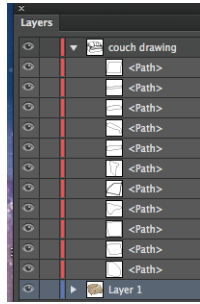**Gradient Couch Tutorial**

This tutorial will exercise your skill with basic shape drawing, gradients, shadows and blurs. Soft furnishings present unique illustration challenges. How can you make them look plush, realistic and fit believably into your interior?

1. Start the tutorial by downloading the **couch.jpg** file from the weekly contents or schedule. Open a new letter size artboard and place the couch.jpg image into the middle of the page and lock that layer. Note: When you place an image it's "linked" to the illustrator file. It will not be sent along with that file unless you select Embed (find it in the tool propery.

2. With the image placed, create a new drawing layer and start outlining the shapes that make-up the couch. Set no fill and start from the back and move forward drawing closed shapes. You're creating a stack of shapes that may slightly overlap..that's ideal. Overlapping shapes give you flexibily to edit rather than shapes that are drawn precisely next to each other. Closed shapes give you control over how they fill with color. When complete your file will look something like this. Dont forget the feet. You may want to lock paths as you draw so you don't inadver-ently select...you can also edit individual shapes by double clicking and going into the isolation mode. Try different techniques and find what works best for you.
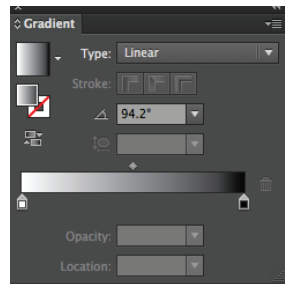
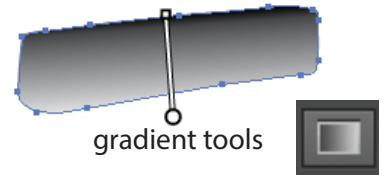3. Now fill each shape with a gradient. Open the swatches palette and make sure you have a white to black linear gradient. You are welcome to modify the gradient to any color combination. It should be linear. Now go to work adding the gradeint to each shape in your couch based on a general light source. What areas will be brighter or darker? Use the gradient editing tool to change directions, rotate and modify your gradient. These are very addictive..have fun!
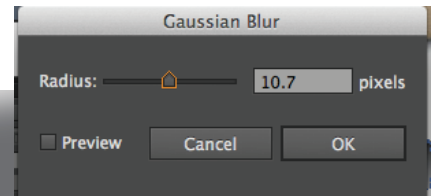
4. Wow...your basic gradient filled couch looks good! At least I hope it does...turn off the layer with the original image to make sure you haven't left any voids. Edit shapes with the direct selection tool if necessary. Now let's add to the realism by including a shadow under the couch. create a new layer and drag below your couch drawing layer. With the pen, draw your vision of how a shadow might be cast onto the floor. A shadow can be more realistic if slightly blurred. Effects>Blur>Gaussian Blur is an adjustable blur..give it a try.
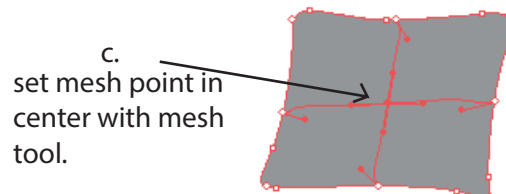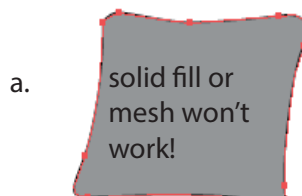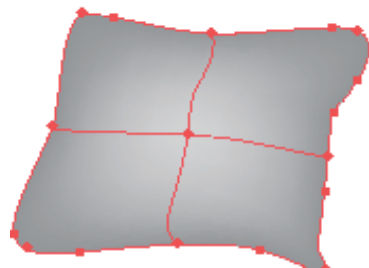
5. Add some realism with the gradient mesh tool. Use with caution..even more addictive than gradients. Try in on the pillow. a. The shape must be filled with a solid color so delete the gradient in your pillow and fill with a solid gray. b. Select the the mesh tool and c. click in the middle of the pillow. d. pick a highlight tint/color. WOW!

Final Finished File

layer palette

couch w/closed paths

gradient palette

gradient tools

shadow under couch

simple blur applied to shadow

Mesh Gradient

a. solid fill or mesh won't work!

b. mesh tool

c. set mesh point in center with mesh tool.

d. Pick highlight tint or color which will be focused at the mesh point. This is a simple example..but you can see the potential. Don't overdue...remember, addictive.

finisihed pillow

6. Save your completed file to the dropbox!