

How To . . .

# Remove The Blue Underlines From Links



**H**ave you ever wondered how to create a hyperlink without its usual default blue underlining? Many Web sites now use other methods of displaying links (visited and unvisited) using effects such as varying text colors, bold or italic text, highlights, and different fonts. Depending on your browser, some links even change before your eyes as you hover your mouse over them. You can create these nice effects on your Web pages, either by embedding the code information about how the link is to display directly in the `<a>` (Anchor) tag, defining the display in a `<style>` tag, or defining it in a CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) file.

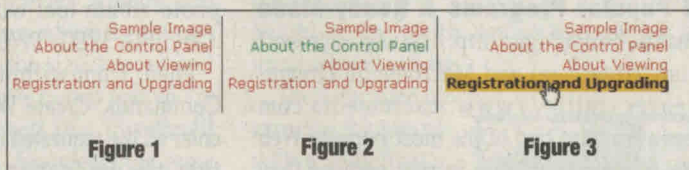
The quickest method is to use a CSS file; that way, you can do a one-time change to alter all the links on your pages that reference that particular CSS file. If you don't like it, change it, and it will apply to all the pages associated with the CSS file. (For more information, see "How To . . . Create Cascading Style Sheets.")

You can define three types of `<a>` links in a CSS file: an unvisited link (`a:link`); a visited link (`a:visited`); and the effect you want to see when you hover the mouse over the link (`a:hover`). (The hover effect only works on a PC using Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.x or newer. It doesn't work on the Netscape browsers we tested.) For each type, you can specify if you want the link underlined, what color the link should be, which font to use, what type of weight or font effect you want, and if you want to use other effects such as highlighting. Let's look at some hyperlink effects and the code used to create them. For example: `a:link {color: #cc0000; text-decoration: none;}`

Use this code to achieve the results in Figure 1. Here, the code defines the color as a shade of

red, and "text-decoration: none" indicates you don't want underlined text. If you don't include any color information, the blue default color displays; and, if you don't include text decoration information, then underlining occurs by default. You'll need to add this code to a CSS file or `<style>` tag area (it can't exist by itself).

Here is our second example: `a:visited {color: #339966; text-decoration: none;}` Use this, along with the code for Figure 1, to get the results shown in Figure 2. As you can see, the color of visited links is now green instead of the default choice of purple.



**By defining three types of links, your site can distinguish an unvisited link from a visited link, as well as highlight a link when a mouse hovers over it.**

Here's the example for Figure 3: `a:hover {font-weight: bold; color: black; text-decoration: none; background: yellow;}` With this code, Figure 3 adds some extra effects that only display when the mouse passes (or hovers) over the link. In this example, we've made the text color black, added a bold effect, and included a yellow highlight.

**Style & Anchor Tags.** If you don't use CSS files for your Web pages, but you want to use these style effects, you can use the same code described above within each Web page. Make sure you place the style information between the `<style>` and `</style>` tags somewhere in the `<head>` area of each Web page. For example:

```
<head>
<body>
<a href="http://www.smartcomputing.com">Smart Computing</a>
</body>
<style>
a:link {color: #cc0000; text-decoration: none;}
a:visited {color: #339966; text-decoration: none;}
a:hover {font-weight: bold; color: black; text-decoration: none; background: yellow;}
</style>
</head>
```

In this example, "http://www.smartcomputing.com" represents the URL (uniform resource locator) you want to link to (the quotes are part of the code, but you can substitute any URL). The disadvantage of this method is remembering to copy and paste the code into every Web page where you want to display the effect.

If you only want to use the effects for a few links on a page, then you might find it easier to embed the information within the `<a>` tag, but this only applies to displaying unvisited links in a specified color and removing the "underline" default; you can't set any visited or hover link effects using this method.

To apply the `<a>` tag to unvisited links, use the same wording and similar punctuation as you did before, but this time, give the `<a>` tag a style element. For example:

```
<a href="http://www.smartcomputing.com" style="color: #cc0000; text-decoration: none">link text </a>
```

Replace the URL with the one you want to link to, and replace *link text* with the actual text you to display as a link.

**Other Suggestions.** When you are defining a style in a CSS file, make sure you use the correct wording and punctuation, otherwise your effects won't work. In addition, you must reference the CSS file in the `<head>` area of all the Web pages where you want to display the effects. For examples of the correct format for CSS files, see Cascading Style Sheets, Level 2 (<http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-CSS2>) and CSS Quick Tutorial (<http://www.htmlhelp.com/reference/css/quick-tutorial.html>).

For more information about Web-safe colors, see "Optimize Your Site For Multiple Browsers" in this issue. Experiment with these effects and others to achieve the look you want. **LS**

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