

**bloggg** Upgrade

**Beach Getaway**  
Blissful Beach, NSW, Australia  
★★★★★ 5

House 2 beds 1 bath 1 garage

Meet your host, Brooklyn  
Hosting since November 2018

Book now \$299.00 / night

Darkest shade 220, 90, 30 Dark shade 220, 40, 57 Medium shade 220, 34, 72 Light shade 220, 10, 95 Lightest shade 220, 2, 98

Heading text Secondary text Dark borders Light borders Background

Must be accessible

✓ ✗

**homeinvest** About Services Contact Register

Your property investment journey starts here  
Achieve financial independence using our proven strategy to build your property portfolio

Sign up Learn more

Find growth areas Monitor market trends Get weekly reports

XS S M L XL XXL  
8pt 16pt 24pt 32pt 48pt 80pt

Closely related Not related

Margin Border Padding Content

Strengthen your brand with a custom domain  
Look professional and help your customers find you online by adding a custom domain  
Add domain

**Free preview**

Heading 1 - 40 - bold  
Heading 2 - 32 - bold  
Heading 3 - 24 - bold  
Heading 4 - 20 - bold  
Small - 18 - regular  
Tiny - 16 - regular

**Practical UI**



# Adham Dannaway

Quick and practical UI design guidelines to design intuitive, accessible, and beautiful interfaces.

Free preview

# Practical UI

Quick and practical UI design guidelines to design  
intuitive, accessible, and beautiful interfaces.

Written and designed by Adham Dannaway

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[www.practical-ui.com](http://www.practical-ui.com)

# What's in the free preview?

To give you a better idea of what to expect, I've included 3 of 100+ guidelines you'll find in the book. Each guideline comes with visual examples and a clear rationale.

## **Minimise interaction cost**

From the "Fundamentals" chapter

## **Group related elements**

From the "Layout and spacing" chapter

## **Ensure ideal line length**

From the "Typography" chapter

CHAPTER 1

# Fundamentals

# Minimise interaction cost

Interaction cost is the sum of physical and mental effort required to achieve a task. Looking, scrolling, searching, reading, clicking, waiting, typing, thinking, and remembering all add to interaction cost. The higher the interaction cost, the harder it is for someone to achieve their task.

The great thing about interaction cost is that you can measure it. This means you can try to minimise it to make it easier for people to achieve their goals. Of course, the more features a product provides, the harder it is to keep interaction costs down. This is one of the reasons why simple apps that focus on doing a specific task efficiently, are often the most successful.

## How to minimise interaction cost

Many of the guidelines in this book help to minimise interaction cost, but here are 3 of the most effective:

### 1. Keep related actions close

According to Fitts's Law, the closer and larger a target, the faster it is to click on that target. Keep actions close to the element they relate to and try to ensure they have a sufficient target area (at least 48pt by 48pt is a safe size). You'll learn about points (pt) in the "Layout and spacing" chapter.

### 2. Reduce distractions

Attention grabbing distractions like animated banners, pop-ups, and unnecessary visuals, can pull people's attention away from the task they're trying to complete.

### 3. Minimise choice

According to Hick's Law, the time it takes to make a decision increases with the number and complexity of choices. Reduce choices to speed up decisions. You can also highlight a smaller set of recommended or popular items to help people make decisions faster.

### An interaction cost example

In the following product page example, let's say you want to add 2 products to your cart. You need to select the quantity via a dropdown, which requires 2 clicks and a scroll. This can be especially tough for those with motor impairments. Then you need to move your mouse across to the "Add to cart" button and click it.

The total interaction cost is 3 clicks, a scroll, and a short mouse movement.

home<sup>shop</sup>

Shop Blog Contact Cart

**White mug**

\$12 USD

★★★★★ 5.0 (38 reviews)

This white porcelain mug is the perfect companion for lazy afternoons reading your favourite book. It's also microwave and dishwasher safe.

Quantity

2 ▼

2 clicks + 1 scroll

Add to cart

1 click

Total interaction cost is 3 clicks, a scroll, and a short mouse movement.

In the next example, we reduce the interaction cost using a stepper for the quantity instead of a dropdown. A stepper component makes it easier and faster for people to make small numeric changes. It allows people to increase or decrease a number with a single button press or by typing the number in the field.

We move the “Add to cart” button closer to the quantity selector to further reduce interaction cost. Left aligning the button also helps ensure the button won’t be missed by those using screen magnifiers.

We reduced the total interaction cost to 2 clicks and a very small mouse movement. A similar approach can be taken to reduce the interaction cost on any interface.

The screenshot shows a product page for a "White mug" on the "homeshop" website. The page includes a navigation bar with links for Shop, Blog, Contact, and Cart. On the left, there's a large image of the mug with a green checkmark icon in a circle. The product title is "White mug", the price is "\$12 USD", and it has a rating of "5.0 (38 reviews)". A descriptive text states: "This white porcelain mug is the perfect companion for lazy afternoons reading your favourite book. It's also microwave and dishwasher safe." Below the product details is a "Quantity" stepper with a value of "2". The "+" button in the stepper is highlighted with a red dashed circle and labeled "1 click". A blue "Add to cart" button is positioned directly below the stepper, also labeled "1 click".

Total interaction cost is just 2 clicks and a very small mouse movement

CHAPTER 4

# Layout and spacing

# Group related elements

Breaking up information into smaller groups of related elements helps to structure and organise an interface. This makes it faster and easier for people to understand and remember.

Group related elements using the following methods:

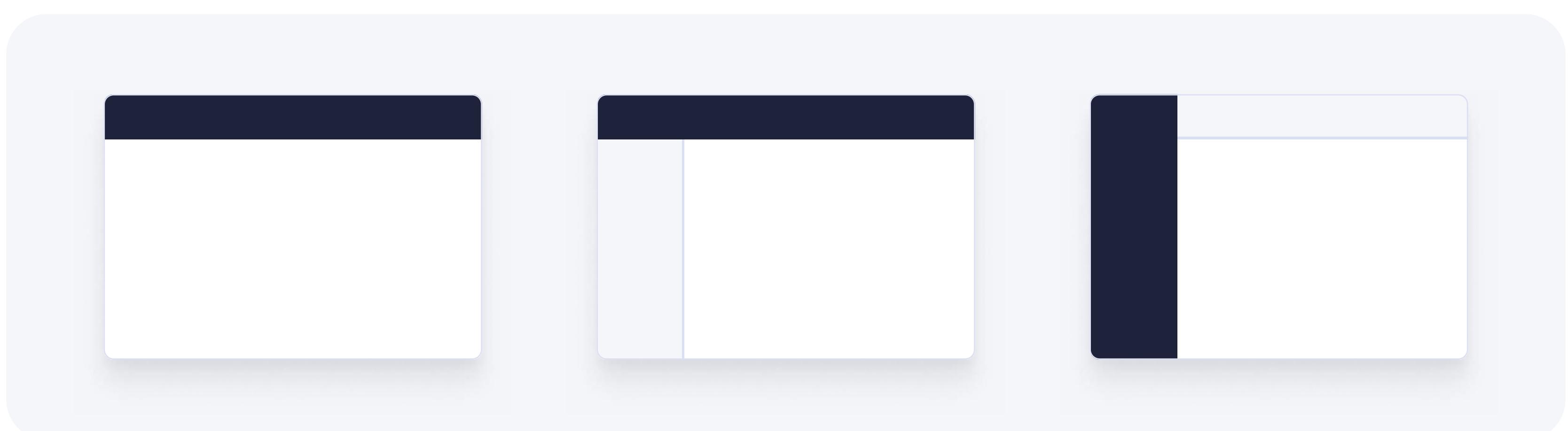
1. Place related elements in the same container
2. Space related elements close together
3. Make related elements look similar
4. Align related elements in a continuous line

You can combine these methods to help display groupings more clearly. Let's look at each of these grouping methods in more detail.

## 1. Place related elements in the same container

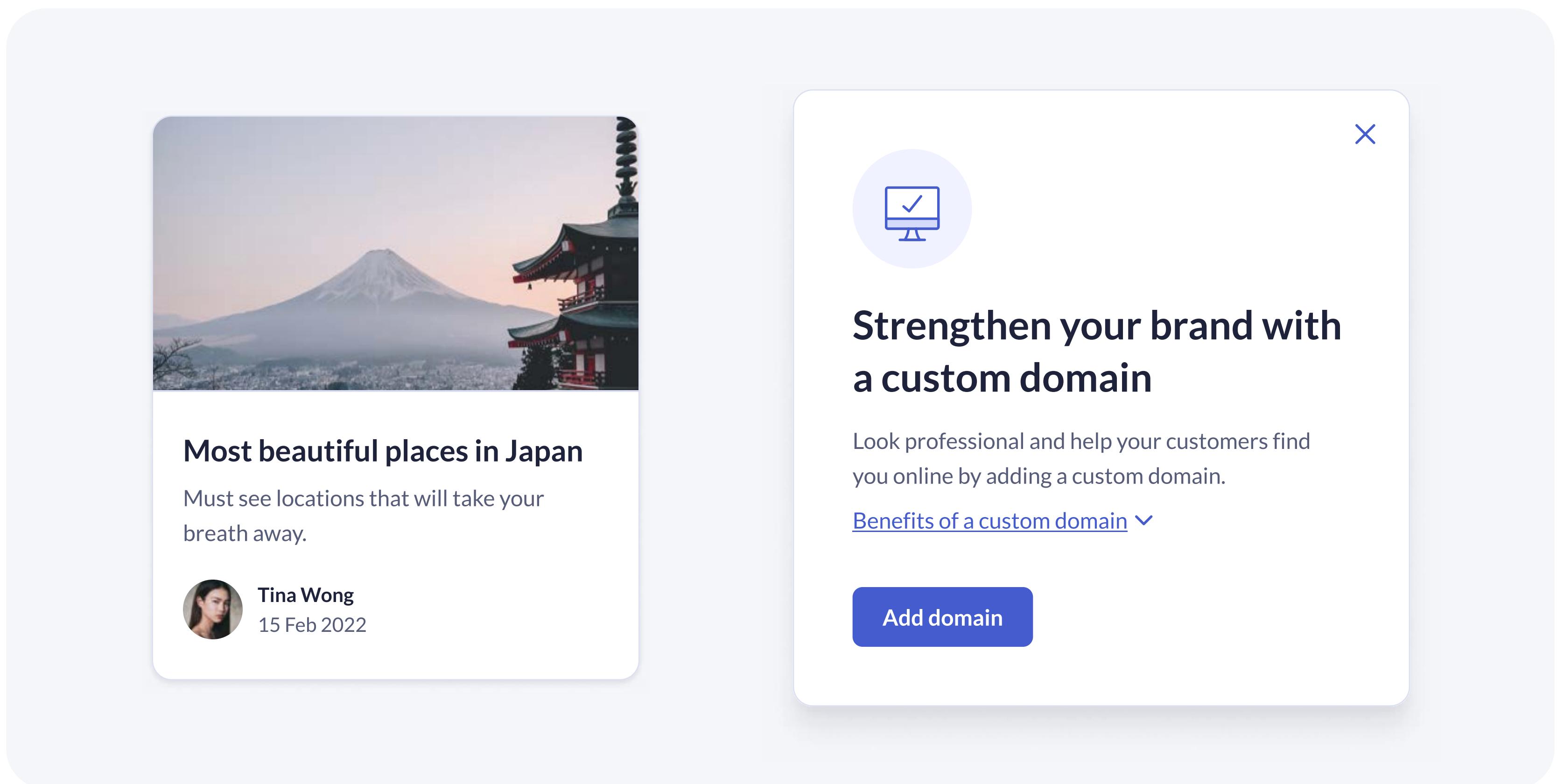
According to the principle of common region, items within the same boundary or container are perceived as a group and assumed to be related. You can create containers using borders, shadows, and background colours. Using containers is the strongest visual cue to group interface elements.

Containers are often used to create the main structure of an interface.



Examples of containers being used to define common website structures

Cards and dialog boxes are a common type of container used to group smaller pieces of related content.



Examples of a card and dialog box container

If groupings are unclear, consider using containers to help make them clearer. In the following travel blog example, it's difficult to tell who wrote each article, as the author's details are very close to the article below.

There are also varying amounts of space above the author's details, as the article description text is an inconsistent length. A large gap above the author's details makes it look like the author is related to the article below.

The screenshot shows a travel blog website with a header containing a red circular icon with a white 'X', the text 'travelblog', and navigation links for 'Top destinations', 'Tours', 'About', and 'Contact'. The main section is titled 'Top destinations' and displays 18 articles in a grid format. Each article includes a thumbnail image, the destination name, a brief description, and the author's profile picture and name along with the publication date. The layout is visually inconsistent due to varying spacing between the author details and the article descriptions.

Destination	Description	Author	Date
San Francisco, USA	Discover the jewel of Northern California.	Jon Tony	16 Feb 2022
Fujiyoshida, Japan	Lots to do and beautiful views of Mt. Fuji.	Tina Wong	15 Feb 2022
Beijing, China	Walk the Great Wall, try amazing foods, and much more.	Brooklyn Simmons	14 Feb 2022
Plansee, Austria	This hidden gem will take your breath away.	Tony Robson	6 Jan 2022
Nevada, USA	Take in spectacular sights as you road trip through awe-inspiring mountain ranges.	Aisha Abboud	5 Jan 2022
Positano, Italy	Go on a culinary adventure through the jewel of the Amalfi Coast.	Darlene Robs	19 Dec 2021
(empty)			
(empty)			
(empty)			

It's difficult to tell who wrote each article due to unclear groupings

Using containers helps to clearly associate the author with their article. This example demonstrates how containers can overpower spacing as a grouping method.

The screenshot shows a travel blog interface with a header containing a green checkmark icon, the site name "travelblog", and navigation links for "Top destinations", "Tours", "About", and "Contact". The main section is titled "Top destinations" and displays 18 articles in a 3x6 grid. Each article card includes a thumbnail image, the destination name, a brief description, and author information (profile picture and name). The cards are styled with rounded corners and shadows.

Destination	Description	Author	Date		
San Francisco, USA	Discover the jewel of Northern California.	Jon Tony	16 Feb 2022		
Fujiyoshida, Japan	Lots to do and beautiful views of Mt. Fuji.	Tina Wong	15 Feb 2022		
Beijing, China	Walk the Great Wall, try amazing foods, and much more.	Brooklyn Simmons	14 Feb 2022		
Plansee, Austria	This hidden gem will take your breath away.	Tony Robson	6 Jan 2022		
Nevada, USA	Take in spectacular sights as you road trip through awe-inspiring mountain ranges.	Aisha Abboud	5 Jan 2022		
Positano, Italy	Go on a culinary adventure through the jewel of the Amalfi Coast.	Darlene Robs	19 Dec 2021		
(Thumbnail 1)	(Thumbnail 2)	(Thumbnail 3)			

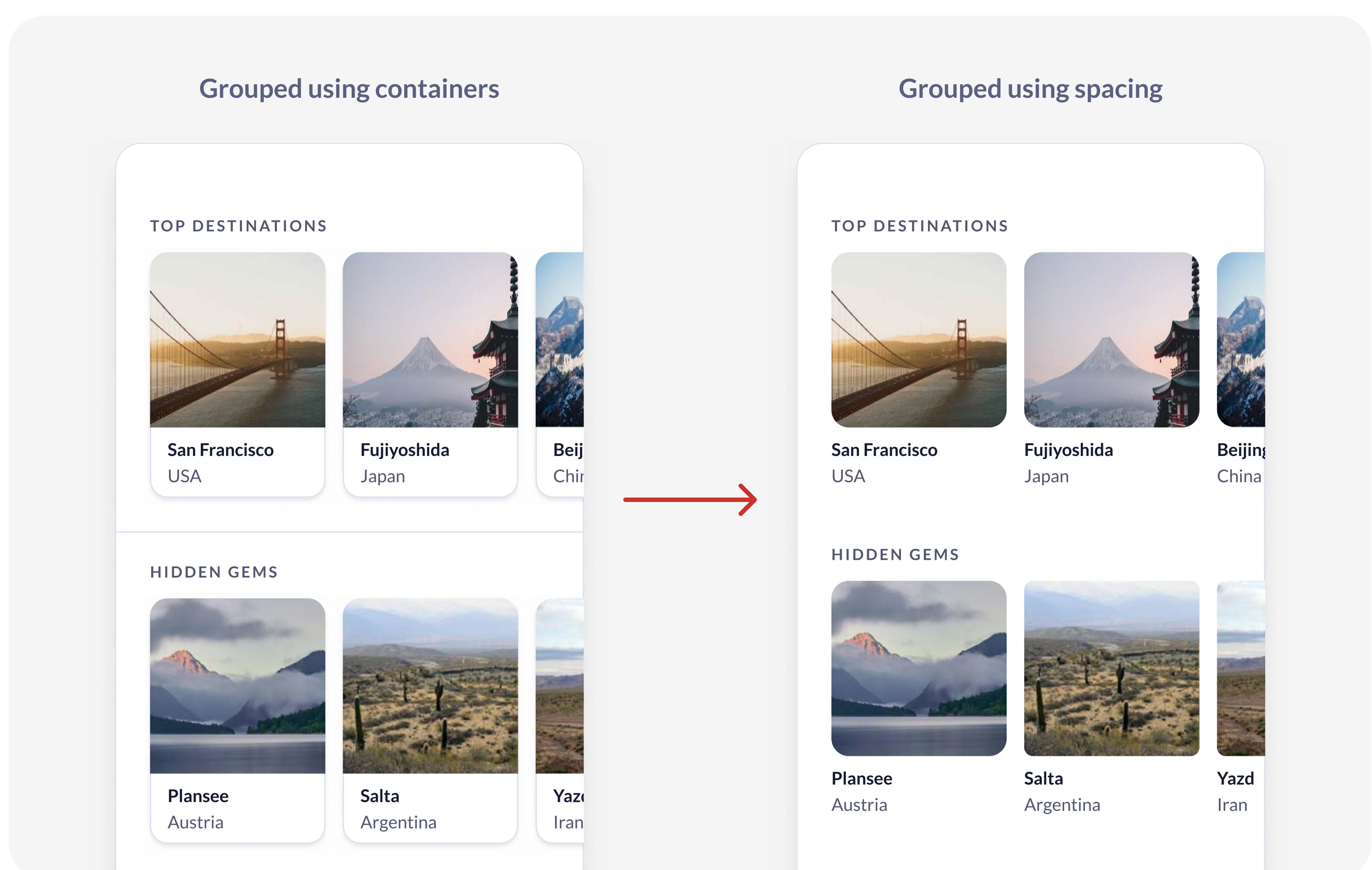
Containers are used to clearly associate the author with their article

Try to avoid using containers for every group on an interface, as it can cause unnecessary clutter. Instead, look for opportunities to use other grouping methods. They're often more subtle and can result in a simpler design, as you'll see next.

## 2. Space related elements close together

According to the principle of proximity, elements near each other are perceived as a group and assumed to be related. Place related elements close together to group them. Separate unrelated elements by placing more space between them. You'll learn how to create and use a predefined spacing system later in this chapter.

Using spacing to create groups, rather than containers, can help declutter and simplify an interface.



Similarly, the next example shows how removing containers can help simplify an interface. Sometimes spacing is enough to clearly group related elements, especially when it's combined with other grouping methods like similarity and continuity.

The screenshot shows a website layout with a header containing the logo 'architect' and navigation links for 'Architecture', 'Interiors', 'About', and 'Contact'. Below the header, a section titled 'RECENT PROJECT' features the title 'Waterview residence'. A descriptive text states: 'Inspired by the vast ocean views, our goal was to bring the outside in wherever possible in this full renovation.' A black button labeled 'View projects' is present. To the right of the text is a large image of a living room with floor-to-ceiling glass doors leading to a terrace overlooking a body of water and distant hills. Three callout boxes are overlaid on the page: 'Website builder' (with a description and a link to 'Explore templates'), 'Email marketing' (with a description and a link to 'Email marketing features'), and 'Affiliate program' (with a description and a link to 'How affiliates work').

Removing the containers simplifies the design without losing the groupings. The spacing is sufficient to clearly separate different groups of content.

The screenshot shows a simplified website layout with a header containing the logo 'architect' and navigation links for 'Architecture', 'Interiors', 'About', and 'Contact'. Below the header, a section titled 'RECENT PROJECT' features the title 'Waterview residence'. A descriptive text states: 'Inspired by the vast ocean views, our goal was to bring the outside in wherever possible in this full renovation.' A black button labeled 'View projects' is present. To the right of the text is a large image of a living room with floor-to-ceiling glass doors leading to a terrace overlooking a body of water and distant hills. Below the image, three sections provide links to 'Architecture', 'Interiors', and 'About' pages.

### 3. Make related elements look similar

According to the principle of similarity, when things look similar your mind groups them together. Make related elements look similar by giving them similar visual characteristics, such as size, shape, and colour.

In the following example, your mind naturally groups the links in the top navigation because they look similar. The cards also appear to be grouped for the same reason. The fact that they're close together and aligned in a continuous line further emphasises their close relationship.

The screenshot shows a website layout for 'homeinvest'. At the top left is the logo 'homeinvest'. To its right is a navigation bar with three items: 'About', 'Services', and 'Contact', all enclosed within a dashed red rectangular box. To the right of the navigation is a blue 'Get started' button. Below the header is a large, scenic photograph of a beachfront with many high-rise apartment buildings. Overlaid on the left side of the photo is the main headline: 'Your property investment journey starts here' in bold black font, followed by a subtext: 'Achieve financial independence using our proven strategy to build your property portfolio'. Below this text are two buttons: a blue 'Get started' button and a blue 'Learn more' link. The bottom section of the page features three white rectangular cards, each containing a small image and text. These cards are also grouped within a dashed red rectangular border. The first card on the left has an image of a couple on a beach and the text 'About' and 'Property investment specialists since 2005'. The middle card has an image of a beach house and the text 'Services' and 'Tailored services to suit your specific situation'. The third card on the right has an image of a man in a suit and the text 'Contact' and 'Contact us today to see how we can help you'.

Examples of related elements being grouped by similarity

Within a group of related elements, you can highlight certain ones by making them look slightly different. In the following example, the pricing options look similar enough that our eyes group them together.

The middle one stands out, as it looks slightly different. It's larger, has a different coloured border, a filled button, and a “most popular” badge.

**Pricing options**

Join 50,000+ designers growing and optimising their businesses.

Plan	Price	Billing	Features
BASIC PLAN	\$10 /month	USD billed annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ 1 user</li><li>✓ 10 GB limit</li><li>✓ Email and chat support</li></ul>
STANDARD PLAN	\$20 /month	USD billed annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Up to 5 users</li><li>✓ 25 GB limit</li><li>✓ Email and chat support</li></ul>
PROFESSIONAL PLAN	\$30 /month	USD billed annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Up to 10 users</li><li>✓ 100 GB limit</li><li>✓ Email and chat support</li></ul>

[Buy basic plan](#)

[Buy standard plan](#)

[Buy professional plan](#)

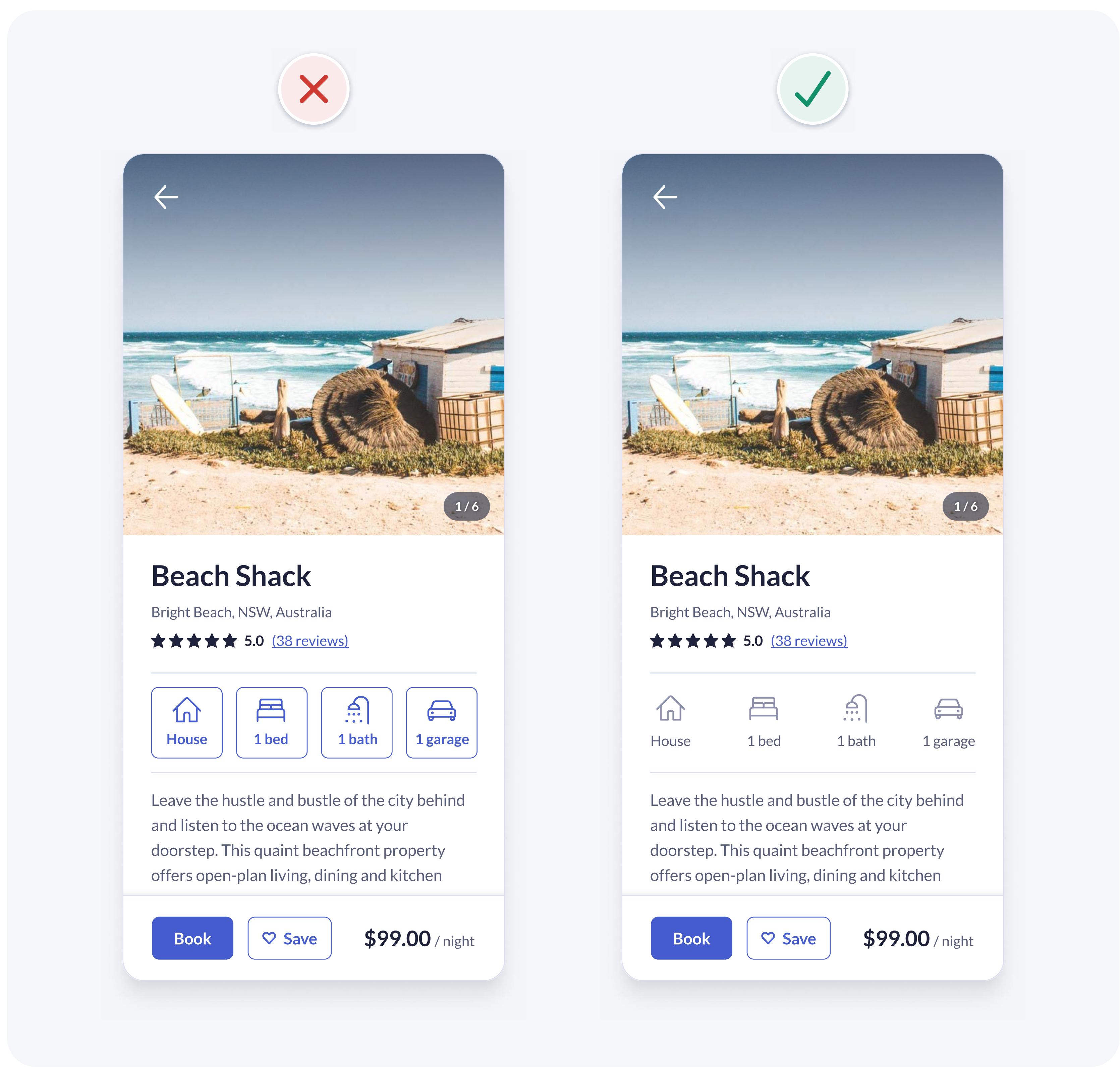
The middle pricing option stands out, as it looks slightly different to the others.

## Ensure similar looking elements function similarly

If elements look similar, people will expect them to work in a similar way. So try to ensure that you use a consistent visual treatment for elements with the same functionality. Conversely, try to ensure elements with different functionality look different.

In the following example, the icons look similar to the secondary “save” button. This makes them seem interactive, even though they’re not.

Removing the blue colour and border helps to differentiate the icons from the secondary button. This makes it clearer that the icons function differently to the secondary button.

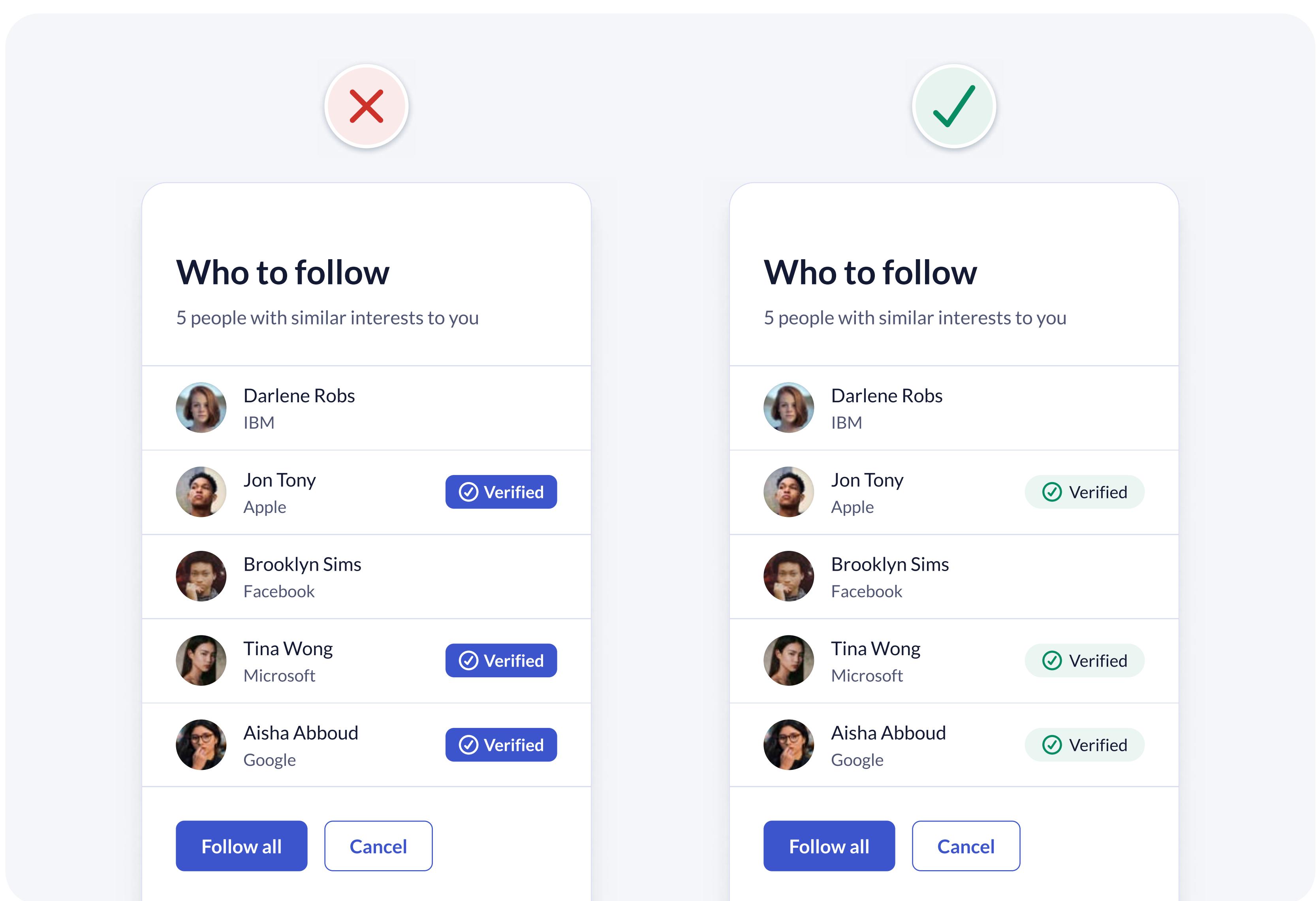


Because the icons look like the secondary button, they seem interactive, even though they’re not.

In the next example, the “verified” badges look very similar to the primary “follow all” button. They’re not interactive elements, so they should look different to the primary button to help avoid confusion.

Change the shape, contrast, and colour of the badges in the following ways to help differentiate them from the primary button:

- Since the badges aren’t interactive, avoid using the blue action colour and instead use green to indicate success.
- A more rounded shape is commonly used for badges to help differentiate them from buttons.
- A lighter background colour helps correct the visual hierarchy, so the primary button is the most prominent element.



Because the badges look like the primary button, they seem interactive, even though they’re not.

## 4. Align related elements in a continuous line

According to the principle of continuity, people perceive elements that are arranged in a continuous line to be related. Our eyes naturally tend to follow elements aligned in continuous straight or curved lines. You can use this to your advantage to help guide people's eyes through an interface.

Lists are a common way of using continuity to group related elements in an interface. You can disrupt continuity to indicate the end of a group of related elements or to highlight a particular element.

**Grouped by continuity**

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface titled "Articles". At the top, there are three navigation tabs: "Interiors" (underlined), "Architecture", and "Gardens". Below the tabs, there is a list of four articles, each with a thumbnail image on the right:

- Contemporary apartment design in Melbourne (Thumbnail: wooden chair)
- Beautiful chairs and where to get them for a bargain (Thumbnail: two wooden stools)
- Interior decor styling tips (Thumbnail: white vase)
- Lush linens to warm up your bed room (Thumbnail: decorative pillows)

**Continuity broken**

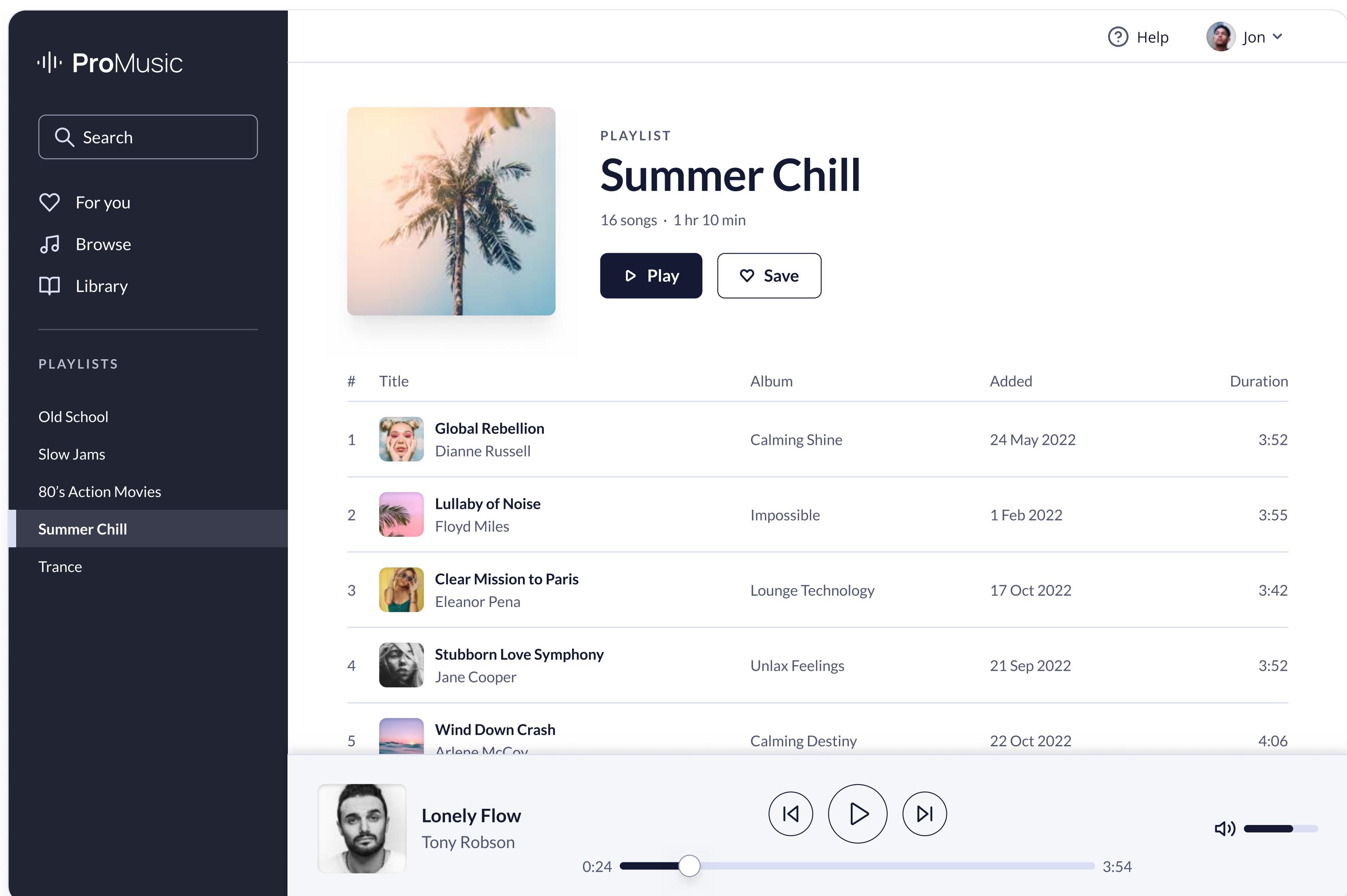
The screenshot shows a mobile application interface titled "Articles". At the top, there are three navigation tabs: "Interiors" (underlined), "Architecture", and "Gardens". Below the tabs, there is a list of four articles, but the layout is different from the first screenshot:

- Contemporary apartment design in Melbourne (Thumbnail: wooden chair)
- Beautiful chairs and where to get them for a bargain (Thumbnail: two wooden stools)
- Love interior design? (Thumbnail: blue button with text)
- Interior decor styling tips (Thumbnail: white vase)
- Lush linens to warm up your bed room (Thumbnail: decorative pillows)

A blue button labeled "Subscribe" is visible next to the third article.

## Grouping methods example

Let's look at how different grouping methods are used and combined in the following music player example.

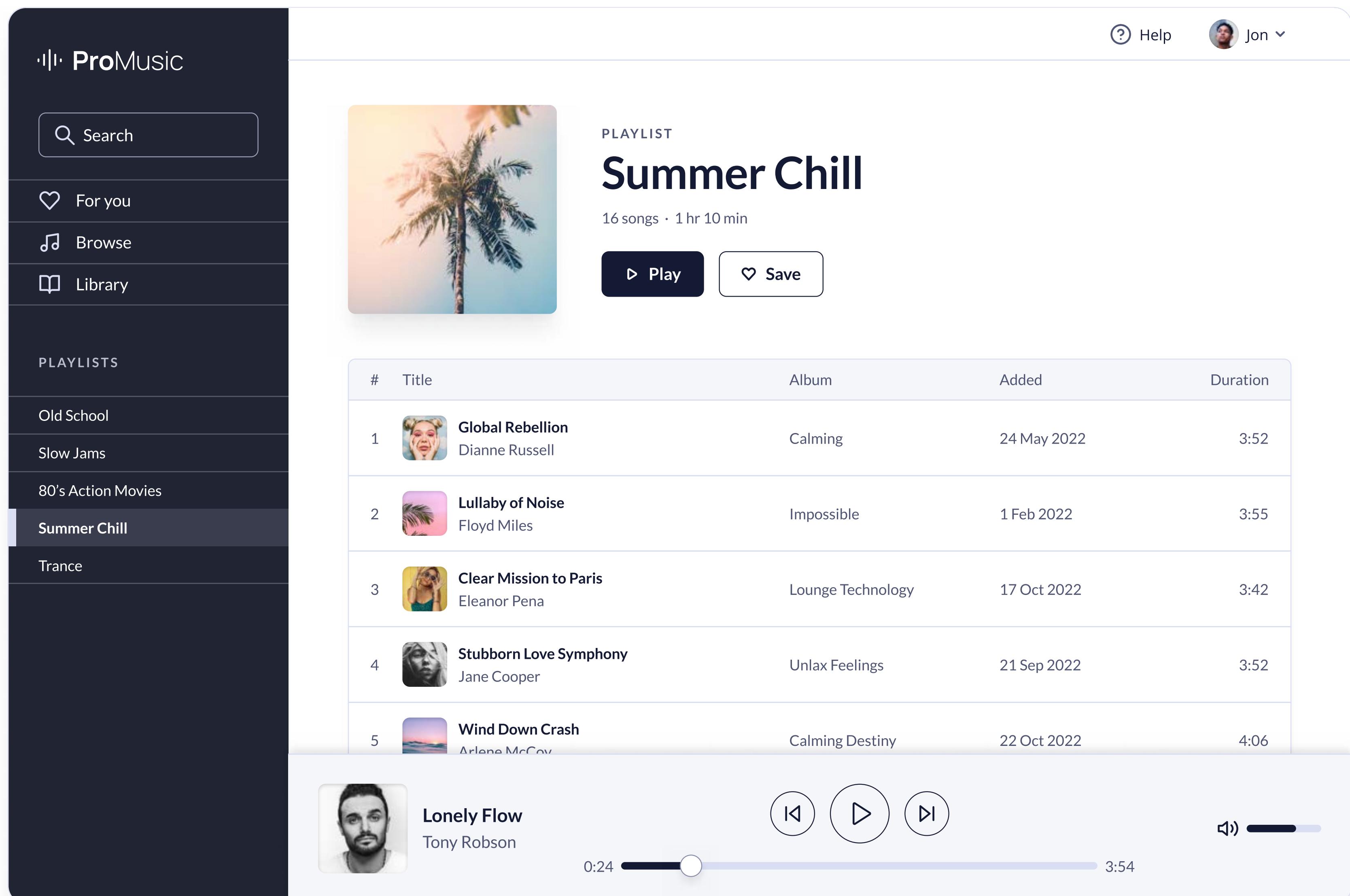


Containers are used to create the main structure of the interface:

- A dark grey background is used to contain the left side navigation.
- A light grey background and shadow are used to contain the music player controls along the bottom.
- A grey border is used to contain the account menu along the top.

All of these colours come from the monochromatic colour palettes created previously in the “Colour” chapter.

You might think of using a container to group the songs in the table, but it's not always necessary.



Look for opportunities to use grouping methods other than containers. This can help simplify an interface design. The songs in the table are grouped in multiple ways:

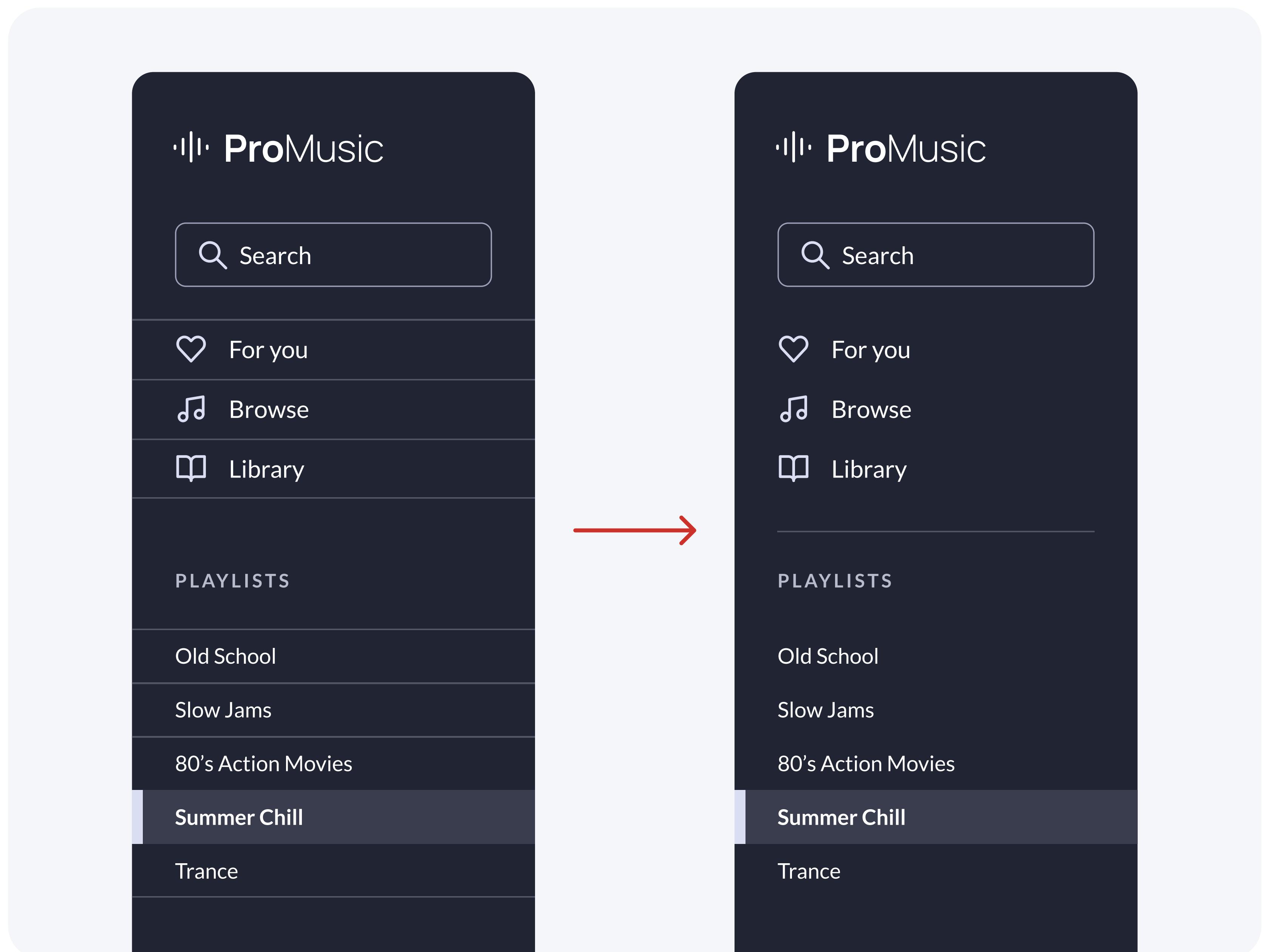
- They have a container
- They're in close proximity
- They look similar
- They're aligned in a continuous line

#	Title	Album	Added	Duration
1	 <b>Global Rebellion</b> Dianne Russell	Calming	24 May 2022	3:52
2	 <b>Lullaby of Noise</b> Floyd Miles	Impossible	1 Feb 2022	3:55
3	 <b>Clear Mission to Paris</b> Eleanor Pena	Lounge Technology	17 Oct 2022	3:42
4	 <b>Stubborn Love Symphony</b> Jane Cooper	Unlax Feelings	21 Sep 2022	3:52
5	 <b>Wind Down Crash</b> Arlene McCoy	Calming Destiny	22 Oct 2022	4:06
6	 <b>Lonely Flow</b> Tony Robson	\$24,118.18	Jan 12, 2022	3:48

Since the songs are grouped using multiple methods, you can remove the outer container, and the songs still appear to be grouped.

#	Title	Album	Added	Duration
1	 <b>Global Rebellion</b> Dianne Russell	Calming Shine	24 May 2022	3:52
2	 <b>Lullaby of Noise</b> Floyd Miles	Impossible	1 Feb 2022	3:55
3	 <b>Clear Mission to Paris</b> Eleanor Pena	Lounge Technology	17 Oct 2022	3:42
4	 <b>Stubborn Love Symphony</b> Jane Cooper	Unlax Feelings	21 Sep 2022	3:52
5	 <b>Wind Down Crash</b> Arlene McCoy	Calming Destiny	22 Oct 2022	4:06
6	 <b>Lonely Flow</b> Tony Robson	\$24,118.18	Jan 12, 2022	3:48

Similarly, you can simplify the side navigation by removing unnecessary containers.



Side navigation with and without containers

Containers, proximity, similarity, and continuity are simple but powerful methods for grouping interface elements. Use them individually or combine them for clarity.

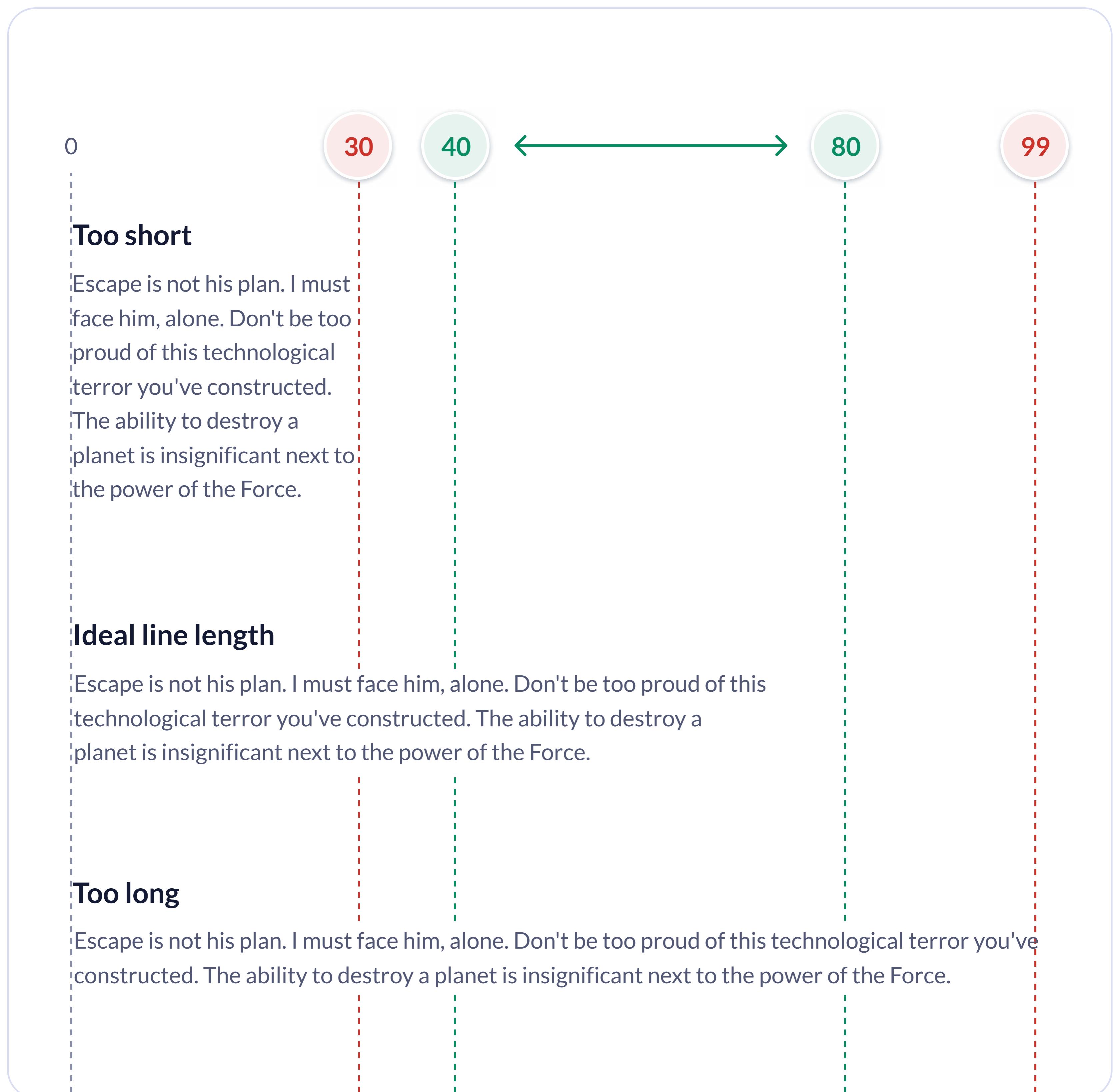
CHAPTER 5

# Typography

## Ensure ideal line length

To improve readability, ensure text is **40 - 80 characters per line** (including spaces). If lines are too long, it makes it harder for people to gauge where the line starts and ends.

If lines are too short, your eyes get stressed from having to travel back too often. A comfortable line length is especially important for long body text.



Uncomfortably long line lengths are very common, like in the following landing page example.

homeinvest

About Services Contact Get started

# Your property investment journey starts here

Achieve financial independence using our proven strategy to build your property portfolio

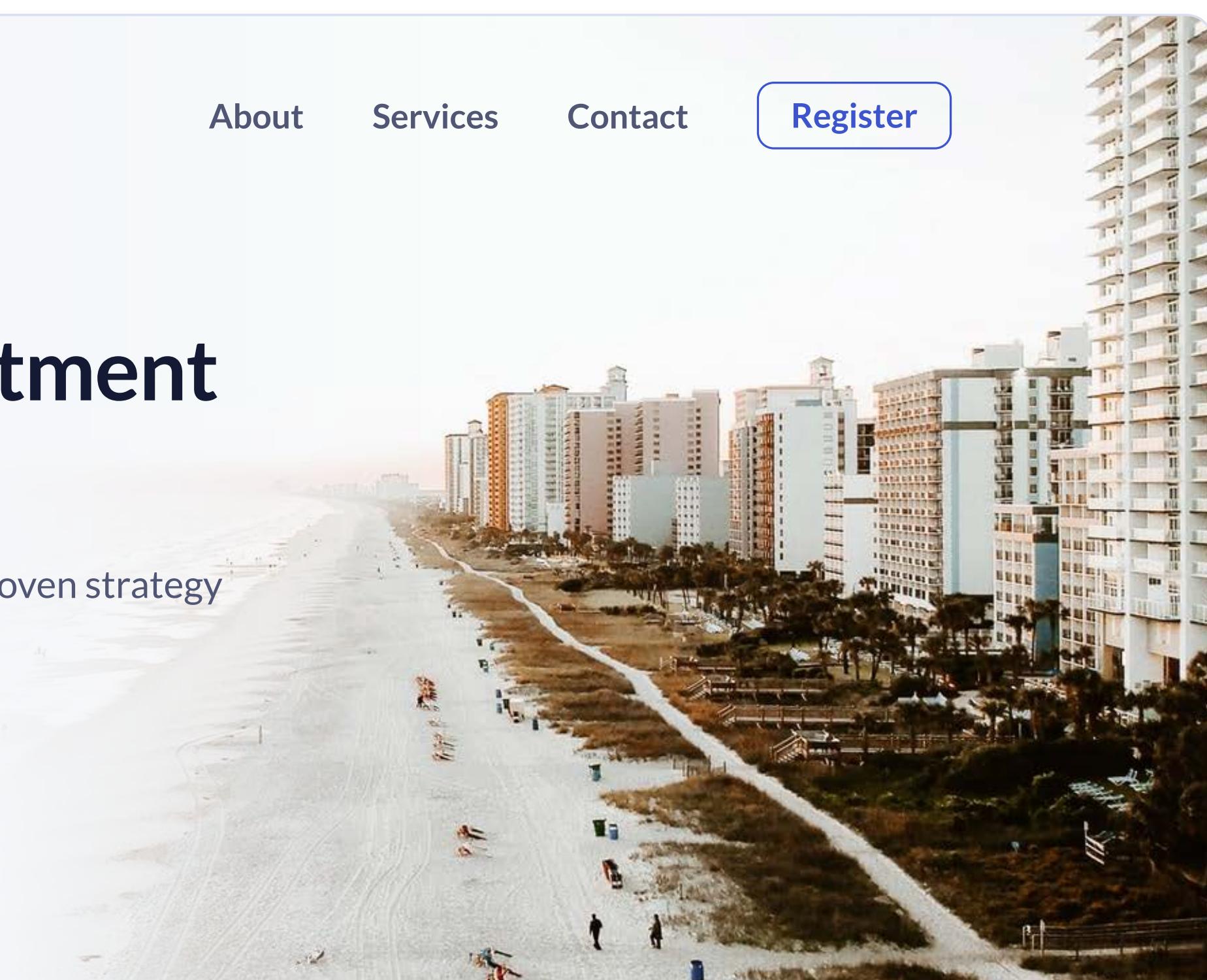
Get started [Learn more](#)

Why use our services

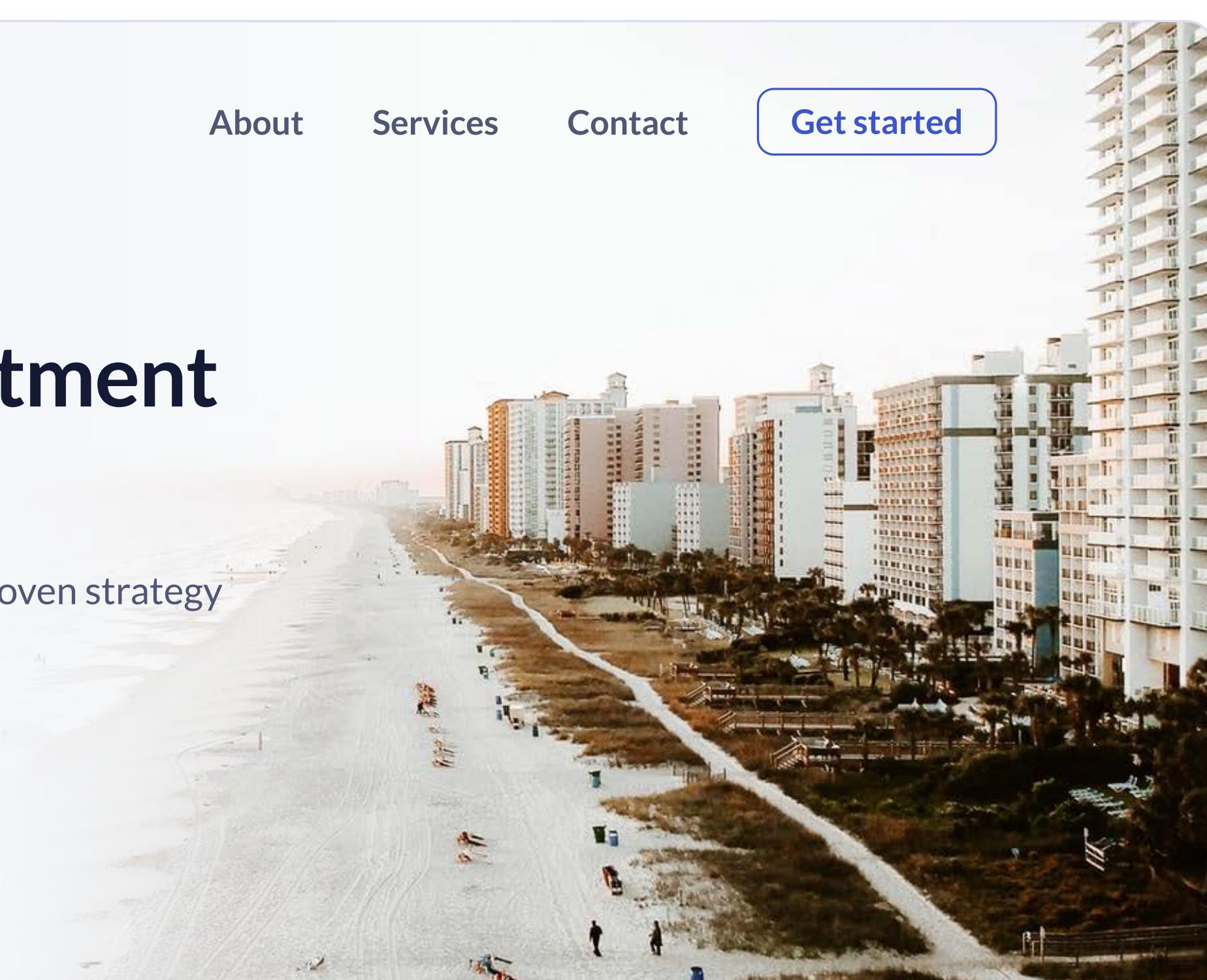
X

Example of an uncomfortably long line length

You don't need to use the full width of the page for your text, as it hinders readability. Instead, keep your line length between the recommended character range and align your block of text to the left or centre of the page.



The header features the 'homeinvest' logo with a blue house icon. The navigation bar includes 'About', 'Services', 'Contact', and a 'Register' button with a blue border. Below the header, a large bold heading reads 'Your property investment journey starts here'. A subtext below it says 'Achieve financial independence using our proven strategy to build your property portfolio'. Two buttons are present: a blue rounded rectangle with 'Get started' and a white button with blue text 'Learn more'. A green circular icon with a checkmark is located in the top right corner of the main content area.



The header features the 'homeinvest' logo with a blue house icon. The navigation bar includes 'About', 'Services', 'Contact', and a 'Get started' button with a blue border. Below the header, a large bold heading reads 'Your property investment journey starts here'. A subtext below it says 'Achieve financial independence using our proven strategy to build your property portfolio'. Two buttons are present: a blue rounded rectangle with 'Get started' and a white button with blue text 'Learn more'. A green circular icon with a checkmark is located in the bottom right corner of the main content area.

LIMITED TIME ONLY

# Get 20% off

Great work, you've just improved your UI design skills with 3 quick guidelines. Imagine what you'll learn from over 100 more in the full book.

[Buy the book](#)

COLOUR

**Use a simple colour palette**

**Primary color**  
HSB: 210, 90, 70  
Used for actions

**Darkest shade**  
HSB: 210, 70, 0  
Used for heading text

**Dark shade**  
HSB: 210, 40, 50  
Used for secondary

**Medium shade**  
HSB: 210, 34, 0  
Used for dark borders

**Light shade**  
HSB: 210, 5, 95  
Used for light borders

**Lightest shade**  
HSB: 210, 2, 98  
Used for background

# Practical UI

Quick and practical UI design guidelines to design intuitive, accessible, and beautiful interfaces.

Adham Dannaway

to understand is

to smaller pieces so it closer together,