

Artwork guidelines for authors of Nature Reviews' clinical titles

How to prepare artwork

Photographic images

General information

Rasterized (bitmapped) formats are best for photos and scans. They are composed of an array of dots (pixels), with the quality being determined by the resolution, usually measured in dots per inch (dpi; also referred to as pixels per inch [ppi]). For printing, we need a minimum of 300 dpi at least at the size the image will appear on the page. Size and resolution are linked so that, for example, enlarging an image to twice its original size will halve its resolution. If the resolution is too low, individual pixels become visible to the eye, the edges of lines begin to appear 'stepped' and the image can appear blurred or pixellated.

TIFFS and PSD formats

.PSD = Adobe Photoshop document. We prefer these formats for rasterized images. Files prepared in Photoshop should be sent with their layers intact (not 'flattened').

.TIF = Tagged Image Format File. File sizes in this format can be quite large, but it is possible to save them as compressed files for submission. Please use an LZW compression, which does not degrade quality.

JPEG format

.JPG = Joint Photographic Experts Group. These files are saved as a compressed format that achieves smaller file sizes by discarding information. If JPEG is the only saving option you have, please set quality to the highest possible. Please do not embed JPEGs in Word documents.

Other formats

.EPS = Encapsulated Postscript File. Although PowerPoint can export JPEGs, the resulting files are low resolution. The only way to obtain a high-quality format from Microsoft is to generate a Postscript file by selecting the 'Print to file' option.

Styles

Separate panels in multipart figures should be labelled with bold, lower-case letters (**a**, **b**, **c** etc) and panels

should be placed 1–2 mm apart in all directions. Scale bars should be used rather than magnification factors, to prevent errors occurring when figures are resized. The length of the bar should be defined in the legend rather than on the bar itself. If arrows are used, they should be small, of less than 1 pt line width, and have small arrowheads. Please also supply images without arrows and labelling.

Drawn (vector) diagrams

General information

Vector (line) formats are best for graphs and schematic illustrations, and for composite figures containing a mixture of photos and line drawings. They preserve individual lines and text as separate, editable components, which makes it easier for us to change labels etc. to our own style, reduces the chance of errors and gives sharper results. These files do not have a resolution as such and, therefore, they can be enlarged without loss of quality. Formats include Adobe Illustrator, Postscript, EPS and PDF, and we can also accept files saved in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

Styles

All line artwork will be completely redrawn and relabelled using the fonts, colour palette and styles of the Nature Reviews clinical titles.

Colour

Computer screens display colours by using red, green and blue pixels (RGB), whereas the colour printing process uses inks in four colours—cyan, magenta, yellow and black (CMYK). Colour figures supplied in RGB mode will be converted to CMYK during the production process to ensure accuracy at the printing stage, but the range of colours is smaller than with RGB. Thus, colours are often more muted and contrast is reduced. For this reason, you should check the proofs carefully for loss of information. Please retain editable layers in the file. If you think there may be a problem with conversion, please ask your commissioning editor to check at an early stage whether it will be acceptable.