English How to use the pen tool

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Most of the requests & questions I get from people breaking into the add-on scene are "How did you make that so smooth?" or "How did you make that design without it being jagged?" and the obvious "How do I use the pen tool?"

Well here we go ladies & gentlemen, a Pen tool tutorial.

We begin with opening Photoshop of course, and opening a jersey template of your choice.

If you single click once with the tool you will see a small grey square appear, this is known as an anchor point. Move the mouse around and click some more, and you will see more of these, as well as lines connecting each anchor point.

This is the outline of your vector. This method is all well and good if you are making a straight, geometrical design, such as you will see in the Timberwolves jersey I did for wwekane2003 (will preview later).

Now when you want to close the vector, just connect back to the original anchor point. You will know its the original when you move the pen tool over it a small circle will appear next to your cursor. Boom, you have your shape.

On that note, you know should be able to tell what the add & delete anchor point tool are for, since they are self explanitory.

"But what if I want something with curves Rebel?" Well I'm glad you asked, because thats next.

Starting the same way as above, click to create an anchor point, only this time, hold down the left click and drag. You will the anchor point you made, but now as you move the mouse around, there will be two lines extending from that anchor point, along with two smaller anchor points on the end of each line.

These extending lines control the curve of your vector. This is where the convert point tool comes in handy. once you make an anchor point with the curve control lines, select the convert point tool. This tool allows you to move those lines around without creating another anchor point.

Now comes the trickey part. Once you select the pen tool again, it will want to make you start with a new vector. Well, we will tell it no. Simply move the pen tool over the last anchor point you made, and a small diagonal line will appear next to the cursor. Click, and your back in the original vector layer. Again, when you are ready to finish your curvey design, close it by connecting to the original anchor point.

I hope this tutorial was helpful, I don't have the time right now to post pics, but if you guys want I wll post some later. If you have any other questions my MSN is public, so feel free to add me.

This tutorial is only meant to familiarize you with the pen tool, it only touches the iceberg of what it can do. With practice and a little curiousity on your part, the pen tool is easily your best friend for desigining in photoshop.