

# The Pen tool by numbers

**T**HE PEN TOOL confuses people more than any other in Photoshop. Here's a step-by-step guide to cutting out a simple object – in this case, a child's toy.

The Photoshop file on the CD has all the numbers, click points and drag points marked on it, so you can follow the instructions here as you trace around the toy. If you make a mistake, use Undo to go back one point – no need to start again.



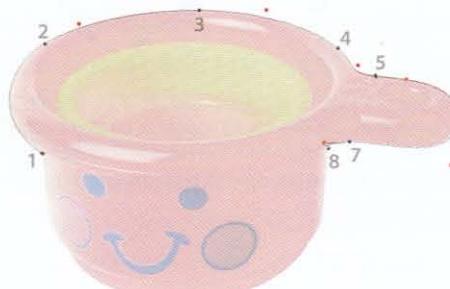
1 Start at the corner point marked 1. Click the pen tool and drag the handle to the red dot to set the direction.



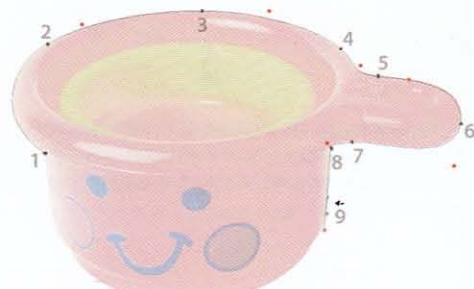
4 Click point 4, and drag just a short way to its red dot: this is a very short curve, so the dot is close to it.



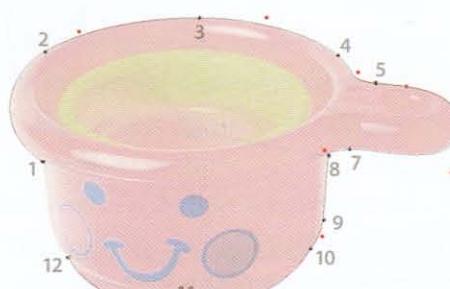
5 Click point 5. The curve will look wrong until you drag to its dot, when the curve behind it will be sorted out.



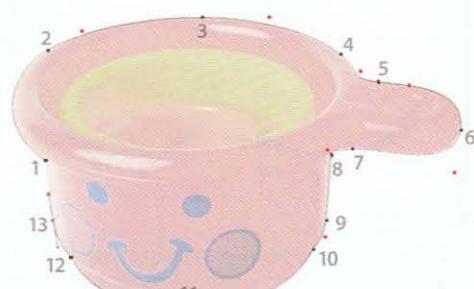
8 Now click point 8, and release the mouse button. No curves needed here: it's our first corner point.



9 Click point 9, and drag downwards a short way to its red dot to start off the next curve.



12 Click point 12, and once again don't drag since this is another corner point.



13 Click point 13, halfway round the next curve, and drag to the red dot. Nearly home now!

# How to Cheat in Photoshop



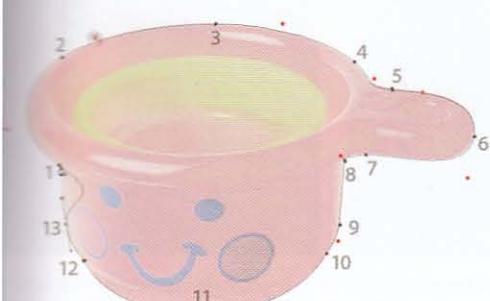
Click the point marked 2, and drag to its red dot: this completes the curve behind it, and sets the next.



Now click point 6, and drag to its red dot: the handles are clearly at a tangent to the curve of the toy.



Click point 10, but don't drag: once again, this is a corner point, so we don't need a curve here.



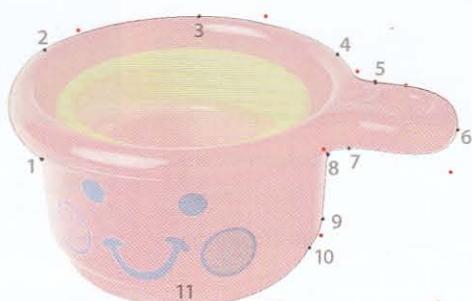
Here's what happens when we place the cursor over our starting point: an ugly curve from point 13.



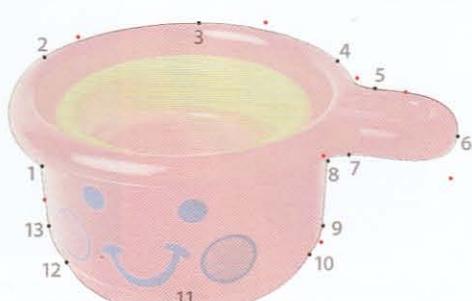
3 Now click point 3, and drag to the red dot. This is the top curve on the toy.



7 Click point 7: once again, it's only a short drag to make the curves both behind and in front of this point.



11 Click point 11, right at the bottom, and drag to the red dot to make the large curve along the base.

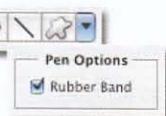


15 Instead, hold **alt** as you click the starting point, to make a corner instead of a curve.



## HOT TIP

To make the Pen tool much, much easier to use, make sure it's in Rubber Band mode – this shows you the path you're about to create before you click the tool.



To turn on Rubber Band mode, click the triangle at the end of the Pen Options bar and select it from the pop-up dialog. When you've completed this exercise, try it again without the dots!

