

Customizing CSS Menu Writer Menus

This Solution Recipe shows you how to customize the button images of your Menu Writer menus, including how to add custom backgrounds to your menu items.

This Solution Recipe takes you through the process of creating custom images using image editing software and then applying the images to your CSS Menu Writer menu items.

What Do You Need to Start?

- Dreamweaver CS3 or 8
- CSS Menu Writer
- Fireworks (*Optional*)
- Sample file located in your Order History

Slicing the Fireworks Images

When creating custom backgrounds for your menu items, the first step is to create your desired design, and then split that design into the necessary images that you need. This process is known as slicing.

In this section we will use Fireworks to slice images. If you do not have Fireworks, other image editing software can achieve a similar result.

Note: If you already have the images you intend to use, you can skip this step.



1. Open the sample PNG file **Sample_Horizontal_Nav.png** in Fireworks.

Notice in this design, that the main navigation has a continuous background and a button appearance is displayed when a link is rolled over.

First, slice the left image.

2. From the tools panel, select the **Slice tool**.
3. Using the slice tool, click and drag over the left side of the button, highlighting a thin vertical area.
4. In the name field of the Properties panel enter **hover_left**.

Next slice the center image. For this you only need to slice a small portion of the menu since we will use the CSS repeat property to extend the image across the entire button.

5. Highlight a small vertical area of the button.

Note: It is important to avoid any areas that include text as this would be included in the outputted image.

6. Enter **hover_center** for the name.

Create the slice for the right image.

7. Highlight a similar area on the right side of the button as you did for the left side.
8. In the name field, enter **hover_right**.

Slice the background image.

9. Highlight a small portion of the background for this slice.
10. In the name field enter **bg_new**.

Now that you have created your slices, you need to export them to individual images.

Before exporting your slices, make sure that the optimization is set to JPEG to represent the gradients properly.

11. Choose **Window > Optimize**.
12. From the Export File Format list, choose JPEG.
13. From the File menu, select **Export**.
14. From the Export menu, select **Images Only**.
15. Make sure that the Slices menu is set to **Export Slices**.
16. Uncheck **Include areas without slices**.
17. Select the new folder icon.

18. Enter **nav_images** for the folder name.
19. Click **Export**.

Changing Design to use custom button images

The next step is to customize the design of your CSS Menu Writer menu using the new button images.

1. From the Files panel, double-click to open the **start.html** file.
2. Select the scripts icon next to the menu that has already been created.

Note: This icon is only necessary for HTML users. If you are working with HTML and cannot see this icon, you will need to turn on showing the invisible element scripts under Preferences.

3. Select the **Edit** button from the Property Inspector.
4. In the Menu Writer Wizard, select the **Design** tab.
5. Select the Main level from the menu level control.

Notice that the design of the new menu does not have a button appearance for each link like the current menu. So, our first step is to remove the current images that are specified for the Link state.

6. In the Background & Border area, under the Link tab, select the **<a>** tab.

The **<a>** tab represents the Background and Border properties for the left cap of your menu button.

7. In the Filename field highlight the path to this image and press **Delete**.
8. Then, press **tab** to confirm this change.

Repeat this process for the **** and **** sub tabs.

9. Select the **** sub tab.
10. In the Filename field highlight the path to this image.
11. Press **Delete**, and then **tab**.
12. Now, select the **** sub tab.

13. In the Filename field highlight the path to this image and press **Delete**.

14. Press **tab**.

15. Select the **Apply** button to update the Preview.

Add your new images to the Hover state.

16. Select the **Hover** tab.

17. Select the **<a>** sub tab.

18. Choose the Filename browse button.

19. Navigate to the **nav_images** folder that contains our slices.

20. Select the **hover_left.jpg** image.

21. Click **Open**.

22. Choose **no-repeat** from the Repeat menu.

23. From the Horizontal menu choose **Left**.

24. Select **Apply** to update the Preview.

Add the images for **** and ****.

25. Select the **** sub tab.

26. Select the Browse icon for Filename.

27. Select **hover_right.jpg**.

28. Select **Open**.

29. From the Repeat menu list, select **no-repeat**.

30. From the Horizontal menu, select **right**.

Add the center image.

31. Select the **** sub tab.

32. Choose the Browse icon from the Filename option.

33. Select the **hover_center.jpg** image.

34. Click **Open**.

35. From the Repeat menu select **repeat-x**.

36. From the Horizontal menu select **Center**.

37. Press **Apply** to update the Preview.

From looking at the preview you can see that the alignment is slightly off for our menu item's text. This can be solved simply by adding some more padding to this menu item.

38. Select the **Box** tab.

39. Under Dimensions, Margin, and Padding, select the **padding** tab.

40. Make sure the All check box is selected

41. Enter **10** in the Top field, and then press tab.

42. Select **Apply** to update your preview.

43. Click **Finish** to have your menu updated.

Changing the MW menu background image

The final step is to customize your menu writer background image so that it blends nicely with the CSS Sculptor page you are using. With the appropriate background image already sliced, all you need to do now is copy your new image to your site folder, and then change the CSS to reference this new file.

1. In the Files panel, expand the CSSMenuWriter folder, then the `cssmw_images` folder.
2. Open Windows Explorer on the PC, or the Mac finder if you are on a Mac, and navigate to our **nav_images** folder.
3. Click and drag the **bg_new.jpg** file to the **cssmw_images** folder in the Dreamweaver Files Panel.

Note: CSS Menu Writer uses two CSS style sheets for your menu. The main CSS file, **menu.css**, and an additional style sheet for Internet Explorer users (**menu_ie.css**), to ensure that the menu functions and appears as it should in IE.

Both these files will need to be changed in order for the background image to appear properly. For HTML users the CSS styles panel can be used directly from the menu page. With dynamic pages, you will need to open the CSS file and make your changes from there.

4. Click anywhere on the menu on your page.
5. In the Tag selector select the `<ul.level-0#cssmw>` option.
6. Click once in the background image option.
7. Select the browse for file icon.
8. Select the **bg_new.jpg** file and click **OK**.

You now need to change the height properties to view the entire image.

9. Click once in the **height** field.
10. Enter **38**.
11. Click back in Design View to see your changes applied.
12. From the Files Panel, double-click to open the **menu_ie.css** file.
13. Click once in the background image option under **the ul#cssmw** element options at the top of this page.
14. In the CSS Styles panel, select the browse icon next to the background image option.
15. Select the **bg_new.jpg** file, and click **OK**.
16. Click in the height value field.
17. Enter **38**.

Note: These changes, because modified outside of CSS Menu Writer, are not saved as part of the custom Menu Writer design.

For this reason, if you reenter the Menu Writer wizard and apply any changes to this menu, you will need to make these modifications to the CSS files again.

18. Press **Ctrl or Cmd + S** to save your page.
19. Then close this page.