



CREATE A BASIC MOTION TWEEN

When you create an animation using the traditional technique, you create an animation frame-by-frame. This can be quite time consuming and isn't necessary in many cases. You can get Flash to do a lot of the hard work for you by using motion or shape tweens.

This tutorial will show you how to create a basic motion tween in Flash MX. When you use a motion tween in Flash, you need to ensure you follow the two rules below:

Rule #1

The object that you are going to tween needs to be on it's own layer. If other objects are on the same layer, Flash won't know what to tween.

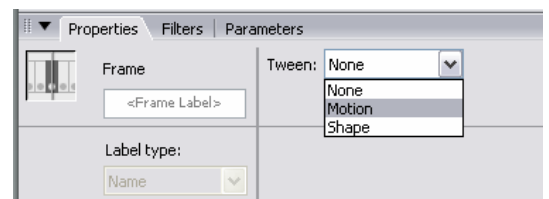
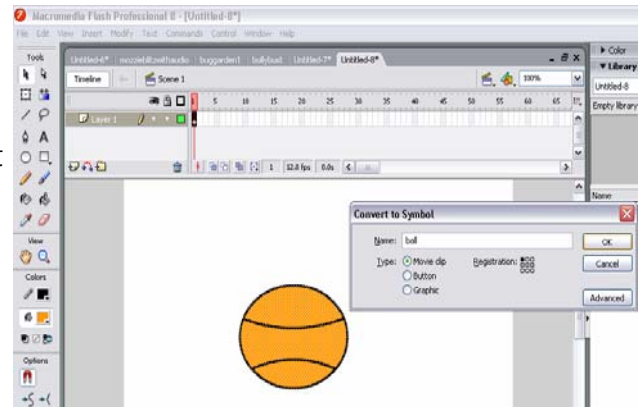
Rule #2

Objects must be converted into a symbol or grouped in order to be used in a motion tween.

STEPS

Now that you know these two important rules, let's create a simple animation sequence using a motion tween.

1. Open a new flash file.
2. Draw a ball on the stage and convert it into a symbol by choosing **Modify > Convert to Symbol** (or **F8**). Leave the Behaviour checked as Movie Clip. (see screenshot above)
3. The timeline contains a keyframe on frame 1. To create our animation, we need to insert a second keyframe further along the timeline. Click on frame 40 of the timeline and select **Insert > Timeline > Keyframe**.
4. Make sure you have the keyframe at frame 40 selected and move your ball to another location on the stage.
5. If you click on the first frame of the timeline and press enter, you will see that the ball sits in the same position for the first 39 frames and then moves to the new location at frame 40. To animate the ball so it moves across the stage gradually, click in the timeline between the two keyframes and select **Motion** from the **Tween** drop down menu in the **Properties** panel.






At this stage, if you select **Control > Test Movie**, you should see your ball moving gradually from the first position to the second position. You can vary the time the ball takes to move by clicking on the keyframe at frame 40 and moving it up or down the timeline. Note that if you shorten the time, you will be left with a series of normal grey frames at the end of the tween. To remove these, you can select them by scrolling across the frames you want to remove, clicking your right mouse button and selecting **Remove Frames**.

Onion Skinning

One of the best features of Flash is the Onion Skin tool.

 To activate this tool, you click on the second toolbar button directly under the timeline. This toolbar button is shown at the left of this text.

The Onion Skin tool allows you to see the contents of frames that are next to each other. When doing intricate animation, it allows you to see where an object was in a previous frame, in order to line it up in the next frame.

From an education perspective, this tool is fantastic, as it provides teachers with a powerful tool to demonstrate to students how much work the computer is doing for them by creating the additional frames.

The screenshot below shows the Onion Skin tool in action. It is providing a view of the contents of a series of frames within our tween. To change the range of frames that can be viewed, simply alter the dark grey selection area directly above the layer where the frame numbers are. This can be shortened or extended.

