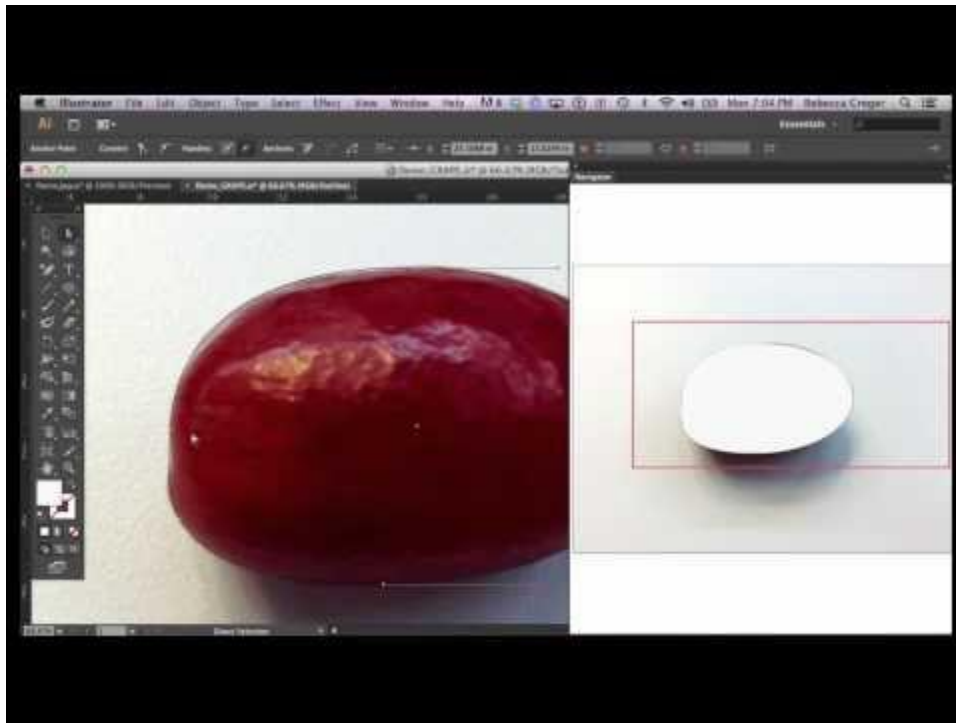
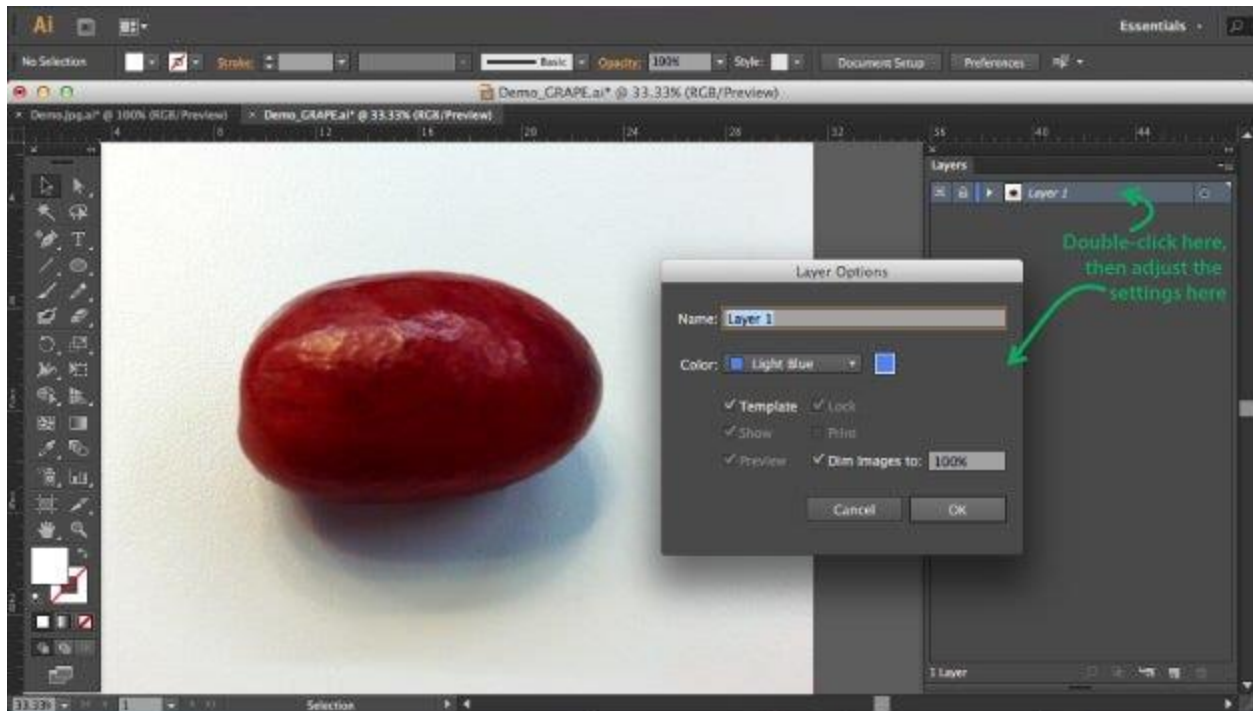


We're going to show you how to create photorealistic vector illustrations using the **Mesh Tool** in Adobe Illustrator. This is a super powerful tool that can make your vector illustrations look more 3D, or photorealistic. It works by adding a 'mesh' over a closed shape, the lines of the mesh intersecting at points onto which different color swatches can be applied to create a vectorized image.:



For this tutorial I took a couple of photos of a delicious bunch of grapes, and now I'm going to re-create this photo as a vector. While I created this whole bunch of grapes using the mesh tool, for the purposes of this tutorial I'm going to show you how to create just one grape — just for starters.

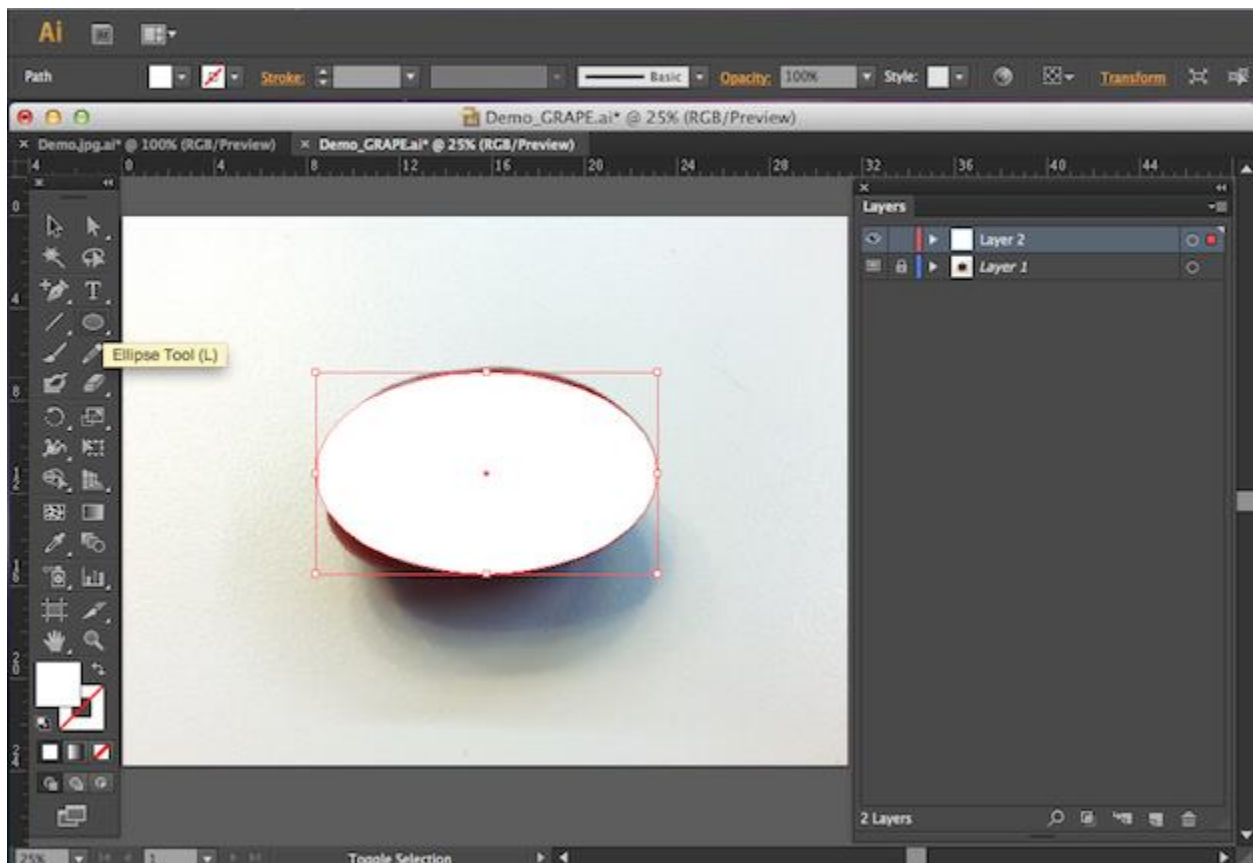
# 1. Make your image layer into a template



Open with your image file with Adobe Illustrator. Double click on the on your image layer in the **Layers Palette**. A window called '**Layer options**' will pop up. Check '**Template**,' check '**Dim Images**' and set the percentage to 100%.

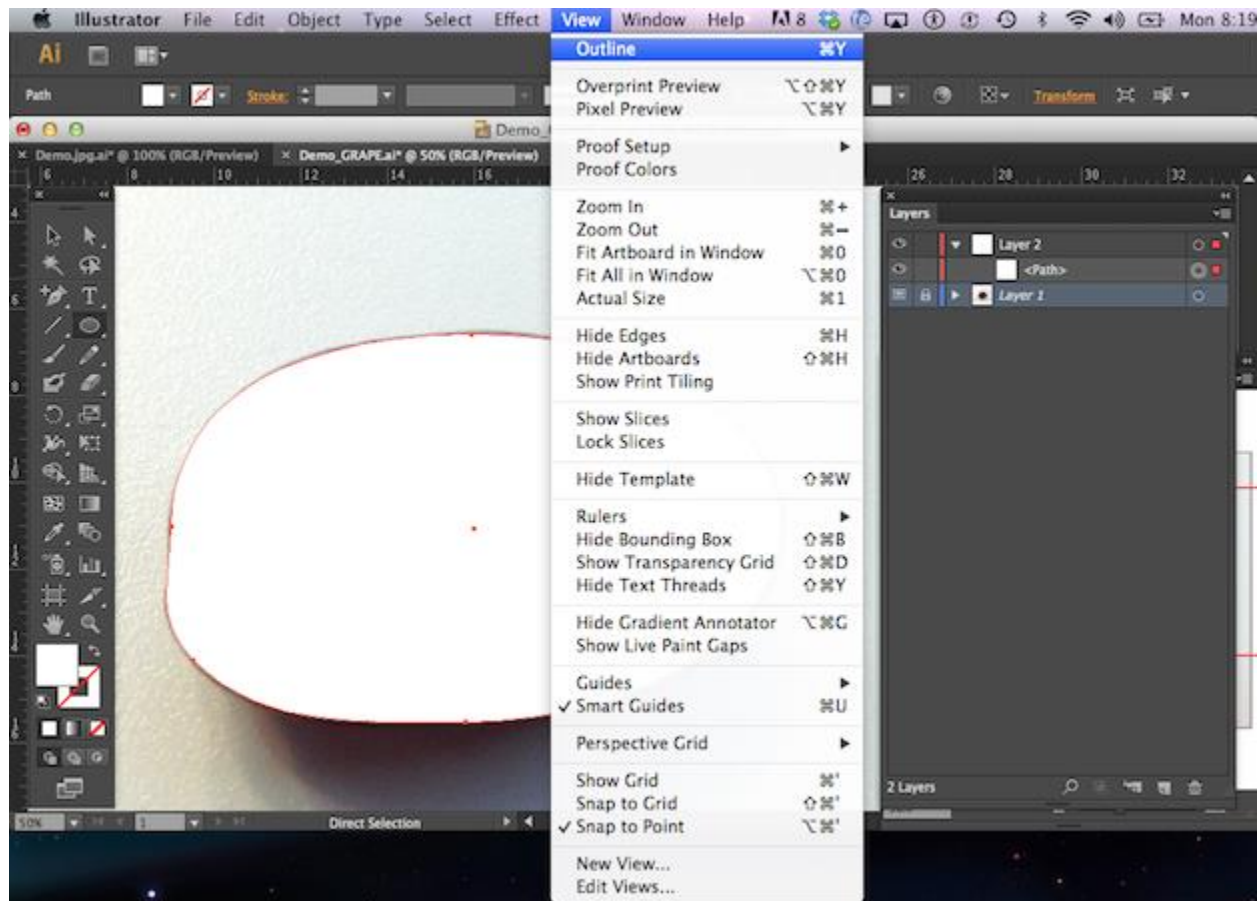
Doing this makes your image layer into a template for your mesh shape, which will go on top of it.

## 2. Trace the shape of the object



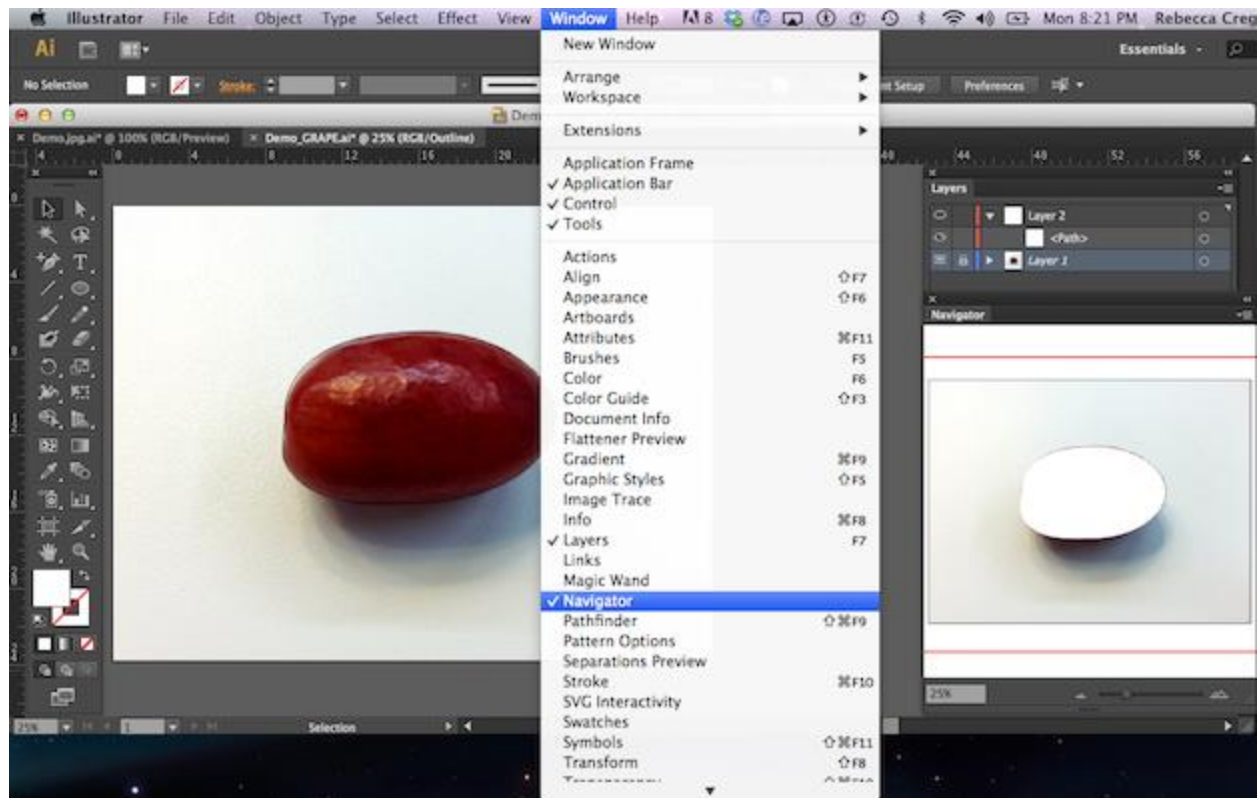
Create a new layer on top of your original image layer, and use the **Ellipse tool** to create a circle. Adjust the circle so that it's more similar to the shape of the grape.

### 3. View in outline mode



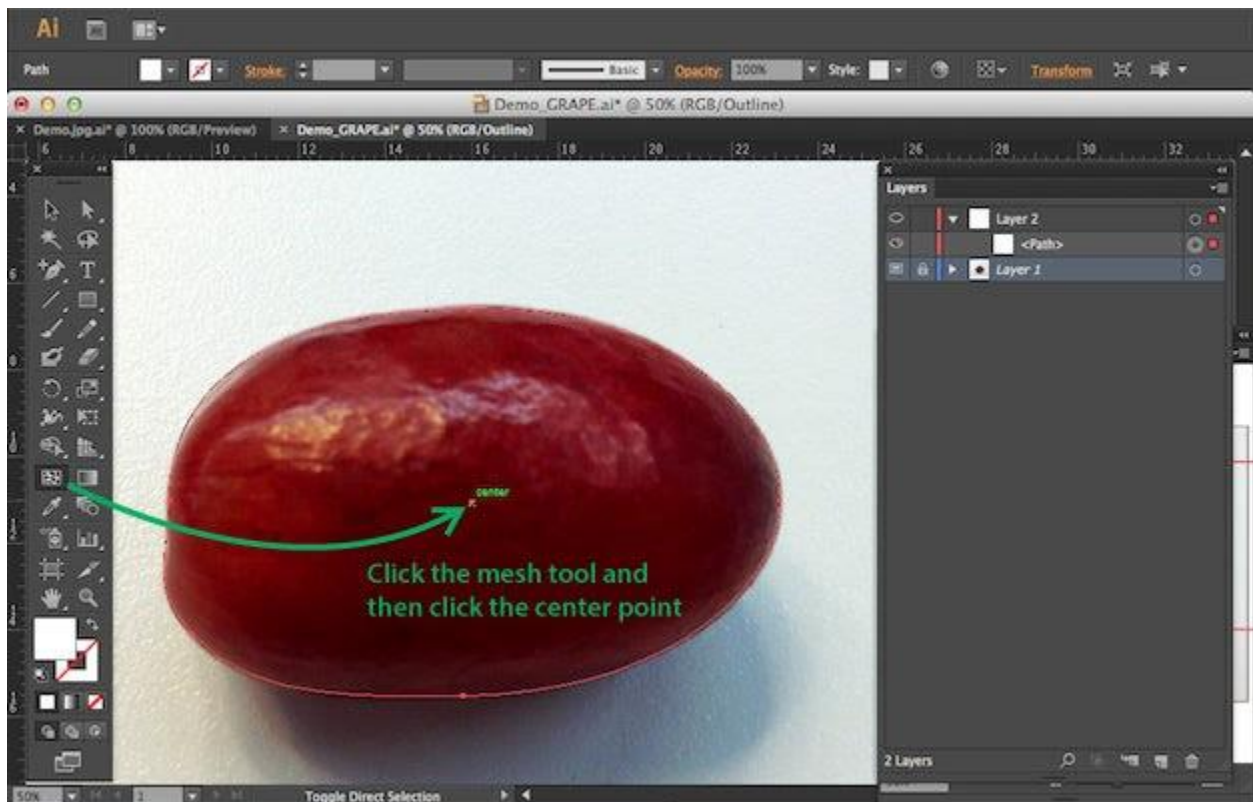
Now click **View > Outline**. This shows your mesh in **Outline mode**, so that you can still edit the mesh but can also see the photo layer underneath.

## 4. Open the navigator window



Now click **Window > Navigator** and a navigator window will pop up. This allows you to see what your mesh will look like while you're still in Outline mode.

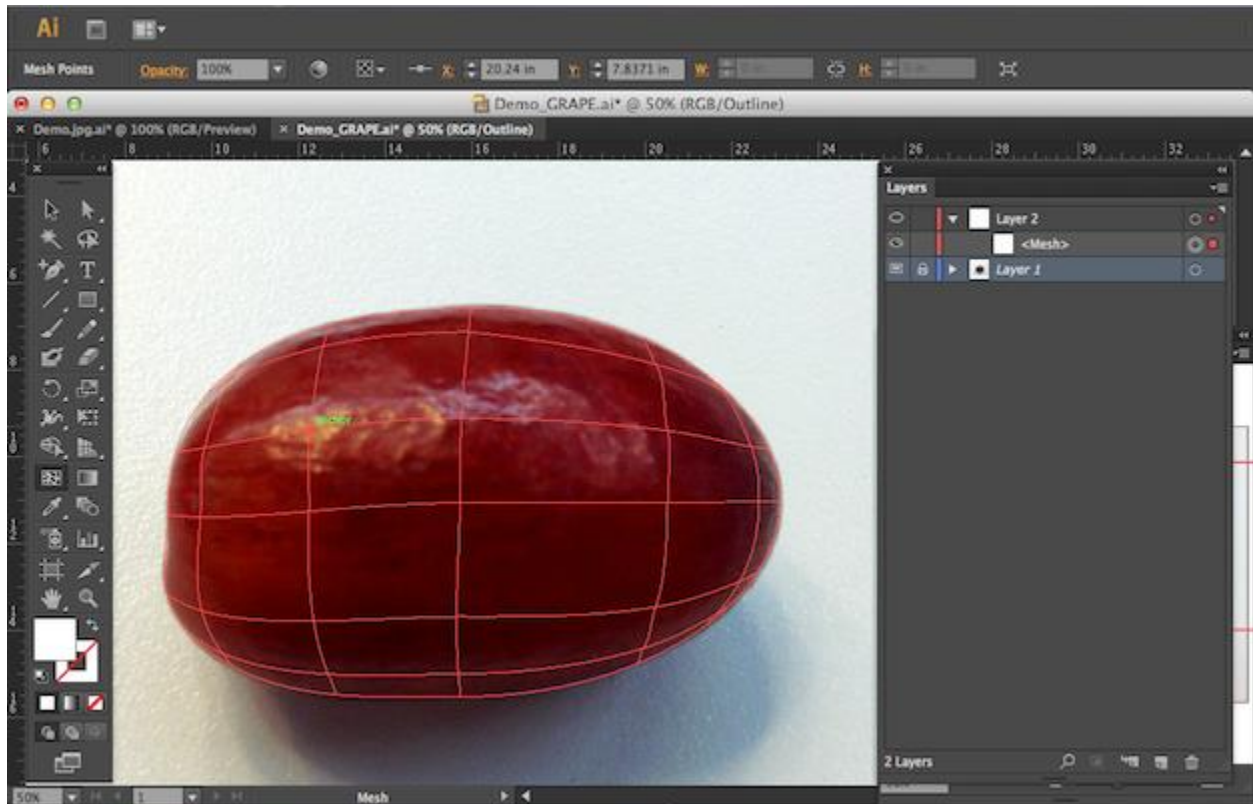
## 5. Add a mesh point



Now click on the mesh icon in the side bar, then click in the middle of the circle. You'll see two mesh lines appear.

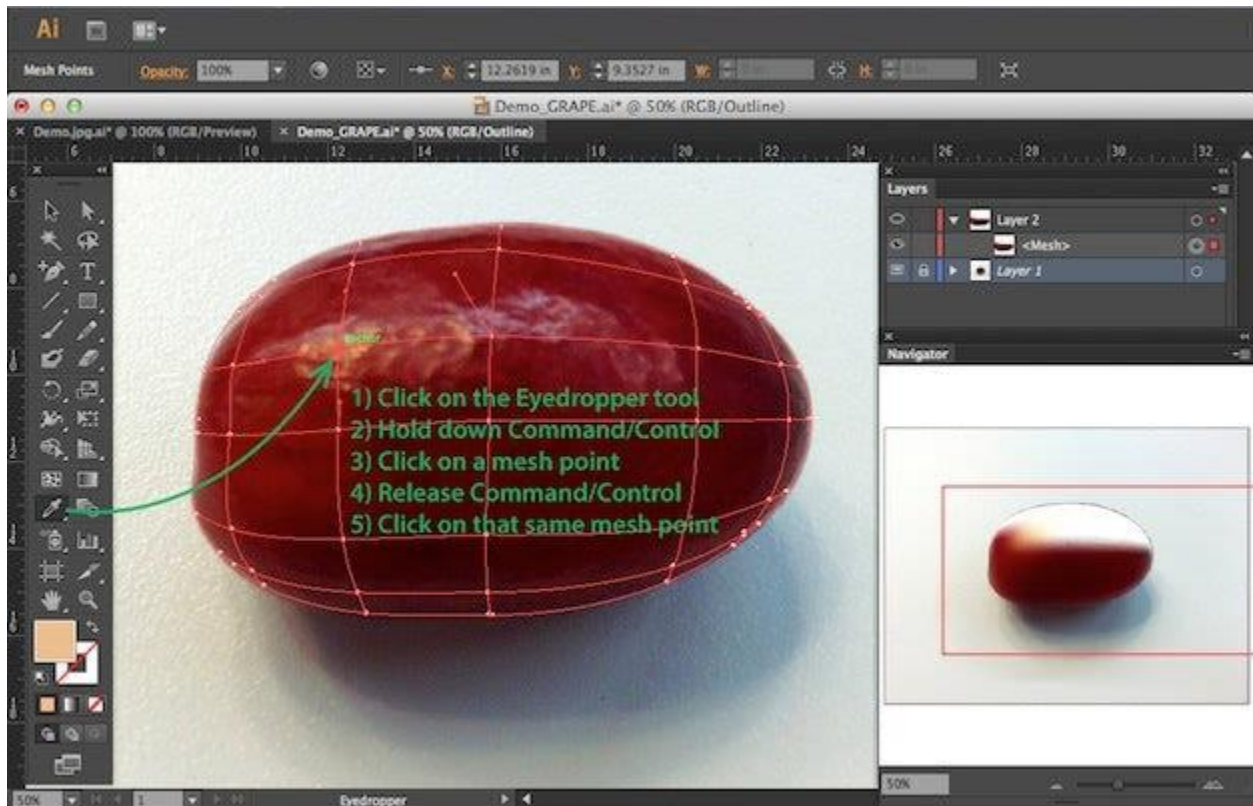


## 6. Add more mesh points where the value/color in your object changes



Click on different lines of the mesh to add more points, focusing on locations where the grape changes in color or value. It's better to work with as few mesh points as possible, so I'm going to add only 5 or 6 more to this grape.

## 7. Use the Eyedropper tool

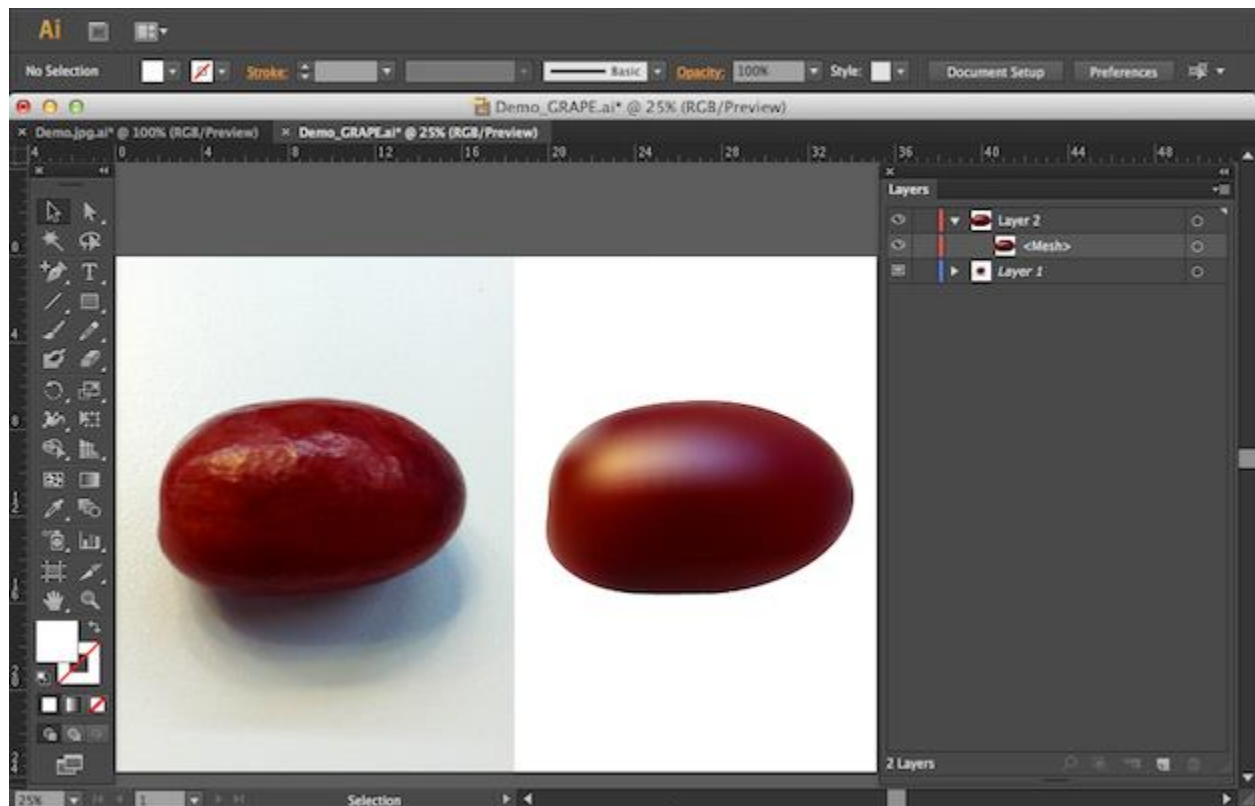


Now that we've got all our mesh points added, we're going to apply colors to each of them. There's a couple of ways to do this, but for this tutorial I'm going to use the eye-dropper tool.

Click on the eye dropper icon in the tool bar, hold down the **Command** or **Control** key and click on an intersecting mesh point inside your mesh shape. Now that your point is selected, let go of the Command or Control key and click that same mesh point with the eye dropper tool. Doing that samples colors directly from the photo and applies them into my mesh.

If you look at the Navigator palette you can see how your mesh shape is starting to look. We're going to click **Eyedropper Tool > Command/Control > Click > Release > Click** a couple more times until all the mesh points in this grape are filled with a color swatch.





Now you have a grape. Next, click **View > Preview** to switch out of outline mode, and you'll be able to see your grape.