

Introduction: Put on a Good Face

Choose a typeface that you're comfortable reading, not one that looks pretty or funny or that catches your eye. Sturdy, straightforward text faces, such as Century Schoolbook, Century Expanded, and Matthew Carter's much more recent Georgia, will give you readable, workaday text. So will Times Roman in a pinch, but it's not the best text face available; it's just the most common. (And its Bold and Italic versions are only good for very short phrases or titles.) Palatino is also commonly available and quite familiar, though it may look a bit too refined for some kinds of brochure. Most of these typefaces can also be used large, or in a contrasting weight or style, for titles and headlines..

What Not to Do

■ **Avoid very round typefaces with big x-heights.** Use a serif face with somewhat narrow character widths (but not a condensed typeface). It should be something classic and straightforward, the kind of typeface we're used to reading without thinking about it, rather than a trendy font that grabs your attention with its quirkiness and flash.

■ **Don't use very light typefaces** -- they're generally harder to read.

■ **Stay away from such spindly typefaces as Goudy Old Style, New Baskerville, New Caledonia, Monotype Baskerville, and Centaur.** These were originally designed for typesetting in metal and printing on a letterpress; they were redrawn for phototypesetting and offset printing, then adapted again for digital typesetting, and in the process they ended up spindly or spiky, losing the even color and readability of strong black ink on white paper that they had once had in metal.

■ **Avoid Adobe Garamond**, which was designed from scratch by Robert Slimbach for digital typesetting (he went back to Claude Garamond's original punches and types to do his research), is a bit too delicate and light for heavy text work. It looks lovely at relatively large sizes in literary books, but it's too refined for most brochures. (Slimbach's more recent Garamond Premier Pro, which is a different typeface based on the same roots, is more robust, though still not what you'd want for industrial use..

■ **For different reasons, stay away from ITC Garamond Light.** This 1970s advertising face is based on the style of Garamond's types (and on later French types that derived from those, also called "Garamond"), but the ITC Garamond family is completely different. Like so many of the early ITC typefaces, ITC Garamond is a multiple-weight family with a very large x-height and a very round body, suitable for the kind of close-fitting advertising headlines and short text popular in the 1970s. It can be very effective when used for that purpose, but not otherwise.

What Not to Do (cont)

And use the Book or Medium weight for text; the Light is simply too light for easy reading..

Basic Font Usage



Font Usage

Proper Font Usage

A proper, well considered mix of font styles, used in the proper areas of your work will allow for an attractive appearance, increased retention and improved reception to your ideas and opinions.

A pleasing look makes for a pleasing reading experience.

Tips

■ **If you do use a light weight of a type family, give it a little extra space by setting the tracking slightly -- slightly! -- loose.** Experiment. Set the same paragraph in the same typeface, without changing the size or leading, and change the tracking values; see which setting seems most comfortable to read.

■ **If using InDesign, try setting the kerning method to Optical rather than Metrics.** A well-crafted font shouldn't need this, but there are plenty of poorly crafted fonts out there. While InDesign's optical kerning isn't perfect, it's surprisingly good.

■ **If forced to use Microsoft Word, which isn't a layout tool no matter how many bells and whistles it has, you can try expanding the character spacing by a fraction of a point** (full points would be much too big). Just be warned that Word isn't good at implementing this kind of fine typographic control consistently.

■ **Don't use Bodoni or Didot, unless you're a typographic expert. Just don't.** There are many versions of each, some of them elegant and quite beautiful, but using a typeface with such high contrast requires great sensitivity and attention to the finest details of spacing.