

SCRAPPER'S GUIDE

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Rounded Rectangle Layout (Elements)

Tip of the Week by Jenny Binder on September 14, 2009

In a recent “Tip of the Week”, I gave you some ideas for incorporating busy paper without distracting from your photos. In a response to that tip, subscriber Kristen asked a question about the “HER Rules” layout. She asked how I created the same sized rounded corners on 3 different elements--the photo, the journaling block, and the patterned paper. For today’s tip, I’ll be showing you exactly how I built this layout.



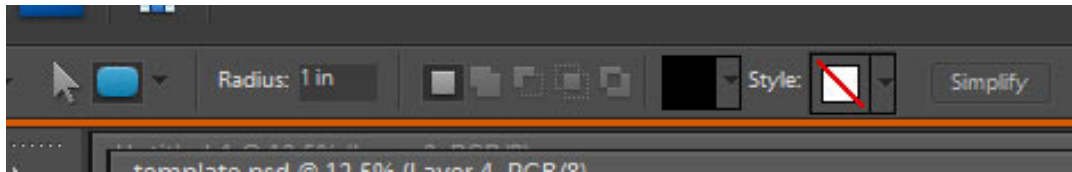
First, you need to know something about me and the way I scrapbook. I almost always create a page template first. On the rare occasion that I don't, I always wish I would have. That doesn't mean I don't adjust the template half-way through the page, or tweak it here and there, but I feel like I get a much cleaner page when I work with a template first. And if you don't know what I mean by a template, just follow along and you'll see.

Step 1 Create a New Document

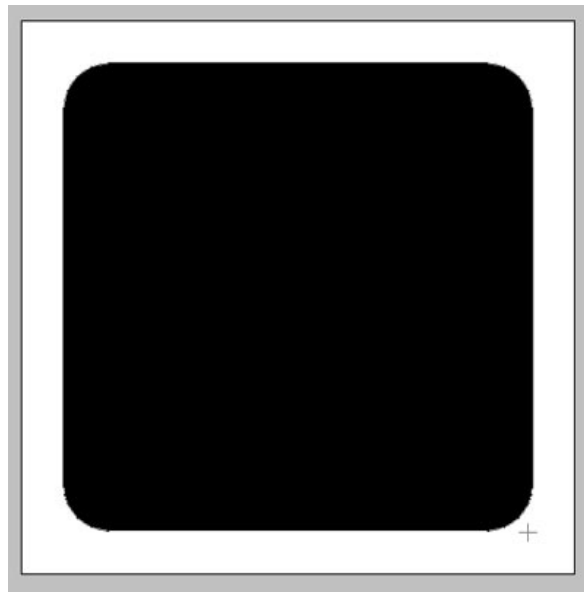
* Start with a new clean document by choosing File>New>Blank File. Enter the dimensions you want your page to be, then click OK. This page design is really simple. We will basically create a rounded rectangle, and then cut it into pieces.

Step 2 Create the Rounded Rectangle

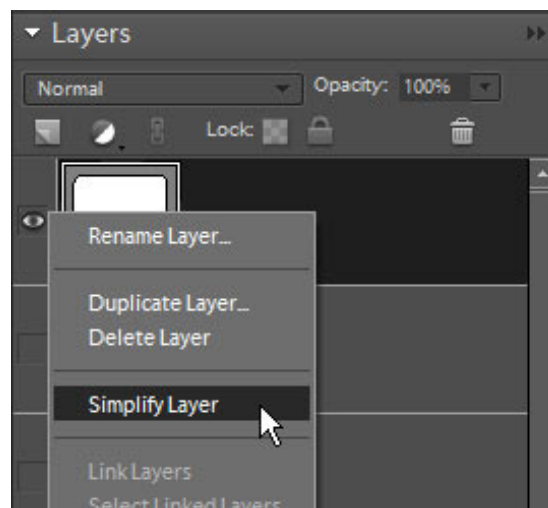
* Choose the Rounded Rectangle Tool from the Tool Bar to the left. It is nested with the Rectangle Tool. Make sure the settings in the Options bar above are the same as mine below.



* Click and drag out a rounded rectangle that is just smaller than the entire page. Hold down the shift key while dragging to constrain proportions, making it a square. (Even though our shape is a rounded square, I will continue to call it a rounded rectangle since that is the tool we used to create it.)



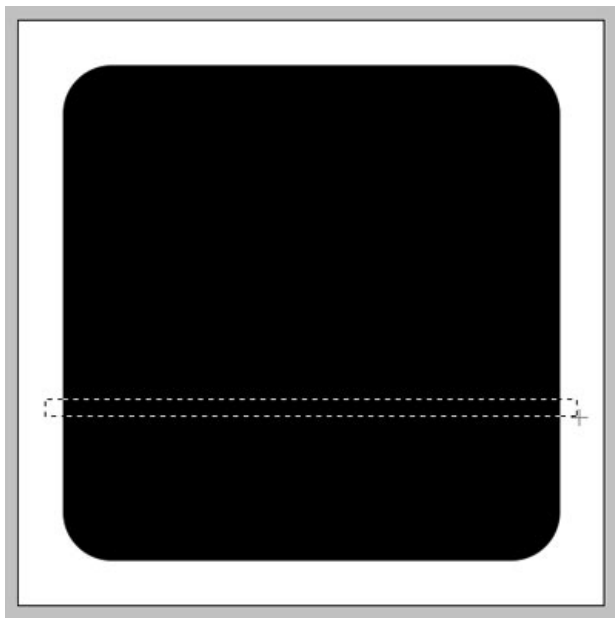
* Now we need to Simplify the rounded rectangle. Right-click (Mac: Ctrl click) on the name of the rounded rectangle layer in the Layers palette and choose Simplify Layer.



Step 3 Cut the Rounded Rectangle

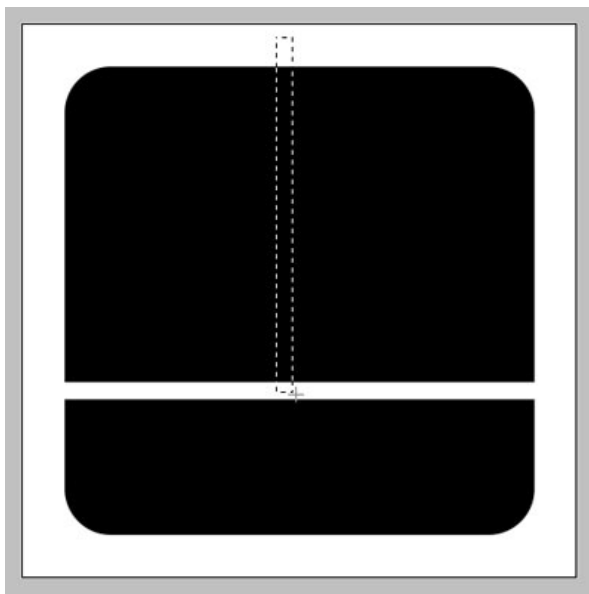
* Choose the Rectangular Marquee Tool from the Tools Bar. In the Options bar above, make sure the Feathering is set to 0 and the Mode is Normal.

* Click and drag out a selection, selecting a portion of the rounded rectangle that you would like to erase.



* Press Backspace (Mac: Delete) to delete this part of the rounded rectangle, then Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.

* Repeat this procedure for the vertical “cut”.

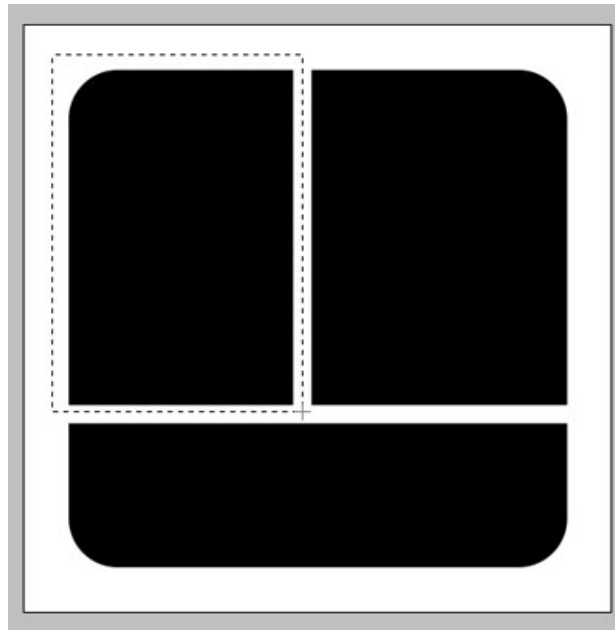


Step 4 Create Separate Layers

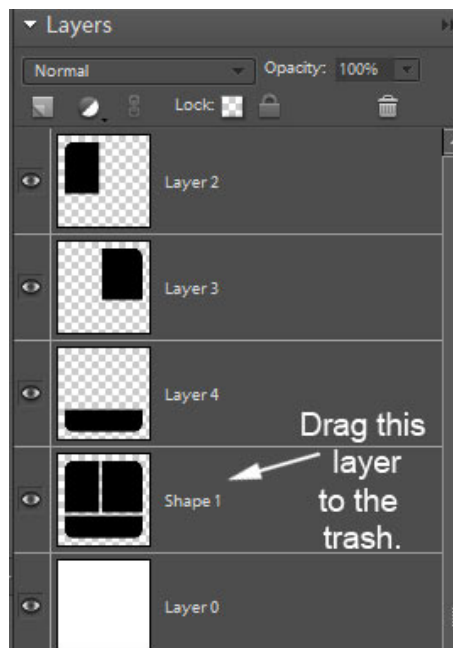
Because of the way I utilize my templates, I like to take each of the “pieces” and put them on their own layer.

* Using the Rectangular Marquee Tool, draw out a selection that includes just one part of the rounded

rectangle.



- * Make sure the rounded rectangle is the active layer in the Layers palette.
- * Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate this part and put it on its own layer. You should see this change in the Layers palette only--it will not be apparent on your page yet.
- * Repeat for all of the different parts of the rounded rectangle. Just be sure you make the complete rounded rectangle layer the active layer in the Layers palette before pressing Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J.) If you forget, don't worry--you will be reminded with an error message.
- * Once you have put each of the pieces on its own layer, drag the original complete rounded rectangle layer to the trash can to delete it.



Step 5 Save Your Template

If this is a page design that you like, you might want to save it at this point so you can use it again and again. Imagine the folder of templates you could eventually have if you created a template before each page! Just make sure you save the template as a psd file to preserve the layers.

Step 6 Use Your Template

Using your template is easy once you get used to the process. Here's the method I like to use. We will use the Move Tool for this step, so make sure that is the active tool.

* Although it doesn't matter which "piece" you start with, I am going to work with the upper right-hand piece. Click on this piece to make it the active layer in the Layers palette. Just click on it, don't actually move it. This is the piece we want our photo to become.

* Bring your photo into this document. Position it above the correct "piece", but don't re-size it yet.



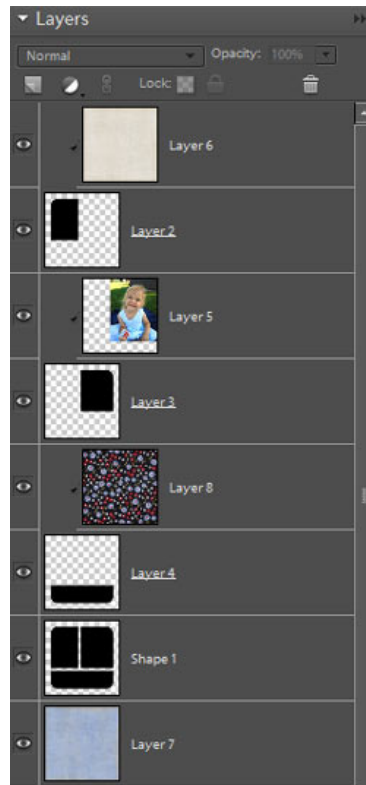
* To group the photo layer with the piece of the template below it, hold down the Alt key (Mac: Opt key) and move your mouse between these two layers in the Layers palette. When you see the double circle icon, click. (If you've read very many of my tips, you will know that I like to use clipping masks to group things together, such as this photo to the black piece below it. The trick is to make sure the two items you want to group are next to each other in the Layers palette. If you followed my procedure, they should be in just the right place.)

* If you need to re-size your photo, as I do, press Ctrl T (Mac: Cmd T) and drag a corner handle. Click and drag inside the outline to move the photo around if necessary, then click on the green check mark or double click on the photo to accept the transformation.

* Repeat this step for all of the pieces. Make sure you click on the next template piece you want to work with before you bring the photo or paper into this document. This will ensure the correct positions of everything in the Layers palette.

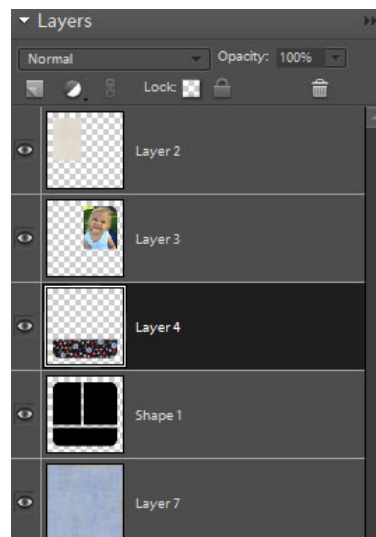
Step 7 Clean Up your Layers Palette

This step is not necessary, but you might find it helpful. If you're done with the template, your Layers palette might look something like this.



This layout only had 3 pieces to the template--imagine what the Layers palette would look like for a template with 10 or 15 pieces! To simplify things, you may want to merge the groups. This means, for example, you would permanently “glue” the photo to the black template piece.

You will have to do this for each group individually. Start at the top of the Layers palette and click on the top layer of the first group you come to as you work down. (This should be the first layer with an arrow on the left side.) Now just press Ctrl E (Mac: Cmd E) to merge. You should see a change in the Layers palette. Continue working your way down through the Layers palette, merging each group. When you're done, you should not see any more of those left arrows on any of the layers. I think this (below) looks much better.



Step 8 Finish your Layout



At this point you can add text, other embellishments, and drop shadows.

Creating a template before every page may seem like a lot of work at first, but you will get faster and faster at it, and I think you will like the results. Give it a try this week!

Credits: Tutorial and page by Jenny Binder, www.HeirloomScrapbooks.com. "HER Rules" Page: All-American Girl kit by Robin Carlton and Misty Cato. Font: LD Blankie.



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