

Custom Shapes in Photoshop

The premise is to create a simple custom shape with any of the vector Custom Shape Tools (U) and then apply a combination of transformations in lieu of its reference point. The results are endless and easy to perform as you will see by the following example.

Step 1:

Start Photoshop

Create a new document with a preset of your choice. I used 500X500 pixels, with a Background Layer of White (#ffffff)

Set your foreground color to one of your choice. I used Black (#000000)

Step 2:

Create a Basic Star Shape

Select the 'Polygon Tool (U)' from the Toolbar.

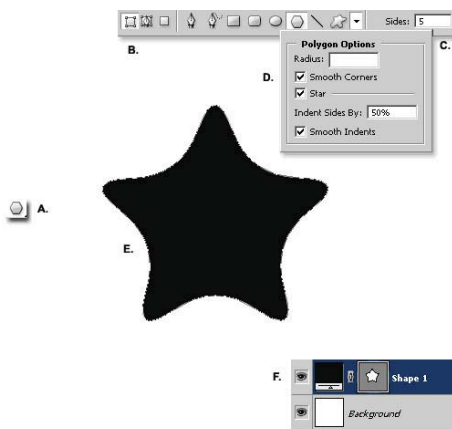
Enable 'Shape Layers' for the active Polygon Tool.

Set the 'Sides' parameters to 5.

Click the 'Geometry Options' picker (down arrow) and set the Polygon Options.

Hold the 'Shift key' to constrain proportions, then click and drag to draw the shape.

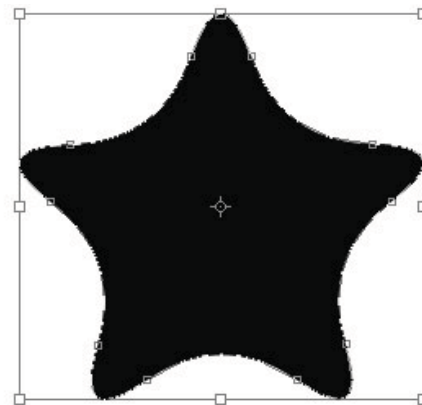
'Shape 1' vector shape with a black fill adjustment layer is created.



Step 3:

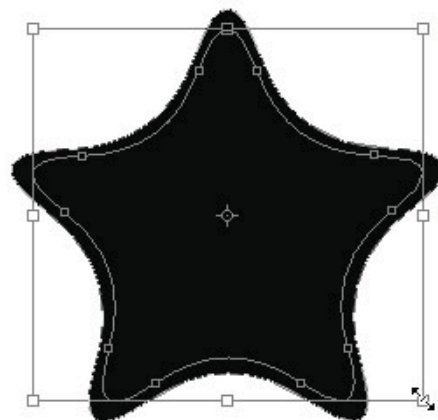
Duplicate & Transform with shortcuts

A. While 'Shape 1' layer is still active, hit 'Ctrl + Alt + T' (Mac: Command + Option + T) to begin a duplicate path transformation, as indicated by the path outlines & its active transformation handlers below. (Though the duplicate is only evident until you manipulate (resize or reposition) the handlers)



Note: 'Ctrl + Alt + T' transformation does not create a new shape layer, but a duplicate path on the same adjustment fill layer. ('Shape 1' layer)

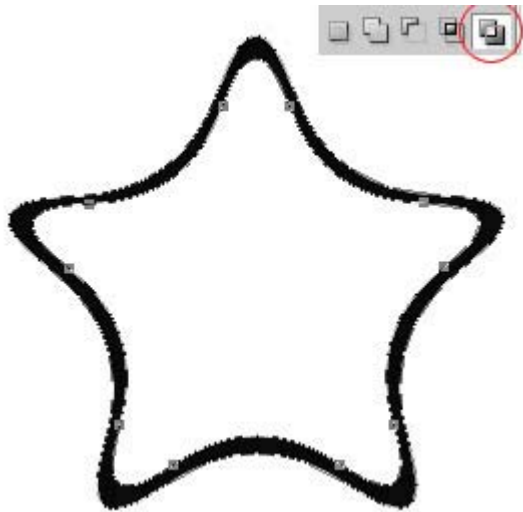
B. Next, switch to the 'Shift + Alt' (Mac: Shift + Option) key combination and from any of the four corner handlers (I used the lower



right), drag inward to resize/transform as to what I have captured below. Then hit the 'Enter' key to confirm transformation.

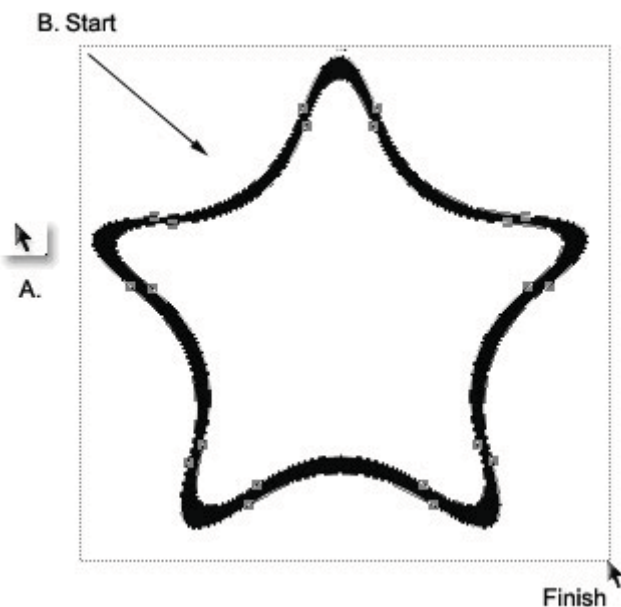
C. Go back to the Options Bar and select the 'Exclude Overlapping Shape Layers' to knock a hole into the original, as captured below.

Step 4:



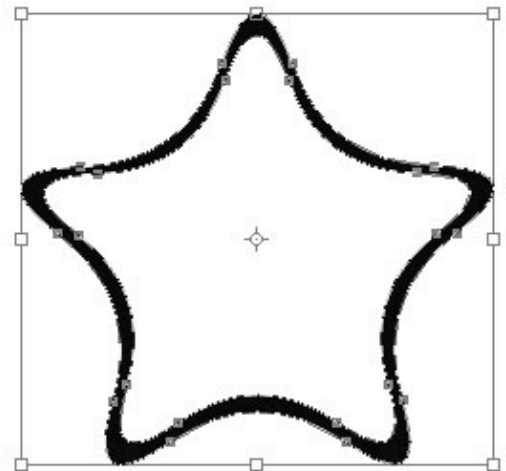
A. Select the 'Path Selection Tool (A)' from the Toolbar.

B. Then click ONCE anywhere outside the two paths (Start), click and drag in the direction of the arrow to the lower right (Finish) to select both paths.



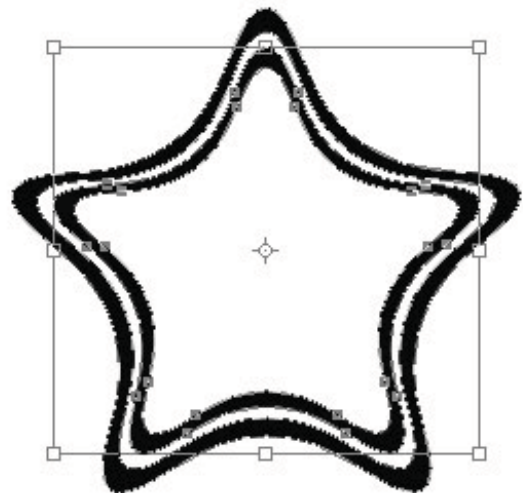
Option + T) to begin a duplicate transformation, as indicated by the transformation handlers below.

B. Switch to the 'Shift + Alt' (Mac: Shift



+ Option) key combination and from any of the four corner handlers (I used the lower right), drag inward to resize/transform as to what I have captured below. Then hit the 'Enter' key to confirm transformation.

C. As a final transformation, mouse over



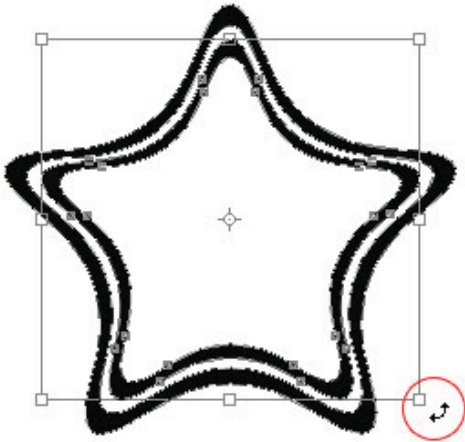
Step 5:

Now that both paths are selected, let's repeat Step 3 A & B.

A. Hit 'Ctrl + Alt + T' (Mac: Command + PS728 - INSERT TITLE HERE 2

to any of the corner handlers (encircled in red below), and click and drag upward to rotate as in the second capture below.

Lastly, hit the 'Ctrl + Shift + Alt + T' key

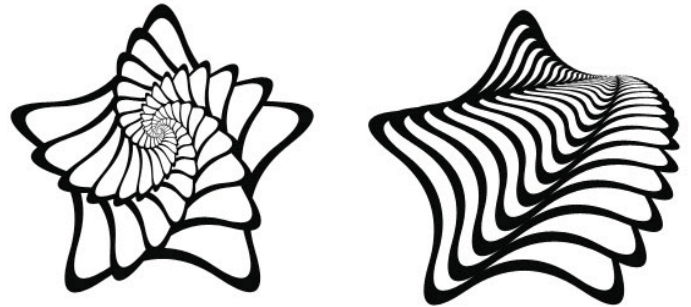
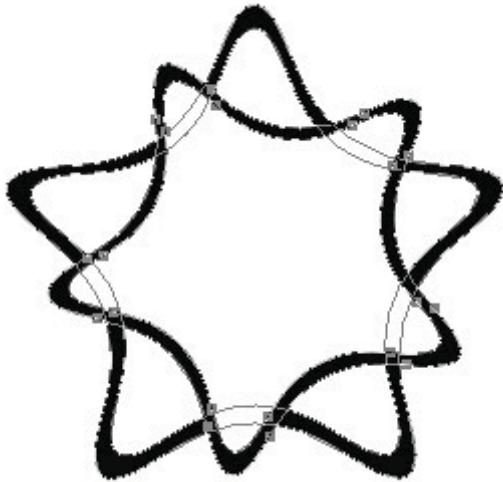


shortcuts the possibilities are endless, and to boot all performed on a single 'Vector Shape' layer. Having said that, be warned – experiment on small shapes as the repeat transformation can be Ram intensive.



combination multiple times and watch the last transformation (the entirety of Step 5) repeat itself. The below shape is the final result.

Other examples:



Armed with these few transformation