HOME

Fly-out & Pop-up Menus

The Logic Behind These Menus | The tutorial

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- **SKILL LEVEL: ADVANCED**
- First have well rounded knowledge in Flash (symbols, tweening, animation logic)
- Know basic use of Tell Targets and actions

Okay.... this is a really complicated tutorial. BUT, it is a very cool effect that many people use. I designed this particular file from scratch. It is the way I would do it. BUT again, everyone has their own way of doing things. This is just to teach you a basic concept of a flyout/drop down menu.   If you find an easier way to do it, or a better way for you than by all means do that :)

THE LOGIC BEHIND THE MENU

First I layed out how I wanted my menu to look. If you notice the shockwave above I wanted menu buttons that floated down rather than just popped up. This will make the tutorial more complicated. I also made the menu disappear when you click on another button. This will also make it more complicated.

Before you start a menu... you will more than likely want to draw yourself a small guideline of what your main buttons will be and all the choices under them. Start out by making your main buttons first. Then make all your option buttons (yes, these have to be created 1 by 1 if they are to have different text on them).

Just think logic. What steps do I need to take in what order of importance to achieve the look I want.
Start with the easy part: button & symbols.
Then the Intermediate part: Animation.
Then the Hard Part: Actions.

THE TUTORIAL

Ok, this will be a long tutorial... but I will try to shrink it down as much possible without leaving you totally lost *smiles*.   These will be the EXACT steps I took to create the DROP-DOWN MENU. I won't cover the flyout menu. But don't worry, once you learn the drop down menu it's not difficult to create all different types of menus. You just have them animate differently. You'll see!!

1. **Create a button**. This will be your main button. Just type some generic text on it like I did (Drop Down). Make sure you have all the state different and all that good stuff so you know your running the mouse over it, clicking it and all that good stuff !

2. **Creating Option buttons (sub buttons)** -- Now you will create 3 more seperate buttons for your Option 1, Option 2, & Option 3.   What I would do is to create the Option 1 button first. Make sure it looks a little different then your main button and smaller too. Then after finished copy ALL the frames for your Option 1 button, and paste them into the other 2 buttons. This way you don't have to create everything from scratch for every button and it all looks nice & neat. The only thing you will need to do is go into the other 2 buttons and make sure you change the text to say Option 2, Option 3, etc....

3. **Create movie clip and add these layers** -- Ok, hopefully that made sense *grins*. Now you will work on your drop down movie clip. This will be your animation for the drop down effect. If you look at the pic below you will see all the layers I used. Please create all these layers in a movie clip called "Drop Down". Also make sure all the layers are in the order you see below.
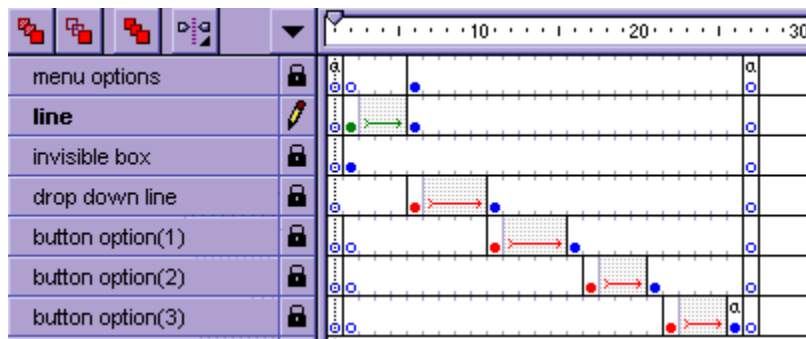
4. Ack!! That's a lot of stuff. So let's look at each layer, and why that layer is there. Make sure you keep the shockwave file in mind from this page. Just reading all this junk might not make sense. Some people need to visually see what is happening and then read :)

   1. **Menu Options:** That is the text that actually says Menu Options (see shockwave above on this page.) It serves no purpose other than being on it's own layer. Notice how it doesn't appear until Frame 6. This is so that it won't show until AFTER the line has animated down from the button.
   2. **Line:** This is the line that will animate down from your main menu button to the Menu Option text. It's just to make things look perty.
   3. **Invisible Box:** Ok, this one is to make things pretty also. The concept is, when I had Option 1 floating down from behind the Menu Options text you could see the whole button. Very Ugly. So I create this box to conceal my button floating down :) The arrangement of this layer DOES make a difference. Make sure it is above the Options buttons, but below your text, lines, and so forth.
   4. **Drop Down Line:** This is just a small line that will flow out from under the text before the buttons do. It's just a prettier look.
   5. **Option buttons:** These are the smaller buttons that will flow down. Option 1 first, then Option 2, and lastly Option 3.

5. **OK. So we are done with that.   Now let's get to work on each layer.**

   1. First if you notice in the picture above there is a entire 'column' of blank keyframes at Frame 1. Please create these and apply a 'Stop' Action on any one of them.
   2. Now in the Menu Options layer create your text at Frame 6.
   3. Let's make the line animate from the main button to the text you just created now. Create a small line in Frame 2 copy the frame and paste it into Frame 6. Extend the line longer in Frame 6.
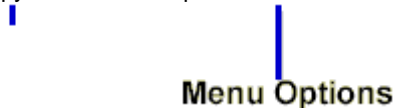
   4. In the Invisible Box layer create a fill that is the same color as your movie background. Make it just a little bigger than the size of your text.
   5. **OPTIONAL:** If you want you can just leave out the Drop Down Line Layer. Now for pretty effects we are gonna make a small horizontal line that will drop down from behind the Menu Options text and sort of divide that text with the actual option buttons. Create a line the length of the text in Frame 6. Align the line to be at the bottom of the M in 'Menu' but to where you still can't see it. Copy Frame 6 and paste it into Frame 11. In that frame move the line down a tad under the text. Now motion tween the frames so the line moves in up to down motion.
   6. For the last step with this movie clip we need to add the Option buttons. I will show you how to animate the first one. Then you can do the other two and use the picture of the layers (above) as a guide. Create Keyframe (F6) at Frame 11 in the Button Option(1) layer. Insert from your Library your option 1 button. Place it behind your 'Menu Options' text. Now copy that frame and paste another frame at Frame 16. Move the option button down right beneath the line you animated in step 5 (if you did it). Now tween Frame 11 - 16 so that the menu button looks like it is coming out from behind the text and rolling down.
   7. For the other two buttons, the only difference will be they will be lined up behind the buttons prior to them, before rolling out. See my timeline above.
   8. After you get all the buttons done there is one last step for the movie clip. If you notice I have a last 'column' of blank keyframes just as I did in the front. Please create these and apply a 'Stop' action on ANY one of them.

6. You should be done with all your symbols now. Go to the main movie stage. From your library add your movie clip. The movie clip will not show anything due to the blank keyframes at the beginning of that clip. It will simply have a little white dot. Double click your movie clip and in the Instance Name type: "DropDown".

7. From your library again, add your main button that is "Drop Down". Double click it and apply the following actions:

On [Release]
    Tell Target /dropdown
        Go To and Play (Frame # 2)
    End Tell Target
End On

If you have more than one menu drop down... and you want each once to disappear when you run your mouse over a different button then you would just add another Tell Target directly above the one you have created above. In the "Drop Down" movie clip you created a column of blank keyframes at the end of the clip. Well this is where it comes in.
Let's say you had 4 menu buttons total (and they all had sub menus). You were programming the "Drop Down" button. You would simple Tell Target to ALL of those movie clip instances at Frame # _____ where that would be where those blank keyframes were at. This would 'force' the drop down menu button to go and play each one of those instances (which would be blank keyframes... thus erasing those menus showing), and then lastly it would play the "dropdown" movie clip.
Yea, it's kinda tough to see this.. but practice.. practice.. practice. And just remember... (and this is my opinion). Flash is simply a big Wad O' Logic.   Just act smarter than it. And KNOW that you can accomplish certain things.   If you have to sit there and stare at the screen for an hour before it knocks you upside the head do it... hehe. I've had to do it MANY times :)

8. Now you need to line up your button with the movie clip. It's kinda hard since can't really see it so just 'quesstimate'. Test your movie a little bit (Ctrl + Enter) and keep adjusting until you get it where you want it.

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