

AdobeSM Customer Services

Adobe Photoshop Tips

This technical note includes tips and suggestions for working with images in Adobe Photoshop. Also see the Quick Reference Card for tips and shortcuts.

This information applies to both the Macintosh and the Windows versions of Photoshop. Please note that the Control and Alt keys in the Windows version function as the Command and Option keys in the Macintosh version, respectively. In the following text, the Windows key is given after the Macintosh key.

SELECTION TIPS

- To move a selection mask without moving its contents, hold down Command/Ctrl+Option/Alt while dragging the selection.
- To move a copy of the selected area, choose Float from the Select menu, and then drag the selection.
- To select the intersection between two or more selections, hold down Command/Ctrl+Shift while making the second or subsequent selection.
- To connect two or more discrete selections, hold down Shift while dragging over part of the separate selections.
- To reposition a pen tool path, select the arrow tool in the Paths palette. Hold down the Option/Alt key and drag over the path. Release the key, and drag the path to another location. If you do not release the key, you will drag a copy of the path instead of moving it.

ZOOM TIPS

- Double-click the hand tool to display an image so that it fits the size of your screen; double-click the zoom tool to display the image at full size.
- To zoom in and out on an image, hold down the Command/Ctrl key and press the Equal Sign key (=) to make the image larger; press Command/Ctrl and the Hyphen key (-) to make the image smaller. These keys magnify and reduce the image in increments of 1.
- To zoom in and out on an area of an image, click the zoom tool and drag until the selection marquee surrounds the area you want to magnify.
- To zoom while a dialog box is open or while another tool is selected, hold down Command/Ctrl+Spacebar and click to enlarge the image; hold down Option/Alt+Spacebar and click to reduce the image.

USING THE CROSS-HAIR POINTER

When you press the Caps Lock key, the standard tool pointers are replaced by a cross-hair pointer. The cross-hair pointer offers an accurate “pressure point” with which to paint and so is especially useful when you are using the painting tools. Release the Caps Lock key when you want to use the tools with their standard pointers.

COMPOSITE CONTROLS SHORTCUTS

- To display the Composite Controls dialog box, either choose Composite Controls from the Edit menu or hold down the Option/Alt key while choosing Paste from the File menu.
- To create a smooth transition, or *fuzziness*, between composited and noncomposited areas, hold down the Option/Alt key in the Composite Controls dialog box, and drag half of each slider to create soft compositing effects.

KERNING TYPE

For greater flexibility, kern type in a separate blank channel or in QuickMask mode. You can then load the type as a selection onto the image when you are satisfied with the kerning.

Make sure that both the type tool and the type are still selected. Deselect the characters that you want to remain stationary by holding down the Command/Ctrl key to display the lasso pointer and then dragging the pointer around the characters you want to deselect. Drag the remaining selected type to reposition it, or use the arrow keys to move the selection in one-pixel increments.

USING THE INFO PALETTE TO MEASURE PIXEL DENSITY

The Info palette can be used to show density readings of CMYK and RGB images. Depending on which tool is in use, the palette also displays other useful information, such as the percentage of a scaling operation and the angle of a rotation.

You can view density readings in any two of these modes: Actual, Grayscale, RGB, HSB, CMYK, and Lab color. Actual mode indicates the mode of the individual channel being viewed; for example, if you view a single channel of an RGB document, the Info palette displays the grayscale (K) values of the pixels.

As a visual densitometer, the Info palette accurately displays the CMYK value that will be used when the RGB image is separated. The palette also indicates colors that are out of gamut, or not printable with CMYK inks, by displaying an exclamation mark next to the selected color. You can use the Map/Adjust dialog boxes (Levels, Curves, Brightness/Contrast, Color Balance, Hue/Saturation, Variations) to bring colors into gamut, as necessary, to make sure that they separate and print correctly.

The Info palette also displays “before” and “after” values of pixels when you make changes using the Adjust dialog boxes. When the Adjust dialog boxes are open, the Info palette displays precise values as you move the pointer over the pixels in the image.

USING CHANNELS

You can view combinations of channels in Adobe Photoshop 2.5. A handy use of this feature is viewing color progressives in CMYK mode. You can simulate the effect of a Color Key™ by selecting the Display: Color Channels in Color option in the General Preferences dialog box and then clicking successive eye icons in the Channels palette to view combinations of the CMYK channels.

It's a good idea to name each new channel you create. Double-click the channel in the Channels palette and type a name in the Channel Options dialog box. By naming channels, you can easily identify them later when you are working with several channels. You will also find a naming scheme useful if you use any channel calculation commands.

When using QuickMask mode, you can set the mask color to contrast with colors in the image and make the mask partially opaque so that you can see the underlying image. A contrasting mask color enables you to add precisely to or subtract from a mask while viewing the image.

WORKING ON AN IMAGE IN TWO WINDOWS SIMULTANEOUSLY

You can work with two image windows open simultaneously. To do so, select New Window from the Window menu, and resize the two windows so that they both fit on-screen at the same time. Using two windows of the same image is especially helpful when you are color correcting a CMYK file, because you can view a single channel of the image in one window and the composite color image in the other. You can also zoom in on an image in one window but keep the second window at a 1:1 view ratio so that you can see how detailed modifications affect the image at actual size.

USING THE LEVELS DIALOG BOX

When you use the Levels dialog box in RGB mode, you can preview the tonal compression while you make adjustments. Deselect the Preview check box, and hold down the Option/Alt key as you adjust the Input Levels controls for the highlight and shadow sliders; a high-contrast preview appears, indicating the areas of the image being altered.

To compare an image before and after adjustment, hold down the mouse button as you point to the title bar of the dialog box name. This feature works as a toggle and may be used in all the Adjust dialog boxes.

USING THE CURVES DIALOG BOX

To see where any pixel falls on the curve displayed in the Curves dialog box, choose Adjust/ Curves from the Image menu to display the Curves dialog box. Click the part of the image you are interested in; a circle appears on the curve representing the value of the selected pixel. You can display where a pixel falls on the curve in both curve and arbitrary curve modes.

You can use the Curves function to make precise changes to pixels within a certain range. To do so, you click the curve to set one or more control points that will not change as you manipulate the rest of the curve. You then can freely manipulate the curve by dragging it.

SAVING CUSTOM TRANSFER CURVES AND HALFTONE SCREENS

Use the following procedure to create your own transfer curves and halftone screens, and then save them as the defaults.

- 1 Choose Page Setup from the File menu, and choose one of two options:
 - Click Transfer to display the Transfer Functions dialog box. Enter the desired transfer curve values in the dialog box.
 - Click Screens to display the Halftone Screens dialog box. Enter the desired halftone screen values in the dialog box.
- 2 To save the values as defaults, hold down the Option/Alt key and click → Default. To save additional sets of transfer curves or halftone screens, use the Save button in the corresponding dialog box.
- 3 To load the default, hold down the Option/Alt key and click ← Default.

CREATING A FILE WITH THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF COLORS

You can create a file containing the entire spectrum of colors using the following procedure. You can then use the spectrum as an additional color palette from which to sample colors.

To create a file with the entire spectrum of colors:

- 1 Open a new RGB file.
- 2 Click the foreground color selection box in the toolbox to display the Adobe Photoshop color picker. Set the foreground color to the following HSB values: H = 0; S = 100; B = 100. Click OK.
- 3 Click the background color selection box to display the Adobe Photoshop color picker. Set the background color to the following HSB values: H = 359; S = 100; B = 100. Click OK.
- 4 Double-click the gradient tool to display the Gradient Tool Options dialog box. Select Style Counterclockwise Spectrum, and click OK.
- 5 Click the left edge of the image; hold down the Shift key to constrain the blend and drag to the left edge of the image to create a blend across the hues in the spectrum.
- 6 To arrange these colors in the order of a 360-degree color wheel with pure red at the 12 o'clock position, choose Distort from the Filter menu and Polar Coordinates from the submenu. Make sure that the Rectangular to Polar option is selected, and click OK.