



Using a graphic tablet instead of a mouse

Description

I have been using a graphic tablet for over 15 years. I started with a **Bamboo Fun** model and recently replaced it with an **Intuos model [CTL6100WL](#)** when the previous one stopped working. Often, I get asked why I chose a graphic tablet instead of a mouse, like I was used to. Let's have a look at various advantages of using a graphic tablet.

Reducing strain

A pen allows you to use a more natural hand position. That reduces strain on the wrist and fingers compared to the unnatural angle often required by a mouse. Do you ever get a tired wrist when using a mouse. Think of it: what is the normal position for your forearm and wrist when at rest? Every time you twist your wrist to accommodate for the mouse position, you are straining it. On the other hand, holding a pen or a pencil leaves your wrist in a more relaxed position.

Pressure sensitivity

As most graphic tablets allow you to adjust the sensitivity, you can set it to require less force to perform tasks. That can also reduce fatigue on your hand and wrist over time.

Another impact of the pressure sensitivity is that you can simulate work with a brush or marker where you can get thicker strokes when pressing harder, and finer lines when pressing very lightly. This is impossible with a mouse. This feature will be very useful if you love to paint with a graphic program.

Minimized repetitive stress injuries

How much do you use your hand and wrist when using a mouse? I used to get a numb hand when I used a mouse for a long period of time when playing computer games. Having a hand in a very fixed position likely affected the bloodflow! In fact, fingers are not moving much at all and that can increase the risk of repetitive stress injuries, like carpal tunnel syndrome.

Precision and Control

Have you ever tried to sign your name with a mouse? Or draw a nice circle? We learned how to use a pen or a pencil even before we were in school. We developed great dexterity and we managed to use our fingers for very fine and detailed movements. It is much easier to be precise when we need to click on a node or move an element by only a few pixels.

Efficiency

Many graphic tablets come with customizable buttons that can be programmed with shortcuts. This can improve your workflow efficiency. For example, one button can go back when navigating the net, or perform an UNDO.

Is it worth the expense?

A graphic table is likely more expensive than a mouse, but you typically don't need a high-end tablet if you don't already have one. Start with a small or medium size tablet. The medium size is typically the same width as a standard sheet of paper so the area you will cover will be familiar.

You can also find a second-hand model to see if you like it. Of course, there will be a learning curve. You went through this when you first learned to handle a mouse to manipulate a cursor on the screen. You might find that this first tablet is enough for your needs and you might keep using it for years. On the other hand, you might want to use something a bit larger or with a few more features, but if that is the case, you will know that the investment would be worth it.

If you have a graphic tablet still gathering dust, it is time to take it out and see how it might make your life easier. You can check out [this article](#) that describes how I have set up my own graphic tablet.

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