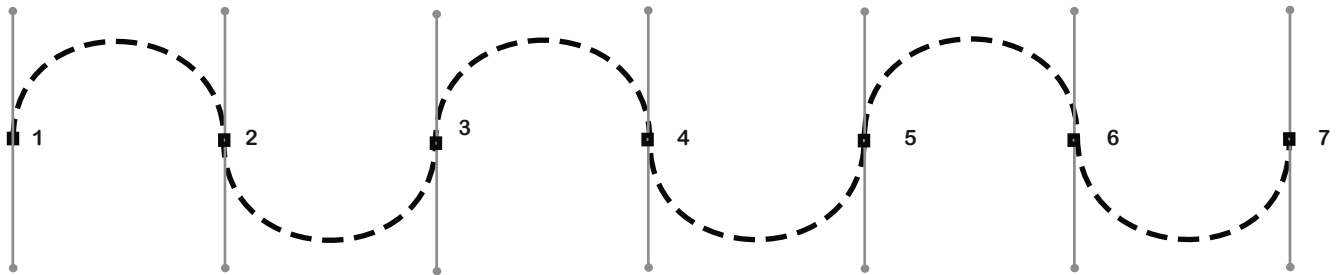


Then in your control panel or the tools palette at the bottom, choose to reverse the line to fill, and make the shape again using the fill instead of the stroke.

Curves

Curves use a different technique, where you are making anchor points whilst holding down the mouse button each time so that you are manipulating the handles for each anchor point, which indicates to the program where you intend the line to go.

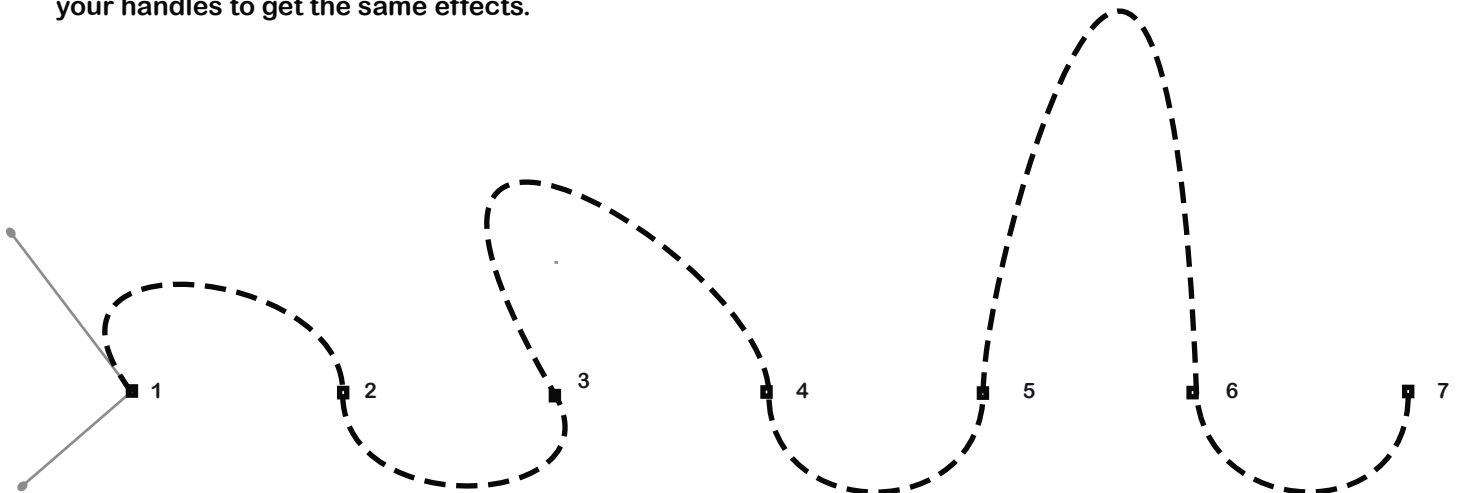
Once again make sure you have the stroke turned on in either your control panel or in your tools panel in the palette at the base of it.



Starting at number one again, click hold the mouse button to create an anchor point and drag the mouse upwards (as the next part of the line you intend to go upwards). Then move to next anchor point and repeat the process of clicking and holding the mouse button, but this time move the mouse downwards to indicate to the computer the next part of the line needs to do downwards. Continue with the remaining anchor points, dragging upwards if the line goes up or downwards if the line goes down. This is a line with an open end beginning and end.

Adjusting Curves

Copy the line you made above and paste it onto the curves below. Select the direct selection tool (white one). As you move your mouse over the line where there is an anchor point, the smart guides tell us that there is an anchor point there, when the word 'anchor' appears on the line. Zoom in to get the best view of the anchor points. With the direct selection tool, move the mouse over the line, then click on the anchor point, and then you will be able to see the handles. For the first point I have included the directions for the handles, I have also moved the handles on anchor point 3, and 6, so see if you can work out how to move your handles to get the same effects.



Complex Shapes

So far we have made mostly lines, but like the square shape we made, you can also make a shape with the pen tool, and to do that you need to make sure the two ends are joined. Now we will try tracing a picture of a truck. This combines the pen tool and the ellipse tool. Experiment with the use of the pen tool and the handles to make the curves.

