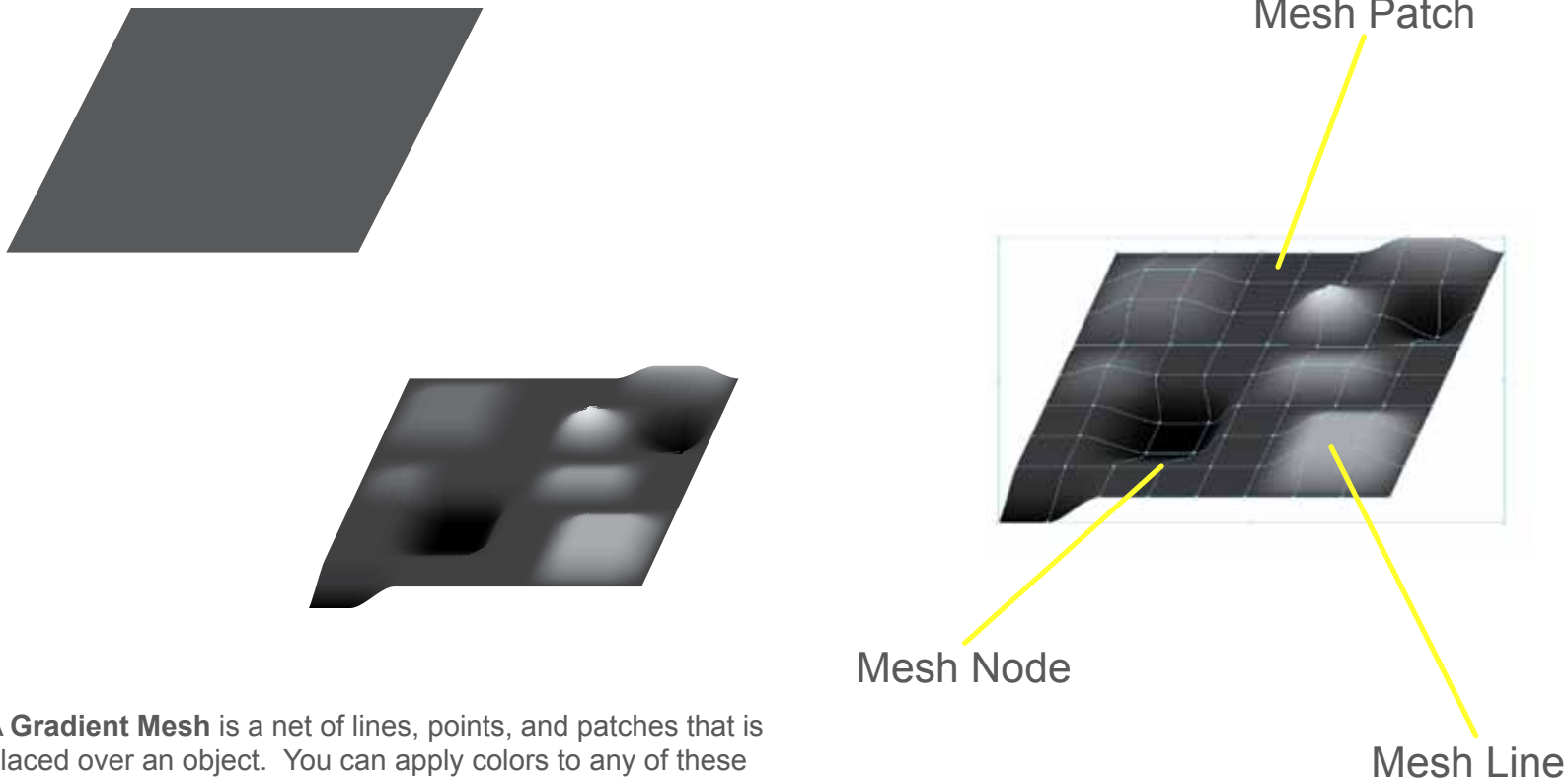


# Using the Gradient Mesh Tool

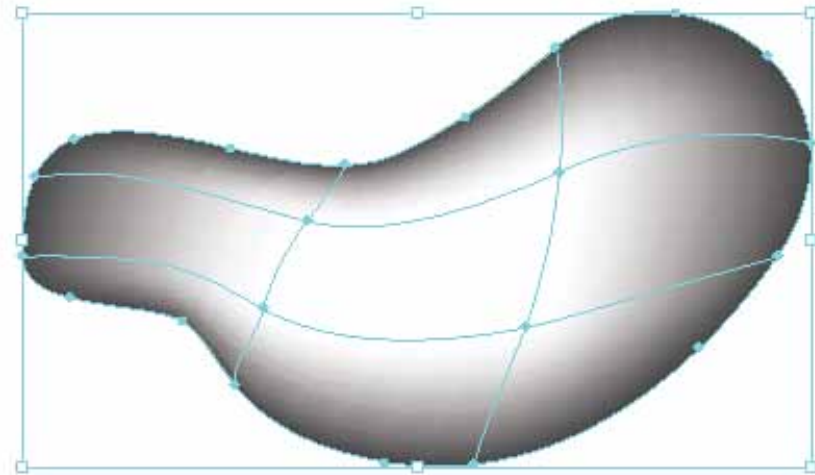
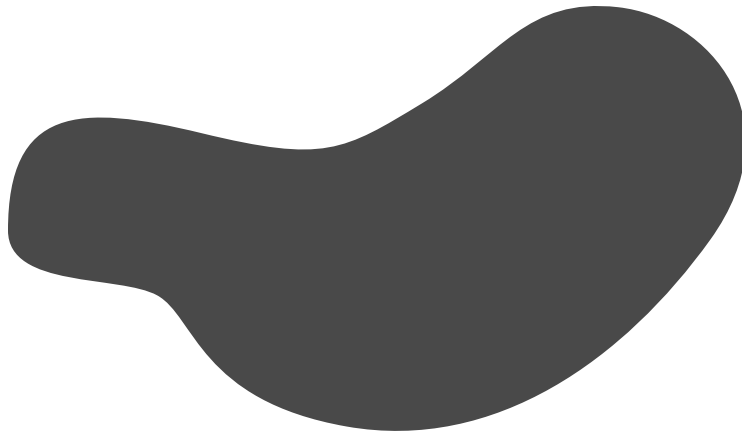
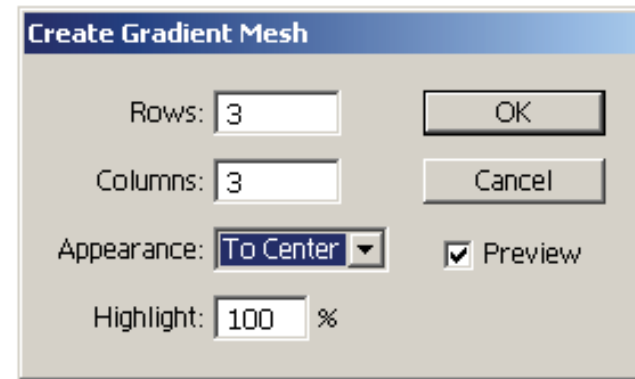
Usually, simple linear or radial gradients will sufficiently describe most surfaces that illustrators will encounter. However, there are times when you will need to render shapes or surfaces that are more irregular. This is when the **Gradient Mesh Tool** comes in handy.



A **Gradient Mesh** is a net of lines, points, and patches that is placed over an object. You can apply colors to any of these features individually or in groups and Illustrator will calculate the color gradient between them. This can be helpful for showing texture and relief, as well as highlight and shadow.

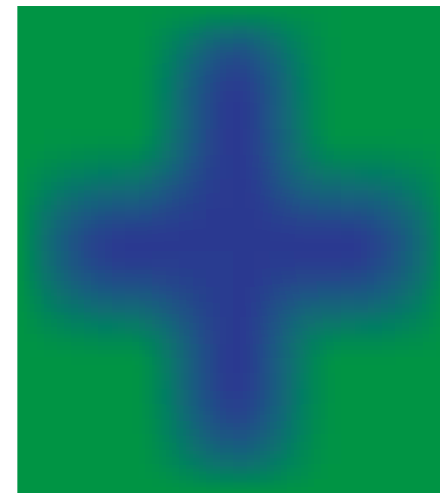
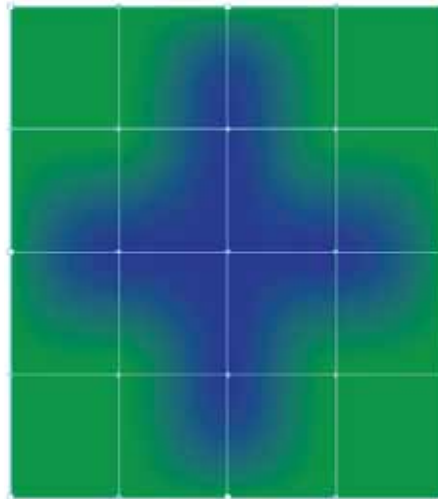
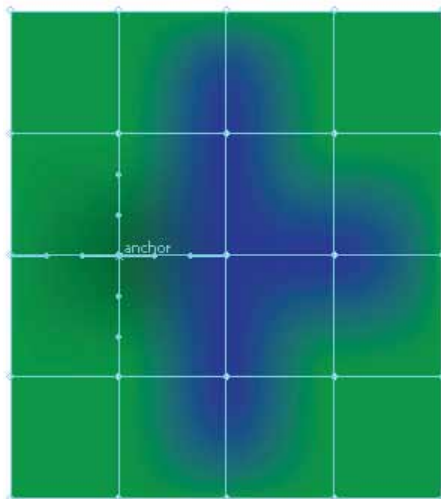
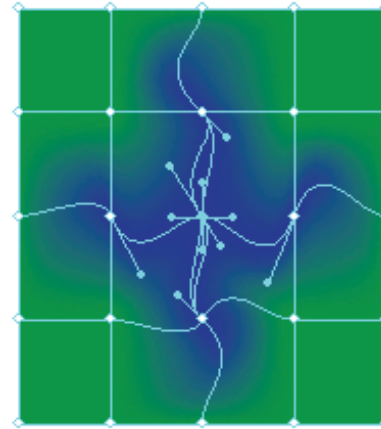
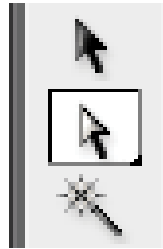
# Using the Gradient Mesh Tool

An easy way to apply a **Gradient Mesh** to an object is to select the object, then go to the **Object** menu. Click **Create Gradient Mesh**. A box will open where you set the density of the mesh net. Illustrator will lay out the net with consistent density.



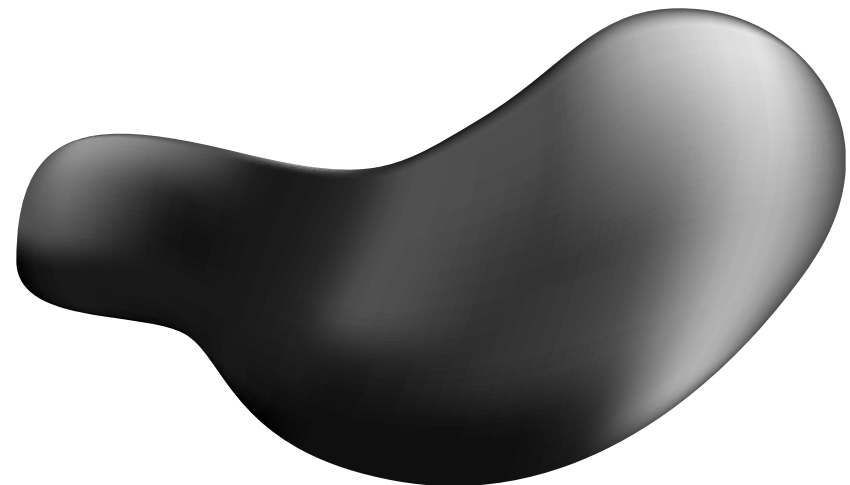
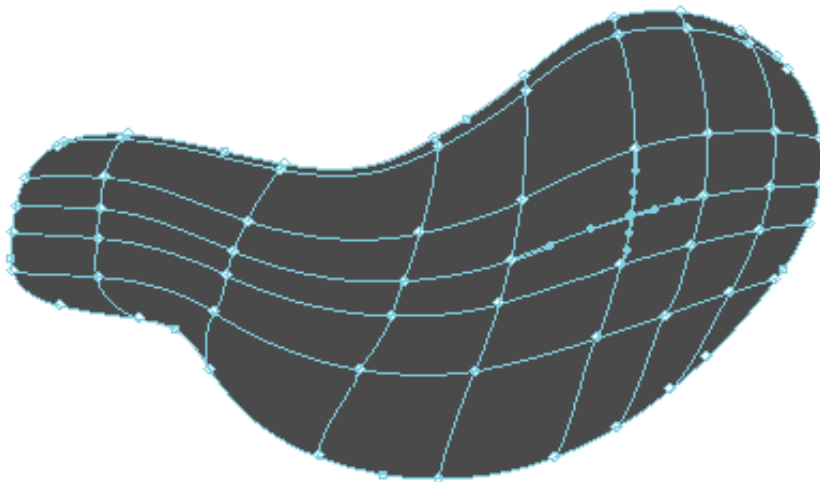
# Using the Gradient Mesh Tool

Select nodes to move or to apply color using the **Direct Selection Tool**. Once a node is selected you can change its color using a **Swatch** or using the **Color Window**. You can also change the curvature of Mesh Lines by grabbing the handles and dragging them around.



# Using the Gradient Mesh Tool

To place your own Mesh Lines and Nodes, use the **Mesh Tool (U)** from the **Tools** Window. Clicking on a spot on an object will place a Mesh Line that runs through that spot. Place the Mesh Lines where you need control over color, tone or reflection. Think about how light will play off the object. Mesh Lines can be thought of as contours of the object, as if they are the wireframe of a 3D object.



# Using the Gradient Mesh Tool

To create this water droplet we layout a mesh that gives us control over the top, the middle and the bottom. Adjust the positions of the nodes so they give the droplet a healthy amount of roundness. Then we apply color. First we select the top middle node and apply white. Then we add a dark blue across the middle of the droplet. Finally, we add a light blue in the bottom.

