

TGIF text tutorial



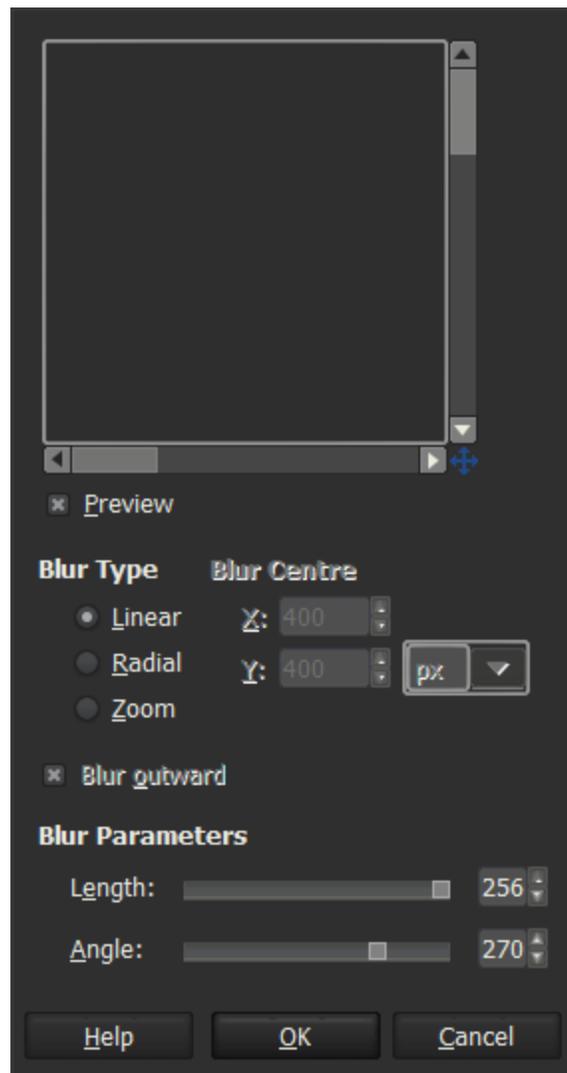
This effect is a little more complicated to make than it may look, but requires no plug-ins or external filters. Will probably look best on a chunky, rather straight lined, sans serif font - here I used a font named simply Normal.

Note that the tutorial is made for gimp 2.8<.

1. Open a new square image (mine is 800X800 px) and make the background black.
2. Type your text in white. Place it a bit above the middle line in the image so you'll have enough space for the motion blur. Set the layer mode to "Grain Merge".
3. To get a feeling of movement in the picture we will be making two motion blurs, the first one will be a blur on the text and that's what we'll

make now. Duplicate your text layer and name the new layer "Motion blur 1". This layer should be above your base text layer. Go to the layers dialog and click "Add layer mask" and in the menu check "Greyscale copy of layer". It's a good idea to turn on "Show layer mask" to see what you're working on.

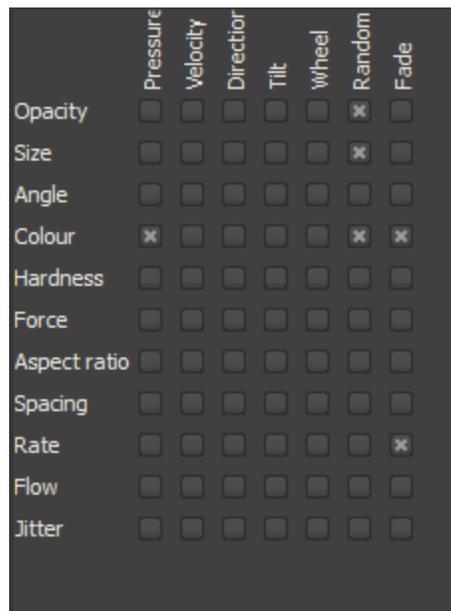
4. Go to Filters -> Blur-> Motion blur and motion blur your layer mask using these settings:



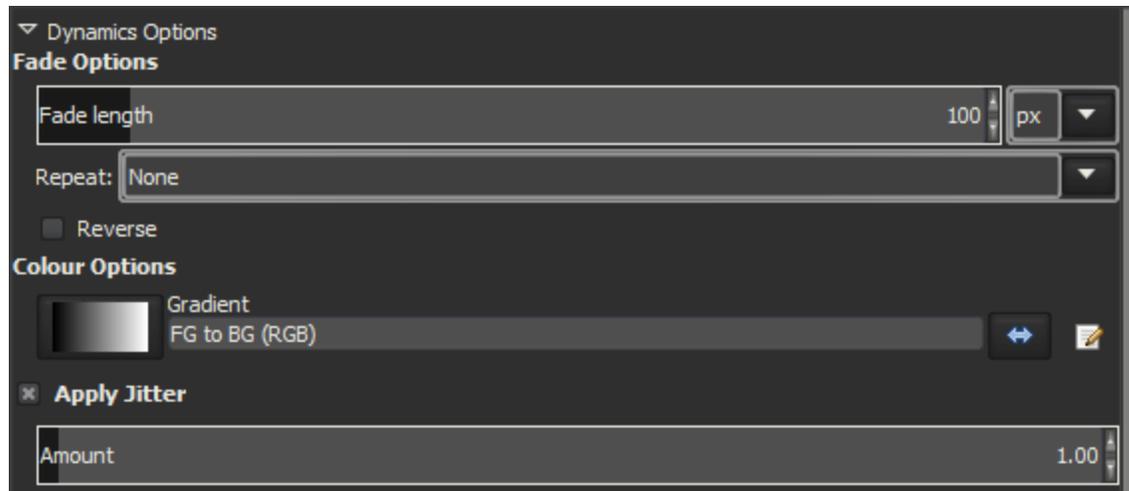
Now go back to working on the layer, not the layer mask. Fill the layer with a medium or dark grey (I used 2e2e2e). Set the layer mode to Value and turn the opacity down a little. The full effect of what we made in this step won't really

show until we put on the colour, so you can always go back after that step and adjust the opacity again.

5. Now we will make an effect layer with a second motion blur. To begin with, we will be setting up a brush. You are going to need the rectangle brush that's one of the gimp default brushes. Change the angle to 90 degrees, first of all, so you get a standing rectangle. Then set up your brush dynamics in the dynamics editor like this:

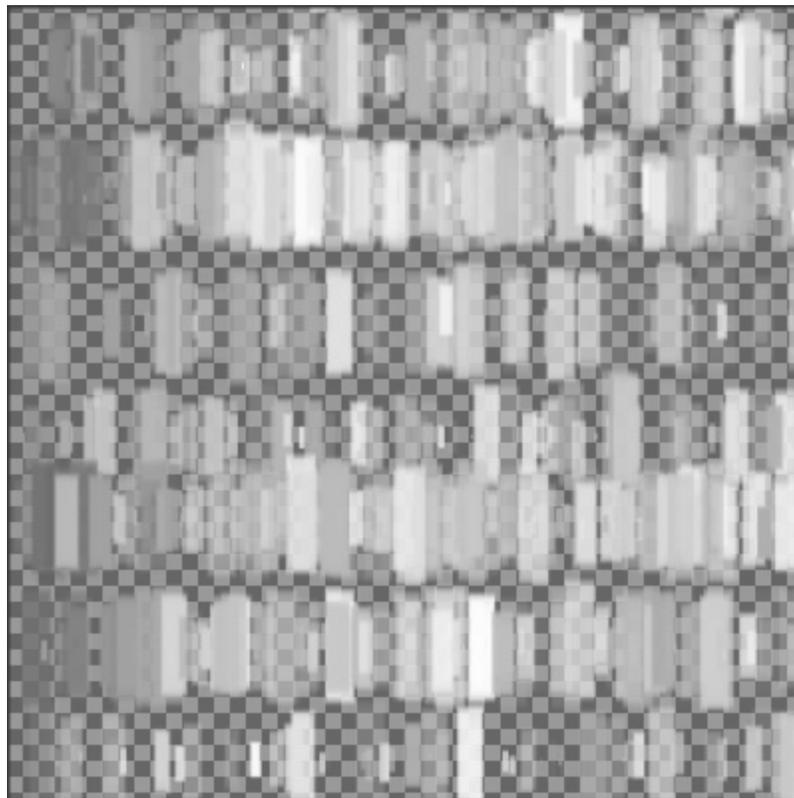


Then use these settings in the brush dialogue:



And finally set your brush to somewhere between 20 and 40 px size.

6. Now that the brush is all set up, make a new layer above the motion blur 1 layer and name it "Motion blur2". Then take your rectangle brush and make straight strokes horizontally across the layer. You will get somewhat wavy, irregular lines like these:



Since we set the colour to random and used the FG to BG gradient in black and white, we will get random greyscale strokes. If you want more highlights in the result you can turn off the brush dynamics (a safe way to do that is to choose the brush dynamics called "dynamics off" in the dynamics list), set your FG colour to white and paint in some extra white strokes here and there. Now make a motion blur on this layer, using the same settings as the first time.

7. So far we have the base text layer (set to grain merge), the motion blur on the text (your "motion blur 1" layer, set to value) and the effect layer with the new motion blur (your "motion blur 2" layer, set to normal). But the effect layer is on top of the stack and covers all the rest, so we will now make a layer mask, to get just the parts of it that we want. To begin with, go to your base text layer and alpha select your text. Turn the selection to a path. Turn off the selection again.
8. In the paths dialogue, turn on the visibility of the text path, we are going to edit it.



I deleted all the nodes inside the yellow circles first (Ctrl+Shift+Click on node) . Then i moved all the nodes inside the pink circles down along the guides (you may have to go to View -> Snap to guides and uncheck that if you have problems moving your nodes), all the way to the bottom edge of the image. Note that this changed the shape of the G from rounded to straight and that's what we want here. When you have finished your path editing, turn the path to selection.

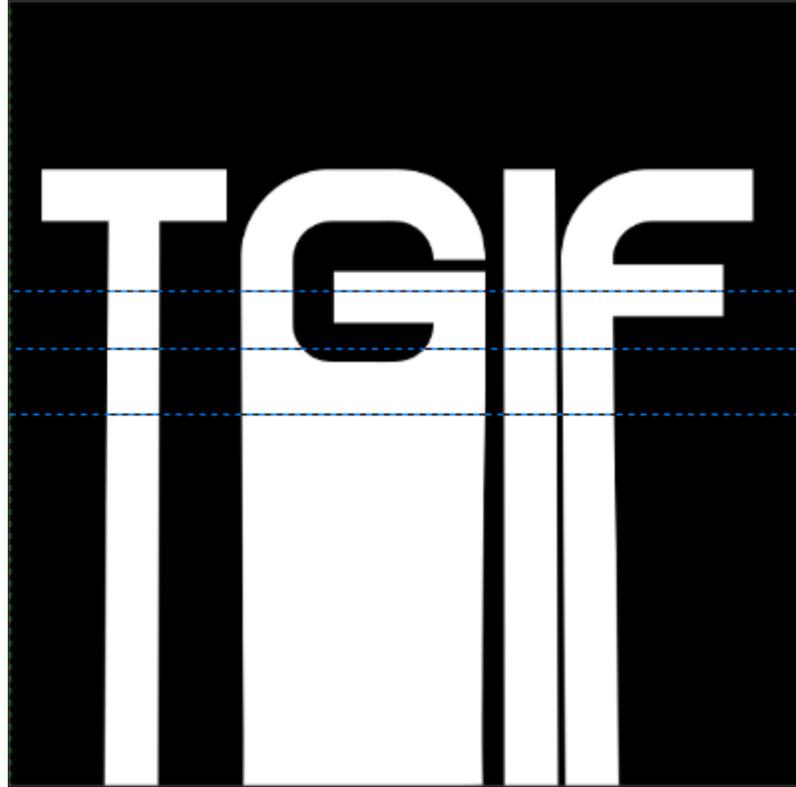


before



after

9. On the active layer (Motion blur2), click "Add layer mask" and check "from selection". Turn off the selection. Again, you can click "Show layer mask" if you want to see what you're doing. Use the gradient tool, set to linear. Change FG colour to black and with FG to transparent gradient selected, make two strokes on the layer mask.

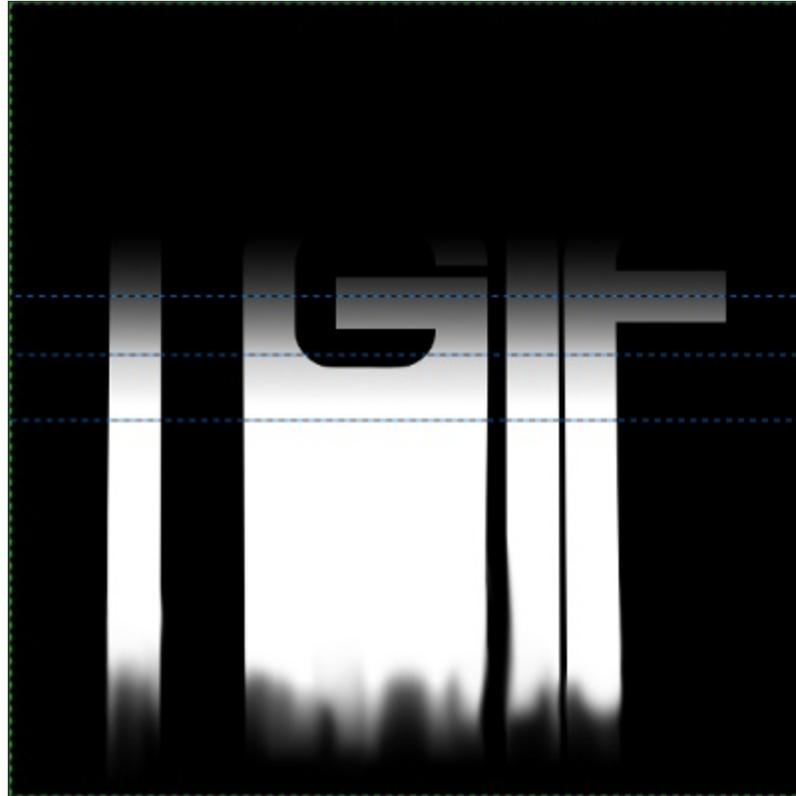


Here's what your layer mask should look like now, before the gradient stroke. the guides are only there for ease of explanation, no need for you to use guides in the image.

The first stroke should start at the middle of the original text (the top guide in the screenshot) and finish halfway down from the middle to the bottom of the text (at the second guide in the screenshot). Make sure you get a straight line. For the second stroke i started just a little way up from the bottom edge of the layer, but it's a matter of taste - how long do you want your motion blur "tails" to be?.

To fine tune you can use the smudge tool to make some up -> down strokes and some down -> up strokes along the second gradient.

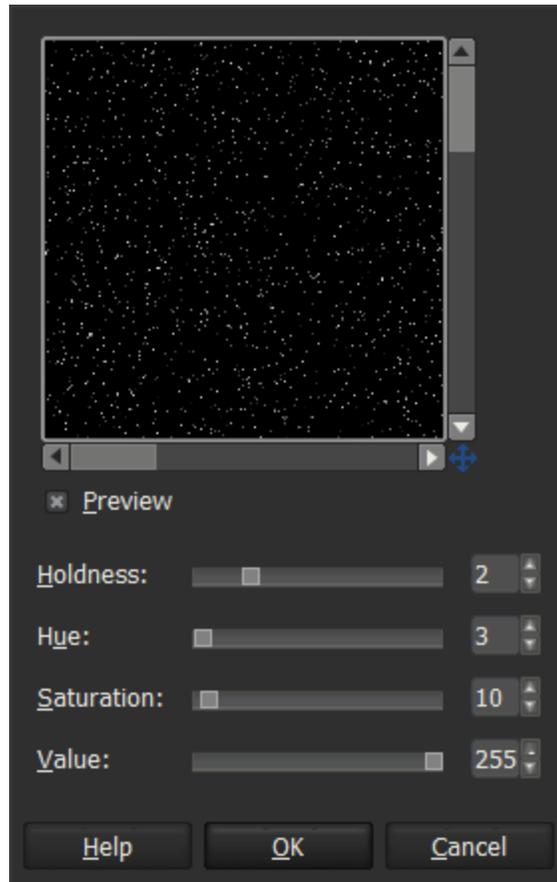
Uncheck "Show layermask" to see what happens to the "tails". This is an optional tuning, you can do it at a later stage or skip it entirely.



*My layer mask after i made the two strokes and some fine tuning with the smudge tool. The important part here for a good result is that **the major part of the text is black or grey**, leaving too much of the text in this layermask white will give you a result with little or no colour.*

10. Give your text some colour. Make a new layer above the motion blur 2 layer and name it "Colour gradient". I chose the full saturation spectrum gradient for this. Just make a horizontal stroke on the whole layer with the gradient set to linear. Set the layer mode to overlay.
11. Now comes the fun part - special effects! Special effect one means making a new transparent layer on top of the layer stack and filling it with a solid noise cloud (Filters-> Render-> Clouds-> Solid Noise). I named the new layer "Cloud". You can keep the default settings. Set the layer mode to divide. This step gives you some random highlights and dark patches in the colours, which makes them look more "alive".

12. Special effect two means making a new black layer just above the background layer - i named the new layer "Glitter" - and then go to Filters-> Noise-> HSV Noise. I used these settings:

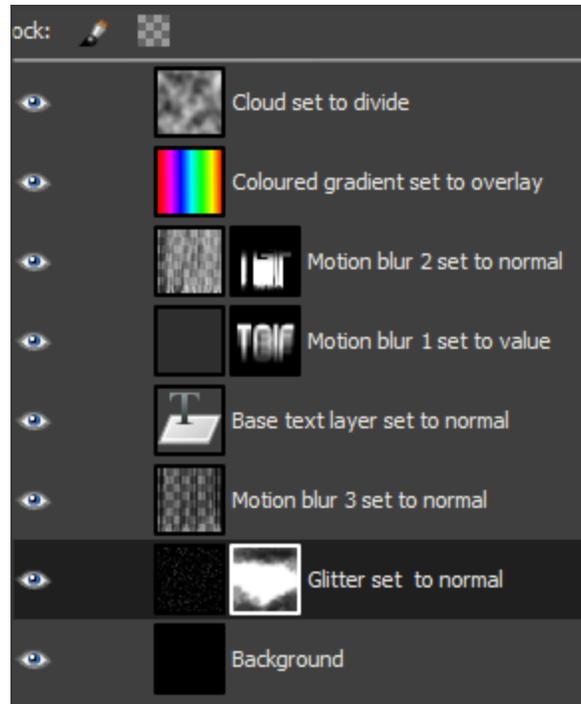


Fine tuning: Take a big, soft eraser with about 30% opacity and make strokes around the edges - the strokes should be a bit uneven. This will make the edges of your image a bit darker than the rest, like a sort of vignette.

13. For special effect three, duplicate your motion blur2 layer (i named the copy "Motion blur 3"), delete the layer mask on the duplicate layer and lock alpha channel. Fill the layer with black. Unlock alpha channel. Move the layer down to just above the glitter layer. Turn opacity down a bit and erase random bits of the layer with a big, soft brush, or keep full opacity and rectangle select + delete about half of the motion blur

stripes. This will randomly take away some of your glitters, making the remaining glitters look all the shinier and sparklier. This also makes the resulting image look less monotonous and machine rendered, so it's usually worth the effort.

Here is a screenshot of the layer stack. Now you can double check that you have put your layers in the right modes and in the right order.



You may think there's something strange with the highlighted layer - instead of erasing the edges of my glitter layer i made a layer mask and blacked the edges of the mask with a big soft brush. The effect is the same, but using a layer mask makes it easier to go back and change if you make mistakes.

Finished!