

How to display unordered list inline with bullets?

Asked 16 years, 3 months ago Modified 2 years, 4 months ago

Viewed 88k times



55



I have an html file with an unordered list. I want to show the list items horizontally but still keep the bullets. No matter what I try, whenever I set the style to inline to meet the horizontal requirement I can't get the bullets to display.



html

css



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edited Jan 24, 2019 at 7:14



[Na Nandini Venkateshan](#)
Venka 257 ● 3 ● 9

asked Aug 29, 2008 at 14:55



[Joel Coehoorn](#)

415k ● 114 ● 577 ● 813

13 Answers

Sorted by:

Highest score (default)



The best option I saw in other answers was to use `float:left;`. Unfortunately, it doesn't work in IE7 which

41

is a requirement here* — you still lose the bullet. I'm not really keen on using a background image either.



What I'm gonna do instead (that no one else suggested, hence the self-answer) is go with manually adding `•` to the my html, rather than styling this. It's less than ideal, but it's the most compatible option I found.



edit: *Current readers take note of the original post date. IE7 is unlikely to be a concern anymore.

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edited Aug 20, 2015 at 17:25

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answered Aug 29, 2008 at 16:34



Joel Coehoorn

415k ● 114 ● 577 ● 813

If I select everything in the list and copy I get HTML bullets in my text when I paste. Gross. I like the alternative: using a background image. – [Matthew](#) Apr 24, 2012 at 17:08

@Matthew - wasn't an option at the time. The solution adopted in the 4 years since this was to move everyone to IE8, where more sane options were available.
– [Joel Coehoorn](#) Apr 24, 2012 at 17:09

Sorry to bring up old ghosts (I know IE7 can be kinda spooky). I found this through a google search and thought I should bring up that point. – [Matthew](#) Apr 24, 2012 at 17:12

you may want to also add that • as a css ::before element – [Roi](#) Aug 24, 2015 at 19:55



26

I had the same problem, but only in Internet Explorer (I tested version 7) - not in Firefox 3 or Safari 3. Using the *:before* selector works for me:



```
ul.tabs li {  
  list-style: none;  
  float: left;  
}  
ul.tabs li:before {  
  content: '\ffed';  
  margin-right: 0.5em;  
}
```

I'm using a square bullet here, but a normal bullet \2022 would work the same.

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thanksd

55.6k ● 23 ● 165 ● 154

answered Oct 14, 2008 at 16:03



Peter Hilton

17.3k ● 6 ● 51 ● 76

-
- 1 ... except this doesn't work in IE7 either, because that doesn't support the :before selector. – [Peter Hilton](#) Oct 14, 2008 at 16:18
-



9

You could also use a background image on the elements, with a padding to keep the text from overlapping it.



```
li {  
  background-image: url(i/bullet.gif) no-repeat center  
  padding-left: 20px;  
  display: inline;  
}
```

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thanksd

55.6k ● 23 ● 165 ● 154


answered Aug 29, 2008 at 15:06



Chris Marasti-Georg

34.6k ● 17 ● 93 ● 137

-
- 1 Using graphical bullet points unfortunately is not a very good solution at the moment because when the user zooms the text, these images won't be scaled accordingly (or worse, pixelated). We can hope that in a few years this won't be an

issue any more (using vector graphics and relying on the web browser to scale images and text alike). – [Konrad Rudolph](#)
Aug 29, 2008 at 15:50 



4



The browser displays the bullets because the style property "display" is initially set to "list-item". Changing the display property to "inline" cancels all the special styles that list items get. You should be able to simulate it with the :before selector and the content property, but IE (at least through version 7) doesn't support them. Simulating it with a background image is probably the best cross-browser way to do it.

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answered Aug 29, 2008 at 15:54

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[Neall](#)

27.1k ● 5 ● 50 ● 49



3



Keep them display blocked, give them a width and float left.

That will make them sit by side, which is like inline, and should maintain the list style.

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answered Aug 29, 2008 at 16:07

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[Chris James](#)

11.7k ● 12 ● 63 ● 90

3 You mean *display:list-item* instead of *display:block*
– [Peter Hilton](#) Oct 14, 2008 at 16:05



3

It's actually a very simple fix. Add the following to the ul:

```
display: list-item;
```



Adding this CSS line will add the bullet points.



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answered Nov 14, 2013 at 22:02



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L. Jordens

47 ● 1

If you read through other answers/comments, you'll see this was not supported by a required browser at the time. Now... this might work just fine. – [Joel Coehoorn](#) Nov 14, 2013 at 22:25



1

Did you try `float: left` on your `` ? Something like this:



```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//E
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD
<html>
<head>
  <style type="text/css">
    ul li {
      float: left;
      margin-left: 2em;
    }
  </style>
</head>
<body>
  <ul>
    <li>test</li>
    <li>test2</li>
  </ul>
```

```
</body>
</html>
```

I only tested Firefox 3.0.1, works there. The `margin` is set because else your bullet overlaps the previous item.

addition: Be wary that when you float the items you remove them from the normal flow, which in turn causes the `` to have no height. If you want to add a border or something, you'll get weird results.

One way to fix that is to add the following to your styles:

```
ul {
  overflow: auto;
  background: #f0f;
}
```

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edited Jun 1, 2013 at 12:51



Linus Caldwell

11k ● 12 ● 47 ● 60

answered Aug 29, 2008 at 15:02



Erik van Brakel

23.8k ● 3 ● 53 ● 66



1



I was just messing around and I ran into the same issue with the same browser constraints; when I searched for an answer your post came up without the answer. This is probably too late to help you, but I thought for posterity's sake I should post it.



All I did to solve my problem was to embed another list with one item within each list item of the first list; like so...

HTML:

```
<div class="block-list">
  <ul>
    <li><ul><li>a</li></ul></li>
    <li><ul><li>b</li></ul></li>
    <li><ul><li>c</li></ul></li>
  </ul>
</div>
```

CSS:

```
.block-list > ul > li { display: inline; float: left;
```

IE7 Page:

o a o b o c

...it is a dumb solution, but it seems to work.

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answered Dec 8, 2015 at 23:52

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AenAllAin

29 ● 4

This is not a dumb solution, it is a bad solution, because you break the semantic meaning of the element. While it may *look* alright, a Screen readers is unable to properly understand context. By having a proper ul/li relationship, the blind person consuming the page also understands that there is a list, the list is a conceptual whole, and what are items in

the list. Wrapping unnecessary elements breaks this behaviour. – Pete Aug 16 at 11:24



1



You may set `` as a CSS grid and `` as cells to get similar layout to inline `` and keep bullets easily:

```
ul {  
  display: grid;  
  grid-template-columns: 100px 100px 100px; /* or a  
}
```

```
<ul>  
  <li>item 1</li>  
  <li>item 2</li>  
  <li>item 3</li>  
</ul>
```



Run code snippet

[Expand snippet](#)

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edited Aug 4, 2022 at 2:40

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answered Jul 6, 2020 at 14:53



Leon

718 ● 1 ● 8 ● 23



You could use Character entities, see reference :

<http://dev.w3.org/html5/html-author/charref>

0



```
<ul class="inline-list">
  <li> &bullet; Your list item </li>
</ul>
```



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answered Mar 12, 2015 at 11:45



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kristjan reinhold

2,048 ● 1 ● 18 ● 34



In HTML, I added a break after each li like this:

0



```
<li>Water is Sacred</li><br>
<li>Water is Sacred</li><br>
<li>Water is Sacred</li><br>
<li>Water is Sacred</li><br>
<li>Water is Sacred</li><br>
<li>Water is Sacred</li><br>
```



And CSS:

```
li { float:left; }
```

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edited Sep 11, 2017 at 12:47

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Donald Duck

8,831 ● 23 ● 79 ● 101

answered Sep 11, 2017 at 4:25



YeRe415

23 ● 2



Using `float: left` didn't work very well for me because it made the content box of the `ul` element 0 pixels high.

0

Flexboxes worked better:



```
ul {  
  display: flex;  
  flex-wrap: wrap;  
}  
  
li {  
  margin-right: 24px;  
}
```

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answered Aug 21, 2020 at 22:44

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MazeChaZer

1,298 ● 14 ● 8

flexbox didn't exist in 2008 :) – [Joel Coehoorn](#) Aug 22, 2020 at 20:52



-1



You can use following code

```
li {  
  background-image: url(img.gif) no-repeat center left;  
  padding-left: 20px;  
  display: inline;  
}
```

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edited Jun 1, 2013 at 12:52



Linus Caldwell

11k ● 12 ● 47 ● 60

answered Mar 25, 2013 at 4:23



user2194160

1 ● 1
