Navigating your way around xcode could be very overwhelming if you aren’t sure what exactly it is that you are looking for. Basically you want to build an app, functional, user friendly and beautiful. However, just like embarking on anything else, this takes practice patients and a few techniques that will get the process started and going in the right direction. One step that’s imperative to understand in order to get a visual appearance of what your app should potentially look like is called auto-layout.

Contrary to belief this term sounds a lot more inviting that it really is. One would get the idea that this helpful tool will do most of your task for you, but much like the coding aspect of apps, the auto layout needs instructions to be given to it so it can preform the required task. This quick tutorial will give you a basic idea on how the auto layout is intended to work.

When I am starting a project I always create an outlet to back up my work just incase the infamous “wheel of death” (Spinning Wait Cursor) appears out of nowhere and destroy what I’ve been working on. The repository platform in this case is GitHub, which is another subject entirely. Going back to xcode, I would then go to file, create a new project, give the project a name and save it as a single view. This should bring us inside the xcode storyboard where we begin the process.

In the main view of the storyboard should be a static view controller that you can begin to work on. Lets say we want to add an image to this view controller and center it on the page. First thing would be to go to the right side pane towards the bottom window. This window is known as the object picker and it stores a glossary of tools and views to get your project to the standard you envisioned it having. In the search bar of the object picker, type in the word “image”. To place your image object in the view controller click and drag it from the object picker to the view.

The view controller works off an “X” and “Y” axis, where the index point (0,0) is located at the upper left corner of the view controller. Note that what you see on the screen is not exactly where the object is set or constrained. The first process I recommend when constraining my image object to the super view (another name for the view controller) is to set the image height and width. In order to do this go to the bottom right corner of the storyboard and select the “pin” icon, which is one of the four choices available at the bottom. Click to open then uncheck and select the current settings for the height and width of the image.

Once that is done, go back to the bottom right corner and selects the resolve auto layout icon it is located right beside the pin icon. Select in the all view section to update all frames. This will put your image somewhere different from where it was originally set. Proceed by clicking on the alignment tap located beside the pin tab. Select both the horizontal in container box and the vertical in container box, click the add constrain tab. Then at the same time press the command, option and equal button to update the frame, now the image object should be place and constrained exactly in the middle of the view controller.

This process is very tricky but only if you allow it to be. Plenty of practice and references will make this process a lot smoother over time, giving you the freedom to place your images, buttons and text field anywhere you chose.