

Compression

Art & Design

Lossy and lossless compression, and what a JPEG does to a hard edge.

Lossless

- Nothing at all is discarded
- PNG, TIFF with LZW, WebP lossless
- Repeated saves are safe
- Larger files
- Right for masters and flat colour

Lossy

- Detail is discarded permanently
- JPEG, WebP, AVIF, most video
- Every save degrades it further
- Much smaller files
- Right for photographs at delivery

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Keep a lossless master. Export lossy copies from that master, never from a previous lossy export.

JPEG works in 8×8 blocks and discards colour detail first, which is why text and flat-colour edges fringe and smear.