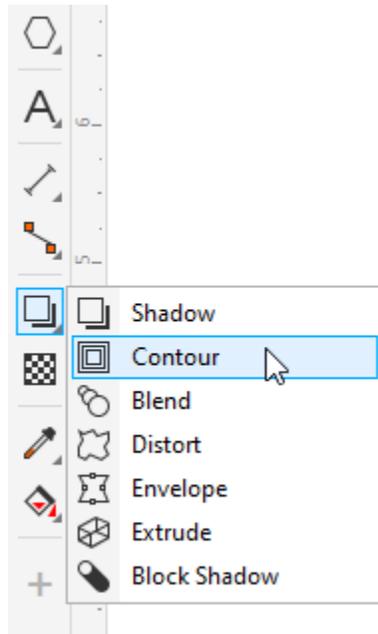


How to Use the Contour Tool in CorelDRAW

A contour is an effect created by adding evenly spaced, concentric shapes inside or outside the borders of an object. Contours can be used to create interesting 3D effects, such as shading in complex illustrations, or for creating cuttable outlines to be used by devices such as plotters, engraving machines, and vinyl cutters. Contours can be applied to objects, groups of objects, and text.

Contour Tool Basics

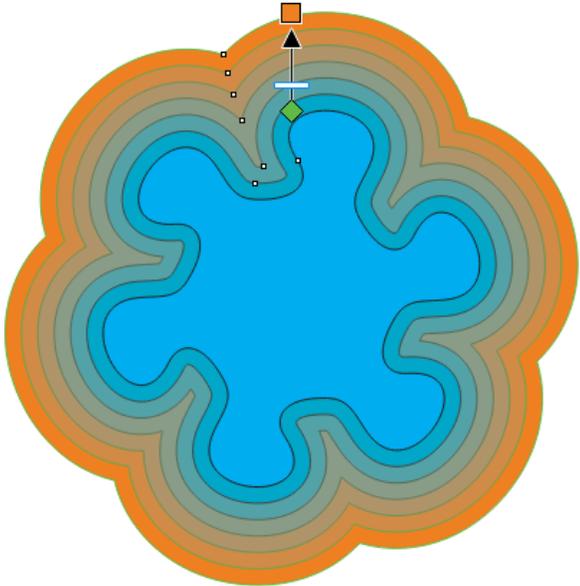
The **Contour** tool is part of the **Effects** tool group.



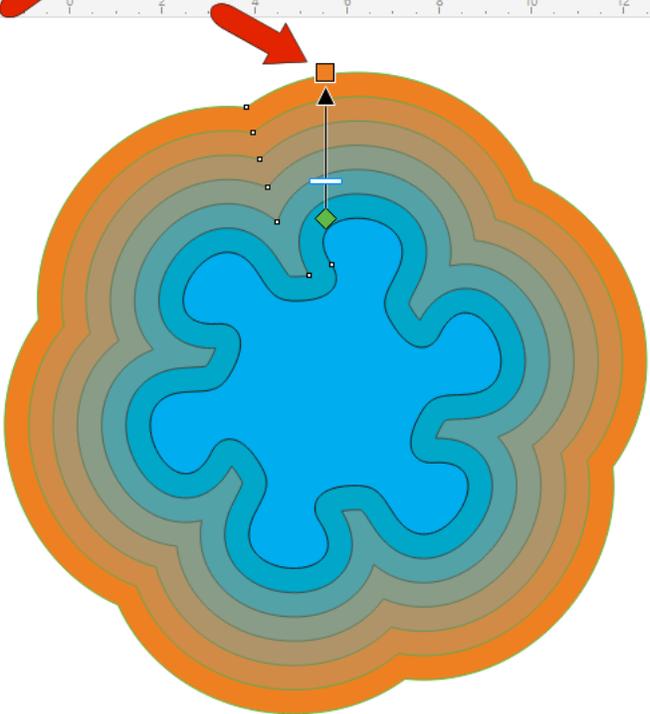
There is also a **Contour** docker, or **Contour** inspector on the Mac, which can be opened by choosing **Window > Dockers > Effects > Contour**. The options here are the same ones that appear on the **Property Bar** when creating or editing a contour.

When the **Contour** tool is active, if no object is pre-selected, you can click the object to contour, and the contour options are displayed on the **Property Bar**. If an object was pre-selected before activating the **Contour** tool, the **Property Bar** displays the contour options.

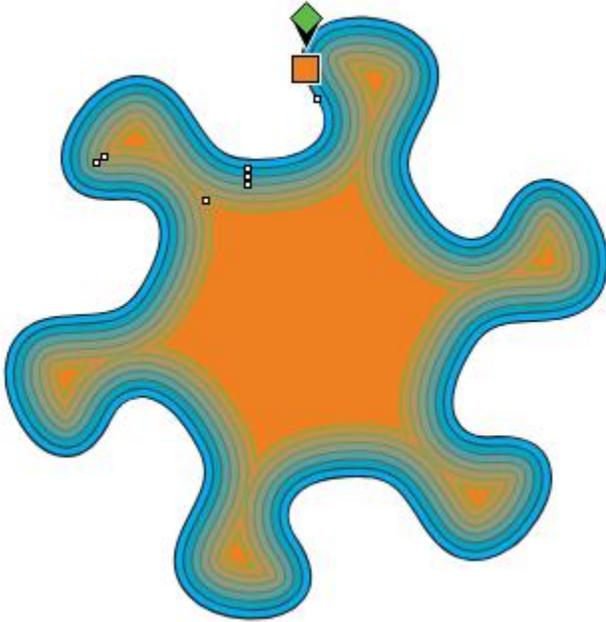
In this example, one contour step was applied, which follows the shape around at a constant offset of the specified distance, with the specified fill and outline colors.



You can change the offset distance, which is the distance between steps, by dragging the fill square swatch, or you can enter the distance manually on the **Property Bar**.

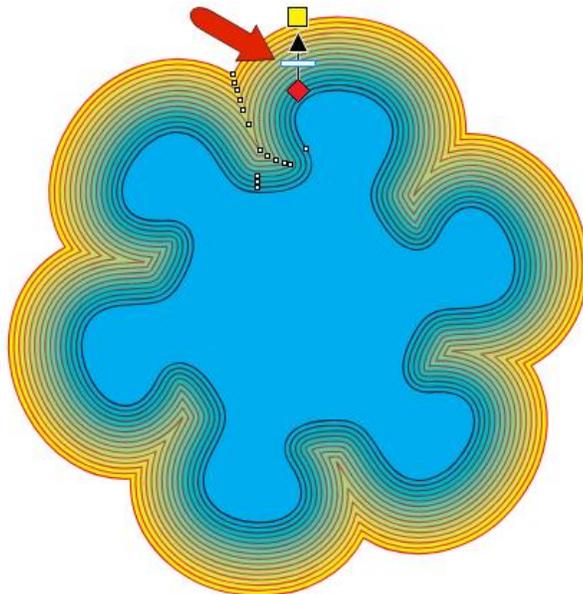


You can also drag the swatch to switch between inside and outside contours.

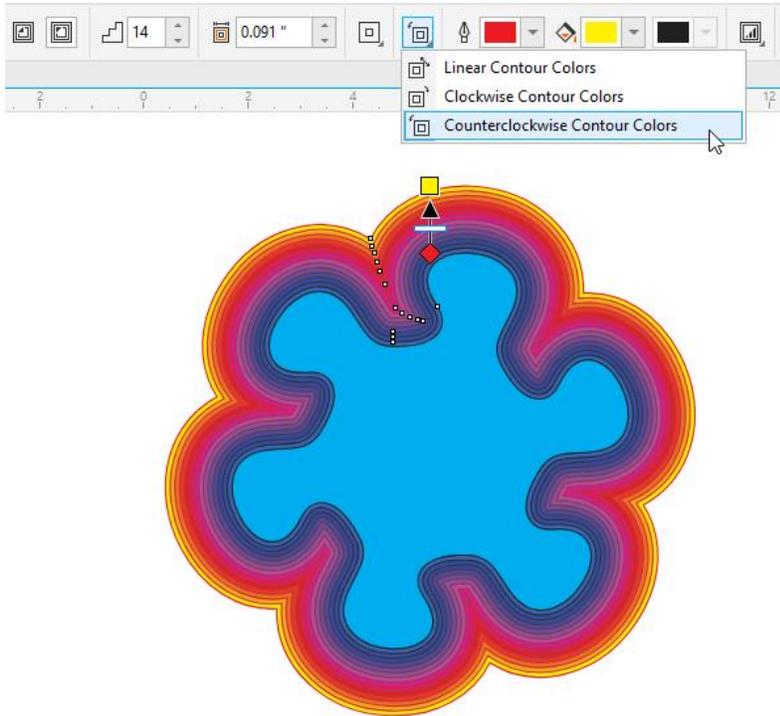


Contour outline and fill color can be set by clicking the swatches on the **Property Bar**, or you can drag a swatch directly onto either the outline diamond or the fill square.

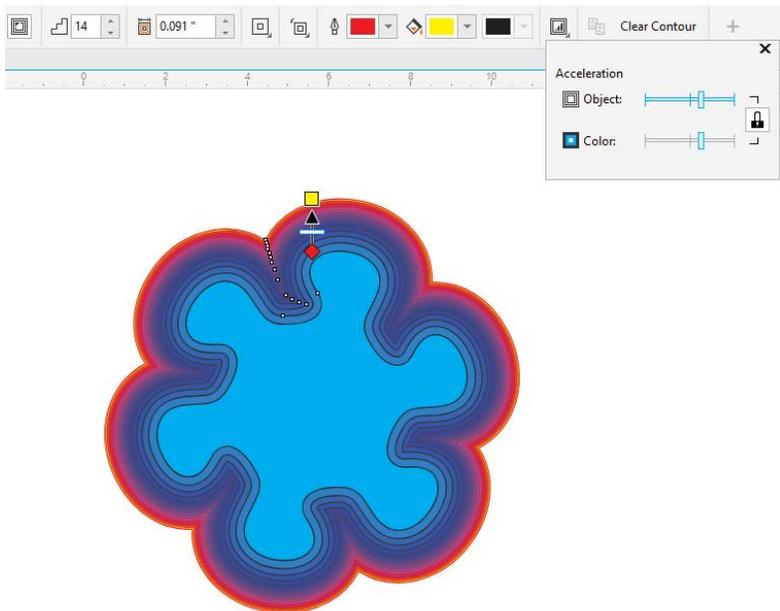
The number of contour steps can also be adjusted by dragging the slider, which updates the contour offset distance.



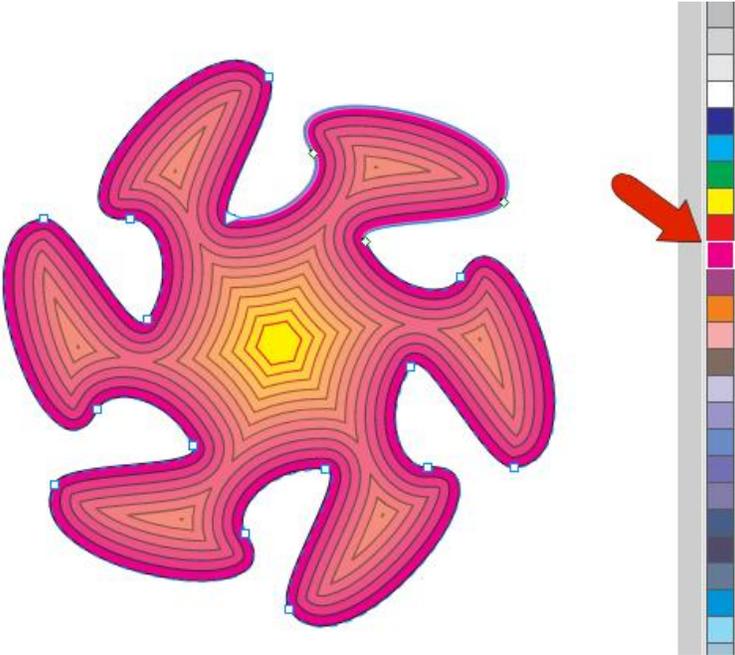
By default, the contour colors change gradually from the object's original fill color to the contour fill color. The same applies to the change between the original and contour outline colors. You can switch the color change progression from the default linear to clockwise or clockwise along the color wheel.



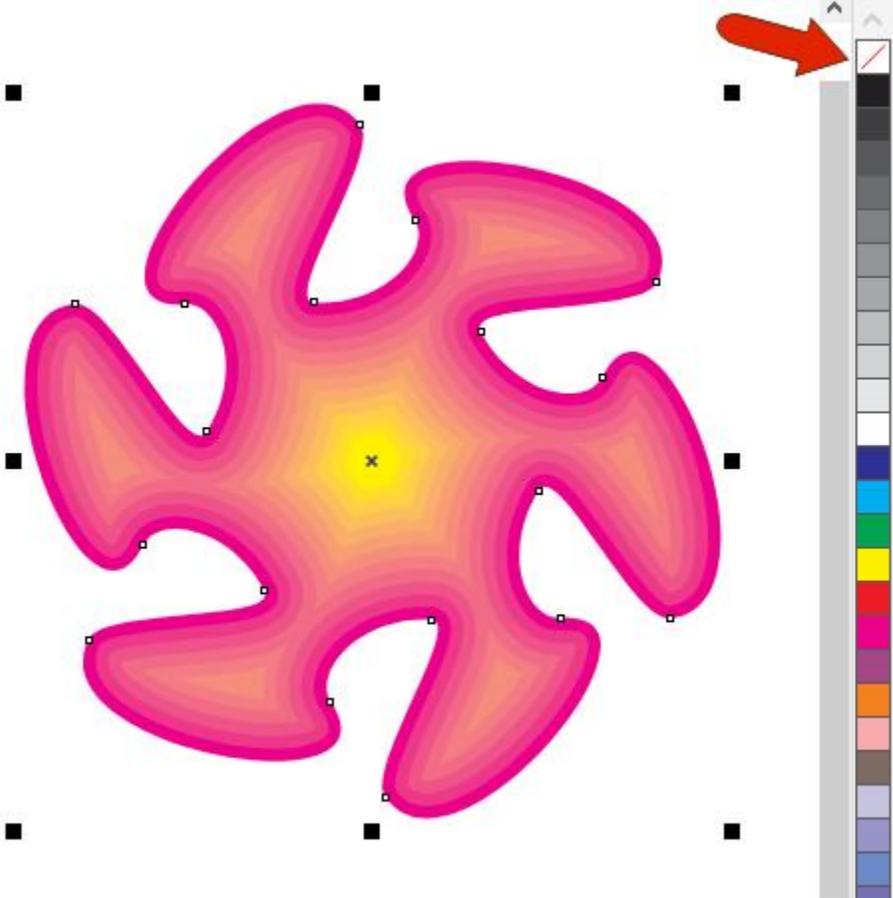
By default, all contours have the same distance between steps, as well as the same rate of color change. To change this, you can click the **Object and Color Acceleration** icon, and adjust both rates of change at once, so that change happens more quickly in the outer contours or in the inner contours. You can click the lock to separate object and color changes, so that both can be adjusted separately.



Changing the fill color of the original object, by clicking a color swatch, will also update the contours.



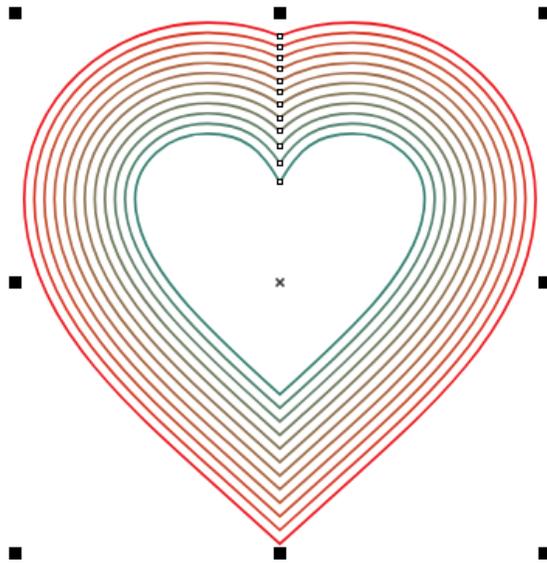
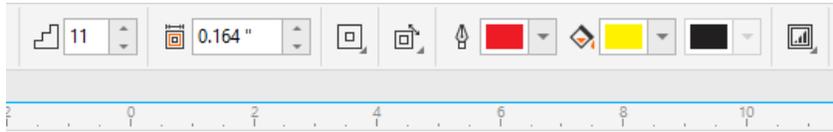
Contours are often used for 3D shadowing or gradient effects, which you can see by right-clicking on the **No-Color** swatch which removes all outlines.



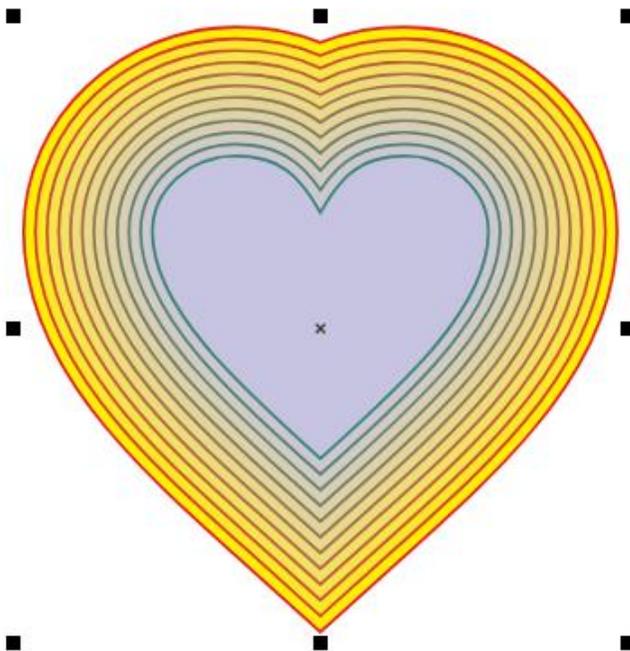
To start over or remove the contour, click **Clear Contour**.

Contours for Open Curves

Contours can also be applied to open curves, or shapes with no fill. The gradient is applied from the original outline color to the contour outline color.

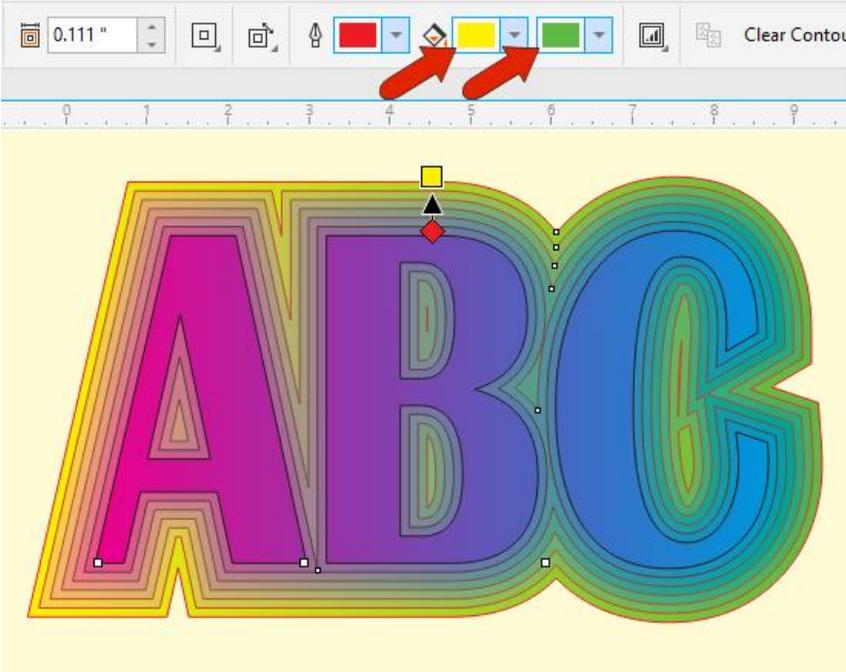


You can fill objects by clicking a color swatch.

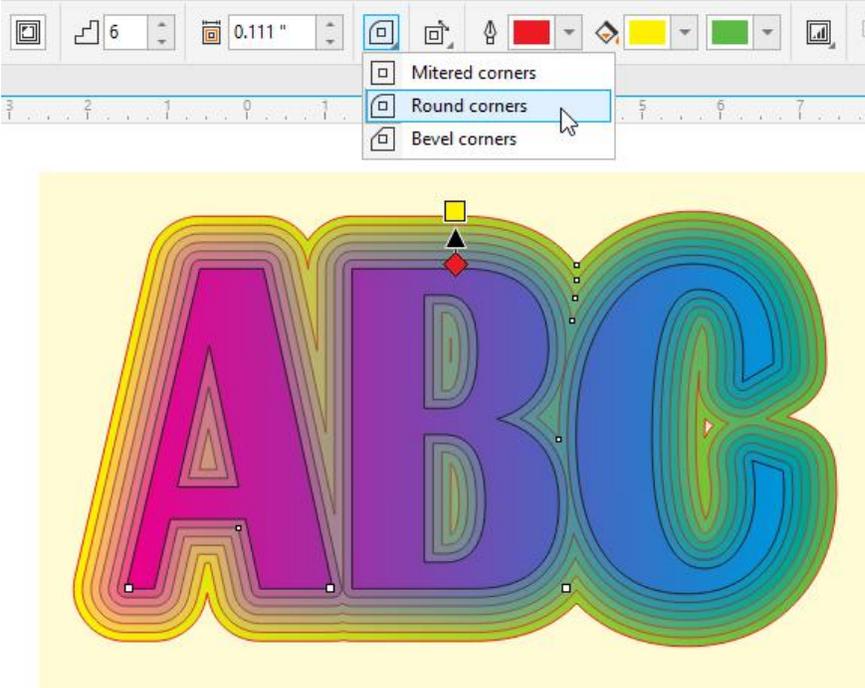


Contours for Text

Contours can be applied to text as well. This text has a fountain fill, which means the contours do as well. In this case you can specify contour fill colors to correspond with the start and end colors of the fountain fill.

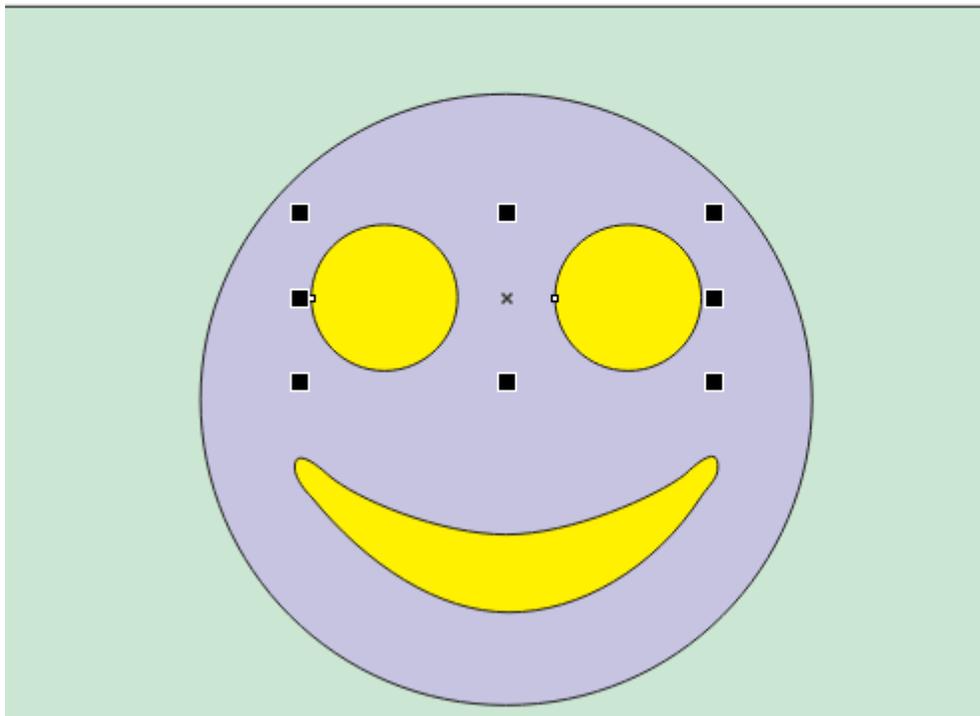
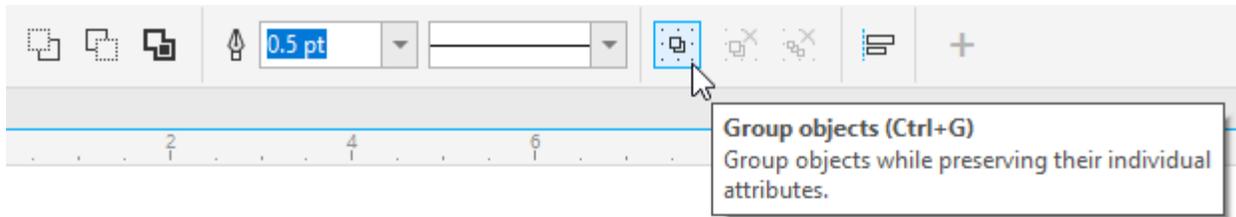


By default, contours have sharp corners to match the sharp corners of the text, but you can click the **Contour corners** icon and switch to **Round** or **Bevel** corners.

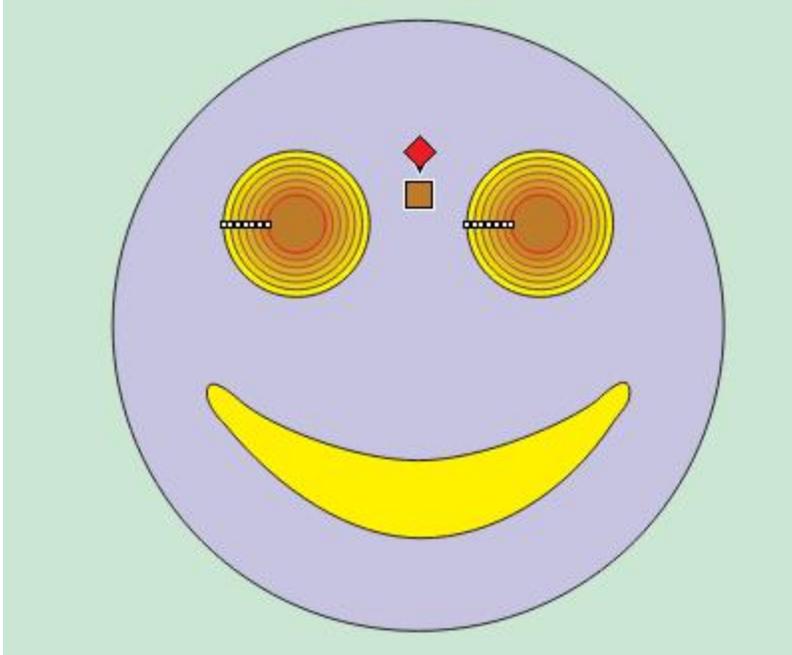


Adding Contours to Multiple Shapes

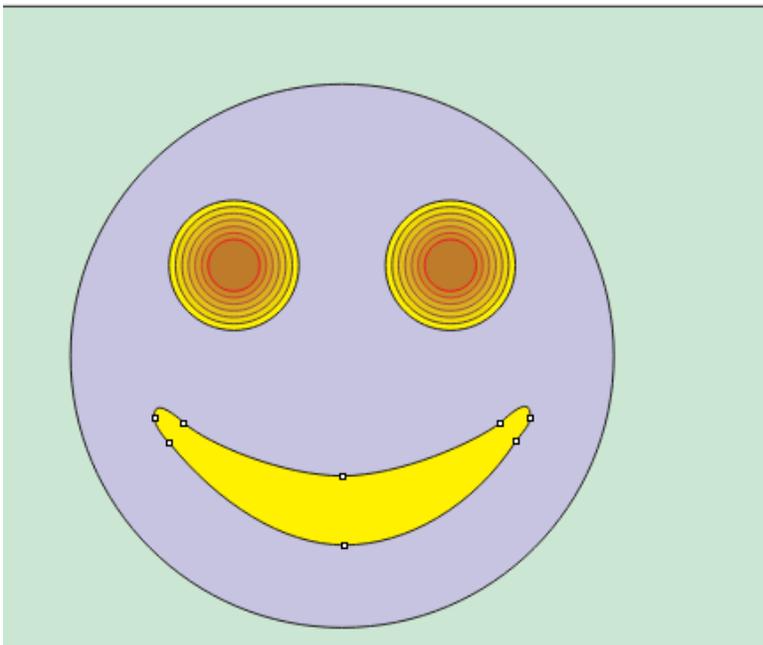
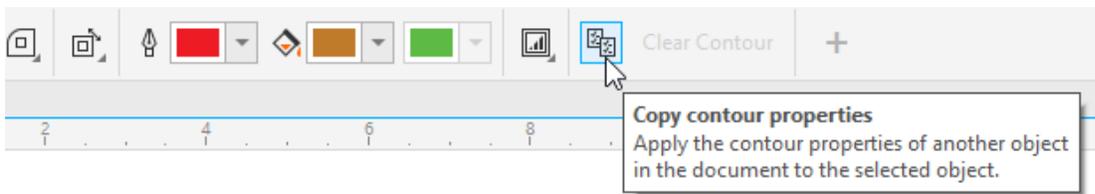
Only one shape can be contoured at a time, but you can get around this by grouping. With the **Pick** tool active, hold the **Shift** key while selecting two or more shapes, then click **Group objects**.



Once grouped, you can apply contours to both shapes at once.

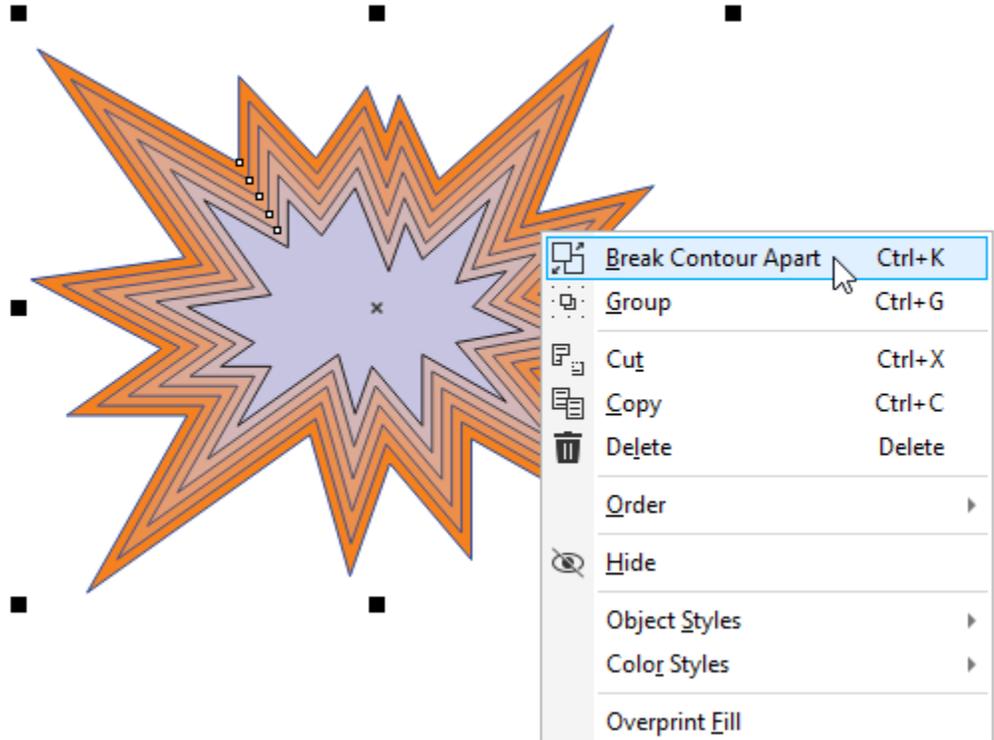


If you want to use the same contour for another object, click the new object you want to contour, click **Copy Contour Properties**, and click one of the contour steps.

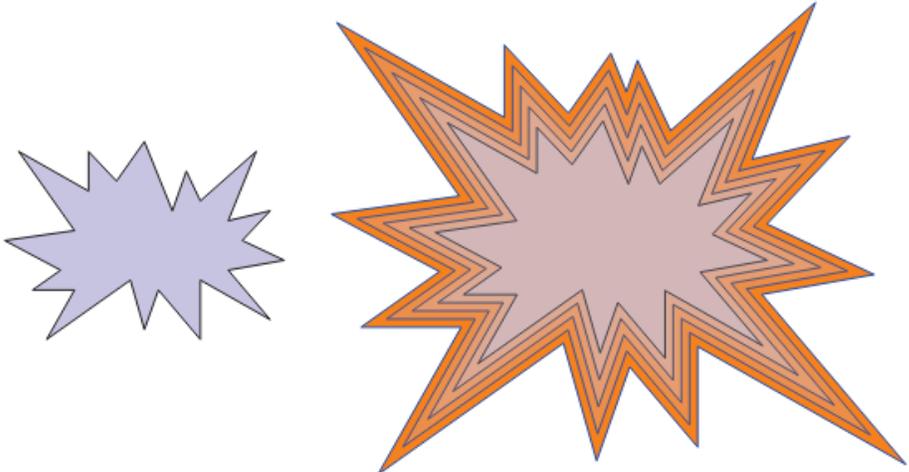


Breaking Contours Apart

Finally, contours are connected to the objects on which they're based, so if you need the contours as a separate object, you need to separate them from the original object. This is done by right-clicking on the contours and choosing **Break Contour Apart**.



Now with the **Pick** tool you can select just the contours and move them aside.



The contours themselves are now a group, so if you need to separate each contour shape, you could right-click and ungroup.