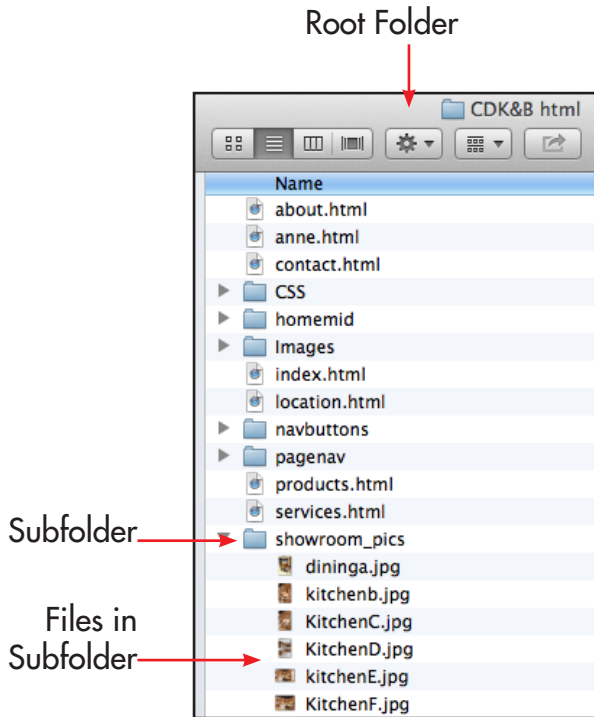


# All About Pathnames

What is a Pathname & how to use it.



**Proper file organization is essential for good web development!**



## Think of it this way:



Suppose you were working in your garage and you have all the necessary tools laying out, handy to use. This may be convenient at first, but once you acquire several dozen more tools you find that you are spending more and more time looking for the right one. You need to organize them to locate them more quickly. So, you put some in a toolbox, perhaps sorted by types of tools in certain drawers. In order to use the tool, you need to know where it is located. You go to the toolbox, second drawer, to locate one of the screw drivers you need. The pathname would be:  
*garage/toolbox/second drawer/flathead screw driver.*

Pathnames are *directions* to locate a desired file within a web page. Anytime you create a link to a file outside of the web page, a pathname, or the location of the item, is needed. This may be an image, graphic, PDF file, or another web page within the site.

Pathnames are required so that the web page can find the item. Without the pathname the link will not work. Pathnames are used for the <img> and <a> tags, and all 'src' attributes.

## File Organization:

For links to work properly it is important to have proper and consistent file organization. The **"root directory"** is the top level of the site, or the main folder that contains all the files. The home page of the site (index.htm) is in the root directory. Other files such as the main html pages may also be in the root directory. Other files such as sub pages, images, and graphics, are placed in subfolders, folders within subfolders, and so on.

## There are three types of pathnames:

The **Default Pathname** is used when all requested files are in the same folder of the current page.

Example:

```
<a href="aboutus.htm">About Us</a>
```

This link points to a filename, with no path provided. This means that aboutus.htm is located in the same folder as the page where this link appears.

An **Absolute Pathname** is the exact, complete, path of the file. Absolute pathnames are defined from the root directory and uses the "/" or a drive letter to start.

```

```

```

```

Absolute pathnames only work on the computer where you create them. As such they are not usable for transferring files to a server. Although they are not used to build websites, it is important to identify them. Dreamweaver can sometimes generate an absolute pathname in workflow. Most server accounts do not allow absolute pathnames, though you may see them on websites where a company owns their server.

**MORE...**

A **Relative Pathname** traces from the current page to the file that is inside a different directory or folder. If the folder is in the same directory as the active page, the folder name is in front of the file name separated by "/":

```

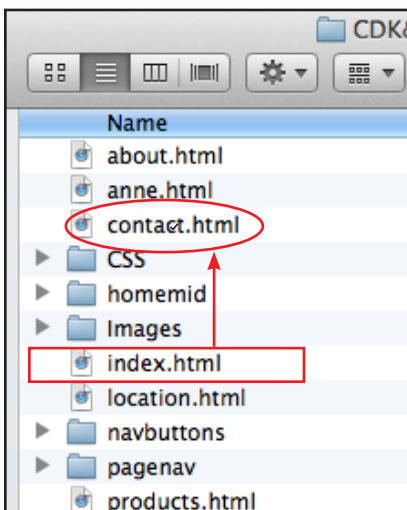
```

What if you want to link to a file in a folder above the current folder? You have to tell the browser to move up one folder in your relative link by putting two periods and a slash (../) in front of the filename or path:

```
<img src = "../showroom_pics/kitchenD.jpg">
```

It is important to maintain consistent and proper file organization! Moving files from one folder to another will cause the links to "break", meaning the "directions" or pathnames are no longer valid. The links will not be able to connect to the file.

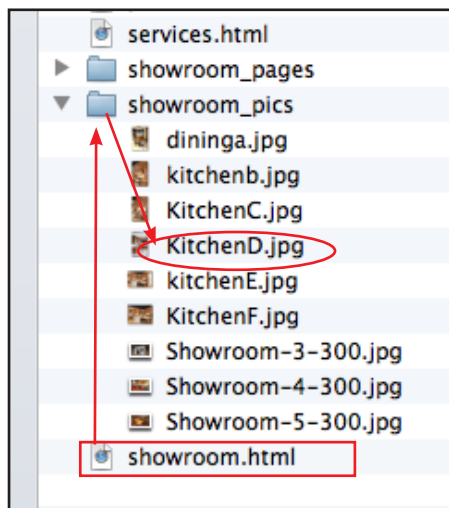
### Default Pathname



**Default pathname = Current page links to a file that is in the same folder.**

```
<a href = "contact.html" title = "Contact Us">Contact Us</a>
```

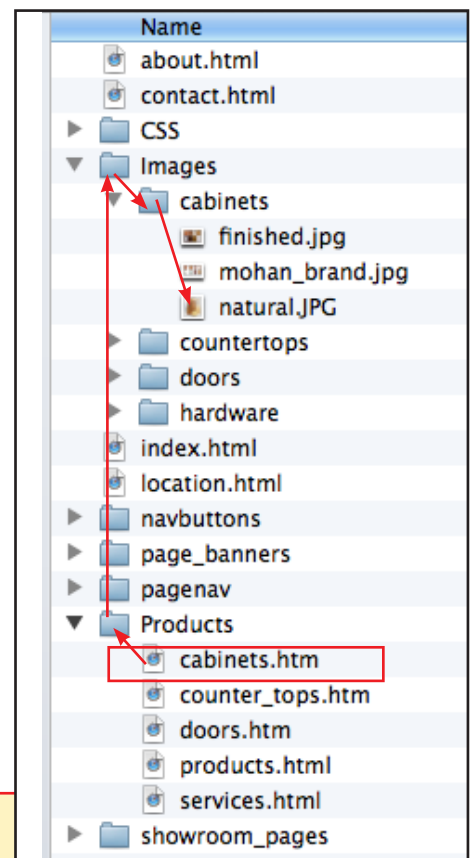
### Relative Pathname



**Relative pathname = Current page links to a file that is in a subfolder of the same folder.**

```
<img src = "showroom_pics/KitchenD.jpg">
```

### Relative Pathname



**Relative pathname = Current page links to a file that is back a level, then in a subfolder of that level**

```
<img src = "../images/cabinets/natural.jpg">
```

### REMEMBER:

- Know the structure of your web site.
- Know the purpose of each directory/folder.
- Know the names of all directories/folders.
- Use short folder and file names.
- Treat all pathnames as case sensitive.
- Do not use spaces or symbols in names.
- Design your web site for efficient and logical use of pathnames.
- Pathnames must be accurate! Typos prohibit the source from locating the file.
- Good Planning will be rewarded!