

Relationship Between Inches, Picas, Points, Pitch, and Twips

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SUMMARY

There are several methods typographers can use to measure character spacing (kerning) and line spacing (leading). Listed below are the definitions, and typical conversions you might need to employ.

POINT

"Point" is a unit of measurement used in typography that is equal to 1/72 inch. It is used primarily for representing the height of characters and the amount of space between lines, also known as leading.

Pitch Transferred to Points

$120 / \text{Pitch} = \text{Points}$

For example: $12 \text{ Pitch} = 120 / 12 = 10 \text{ Points}$

PICA

"Pica" refers to a unit of measurement equal to 1/6 of an inch or 12 points. Pica and points can be used interchangeably and many typographers use pica as their standard unit of measurement.

Points Transferred to Pica

Points / 12 = Pica

For example: 24 Points = 24 Points / 12 = 2 Pica

PITCH

"Pitch" describes the width of a character. Pitch equals the number of characters that can fit side-by-side in 1 inch; for example, 10 pitch equals 10 characters-per-inch or 10 CPI. Pitch is a term generally used with non-proportional (fixed-width) fonts.

Point Transferred to Pitch

120 / Points = Pitch

For example: 10 point = 120 / 10 = 12 Pitch

TWIP

"Twip" is a unit of measurement equal to 1/20th of a printers point. There are 1440 twips to an inch, 567 twips to a centimeter

Points Transferred to Twips

20 * Points = Twips

For example: 10 Points = 20 * 10 Points = 200 Twips

MORE INFORMATION

The following is a conversion table for some of the common point sizes you'll encounter.

Inches	Picas (1/6")	Points (1/72")	Pitch (CPI)	Twips (1/1440")

.08	.5	6	20.0	120
.10	.6	7	17.1	140
.11	.7	8	15.0	160
.13	.8	9	13.3	180
.14	.8	10	12.0	200
.15	.9	11	10.9	220
.17	1.0	12	10.0	240

.18	1.1	13	9.2	260
.19	1.2	14	8.6	280
.21	1.3	15	8.0	300
.22	1.3	16	7.5	320
.24	1.4	17	7.1	340
.25	1.5	18	6.7	360
.26	1.6	19	6.3	380
.28	1.7	20	6.0	400
.29	1.8	21	5.7	420
.31	1.8	22	5.5	440
.32	1.9	23	5.2	460
.33	2.0	24	5.0	480
.35	2.1	25	4.8	500
.36	2.2	26	4.6	520
.38	2.3	27	4.4	540
.39	2.3	28	4.3	560
.40	2.4	29	4.1	580
.42	2.5	30	4.0	600
.43	2.6	31	3.9	620
.44	2.7	32	3.8	640
.46	2.8	33	3.6	660
.47	2.8	34	3.5	680
.49	2.9	35	3.4	700
.50	3.0	36	3.3	720

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