

Welcome To **Test Strip**

Thank you for purchasing Vivid Details™ Test Strip®. This user guide introduces you to Test Strip, and acquaints you with its many features and capabilities.

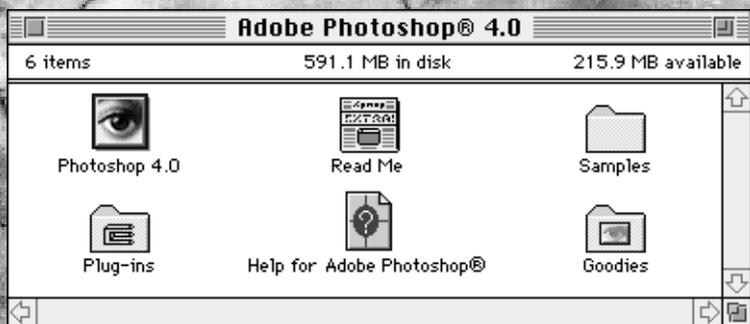
Vivid Details Test Strip is a powerful and sophisticated software plug-in that is designed to enhance color correction capabilities in Adobe Photoshop, as well as other programs that support Photoshop compatible plug-in filter technology. Test Strip has a visual and intuitive interface that makes color correction easier, faster, and more precise.

Best described as Photoshop Variations on steroids, Test Strip borrows the time-tested concept of Test Strip from traditional photography, where a print is divided into sections containing different exposures or colors to eliminate guesswork in the dark-room.

Vivid Details has updated the Test Strip metaphor for the digital age. Strips can be oriented horizontally, vertically, or in a sequence of repeating images. In addition, users can alter the number of strips that are displayed, and colors can be added or subtracted in as little as 1% increments. A Test Proof option lets users save any Test Strip view and output it as an approval print or as a guide for final color correction changes.

Test Strip is designed for anyone who works with color images. Graphic Designers, Publishers, Advertising Agencies, Illustrators, Photographers, Offset Printers, On-Demand Printers, Service Bureaus, Webmasters, Wide Format Printers, Photolabs, Prepress Houses, Scanner Operators, and Educators wishing to teach students the concepts of color correction can all benefit from Test Strip's unique and powerful features.

Test Strip color correction panel include: Color Balance, Adjust One Color, Saturation, Exposure, and Before & After Preview.



Chapter 1: Getting Started

UNDERSTANDING COLOR CORRECTION

In the real world, the human eye recognizes depth, and can distinguish several million more colors, and infinitely more detail than can be reproduced in photography, with a scanner, or on a printed page. Your job is to squeeze the most out of every image, so when it is reproduced it looks its best, whether that means the final destination is offset printing, ink jet, the internet, or some other media.

Color correction is the process of manipulating color balance, tone, and saturation to prepare an image for reproduction. Virtually every image that enters the digital production environment requires some degree of correction. There are two kinds of color correction, global or overall, and local corrections that only affect specific areas.

In most instances, the goal of color correction is to achieve realism, although special effects that make an image appear surrealistic can also be achieved. Since color is perceived differently by everyone, color correction is performed on the basis of your own personal taste, with additional consideration for the limitations and specifications of the equipment being used for reproduction. An image that's perfectly tailored for offset printing will not look its best when output on another device like a wide-format printer, or a digital film recorder, unless further color correction and fine-tuning is done.

WHAT CAUSES A COLOR CAST?

Why do images routinely need color correction? Unfortunately, many factors can have a negative impact on color. Color shifts can be caused by photographic film, lighting and scanning. Early morning and evening sun will add orange and yellow to a photograph. The midday sun affects contrast and can wash out colors, while indoor fluorescent light turns an image green.

As mentioned, film can be the culprit. Each manufacturer's film has a slightly different color tendency. Eastman Kodak gives you a clue by color-coding their packages. As the box indicates, Ektachrome produces a blue-green cast, while Kodachrome shifts a bit to the red, while Fuji's Velvia tends to be red and overly saturated.

Finally, scanning can have a detrimental affect on color, especially low-end scans like Kodak PhotoCD, which has a reputation for producing over saturated color with a red cast.

GLOBAL COLOR CORRECTION

It's no wonder that by the time an image pops up on your computer screen, it will inevitably need to be corrected. Because color shifts affect the entire image, it's safe to say that if a face is too red, or too saturated, then everything is too red or too saturated. That's why a global adjustment is the solution to a vast majority of color correction problems.

LOCALIZED COLOR CORRECTION

Localized color correction, on the other hand, is used to alter specific colors or areas that cannot be corrected with global changes. Localized adjustments require a selection process to isolate the trouble spots before modifications can be made. To blend or camouflage these changes, it's important to use soft-edge brushes, or selections with feathered edges.

WHY TEST STRIP?

The fact that you have purchased Test Strip, and are reading this manual is evidence that current color correction solutions are either too difficult to use, not precise enough, or simply don't work.

Software and hardware vendors have attacked the problem from all fronts: monitor calibration, color-management systems, soft-proofing, and more. What all the experts overlooked was a simple solution based on traditional techniques that has passed the test of time. That solution is Test Strip.

Test Strip takes a different, two-tiered approach. First, you get the most sophisticated on screen tools for color correction: full-screen previews, Before & After comparisons, zooming, precision changes in 1% increments, a Task List, and more.

Second, you get a direct connection to both traditional and digital proofing systems with our exclusive Test Proof feature. What's more, it all comes wrapped up in an intuitive user interface, and a comfortable working environment specifically tailored for photographers, graphic artists, and prepress professionals.

PRODUCT REGISTRATION

Now would be a good time to register Test Strip by filling out the enclosed registration card and mailing or faxing it to us. If you prefer, register over the internet by visiting our home page at: www.vividetails.com, and filling out the online registration form.

Registered users are entitled to several key benefits, including free technical support, software discounts, royalty-free stock photo discounts, and upgrade notices for major new releases, as well as minor maintenance revisions.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

- An Apple Macintosh equipped with a PowerPC processor.
- System Software version 7.1 or higher
- Adobe Photoshop 3.0.5 or later, or a host application that fully supports Photoshop compatible plug-ins.
- An additional 1 MB of application RAM above and beyond that required by Photoshop or other host programs. Photoshop requires 3-5 times the image size reserved for a combination of RAM and scratch disk space. Minimum application RAM is 16 megabytes.

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

Test Strip is a software plug-in that works in Photoshop and other applications that support Adobe Photoshop compatible plug-in architecture. That means Test Strip will work with industry leaders like Adobe Photoshop 3.0.5 or 4+, Adobe Illustrator 7.0+, Adobe PageMaker 6.5+, Macromedia Freehand 7.0+, and other programs.

Note: Test Strip stringently follows Photoshop's plug-in guidelines, but we cannot guarantee that Test Strip will work with every program or every version of a particular program. Test Strip has not been thoroughly tested with any application not specifically mentioned above.

INSTALLATION

Insert the Test Strip CD-ROM, double-click on the CD icon, and then double-click on the installer icon to begin the installation process.



Install Test Strip 2.0

- To proceed, click the Continue button, and then the Install button.
- A standard Macintosh dialog box will be displayed.



- Locate the folder where you want Vivid Details Test Strip to be installed (i.e. Photoshop Plug-ins folder).
- Click once on the Plug-ins folder to highlight it.
- Click the Select button to specify the target location, and finish the installation process.

SERIAL NUMBER

The first time you use Test Strip, a dialog box will appear asking you to personalize your copy of Test Strip. Fill in the appropriate information in the space provided, and type in the serial number exactly as it appears on the inside front page of your User Guide.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

For questions or problems with Test Strip, please call our technical support line at (805)646-0230. It's open Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm Pacific Standard Time.

You can also receive support information by sending an Email message to help@vividdetails.com.

To expedite your call, be prepared to give the technician:

- Your Macintosh and software configuration
- A concise summary of your problem
- Have the program running and ready to use



Chapter 2: Tutorial

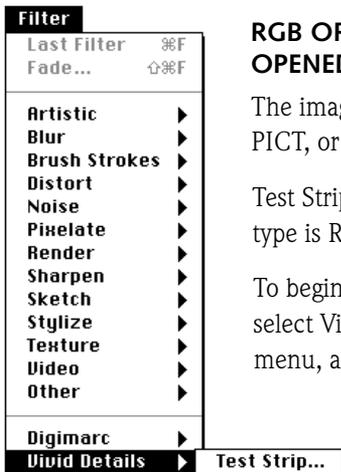
The tutorial introduces you to Test Strip's user interface, and guides you through Test Strip's basic concepts, fundamentals, and essential features. After completing the following lessons, you will have learned enough about Test Strip to continue on your own.

We assume that you are familiar with standard Macintosh terms, conventions, and operations. If that is not the case, please refer to your Apple Macintosh Users Guide before continuing.

Whenever hierarchical menus are referred to in this manual, we will use the following abbreviated format: Menu>Command>Sub-menu.

Lesson 1: Learning The Basics

Test Strip's thoughtfully designed interface is extremely intuitive and easy to use. All the features are readily available for instant access. Don't be afraid to investigate and experiment. You can't permanently ruin anything because everything can be undone, reverted, or cancelled.



RGB OR CMYK IMAGES CAN BE OPENED IN TEST STRIP.

The image file format can be Tiff, EPS, JPEG, PICT, or Photoshop.

Test Strip's Title Bar displays whether the file type is RGB or CMYK.

To begin, just open an image in Photoshop, select Vivid Details Test Strip from the Filter menu, and start exploring.



USER INTERFACE

When Test Strip opens, the image is automatically repeated nine times with different colors on each image. To make a color change, just click once on the color image that looks best. The Current Pick, in the center of the window, will be updated to reflect your change.

+20% R

Labels on the image display the color choices available for each color correction panel, and are updated to reflect the amount specified with the slider.

Current

The Current window begins as the original image, and is the repository for the changes that you apply. It is updated each time you make an alteration.

Note: Labels do not appear on small images that do not provide sufficient space.



The button bar on the top right of the screen allows you to switch to the different color correction panels. For your convenience, the panel title is displayed in the black box above the row of icons.

When you're in the Color Balance panel, clicking and rotating the color wheel rotates the position of the colors on the preview images.

In One Color panel, clicking on the color wheel selects the color you wish to edit.

You've probably already noticed that the amount of change is controlled by the slider.

Lines

Labels

The Lines and Labels checkboxes are used to show or hide the image divider lines and the text labels, respectively.

100%

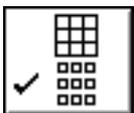
The +/- buttons are used to enlarge or reduce the size of the preview image. Clicking zooms in or out on the center of the image.



The Black, Gray, and White buttons are used to change the background color behind the image.

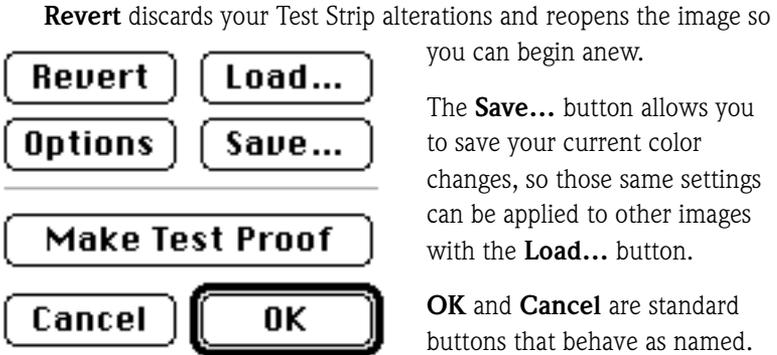


The Flip Layout button rearranges the strips either vertically or horizontally. Green arrows indicated the standard default position, while red arrows indicate that the layout has been flipped.



The pop-up menu controls the window display. Each color correction panel has its own unique set of overlays with different divisions and orientations.

At the bottom of the control panel is a group of standard buttons.



you can begin anew.

The **Save...** button allows you to save your current color changes, so those same settings can be applied to other images with the **Load...** button.

OK and **Cancel** are standard buttons that behave as named.

Make Test Proof[™] button gives you the option of saving any Test Strip view as an output file for proofing on any device.



Test Proof saves time and money by eliminating the need for multiple proofs and color correction by trial-and-error. No longer are you dependent on your monitor for accurate color representation.

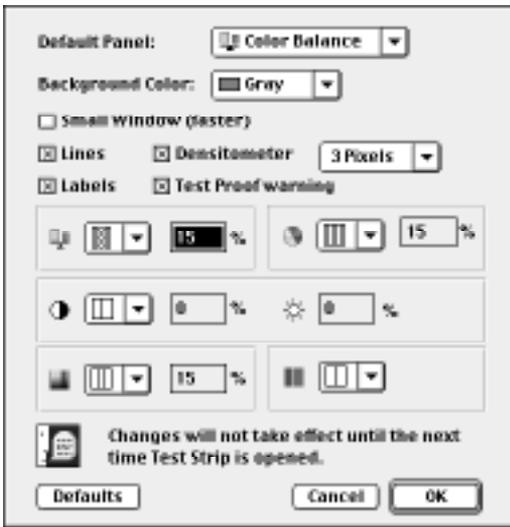
Make Test Proof overwrites your image with color strips, divider lines, and labels, so be sure you make a backup of the original file.

UNDO & REDO

To reverse the last change, use the keyboard combination Command-z. Redo is accomplished with Command-shift-z.

UNLIMITED & SELECTIVE UNDO & REDO

Earlier versions of Test Strip provided unlimited undos and redos. Now it is limited to just one level with the keyboard, but a powerful new feature, called the Editable Task List, has been added. Editing the Task List not only allows unlimited undos and redos, it lets you selectively edit or eliminate any step without effecting any other step in the sequence.



CUSTOMIZING TEST STRIP

The **Options** button opens a dialog box that lets you customize the default settings to fit your personal working style.

With Options, you can choose the start-up panel, specify a different default slider amount, choose a screen layout for each panel, and change the pixel size of the densitometer.

Changes do not take effect until the next time you use Test Strip.

To reset the factory default settings, click the Defaults button.

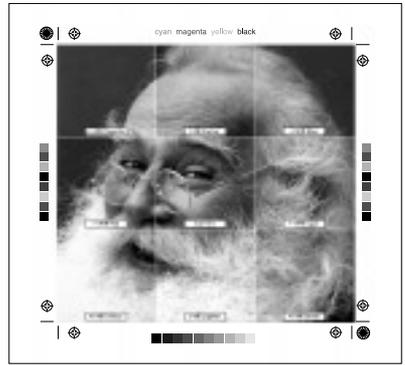
SMALL WINDOW (FASTER)

When activated, the optional small window display checkbox, located in the Options Dialog, will increase the speed of Test Strip by more than 200%.

DENSITOMETER SIZE

To specify the densitometer size, use the pop-up menu located in the Options dialog. The choices are 1, 3, or 5 pixel average. The default size is set to a 3-by-3 pixel average.

Note: The densitometer does not appear on monitors that measure 640x480 pixels or smaller.



Chapter 3: Make Test Proof

One of the ingenious innovations of Test Strip is the exclusive Test Proof™ option. Test Proof allows users to save any Test Strip view, and then output it to any device for accurate customer approval prints, or as a guide for final color correction changes.

Test Proof is an enormous cost and time saving feature that eliminates the need for multiple proofs and color correction by trial-and-error.

Understanding Test Proof

- Test Proof automatically creates a file with color variations.
- Any Test Strip panel can be used to make a Test Proof.
- Any screen layout can be selected.
- The slider can be set to any amount.
- Divider lines and labels can be turned on or off.
- Test Proof creates a file that matches the size and dimensions of your original file.
- You can make a Test Proof before or after making color changes.
- Test Proofs can be applied to selected areas, and several Test Proofs can be added to multiple selections within a single image.
- Test Proof alters your original file, so be sure to save the Test Proof using a new name (Save As...), or start with a copy.

Why Test Proof

Color fidelity is a major concern in the graphics industry, and proofing has always been an important part of the prepress process.

Unfortunately, since the advent of Desktop Publishing, accurate color correction has become a vanishing art because calibration is difficult, and RGB monitors don't accurately simulate process colors. Predictable color correction on a phosphorus display is merely guesswork because what you see is not what you get.

Calibration can help narrow the gap, and color-management systems (CMS) can add consistency to the process with hardware and software profiles, but expecting anything more is wishful thinking. For the foreseeable future, color interpretation and aesthetic

decisions will remain in the hands of graphic artists.

Test Proof is a tool that helps designers make these difficult decisions. Test Proof provides accurate color proofs, and automatically creates a whole spectrum of choices. What's more, Test Proof can be output to any color-proofing system, so you get the reliability you can count on.

With Test Strip on your screen, and Test Proof in your hand, you can be assured of perfect color correction every time.

USING TEST PROOF'S OPTIONS WISELY

Choose the appropriate Test Proof options based on your level of expertise, as well as your needs.

If you are familiar with the intricacies of color correction, making a final proof at the end of your production cycle may be all you need. If you are not as confident in your skills, or with your monitor calibration, you should consider making a Test Proof before you begin your color correction, and then again afterwards. This will save you time and aggravation.

To get the most feedback from Test Proof, the format you choose, and the amount of change you specify should also be selected wisely. The following explanations offer some insight into the various options available to you.

Using the Color Balance panel as a Test Proof

Because Color Balance gives you the widest possible array, it's the obvious candidate for customer approval prints. Additionally, if you are unsure of the color shift that is needed, Color Balance is your first choice.

Set the amount around 15%. That will give you a good indication of change, and make it easy to determine if more or less change is necessary.

Using One Color as a Test Proof

If you're sure which color is responsible for a color cast, make a Test Proof using One Color panel. It lets you focus on a specific color

with progressive amounts of change. Use the five strip display, and try a slider setting around 8%, which will also produce a 16% sample.



Using Exposure or Saturation as a Test Proof

Most users will not feel the need to output an Exposure or Saturation sample because a color balance Test Proof provides enough visual feedback. But, if there is room on the proof sheet, why not include these at no extra cost?



Using Before & After as a Test Proof

Before & After is the only display that shows both the original and current views. The split-screen can be a valuable comparison that clearly demonstrates the improvements that have been made.

PRINTING TEST PROOFS

Printing functions are not included with Test Strip. To output a Test Proof you must rely on Photoshop's printing capabilities, or place the image in a page layout program like Adobe PageMaker or QuarkXPress. If you plan to output color proofs at your service bureau, check their equipment requirements before you submit your files.

***Tip:** If you have several images to process, using a page layout application can save you money. Make a Test Proof for each of your images, and arrange them on a single page to reduce proofing costs.*

To make a Test Proof

1. Choose any Test Strip view, and set the slider to any amount.
2. Click the Make Test Proof button. A warning message will ask if you want to continue, and then Test Strip will apply the changes.
3. If you are not working from a backup of your original image, immediately choose Save As from the File menu to save the image under a different name.
4. To print a Test Proof, proceed as you normally would with any image file. Print directly from Photoshop, or place several Test Proof images on a page in a page layout program.