

Chapter 43: CSS Image Sprites

Section 43.1: A Basic Implementation

What's an image sprite?

An image sprite is a single asset located within an image sprite sheet. An image sprite sheet is an image file that contains more than one asset that can be extracted from it.

For example:



The image above is an image sprite sheet, and each one of those stars is a sprite within the sprite sheet. These sprite sheets are useful because they improve performance by reducing the number of HTTP requests a browser might have to make.

So how do you implement one? Here's some example code.

HTML

```
<div class="icon icon1"></div>
<div class="icon icon2"></div>
<div class="icon icon3"></div>
```

CSS

```
.icon {
  background: url("icons-sprite.png");
  display: inline-block;
  height: 20px;
  width: 20px;
}
.icon1 {
  background-position: 0px 0px;
}
.icon2 {
  background-position: -20px 0px;
}
.icon3 {
  background-position: -40px 0px;
}
```

By using setting the sprite's width and height and by using the background-position property in CSS (with an x and y value) you can easily extract sprites from a sprite sheet using CSS.