

Adobe Dreamweaver Web Page Layouts



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Web Page Layouts

There are many ways to layout a web page. When people first started creating web pages the pages contained text only and it was one column of text. Now that we are adding items such as images, tables, video and navigation the pages have become much more complex. In order to create pages that encompass all the complexities and are easy to read we have to work on more complex layouts. We want headers, footers, navigation areas as well as content areas.

Layout Tables

Web pages can be laid out with tables. Tables can be created with a fixed pixel dimension or with a relative size with % or ems. Relative sizes will resize with the browser size. This resizing may alter your design. Some tables have cells that are liquid or autostretch. Some tables have both fixed and liquid cells. Web pages designed with tables may or may not be accessible. There are many tables that will layout well (in a linear fashion). Tables will be read from top to bottom, from left to right. If there is a nested table within a main table, when a screen reader sees the nested table it will read that whole table before it moves on.

If you use tables for layout, make sure you set the header row as a th (table header). The newer and frequently more approved method of laying out web pages is to use CSS to organize the content on a web page. Div tags are used to contain the content on the page. A Div tag acts as a container for page elements. Div tags can be AP (absolutely positioned) with x and y coordinates or relatively with a distance from other page elements. Div tags can create headers and footers as well as sidebars and main content containers.

A simple table like this can be used for layout.

Header (th) This is read first and given special treatment	
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut.	Subheading Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.
Footer	

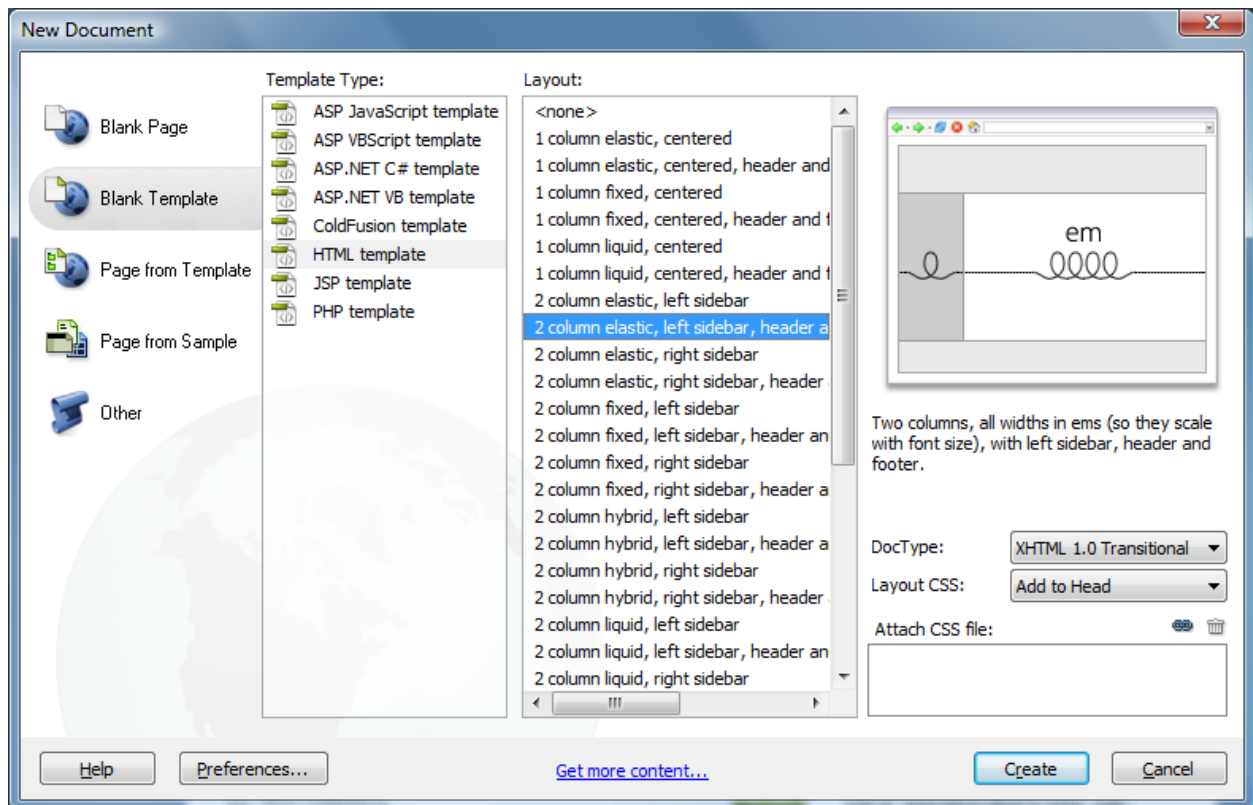
Tables can be created with a fixed size such as 750 pixels. Tables can also be set up as liquid or autostretch. To accomplish this, you would give your table a % width. Then as a browser window was increased in size so would the table.

Each column can be set as a fixed amount of pixels each. Or the columns can be set with a percent. For example, with a two column layout as in the picture above, if you want to make sure your Navigation column is 1/3 of the table, set the width (W) to 33% in the property inspector panel. Then the other column will fill the rest of the table. If you want the Navigation column to stay at 250 pixels, set the width to 250 pixels, then if you change the size of the table at a later time the Navigation column will always stay at 250 pixels.

CSS Layout

One way to create a CSS based layout is to choose a preset layout in Dreamweaver and add your content.

From the File menu choose New and then click on Blank Template > HTML Template. This gives many choices of templates.



The Layout choices include Fixed, Elastic, Liquid, and Hybrid.

CSS Column Types

Fixed – Column size is set in pixels

Elastic – Column width is set in units relative to the size of the text (ems). The size changes if the user changes the size of the text.

Liquid – Columns are set as a percentage of the browser window. The columns would change size if the user resizes the browser window.

Hybrid – Columns are a combination of the other options. You could have a Navigation column that resizes to the users text and a main content that would increase in size as the user resizes the browser.

If you are using a Dreamweaver layout Dreamweaver will give you the choice of adding the CSS to the head of the page or to a separate CSS page.

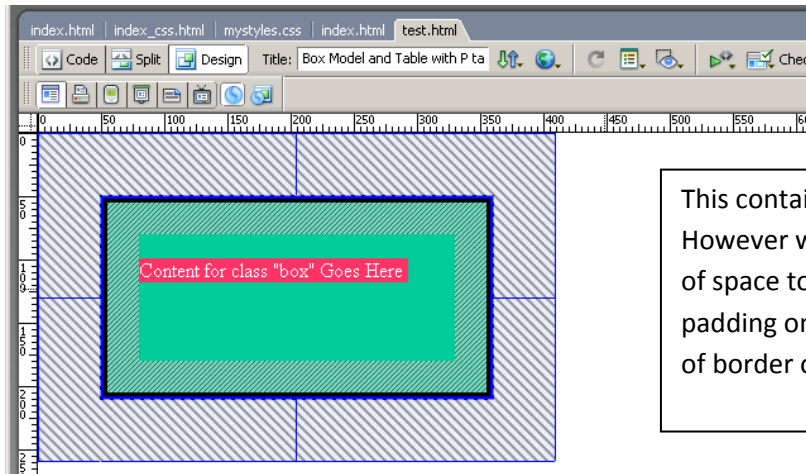
Creating Layout with Div Tags

To create your own layout, once you have the HTML formatted add div tags to the sections of your page that you want to move around.

Div tags take a section of code out of the normal flow of the document. Normal flow starts at the top left of the page. Then with floats and margins you can move items around the page.

Start by creating a container for the page. Set the width for the container and add margins. Usually we add a top margin in pixels. Side margins can be set with pixels or if you want to center the content, you can add auto for the left and right margins. This takes the space in the browser window outside of the container and divides it in half for the left and right margin. The width of the container can be a fixed width or a percentage or it can be set in ems. When you set a width remember to add all the widths of each column you want in your page and include border size and padding (consider box model). If the container is not wide enough to contain the other columns your design will not work properly. A column that should be on the right may get pushed down underneath the left container.

Box Model



This container (div tag) is 250 pixels. However we need to allow 310 pixels of space to include the 25 pixels of padding on each side and the 5 pixels of border on each side.

Create div tags for each section of your page. Determine where you want the sections to be. A header section will be at the top of the page if it is the first item in your document and you don't add a location for it. If you want a section to be a left column, add a property of float left. Add the width in pixels, %, or ems. Add padding as desired. At this point the next section in the flow of the document will move up to the right of the first section and may overlap. If that section is to be on the right it could be given it a code of float right and a width or you could set a left margin that was wider than the left column to push it over to the right.

To make a section like a footer not move up in empty space left by previous columns, use a code of clear:both. That will push that columns down to where there is no other columns on either side of it.

To add a border between columns add a border to one side of the column that should consistently have the greater amount of content.