

4 STYLING LINKS



This is an external link 

Andy Budd's Blogography	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stuff and Nonsense	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hicks Design	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clagnut	<input type="checkbox"/>
HTML Dog	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adactio	<input type="checkbox"/>
All In The Head	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mark Boulton	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ian Lloyd	<input type="checkbox"/>

The humble anchor link is the foundation of the World Wide Web. It is the mechanism that allows web pages to interconnect and people to explore and navigate. The default styling for anchor links is fairly uninspiring, but with a little sprinkling of CSS you can do some amazing things.

In this chapter you will learn about

- Ordering your link selectors based on the cascade
- Creating stylized link underlines
- Styling external links using attribute selectors
- Making links behave like buttons
- Creating visited-link styles
- Creating pure CSS tooltips

Simple link styling

The easiest way to style a link is to use the anchor type selector. For instance, this rule will make all anchors red:

```
a {color: red;}
```

However, anchors can act as internal references as well as external links, so using a type selector is not always ideal. Take this situation, for example. The first anchor contains a fragment identifier, and when the user clicks that anchor, the page will jump to the second named anchor:

```
<p><a href="#mainContent">Skip to main content</a></p>
...
<h1><a name="mainContent">Welcome</a></h1>
```

While you probably only want the link to be styled red, the contents of the headline will be styled red also. To avoid this, CSS has two special selectors called link pseudo-class selectors. The `:link` pseudo-class selector is used to target links that have not been visited, and the `:visited` pseudo-class selector is used to target visited links. So in this example all unvisited links will be blue and all visited links will be green:

```
a:link {color: blue;} /* Makes unvisited links blue */
a:visited {color: green;} /* Makes visited links green */
```

The other two selectors you can use for styling links are the `:hover` and `:active` dynamic pseudo-class selectors. The `:hover` dynamic pseudo-class selector is used to target elements when they are hovered over, and the `:active` dynamic pseudo-class selector targets elements when they are activated. In the case of links, activation occurs when the link is clicked. So in this example, links will turn red when hovered over or clicked:

```
a:hover, a:active { color: red;}
```