

# Typoholism—The Warning Signs Explained

It starts so innocently. One day you're mildly interested in the difference between display and text typefaces. You try to get away but they just keep pulling you back in.

[display faces are used in signage, headlines, logos, etc; text faces appear in books, newspaper and magazine articles, web sites and so on] They're Huge man, Huge! (over 18 pts as a general rule)

Soon you can distinguish between teardrop and beak terminals. Huh? Read on brave heart.

[terminals are the ends of certain letter downstrokes, e.g., the lower case j. Teardrop terminals are, um, teardrop-shaped. Beak terminals are sharp and angular]

Suddenly you're annoying everyone in the movie theater by yelling out the names of all the fonts used in the credits. What's so scary is that you never saw it coming. You, my friend, are a type freak.

How do you know when you're at risk? Read the following warning signs. Do any of them apply to you?

1. It takes you more than 10 minutes to scroll through the type choices on your computer.
2. You know your bastarda from your rotunda.

[Bastarda, rotunda, fraktur and textura are all types of blackletter (Old English, or medieval-looking) alphabets.] **Ozzie loves this stuff.**

3. You make big-ticket purchases based solely on whether you like the font used in the packaging.
4. You can spend a romantic evening with a set of rubdown letters.

[Letraset sold them in sheets — you placed the sheet over your design, rubbed the letters off with a pencil.] a pre-Dave Mathews era invention. (actually, a pre-Dave Mathew's dad invention)

5. You inspect graffiti tags for incorrect tracking.

[Tracking: the space between individual letters in a word. Certain applications, like inDesign or Illustrator allow you to adjust tracking on words or blocks of text.]

6. You lobby Congress to include diacritics in the English language, because then you could use more characters in your type alphabets.

[Diacritics: Accents used to indicate pronunciation — common in European languages other than English. E.g., umlaut, tilde, circumflex accents könnten, Peña, s□kemfleks ]

Be kind to KeyCaps Utility & it will be kind to U. (Applications>>Utilities>>KeyCaps)

7. You know what “incunabula” means.

[Incunabula: Latin for “From the Cradle” — refers to any book printed before 1501.] graduates of ARTS 101 better know this one.

8. To you, supermodels aren’t skinny; they’re just condensed.

[Condensed text is close together and usually skinny (stretched vertically rather than horizontally).]

9. You can recite all ISO and Unicode characters before the match burns out between your fingers.

[ISO and Unicode include all mathematical symbols and international accents.]

10. You can distinguish between an ogonek and a cedilla.

[Ogoneks and cedillas are little "tails" that are attached to certain consonants in French, Polish and other languages.] façade is a case-in-point

11. When you have insomnia, instead of sheep, you count quick red foxes jumping over lazy dogs, Usually in Times Roman 12 pt. But this particular phenomenon is directly affected by the band you last listened to at beddy-by time.

12. You letterspace your alphabet soup. You also mentally correct the tracking of traffic signs.

[Letterspacing refers to the space between individual letters. See tracking explanation in No. 5, above.]

13. You get physically ill when ditto marks are used in place of quotation marks.

[Unfortunately, there is no known cure.] dis be "dittos", dis be “quotes” it’s all about the curve.

## PSA

*Typoholism is real. Typoholism effects us all. More importantly, it can be controlled.*

*Visit your local typography support group for details.*

U R now fit to move on to the official typefreak quiz. **<http://www.iliveonyourvisits.com/helvetica>**