

PHOTOSHOP BASICS

Layers are used in digital image editing to separate different elements of an image. A layer can be compared to a transparency on which imaging effects or images are applied and placed over or under an image. Today they are an integral feature of image editors.

Layers are used to further enable manipulation along a common timeline for the animation.

Layer types

There are different kinds of layers, and not all of them exist in all programs. They represent a part of a picture, either as pixels or as modification instructions. They are stacked on top of each other, and depending on the order, determine the appearance of the final picture.

In graphics software, a layer is the term used to describe the different levels at which a user can place an object or image file. In the program users can stack, merge or define layers when creating a digital image. Layers can be partially obscured allowing portions of images within a layer to be hidden or shown in a translucent manner within another image, or one can use layers to combine two or more images into a single digital image. For the purpose of editing, working with layers allows user to go back and make changes within a layer as user works.

Layer (basic)

The standard kind of layer is called simply "Layer" in most programs. It contains just a picture which can be superimposed on another one. The picture can cover the same area as the resulting picture, just a part of it, or, in some cases, a bigger part than the final picture.

A Layer can have a certain transparency/opacity and a number of other properties.

In a high end program like Adobe Photoshop, a basic layer may have more than a hundred different possible settings. Even though some of them overlap and give the same result, they give a skilled user a lot of flexibility. Two Layers can blend using one of several modes which result in different light and color combinations.

Layer Mask

A Layer Mask is linked to a layer and hides part of the layer from the picture. What is painted black on the adjustment layer will not be visible in the final picture. What is grey will be more or less transparent depending on the shade of grey. As the layer mask can be both edited and moved around independently of both the background layer and the layer it applies to, it gives the user the ability to test a lot of different combinations of overlay.

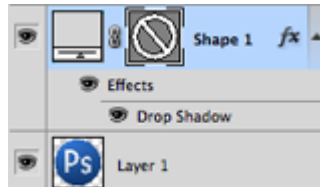
Adjustment layer

An adjustment layer typically applies a common effect like brightness or saturation to other layers. However, as the effect is stored in a separate layer, it is easy to try it out and switch between different alternatives, without changing the original layer. In addition, an adjustment layer can easily be edited, just like a layer mask, so an effect can be applied to just part of the image.

Tutorial 1. Learn basic organizational and editing skills using the Layers Palette

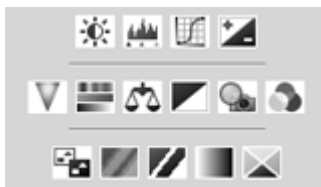
Palettes

Palettes are the things that are seen when sitting over on the right side of the screen. They make it easy for users to navigate through the document, add adjustments, switch modes, and other things.



Layers

The layers palette lets user see all the layers in your document. As one starts getting to know Photoshop, user will find for themselves in this palette more than any other. It'll let user to organize and arrange the layers, set blending modes, set visibility and opacity of layers, group and merge layers, and a bunch of other neat things.



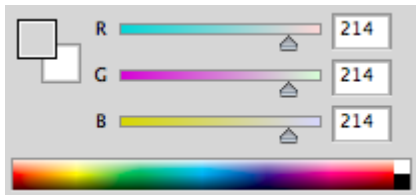
Adjustments

The adjustments panel is where user can easily create and edit adjustment layers. Adjustment layers are non-destructive image alterations that affect all the layers below them and can easily be turned on and off. Their most common use is for color correction, namely the Levels and Curves adjustments, but there are many different kinds of adjustments user can perform that can dramatically alter the look of the image.



Color Channels

The color channels palette will let user look at the specific colors that make up the picture. If user is in RGB mode, the user will get red, green, and blue. These color channels will differ if user is in a different color space (such as **CMYK** or **LAB**). When user chooses a specific color, user will notice the image in different versions of black and white. This is because each color channel is simply a monochromatic image representing the light in each channel (e.g. the red channel is just a look at the red light in your photo). Switching between these different channels is useful for making color channel-specific touch ups, overall contrast enhancements, and also for converting a photo to black and white in a compelling way.



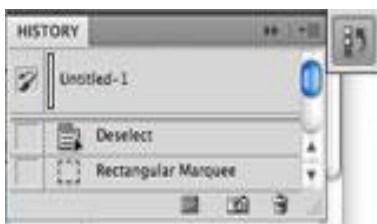
Color Picker

This palette will let user to easily alter the foreground and background colors using sliders.



Color Swatches

The color swatches palette is a set of pre-defined colors user can quickly choose from. A user can load in several other pre-made swatch collections or create his/her own, too.



History

The history palette lets user go back in time to undo any previous alterations. The standard undo command - in the edit menu, will simply toggle between undoing and redoing the latest action performed on the image. The history panel is where you can go back much further (50 actions by default).



Text

The text palette and the paragraph palette below it, let user to make all sorts of adjustments to any text user creates with the type tool. These options are very similar to what the user will find in a word processing, but one can also specify things like character width and spacing which are more useful in design.

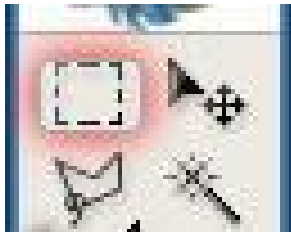
Tutorial 2. Use, practice and learn PS selection, paint, brush, and text tools

Selecting the Quick Selection Tool

To select the Quick Selection Tool, click on its icon in Photoshop's Tools panel, or press the letter **W** on the keyboard to select it with the shortcut:



Rectangular Marquee Tool (M)



This tool can be used to make selections on the image, in a rectangular shape. This changes the area of the image that is affected by other tools or actions to be within the defined shape. Holding the [Shift] key while dragging required selection, restricts the shape to a perfect square. Holding the [Alt] key while dragging sets the center of the rectangle to where the cursor started.

Move Tool (V)



This tool is used to move things. Usually one can use it to move a Layer around after it has been placed. Hold the [Shift] key to limit the movements to vertical/horizontal.

Polygon Lasso Tool (L)



This tool can be used to draw selections in whatever shape user would like. To close the selection, either click on the beginning point (see the cursor change when one is on it), or just double-click. When holding the [Ctrl] key, user will see the cursor change, and the next time user clicks, it will close the selection.

Magic Wand Tool (W)



This tool is used to select a color range. It will select the block of color, or transparency, based on wherever user clicks. In the Options Bar at the top, user can change the Tolerance to make the selections more/less precise.

Crop Tool (C)



The Crop Tool works similarly to the Rectangular Marquee tool. The difference is when user presses the [Enter/Return] key; it crops the image to the size of the box. Any information that was on the outside of the box is now gone. Not permanently, user can still undo.

Slice Tool (K)



This is used mostly for building websites, or splitting up one image into smaller ones when saving out. It's kind of an advanced tool.

Healing Brush Tool (J)



This is a really useful tool. Slightly advanced. User can use this tool to repair scratches and specs and stuff like that on images. It works like the Brush tool (see below). User can choose the cursor size, then holding the [Alt] key, select a nice/clean area of the image. Then let go of the [Alt] key and paint over the bad area. It basically copies the information from the first area to the second, in the form of the Brush tool. Only, at the end, it averages the information, so it blends.

Brush Tool (B)



This is one of the first tools ever. It's what Photoshop is based off of. It paints the required image, in whatever color user has selected, and whatever size is selected.

Clone Stamp Tool (S)



This is very similar to the Healing Brush Tool. User can see it the exact way, except this tool doesn't blend at the end. It's a direct copy of the information from the first selected area to the second.

History Brush Tool (H)



This tool works just like the Brush Tool except the information that it paints with is from the original state of the image. If seen in Window>History, user can see the History Palette. The History Brush tool paints with the information from whatever History state is selected.

Eraser Tool (E)



This is the anti-Brush tool. It works like an eraser and erases whatever information wherever user clicks and drags it. If user is on a Layer, it will erase the information transparent. If user is on the background layer, it erases with whatever secondary color is selected.

Gradient Tool (G)



This tool is used to make a gradiation of colors. Gradiation doesn't appear to be a word, but it makes sense anyway. It creates a blending of the foreground color and background color when user clicks and drag it. Like a gradient.

Blur Tool (R)



The Blur tool is cool. It makes things blurry. Click and drag to make things blurry. The more user clicks and drags, the blurrier things get.

Dodge Tool (O)



This tool isn't as crappy as the car brand. It's actually used to lighten whatever area user uses it on, as long as it is not absolute black. Absolute black won't lighten.

Path Selection Tool (A)



This tool is used when working with paths. It's related to the Pen Tool.

Horizontal Type Tool (T)



It makes type or text. User can click a single point, and start typing right away. Or user can click and drag to make a bounding box of where user's text/type goes.

Pen Tool (P)



It's for creating paths, in which user would use the Path Selection Tool to select the path. Paths can be used in a few different ways, mostly to create clipping paths, or to create selections. User uses the tool by clicking to add a point. If user clicks and drags, it will change the shape of the path, allowing user to bend and shape the path for accurate selections and such.

Rectangle Tool (U)



By default it draws a Shape Layer in the form of a rectangle. It fills the rectangle with whatever foreground color user has selected.

Notes Tool (N)



This tool is used to add small little note boxes to the image. These are useful if user is very forgetful or if user is sharing the Photoshop file with someone else. It only works with .psd files.

Eyedropper Tool (I)



This tool works by changing the foreground color to whatever color user clicks on. Holding the [Alt] key will change the background color.

Hand Tool (T)



User can really make short work of the job with the Hand Tool. It's for moving the entire image within a window. So if it is zoomed in and the image area is larger than the window, user can use the Hand Tool to navigate around the image. Just click and drag. User can get to this tool at any time when using any other tool by pressing and holding the [Spacebar].

Zoom Tool (Z)



It allows user to zoom into the image. Hold the [Alt] key to zoom out. Holding the [Shift] key will zoom all of the windows user has opened at the same time. Double-click on the Zoom Tool in the palette to go back to 100% view.

BONUS!!



These are the color boxes. Foreground (in the front) and Background (in the back). Click on either one to bring up the color select dialog box.