

The Care and Feeding of Powerpoint Presentations

Best Practices, Tips & Tricks

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Using Master Slides

Consistency and uniformity are the foundation of design for books, websites, and slide shows. The first place you should visit when creating a new presentation for any purpose are your Master Slides.

Whatever you place on a Master, appears on every slide based on that Master. How you format text and shapes on a Master affects (with one caveat) every slide based on that Master. Placing a logo on a Master slide, for example, is certainly easier than copying and pasting it twenty times. It may go without saying that another benefit is the logo appears in exactly the same location on every slide.

Viewing Master Slides

There are, of course, multiple ways to get there but the fastest is Shift-clicking the **Normal View** button (Figure 1). Pressing Shift changes **Normal** to **Master**.

Suggestion: Add some paragraph spacing!

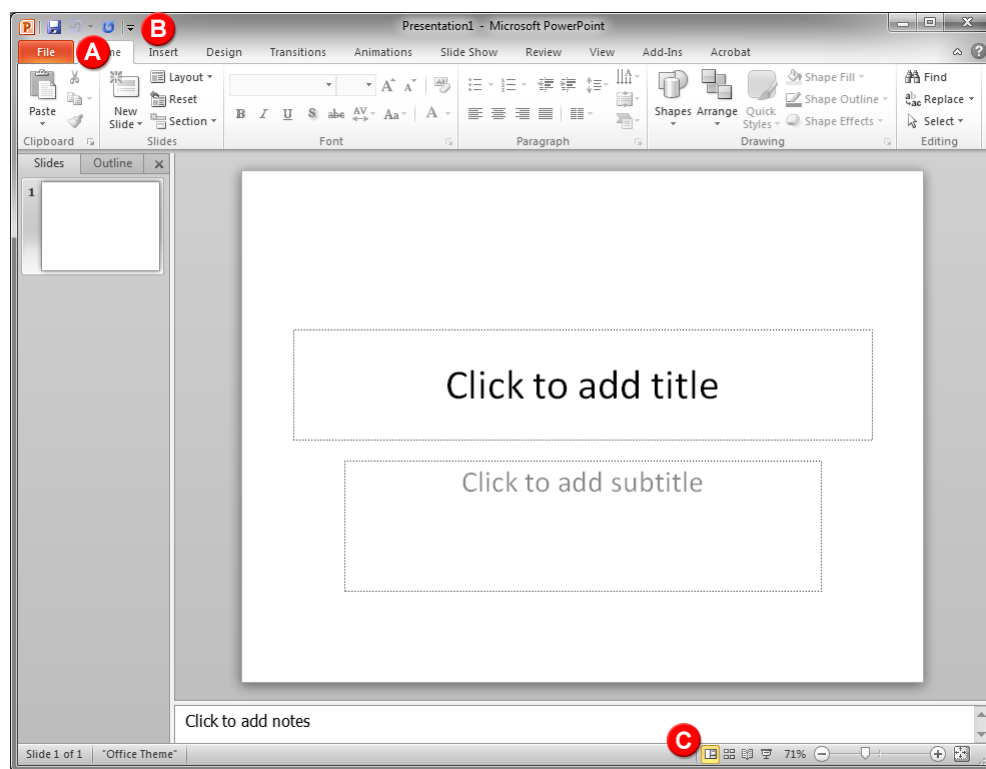


Figure 1: A) The Ribbon B) Quick Access Bar C) Normal View button.

NEED TO KNOW

The coolest thing about Master Slides is that when you update something on the Master, it updates on all the slides ... except ... anything you've manually formatted on a slide.

This means you can't effectively use this feature on an old presentation in which you've made manual edits over generations of "Save As" copies.

Multiple Master Slides

The top/parent Master Slide affects all slides. It also affects the “child” masters. Each type of slide layout has its own master. This means if you have sections in your presentation, you can change all the section title slides at once without affecting the slides in those sections.

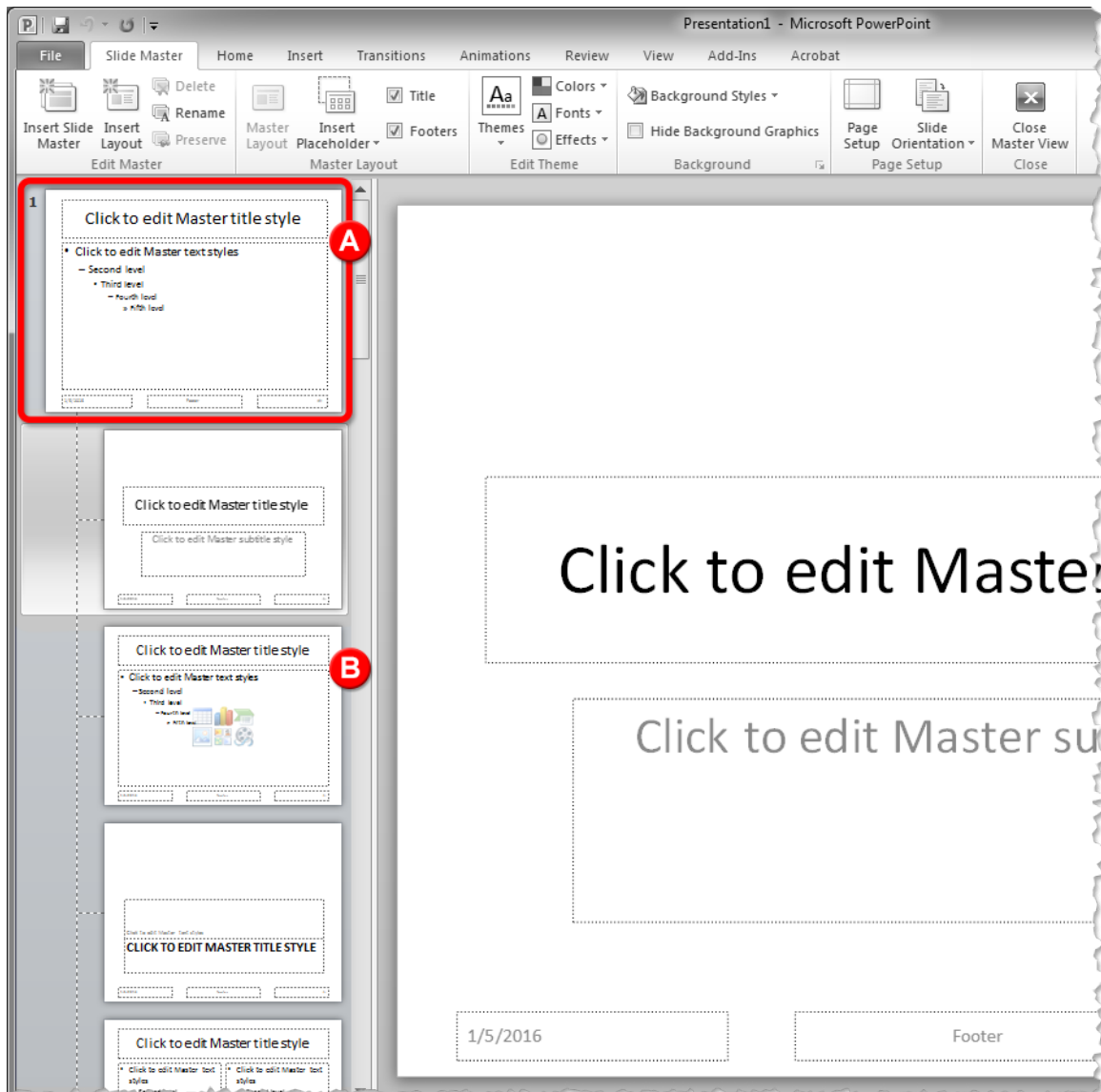


Figure 2: For most changes, use A) the top/parent Master Slide.
For section-specific changes, use B) a child-Master.

GOOD TO KNOW

Slide Titles are often automatically converted into Bookmarks in a PDF (which totally rocks) and slide titles in Articulate Storyline *but only if they actually in Title boxes from a Master slide.*

Faux titles created using **Insert > Text Box**, don't become anything in a PDF and those slides are “untitled” in Storyline.

Navigation in PDF and Storyline benefit from slides with unique names.

Formatting Text Boxes

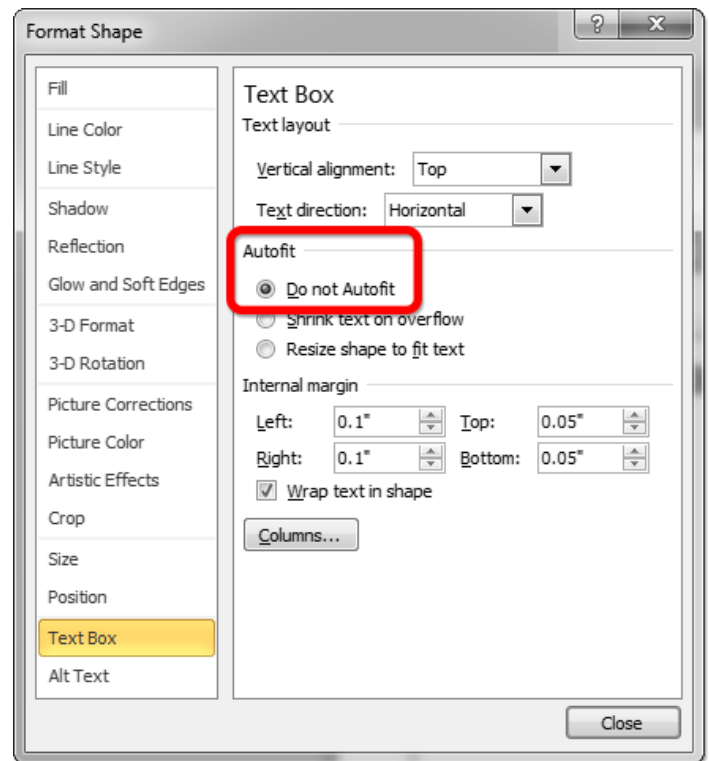
You'll want to do this on the Master slide and any time you create a new text box.

1. Select the title and body placeholders and choose **Format Shape**.
2. In the **Format Shape** box, under the **Text Box** tab, select **Do not Autofit**. This prevents the text from getting smaller when it runs out of room in the shape.

This ensures your text won't automatically resize if you type more than the text box can hold. If a text box can't hold all of the text without wanting to resize it, you should use an additional slide for that content.

NEED TO KNOW

Manually created text boxes aren't connected to anything on the master, so, are not updated by any changes to the Master slide.



*Figure 3: Selecting **Wrap text in shape** keeps the text within the shape instead of going off the slide into infinity.*

Layout & Design Tips

- White space. Let your content breathe a little. Fewer, but more crowded, slides cause reader fatigue much faster than many more, well-designed slides.
- Larger text, such as titles, should use thicker typefaces--they're especially easier to read on screen.
- For the same reason, avoid drop shadows on text with thin typefaces.
- Only use ALL CAPS one word at a time (with acronyms, for example). For emphasis, instead try a different style such as bold and italics, different sizes, different colors, or a combination of all those. If you inherit an Office file with tons of content in all caps, the **Change Case** button (Figure 4) is your friend. It can also be used to change titles with **Capitalize Each Word** if you don't mind then manually changing one- and two-letter words to lower case.
- One exclamation point or question mark per sentence is enough.

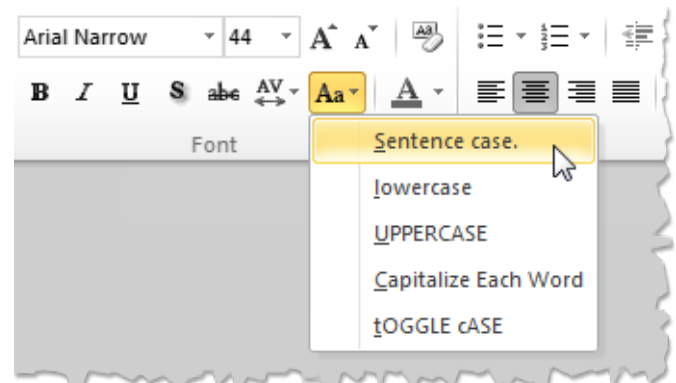


Figure 4: Sentence Case is a hidden gem.

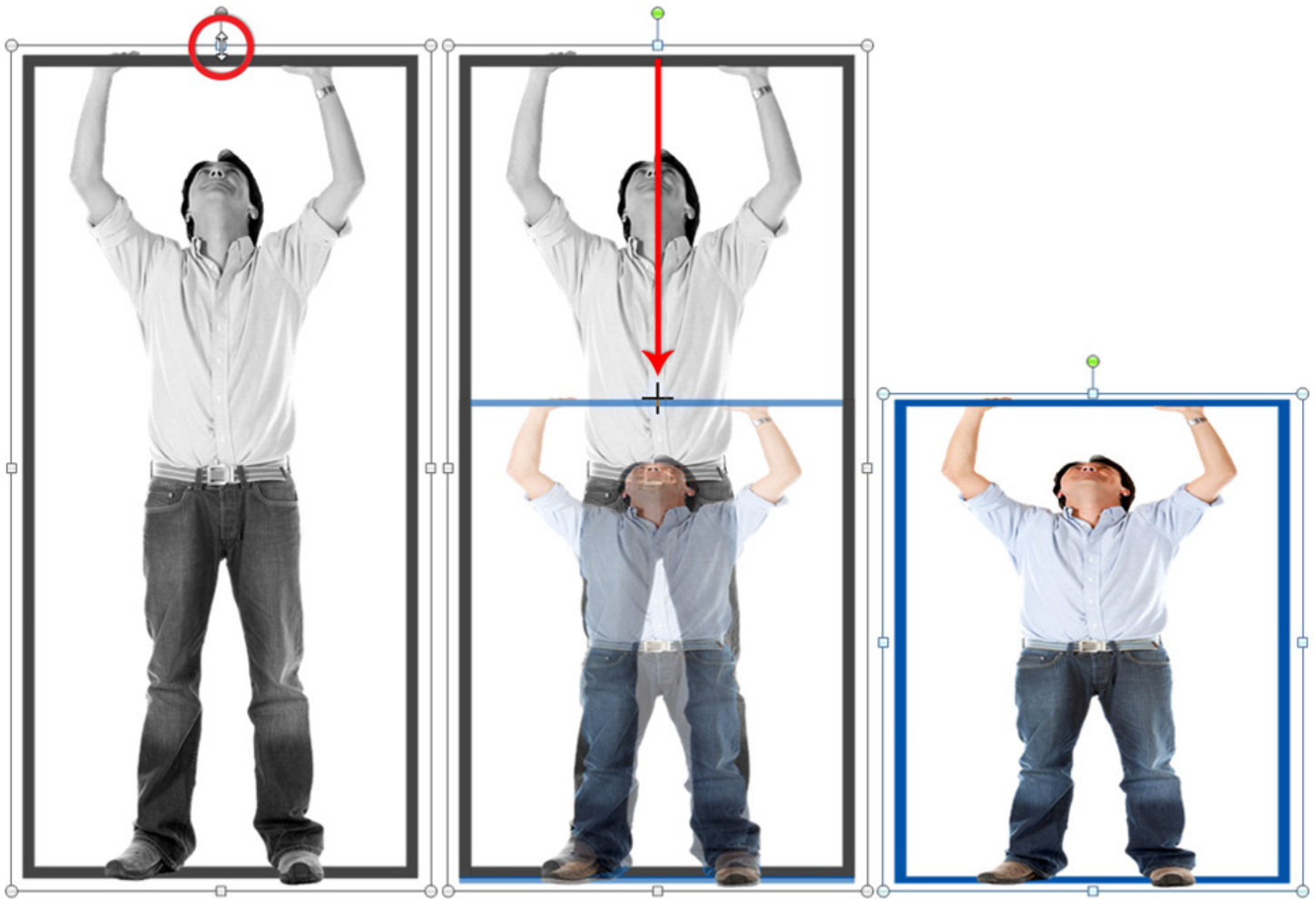


Figure 5: Every time you distort an image like this, a kitten dies.

Resizing Images

Using the resizing handles on the sides (**Figure 5**) of shapes works perfectly fine. For pictures, not so much. No matter how careful you are, you never get the dimensions just right. To resize photographs and screenshots, use the corners as shown in **Figure 6**.

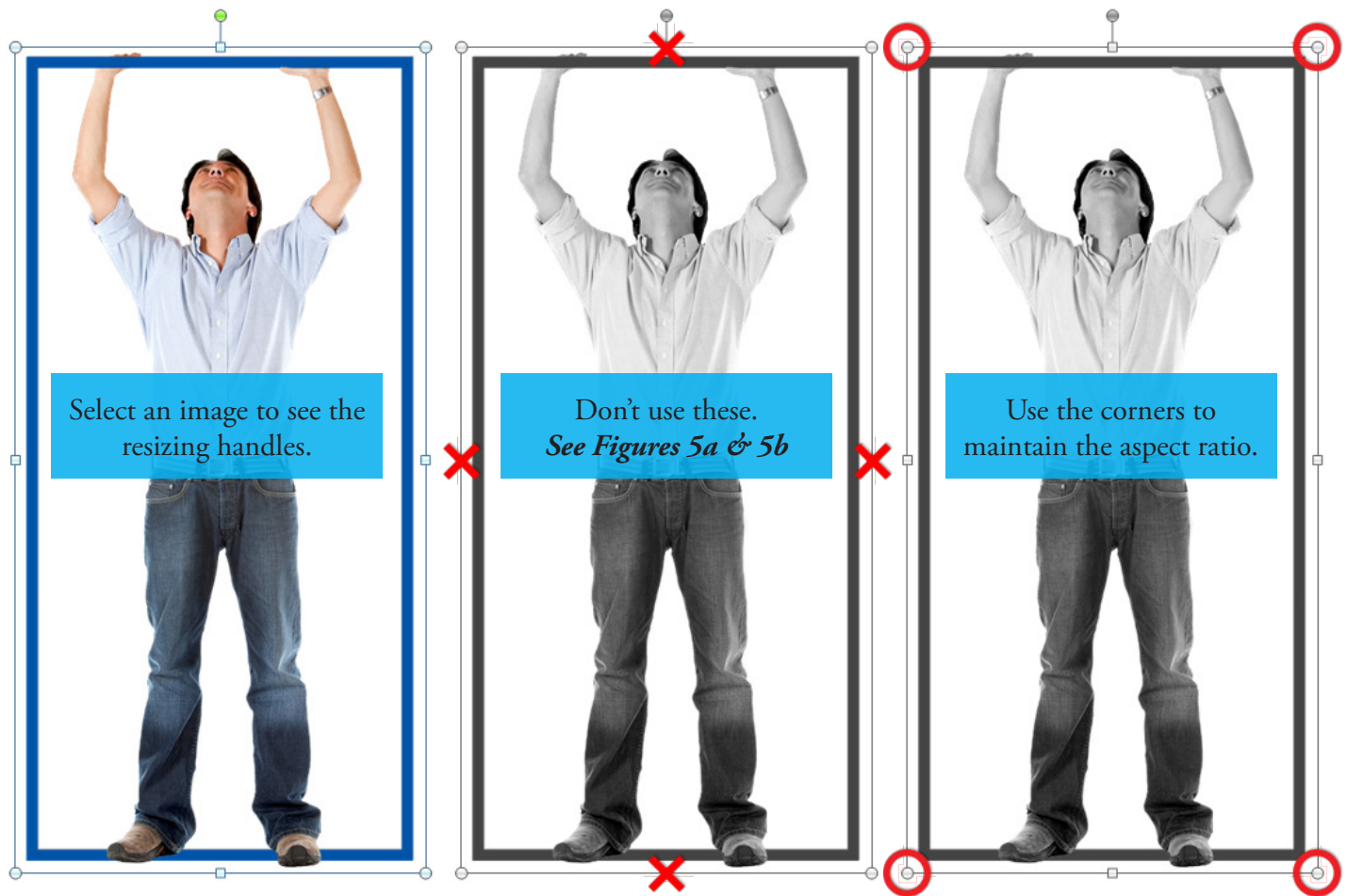
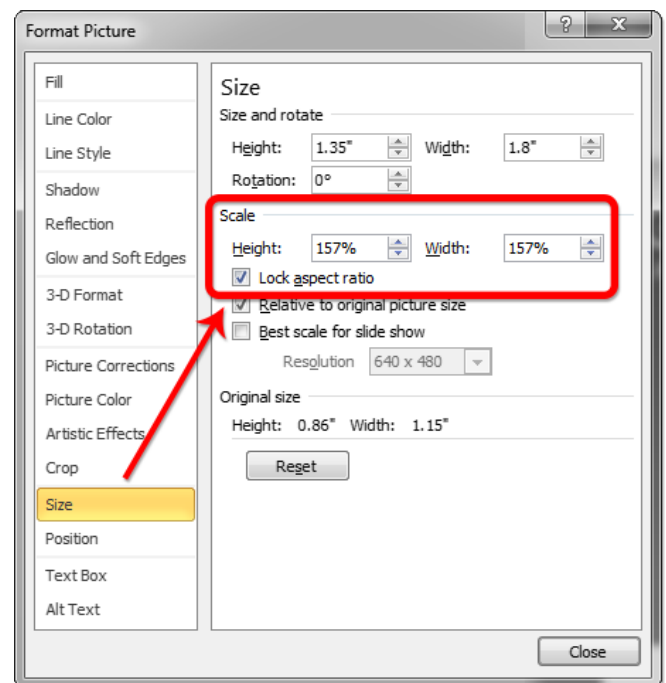


Figure 6: Corner resizing handles preserve the aspect ratio.

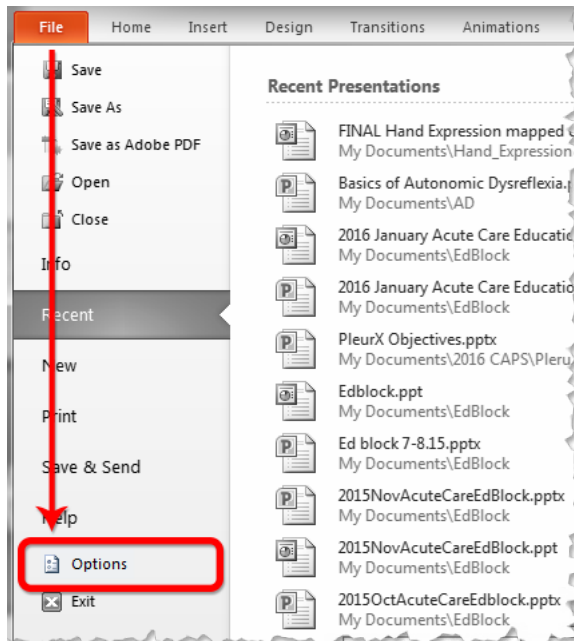
Fixing Distorted Images

Right-click the image and choose **Size and Position**. Deselect **Lock Aspect Ratio**, make the **Height** and **Width** match, then reselect **Lock Aspect Ratio**.



Customizing the Quick Access Bar

We can all agree the **Ribbon** is the worst thing in the history of MS Office. Tired of switching tabs constantly? Tired of MS Office switching tabs for you thinking it's being helpful? Add frequently used tools to the **Quick Access Bar**.



*Figure 7: Click the **File** tab in the ribbon to find **Options**. In earlier versions, click the Office logo in the upper left.*

1. Click the **File** tab in the ribbon then click **Options** in the bottom left (**Figure 7**).
2. In the **PowerPoint Options** window, click **Quick Access Toolbar** on the left (**Figure 8**).
3. Select your favorite, frequently used tools in the left column and click **Add** to move them to the **Quick Access Toolbar** column on the right.
4. Click **OK**.

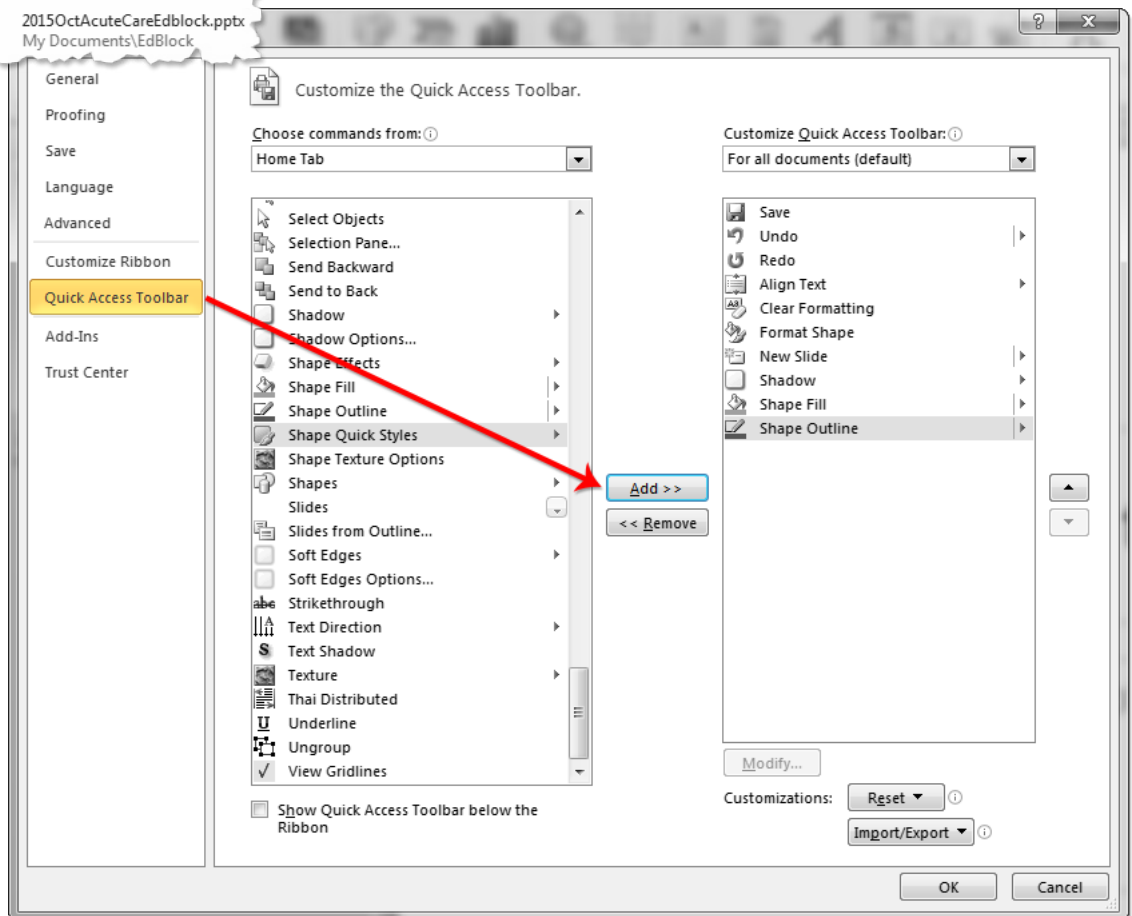


Figure 8: In earlier versions of Office, this is your only recourse against Ribbon tyranny.

Customizing the Ribbon

In Office 2010 and later, you can finally customize the ribbon--even creating your own custom Tab! You can even export these settings to share between your work and home machines or with co-workers.

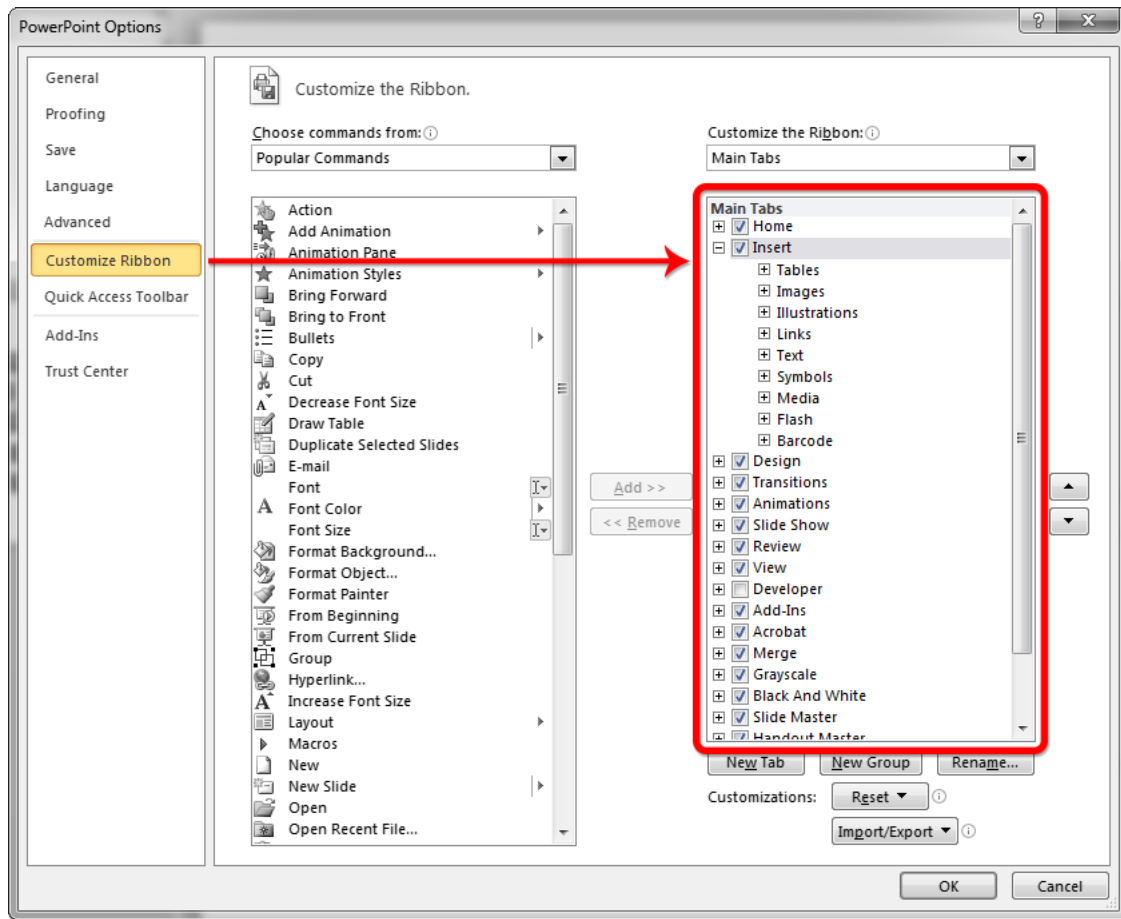


Figure 9: MS Office is, finally, under our control again.

1. Click the **File** tab in the ribbon then click **Options** in the bottom left (**Figure 7**).
2. In the **PowerPoint Options** window, click **Customize Ribbon** on the left.
3. Create your own custom tab by clicking **New Tab** in the bottom right (**Figure 9**).
4. Optionally divide the tab into groups (think "Paragraph," "Drawing," etc. or "Images" and "Illustrations" in **Figure 14**) by clicking **New Group**.
5. Rename tabs and/or groups by selecting them and clicking **Rename**.
6. Click **OK**.

AutoCorrect for Good and Evil

Are there medical terms you'd love it if you didn't have to type out each time? From now on, you can type an acronym such as, "cauti," press Enter and MS Office will insert "Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infection" for you. Or, you can get onto a co-worker's computer and make it so every time they type their name, Office changes it to "Big Fat Poopyhead."

1. Click the **File** tab in the ribbon then click **Options** in the bottom left (Figure 7).
2. In the **PowerPoint Options** window, click **Proofing** on the left then **AutoCorrect Options** (Figure 10).

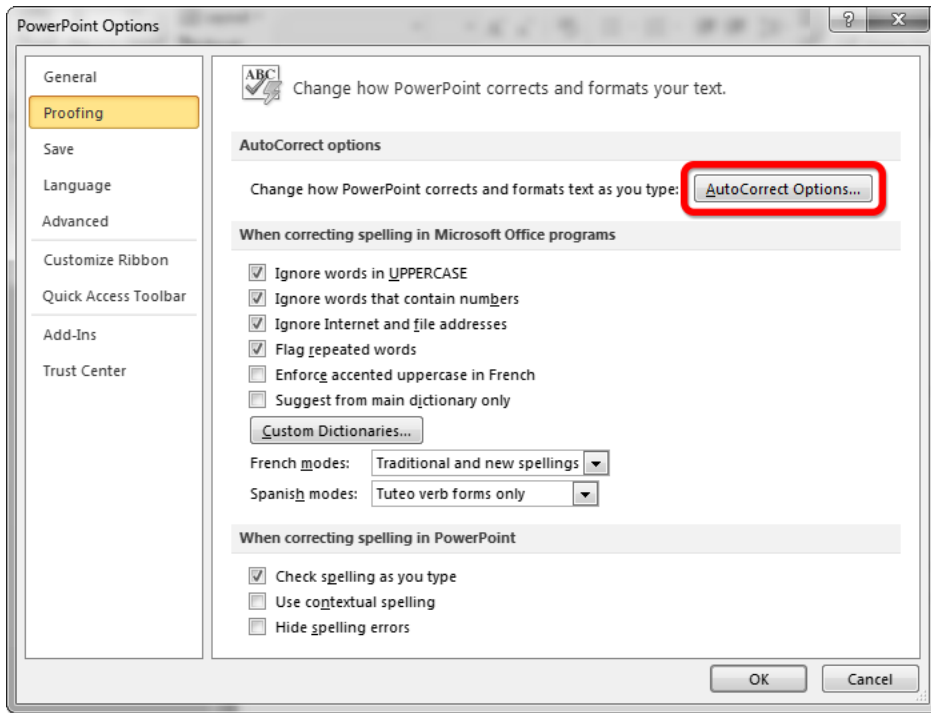


Figure 10: File > Options > Proofing > AutoCorrect Options.

3. In the **Replace** field (Figure 11), enter the term you want to type (for example, this is where a misspelled word goes) such as "cauti."
4. In the **With** field, enter the word or phrase you'd like Office to replace that acronym *with* such as "Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infection."
5. Click **Add**.
6. Click **OK**.

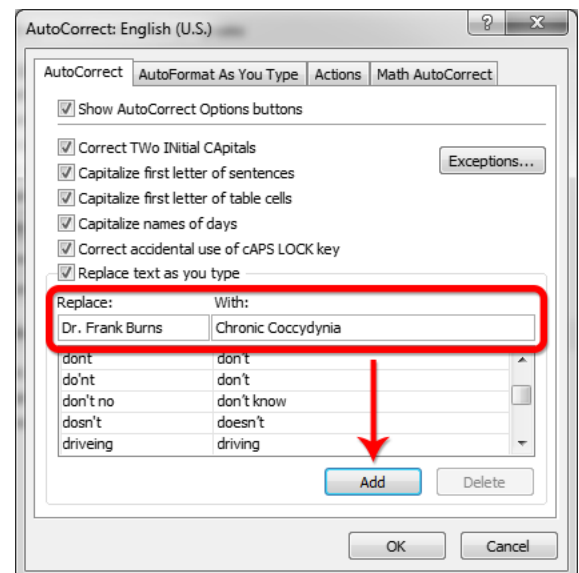


Figure 11: Add any unique words or phrases to this "custom dictionary."

Create Presentations Fast

Speedy typers, type right in **Outline** view (**Figure 12a**). Press **Tab** to indent, changing a slide into a bullet (or a bullet into a sub-bullet) and **Shift-Tab** to “outdent.” This is also a super-fast way to split content from one slide into multiple slides just by pressing **Shift-Tab**.

Copying & Pasting Formatting

Format Painter

Select text with the formatting you want to copy, click **Format Painter** (**Figure 12b**) and select the text on which you want to past the formatting.

Double-click it to apply formatting in multiple locations but don't forget to click it again to shut it off. You're welcome.

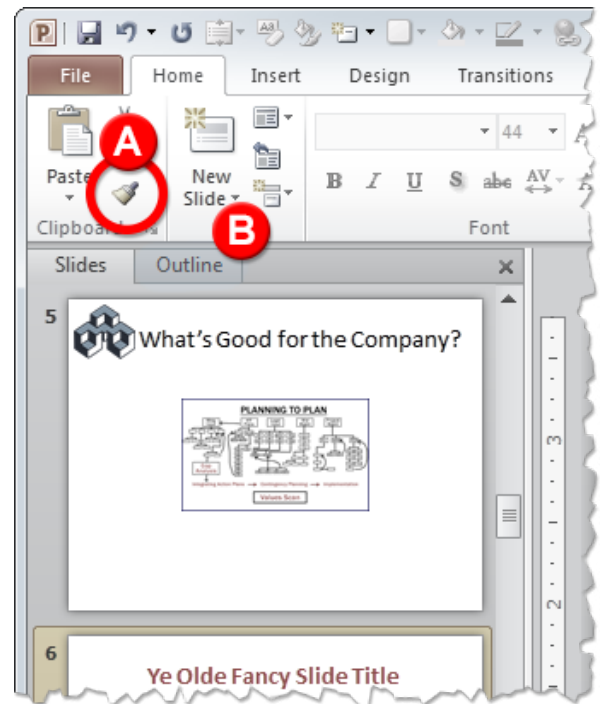


Figure 12: A) Format Painter B) Outline view

Destination or Source Formatting

Instead of using the **Paste** button--especially **Paste Special**--or even **Ctrl-V**, right-click where you want to paste, so you can choose either choose **Use Destination Theme** (how the text in which you're pasting is formatted) or **Keep Source Formatting** (how it was formatted in its original location) under **Paste Options** (**Figure 13**).

- Not only does **Keep Source Formatting** also work when pasting entire slides, it brings the theme and master slide along with the new slide(s)!
- And ... this also works for charts & graphs!
- This may or may not work with tables—I've heard it does and that it doesn't but haven't tested it so don't blame me.

Paste Text Only strips any tables, html, or other nastiness in addition to formatting. Seriously consider downloading the totally amazing and life-changing **PureText** app.

Animation Advice

- Don't use sound effects.
- The more animation you use, the less effective and increasingly ugly & annoying it becomes.
- Animation doesn't survive the journey into other apps.

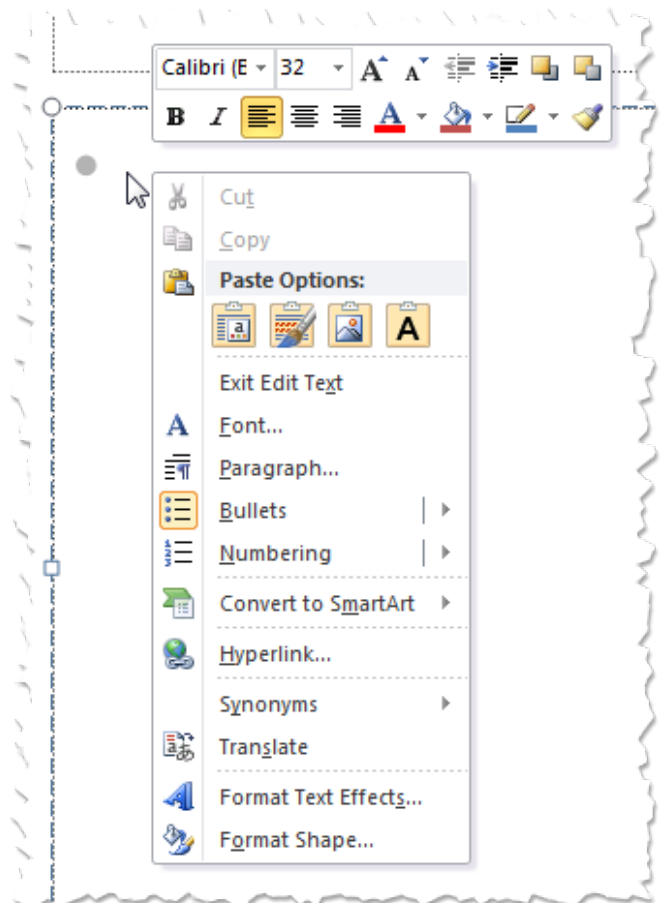
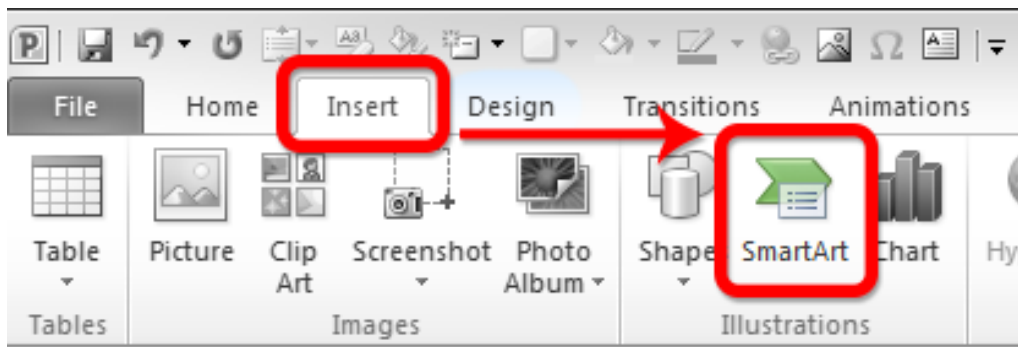


Figure 13: The Context-Sensitive Menu

Smart Art

Smart Art (Figure 14) is as practical, elegant and effective as **WordArt** is none of those things.

- Use this as an alternative to your billionth bulleted list or bland table.
- In fact, whenever you think of using one of the standard slide Layouts, look here first to see if there's something better.
- This is where PPt now keeps Org Charts (under Hierarchy). I might not like Powerpoint for much, but this particular feature in PPt is far more intuitive and friendly than it is in other apps.
- Animate these to your heart's content.



*Figure 14: Find **SmartArt** under the **Insert** tab.*

Printing

Check out **Print** options such as multiple slides per page, **Notes Pages**, **Outline**, and **Frame Slides** (one of my favorite features) pictured in Figure 15.

It's not just you: There seems to be no difference between Black & White and Grayscale.

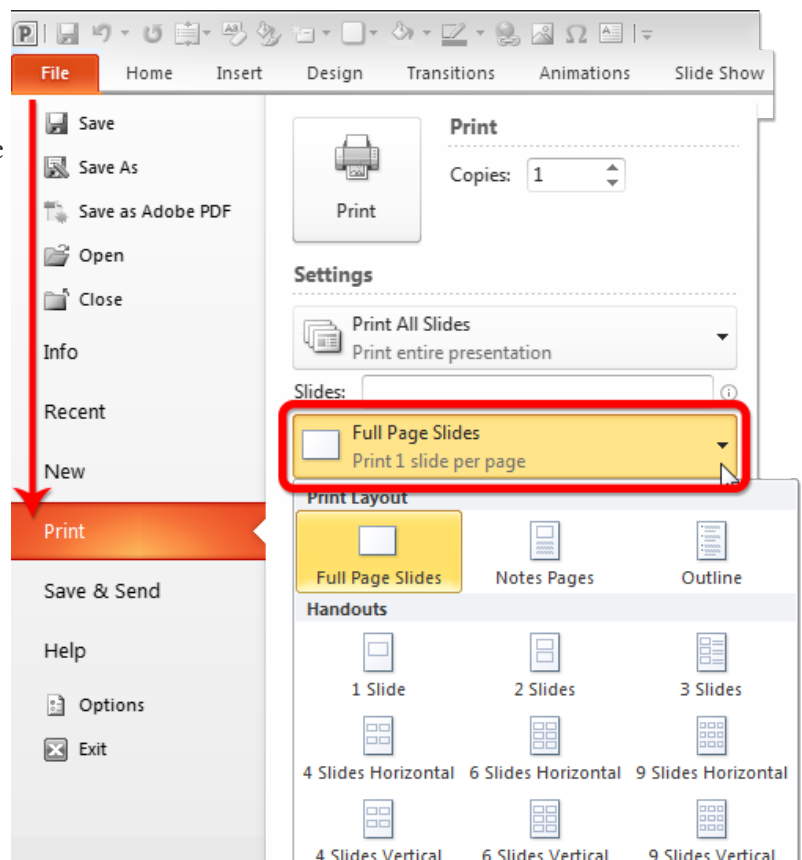


Figure 15: The Context-Sensitive Menu