LAYERING
IN PHOTOSHOP

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PANEL MENU
A drop-down menu of various relevant commands

LAYER SEARCH BAR
Quickly filter through the layers in a multi-layered document to find a specific layer, view only certain types of layers, or view only the layers that match certain criteria

BLENDING MODE
Blending mode controls how pixels in the image are affected by a painting or editing tool

OPACITY
The extent to which we can see through an entire layer. This includes layer styles and blending modes
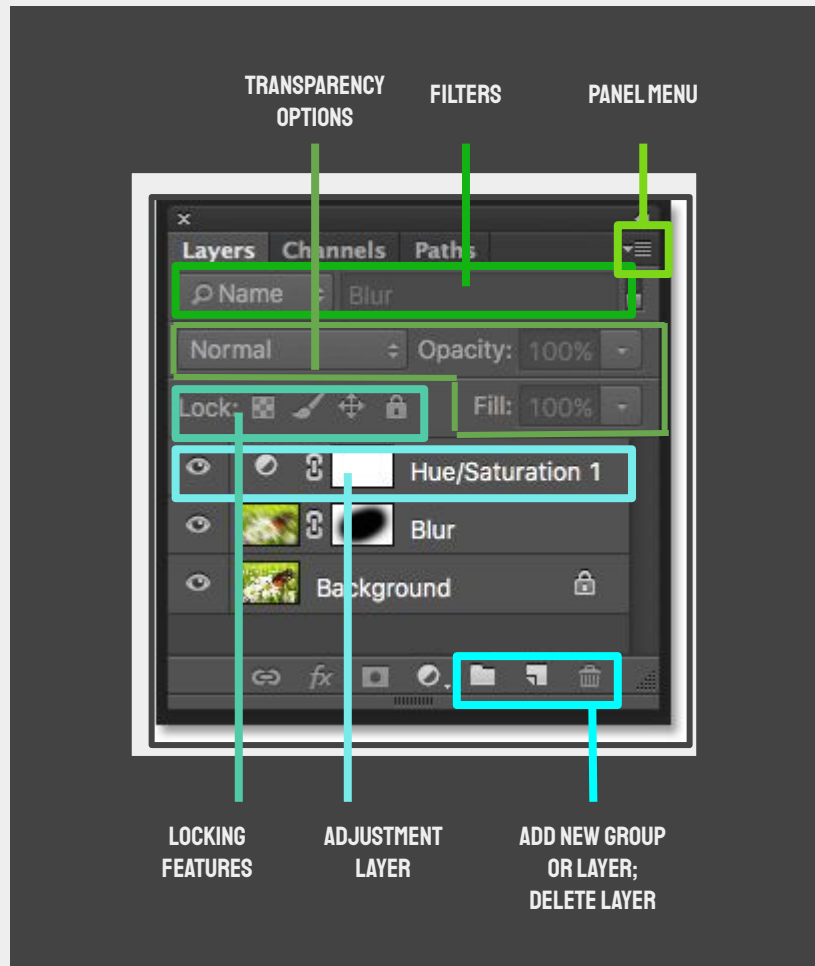
FILL
The extent to which we can see through an entire layer. Only painted pixels and vectors shapes are effected; not layer styles or blending modes.

LOCK

ADJUSTMENT LAYER
A layer that lets you apply color and tonal adjustments to your image without permanently changing pixel values.

ADD NEW GROUP, NEW LAYER, OR DELETE LAYER

THE LAYERS STACK

Think of photoshop layers as a collage of clear plastic sheets (e.g. acetate). Each layer overlaps and obstructs the view of the layer(s) underneath it. Things that are visually closer should be placed at the top of the stack where as things that are in the distance/background should be at the bottom.

You can move each layer to the position that you'd like. You can also change the transparency/opacity of each layer so that you can see the layer(s) underneath.

ORGANIZATION

Click the icon at the bottom of the layers panel to do any of the following:

CREATE NEW GROUP

Layer Groups help to organize your layers. They also help to work with several layers at the same time.

Or click: Layer > New > Group

CREATE NEW LAYER

A new layer will appear directly over the current selected layer. These new layers are empty. Photoshop names each layer for you numerically (beginning with "Layer 1".
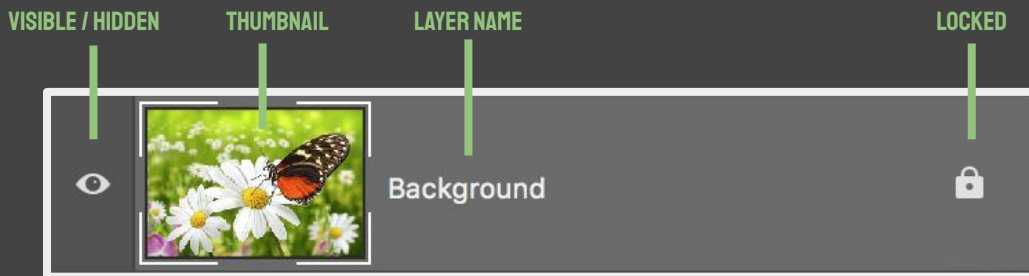
Or click: Layer > New > Layer

DELETE LAYER

Deletes the current selected layer. You can also drag the layer to the "trash" icon.

Or click: Layer> Delete> Layer

Layer Example

VISIBLE / HIDDEN   THUMBNAIL   LAYER NAME   LOCKED

Background

ONE LAYER AT A TIME

When you create a new document, Photoshop will automatically create a layer for your background. This background can be from a file (see above), a color (usually white), or transparent.
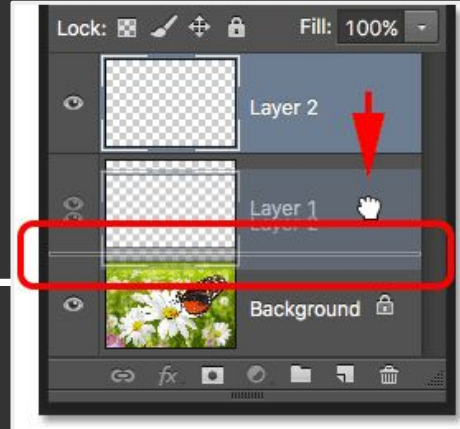
Each layer appears as a new row in the layers panel. Each layer row will show a range of information including:
- Layer Name
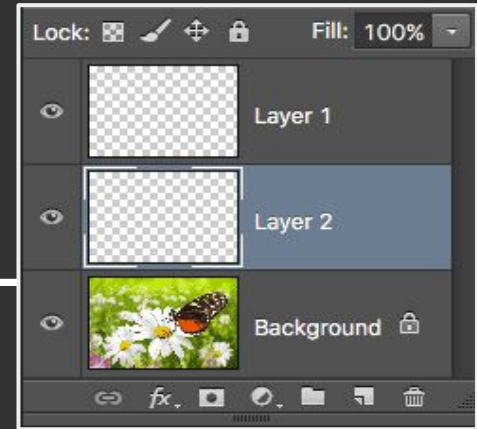- Thumbnail image of layer
- Visibility (on/off)
- Locked (on/off)

MOVING LAYERS
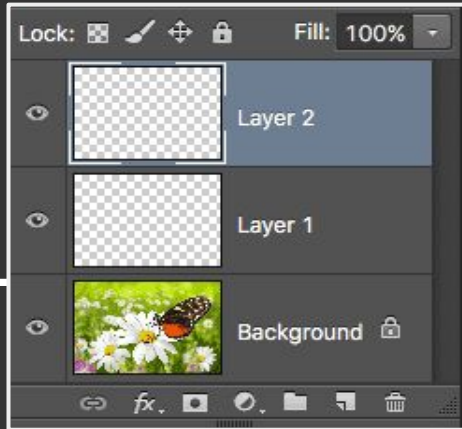
Layer 2 is sitting above Layer 1

To move a layer, click and drag it above or below another layer. Release your mouse button when the highlight bar appears.

Layer 2 now sits between Layer 1 and the Background layer.

*You cannot move the background layer because it is locked.

FIND A LAYER

This new command enables you to isolate the content of your Layers panel based on your chosen filter. Click on the filter type pop-up menu to filter your results by the kind of layer. Choose by Kind, Name, Effect, Mode, Attribute or Color.

FILTERS:

PIXEL LAYERS

ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

TYPE LAYERS

SHAPE LAYERS

SMART OBJECT LAYERS
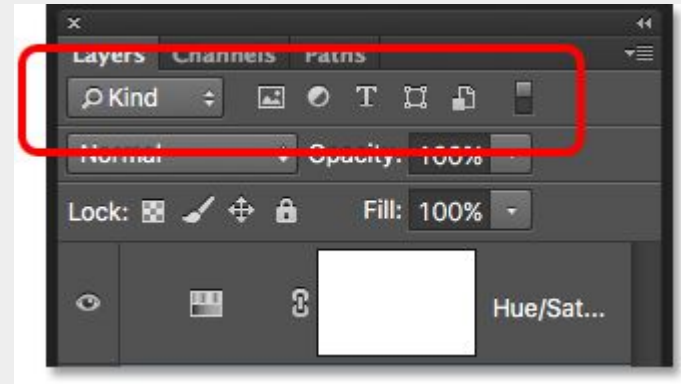
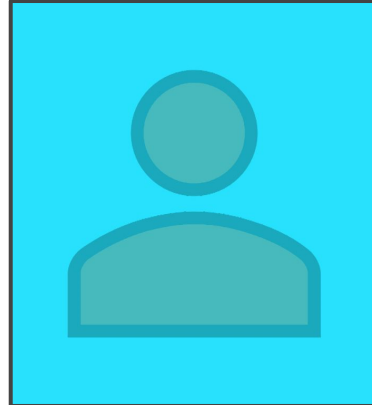# SEEING THROUGH THE LAYERS

OPACITY VS. FILL

Opacity and Fill both affect the transparency of the layer. However, the difference can be seen if there is a Layer Effect applied. In the examples below, lowering the "opacity" lowers the transparency of both the image AND the layer effect. Whereas, lowering the "fill" only lowers the transparency of the image BUT NOT the layer effect.
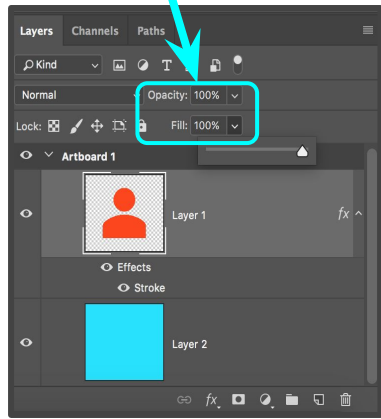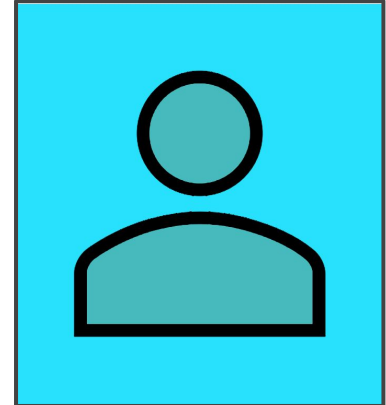

Opacity & Fil appear next to each other at the top of the layer Panel. Notice "Layer 1" has a "Stroke" effect applied to it
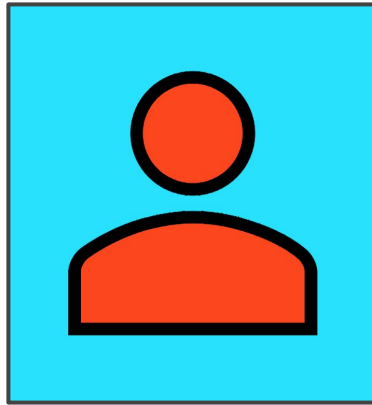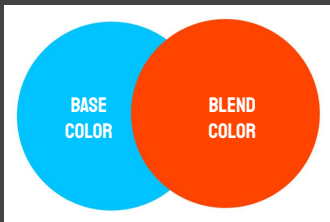
100% OPACITY
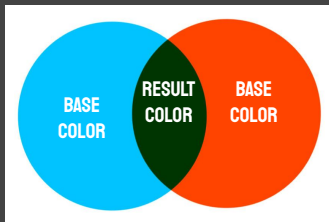**100% FILL**

25% OPACITY
100% FILL

100% OPACITY
25% FILL

SEEING THROUGH THE LAYERS:

BLENDING MODES

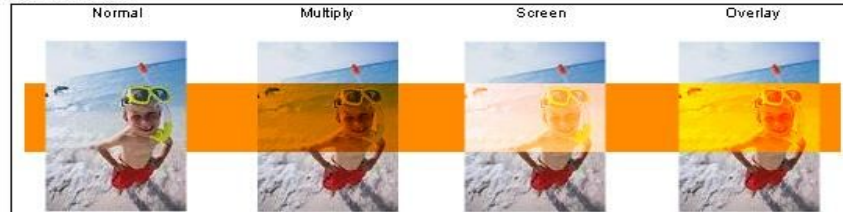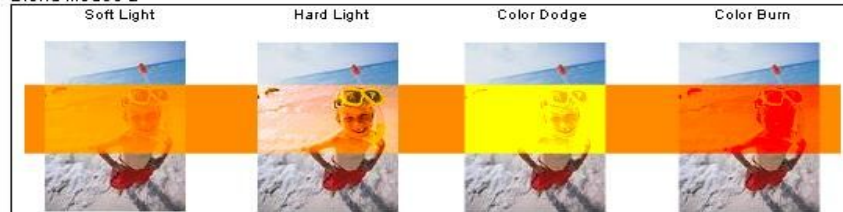**"NORMAL" BLENDING MODE**

"MULTIPLY" BLENDING MODE

The blending mode specified in the options bar controls how pixels in the image are affected by a painting or editing tool. Think in terms of the following colors when visualizing a blending mode's effect:

- The base color is the original color in the image.
- The blend color is the color being applied with the painting or editing tool.
- The result color is the color resulting from the blend.

Blending mode examples
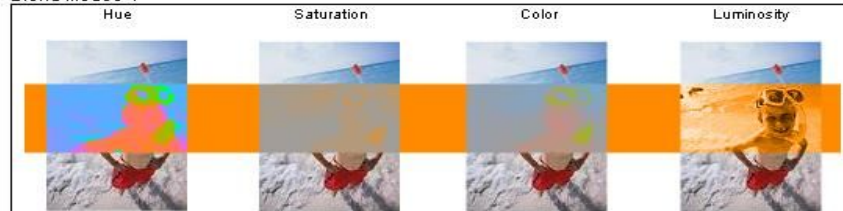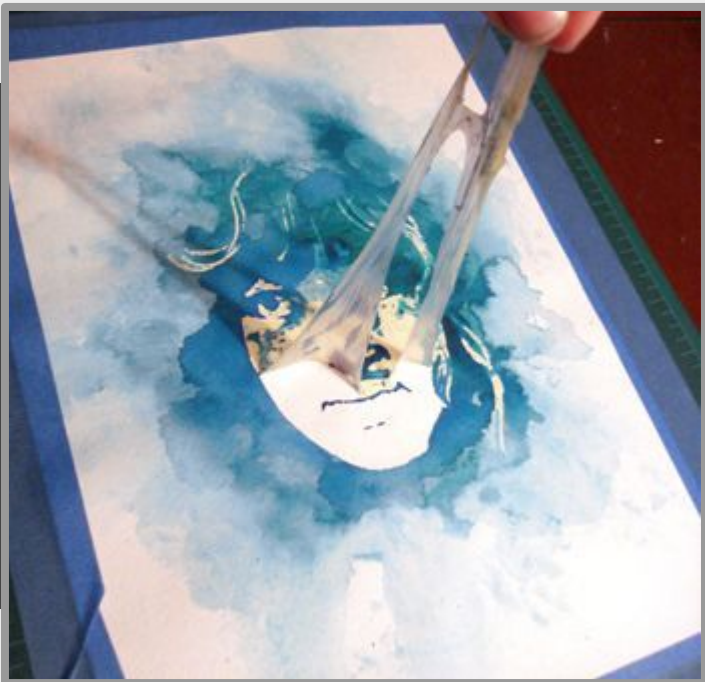
MASKING

You can add a mask to a layer and use the mask to hide portions of the layer and reveal the layers below. Masking layers is a valuable compositing technique for combining multiple photos into a single image or for removing a person or object from a photo.
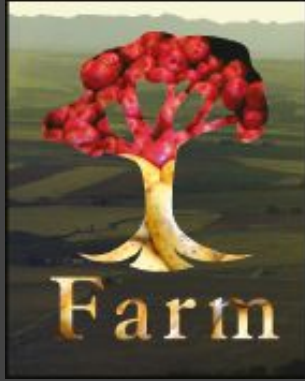
The term "masking" originated from the use of masking fluid or tape in artwork. In the image above, the artist is removing masking fluid from a watercolor painting to reveal a portrait beneath.
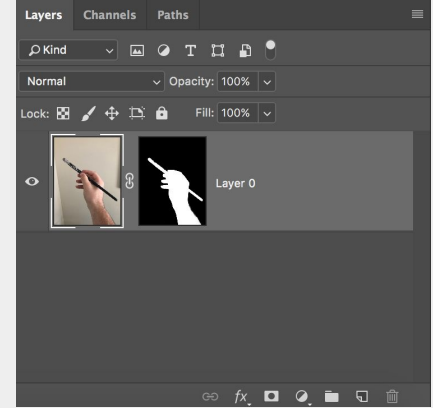
CLIPPING MASK

Lets you use the content of a layer to mask the layers above it. The masking is determined by the content of the bottom or base layer. The non-transparent content of the base layer clips (reveals) the content of the layers above it in the clipping mask. All other content in the clipped layers is masked out.

LAYER MASK

You can edit a layer mask to add or subtract from the masked region. A layer mask is a grayscale image, so areas you paint in black are hidden, areas you paint in white are visible, and areas you paint in shades of gray appear in various levels of transparency.

## REMEMBER: WHITE REVEALS; BLACK CONCEALS!

ADJUSTMENT LAYER

Adjustment layers have many of the same characteristics as other layers. You can adjust their opacity and blending mode, and you can group them to apply the adjustment to specific layers. Likewise, you can turn their visibility on and off to apply or preview the effect.

ADJUSTMENT LAYERS PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING ADVANTAGES:

- Non-destructive edits. You can try different settings and re-edit the adjustment layer at any time. You can also reduce the effect of the adjustment by lowering the opacity of the layer.
- Selective editing. Paint on the adjustment layer's image mask to apply an adjustment to part of an image. Later you can control which parts of the image are adjusted by re-editing the layer mask. You can vary the adjustment by painting on the mask with different tones of gray.
- Ability to apply adjustments to multiple images. Copy and paste adjustment layers between images to apply the same color and tonal adjustments.
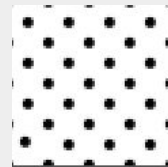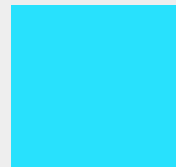
GRADIENT   **PATTERN**   **SOLID**

FILL LAYER

Fill layers let you fill a layer with a solid color, a gradient, or a pattern. Unlike adjustment layers, fill layers do not affect the layers underneath them.