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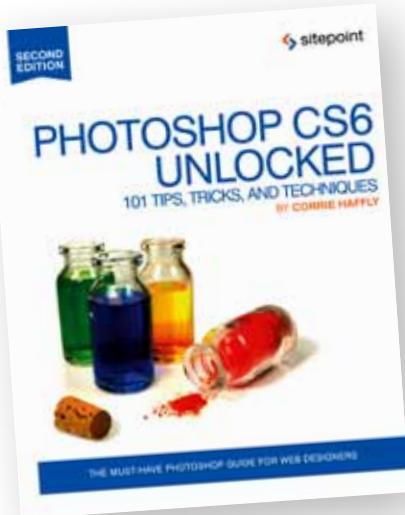
# PHOTOSHOP CS6 UNLOCKED

101 TIPS, TRICKS, AND TECHNIQUES

BY CORRIE HAFFLY



THE MUST-HAVE PHOTOSHOP GUIDE FOR WEB DESIGNERS



# Thanks for your interest!

Thanks again for your interest in “*Photoshop CS6 Unlocked*”. It’s great that you’ve decided to download this sample PDF, as it’ll give you a taste of the full 400+ page version of the book.

Just to recap, this book covers:



## Build beautiful buttons

Sure, you can make your UI simple, easy to use, efficient and responsive, but great interface designs make you want to use them. Use Photoshop to create beautiful, engaging interface elements.



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# **Photoshop CS6 Unlocked: 101 Tips, Tricks & Techniques**

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## **What's in This Excerpt**

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This excerpt comprises large extracts from three chapters of *Photoshop CS6 Unlocked: 101 Tips, Tricks & Techniques*:

### ***Getting Started with Photoshop***

If you're brand new to Photoshop, come here to learn about how to get around. If you're not brand new, you may still enjoy the time-saving tips included in these pages.

### ***Adjusting Images***

Fix, salvage, and adjust photographs that are over-exposed, under-exposed, or just dull-looking. Or, take a good photograph and make it look even better!

### ***Designing a Website***

Bringing all the skills from previous chapters together, this chapter shows you how to create web design mockups in Photoshop, then generate web-optimized images.

## **What's in the Rest of the Book**

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### ***Basic Skills***

Build a good foundation for your use of Photoshop with these basic skills, including resizing, rotating, and hiding parts of your picture.

### ***Creating Buttons***

Make buttons of every shape and style by following the solutions in this chapter.

### ***Creating Backgrounds***

Create tiling backgrounds that you can use in design elements such as headings and menu bars, or even the page background itself!

### ***Working with Text***

Learn to adjust type settings and make cool text effects for your next logo or web graphic.

### ***Manipulating Images***

Start with a photograph or image and add your own effects such as a bokeh effect, reflections, and more!

### ***Advanced Photoshop Techniques***

Automate and animate! This chapter shows you how to save time when performing similar tasks on many different files, then shows you how to use Photoshop to create animations and edit videos.

#### **Interested in finding out more?**

This sample gives you a taste of what's in the book, but remember: you're only seeing a small piece of the action.

The full version of *Photoshop CS6 Unlocked: 101 Tips, Tricks & Techniques* is available now. There's a page at the end of these sample chapters with a link to the download page.

And once you've worked your way through the book, find out how much of a Photoshop master you are with the online SitePoint Photoshop quiz!



# Chapter 1

## Getting Started with Photoshop

You've heard of Photoshop, right? Of course you have—you wouldn't be reading this book otherwise!

Photoshop is one of the most commonly used tools in the web designer's arsenal. From the preparation of initial design comps to generating optimized graphics for a web page, most web designers rely heavily on this powerful program.

In this introductory chapter, I'll cover some of the basic tools and tasks that we'll draw on in later chapters. I'll also share some of the shortcuts and time-savers that I frequently use. This chapter will stop short of providing an exhaustive review of the many effects that Photoshop can achieve (where would it end?), but it will provide the bare bones that will help beginners get started. If you're already familiar with the interface and can perform tasks like making selections, applying gradients, and working with layers, you might want to skip ahead to the next chapter.

So, what are you waiting for? Open up Photoshop and let's go!



### What's new in Photoshop CS6?

If you're a seasoned user of previous versions of Photoshop, you might just be interested in what's new in CS6 for web designers. Here's a quick list:

- The Photoshop interface is darker, allowing your images and documents to better stand out.
- Background saving and auto-recover gives you peace of mind.

- The Crop Tool has many more options, including image-straightening and helpful aspect ratio grids. A new Perspective Crop Tool allows you to straighten images taken at an angle.
- The Shape Tool allows you to immediately apply fill and stroke effects to the shape (instead of using styles).
- Blurring tools are much more powerful.
- The Patch Tool uses better Content-Aware technology.
- The Content-Aware Move Tool allows you to quickly move objects in photos with minimal editing.
- Basic video editing is now possible in Photoshop.
- You can now define character and paragraph styles for type.
- You can quickly add lorem ipsum filler text from the **Type** menu.
- Layer styles are no longer just for layers; they can now be applied to Groups.
- The **Layer** panel allows for filtering and searching layers.

## The Photoshop Workspace

Photoshop's "out of the box" workspace consists of the following components, shown in Figure 1.1:

### Options bar

The **options bar** holds contextualized options for different tools.

### Toolbox

By default, the **toolbox** sits to the left of your Photoshop window, and contains shortcuts to Photoshop tools.

### Panels

Individual "panes" that hold information or options for working with your file, known as **panels**, float on the right-hand side. Each panel is labeled with a tab, and can be minimized, closed, grouped with other panels, or dragged to the panel docking areas on the right and bottom, and in the icon column. In Figure 1.1, the **Color** panel allows you to change the foreground and background colors by changing the Red/Green/Blue values directly, or by picking from the color spectrum.

### Document windows

Each open document has its own **document window** with a **status bar** along the bottom. The status bar displays information that's specific to the document. Document windows can be full-

screen as shown in Figure 1.1, with multiple document tabs across the top, or dragged out to become independent, floating windows.

### Menu bar (not shown)

You will probably already be familiar with the **menu bar** from other programs. This runs across the top of your display (Mac) or Photoshop window (Windows), and contains various menu options for Photoshop's tools.

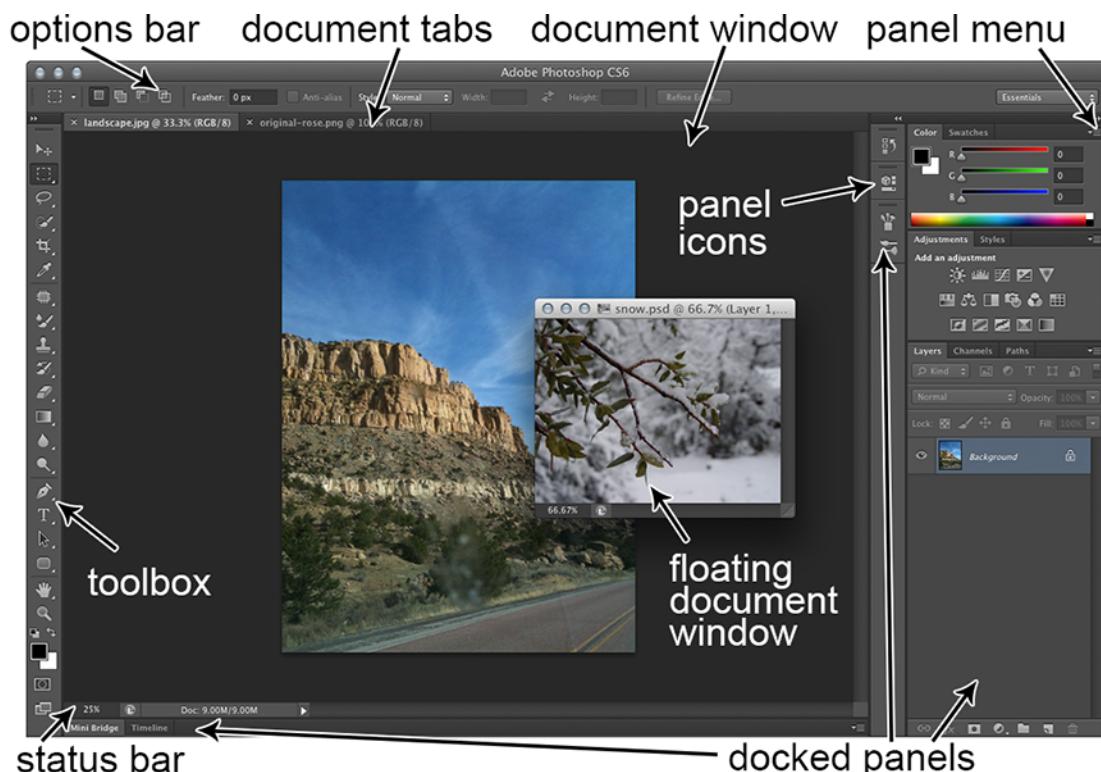


Figure 1.1. The Photoshop workspace



### Comps and Turtlenecks: Designer Lingo

Now that you're going to be working in Photoshop, you might want to start talking like a designer. Designers, like professionals in most specialist fields, have their own terminology for their tools of the trade. A comp (short for "composite") refers to a mockup of the final solution that a designer has in mind. Traditionally, a comp is used in the print world to refer to page layouts, but for web designers it usually refers to a static interface prepared entirely in Photoshop for the client to look over before they decide to proceed. You might even hear it being used as a verb, where comping is the process of creating that mockup site.

## Customizing Your Workspace

You can customize your Photoshop workspace to suit you or your project; almost everything within your workspace can be repositioned and reconfigured. You might choose to customize your workspace by:

### Changing the look of the menu bar

You can change which menu items are visible in your **menu bar**, or even add color to your menu items. If you wanted, you could also assign new or alternative keyboard shortcuts to menu commands (I recommend against it, though, until you feel very comfortable with Photoshop or have a compelling reason to do so). Go to **Edit > Menus...** and use the dialog box to modify the menu bar and panel menus.

### Moving the options bar

If you want to move the **options bar**, you can do so by clicking the handle on its left side and moving it around. The options bar will “dock” to the top or bottom of the screen automatically if moved near those areas.

### Moving the toolbox

The **toolbox** is extremely portable, and can be moved to any location on your screen. Move the toolbox by clicking on the dark gray area at the top of it and dragging it around. You may also click the double arrows in this gray area to change the toolbox from one to two columns.

### Rearranging panels

There are many ways to rearrange your panels. You might want to separate a panel from its **panel group** and move it into another group. You can do this by dragging the panel tab out of its original group and into the new group. You might also decide to drag some of your panel tabs into the icon column. The panel icon column can be resized as well to display the name of the panel instead of just the icon. Panels also can be docked in the right side or bottom of the workspace of the workspace. Finally, to display a panel that has been closed, go to **Window** and select the panel you want to show.

### Displaying different information in the document window status bar

The status bar displays the document file size by default. The file size is shown as two numbers separated by a forward slash: the first number is an approximation of the image file size with all layers merged (known as “flattening” the image), while the second number is an approximation of the total file size of the image with layers intact. If all this sounds new to you, don’t worry—we’ll be discussing layers shortly. You can set the status bar to display different information, such as the document dimension in pixels (shown in Figure 1.2) or the version number of the file. To do this, click on the arrow icon next to the status bar and choose the information you’d like to see.

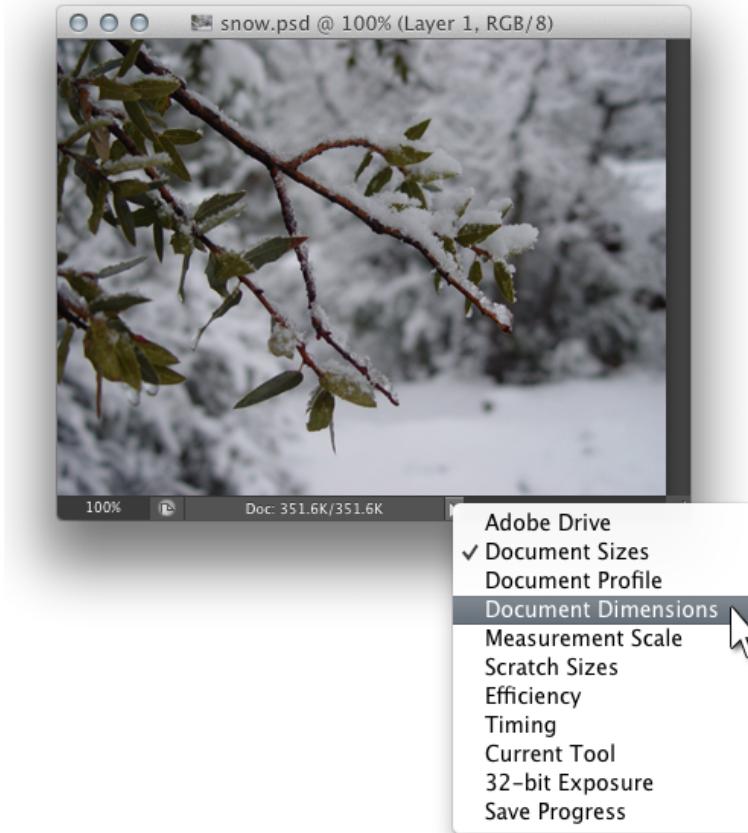


Figure 1.2. Changing the status bar

## Saving Your Customized Workspace

As you become more proficient with Photoshop, you may discover that you use certain sets of panels for different types of projects, while other panels are left unused. Photoshop allows you to save and load various **workspaces**—different arrangements of panels, menus, even keyboard shortcuts—to help you work more efficiently.

After you've customized your workspace to your satisfaction, select **Window > Workspace > New Workspace...** from the menu bar and enter a name for your workspace, such as *Creating Thumbnails* or *My Default Workspace*. You can then load your different workspaces by opening **Window > Workspace** and selecting your custom workspace from the menu list.



### Web Designers Use Pixels

One of the first tasks I do once I've installed Photoshop is change my Photoshop preferences to use pixel units instead of inches or centimeters. Go to **Photoshop > Preferences > Units & Rulers** (Windows:

**Edit > Preferences > Units & Rulers**) and change the **Ruler** units to pixels. You may also want to change the **Type** units to pixels.

## Working in Photoshop

Now that you've been introduced to the Photoshop workspace and have a basic idea of where everything is, let's start getting our hands dirty.

### Creating New Documents

You can create a new document by selecting **File > New...** from the menu bar, or pressing the keyboard shortcut **Command-N (Ctrl-N on Windows)**. The **New** dialog box will appear, as shown in Figure 1.3, where you can specify the document size and other settings.

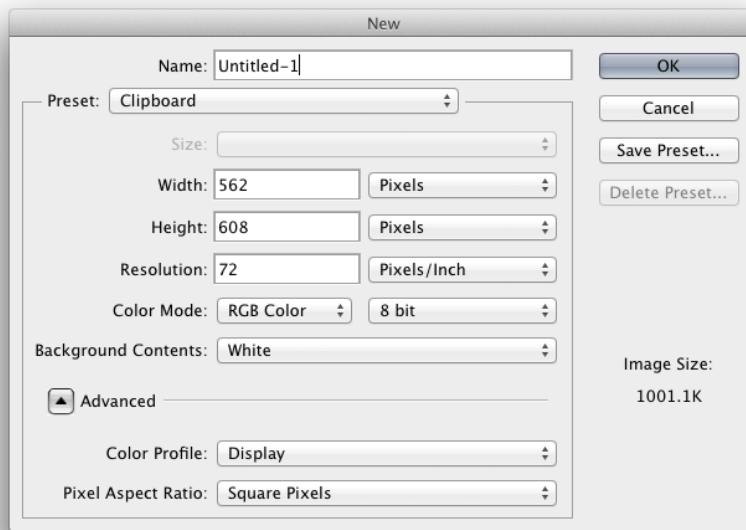


Figure 1.3. The **New** dialog box



#### Snappy Presets

If you're designing for a website, be sure to set the resolution at **72 Pixels/Inch** to reflect the actual screen resolution. If you're designing for a minimum screen size, such as  $1024 \times 768$ , be sure to take into account scrollbars and menus, and set your initial document size at a smaller dimension for your actual working area.  $1000 \times 650$ , for example, will give you a better estimate of your actual screen size.

If you want easy access to these dimensions for other new documents, it's probably a good idea to click **Save Preset...** and give the settings a name like "Web Page." The next time you create a new document, you'll be able to load your "Web Page" settings from the Preset list.

## Opening Files

Open files by selecting **File > Open...** from the menu bar, or pressing **Command-O** (**Ctrl-O** on Windows). You can select and open multiple files by holding down **Command** (**Ctrl**) and clicking on all the files you require in the **Open** dialog box.

## Saving Files

Save a file by selecting **File > Save** or pressing **Command-S** (**Ctrl-S** on Windows). For a newly created document, this will save your work in Photoshop Document (PSD) format. If you'd prefer to save an additional copy of the document, you can use **File > Save As...** or press **Command-Shift-S** (**Ctrl-Shift-S**) instead. To the great delight of Photoshop users everywhere, Photoshop CS6 introduces a backup save, where a recovery file is saved every ten minutes. You can change the time in between saves by going to Photoshop's preferences (Mac: **Photoshop > Preferences > File Handling...**, PC: **Edit > Preferences > File Handling...**), and choosing from 5, 10, 15, or 30 minutes, or 1 hour. If Photoshop crashes on you, the recovery file will open automatically the next time you start up Photoshop.



### Double-clicking Power

As if keyboard shortcuts weren't quick enough, Windows users have even more ways to open and save files, such as:

- holding down **Ctrl** and double-clicking the work area to create new documents
- double-clicking the work area to pull up the **Open** dialog box to open files
- holding down **Alt** and double-clicking the work area to open existing files as new documents
- holding down **Ctrl-Shift** and double-clicking the work area to save documents
- holding down **Shift** and double-clicking the work area to access Adobe Bridge: Adobe's "control center" and file browser

The **work area** is the dark gray area behind the document windows. If your shortcuts fail, check that you're clicking on an empty spot on the work area, and not in one of the document windows or Photoshop tools.

Alas, on a Mac, Photoshop only allows for double-clicking the work area to open a document. Even then, you must have **Window > Application Frame** ticked in order for it to function.

## Saving Files for the Web

Photoshop files themselves are unable to be embedded into a web page. You'll need to export your file and save it in a web-friendly format. There are three formats for web graphics: GIFs, JPEGs, and PNGs.

- GIF** The GIF format (pronounced “giff”) can have a maximum of 256 colors. GIF files support transparency and animation, and work best with graphics that have large areas of the same color, as shown in the logo in Figure 1.4.



Figure 1.4. An image that should be saved as GIF

- JPEG** The JPEG format (pronounced “jay-peg”) works best with photographic images, or images that have more than 256 colors and gradients, such as the flower in Figure 1.5. Images saved in JPEG format are compressed, which means that image information is lost, causing the image to degrade in quality.



Figure 1.5. An image that should be saved as JPEG

- PNG** The PNG format (sometimes pronounced “ping”) is similar to the GIF format in that it supports transparency and works best with solid-color images like the logo shown previously; however, it’s superior to the GIF format as it has the ability to support true levels of transparency for colored areas. PNGs can produce a better quality image at a smaller file size than can GIFs. Photoshop allows you to save an image as a PNG-8 file (which works the same way as a GIF would with 256 colors) or a PNG-24 file (allowing for millions of colors as well as variable transparency).

To save for the Web in Photoshop, select **File > Save for Web...** or press **Command-Option-Shift-S** (**Ctrl-Alt-Shift-S** on Windows). This will bring up the **Save for Web** dialog box shown in Figure 1.6, which will show you a preview of the image to be exported, with its optimized size in the bottom left-hand corner. You can adjust the settings for the image using the options in the pane on the right. Choose whether you want to save the file as a GIF, JPEG, PNG-8, or PNG-24, and have a play with the other settings, keeping an eye on the optimized file size. Try to strike a balance between the quality and file size of the image. When you’re happy with the result, click **Save...** and give your image a filename.

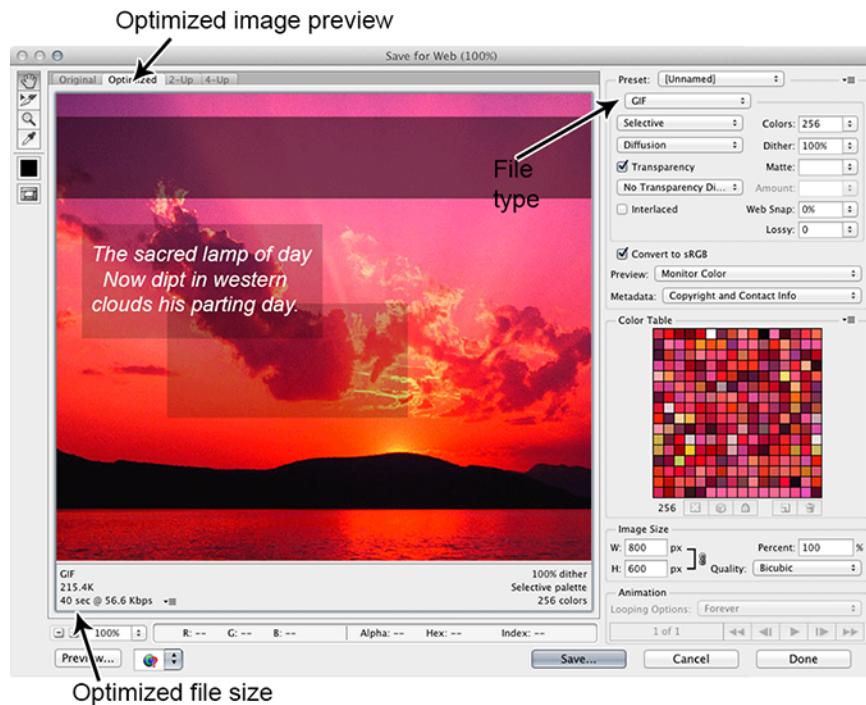


Figure 1.6. Save for Web dialog box

If you tried this exercise, you're probably quite pleased with yourself for saving an image of reasonable quality at a file size significantly smaller than the original. You managed this by altering the settings in the right-hand pane, but what do these settings actually *do*?

## GIF/PNG-8

### Colors

Adjusting this setting reduces the number of colors used in the image. This will usually have the biggest effect on the final image.

### Dither amount and type (such as No Dither, Diffusion, Pattern, Noise)

This setting has nothing to do with being nervous or agitated. **Dither** refers to a compression technique in which the pattern of dots is varied to give the illusion of a color gradient. Changing the dither will result in a more noticeable degradation for images that involve a large number of colors blended together.

### Transparency

If you want transparent areas in your graphic, check this box.

### Matte color

For transparent images, the **matte color** is used to blend the edges of your image into the background of the web page. For opaque images, the matte color defines the background color of the image.

## JPEG

- Quality** Changing the value in the compression quality drop-down box or **Quality** input field alters the level of compression for the image. Reducing the quality may result in blurring or pixelation, but too high a setting will produce a large file that will take users too long to download. A good approach is to decrease the quality value gradually until you notice the degradation of your image becoming unacceptable. A reasonable compromise will be somewhere around this point.

## Photoshop Layers

Layers are a powerful feature of Photoshop that enable you to work on one part of an image without disturbing the rest of it. While the concept of layers may seem intimidating at first, you'll wonder how you ever survived without them once you get the hang of using layers. Figure 1.7 shows a Photoshop document made up of layers.

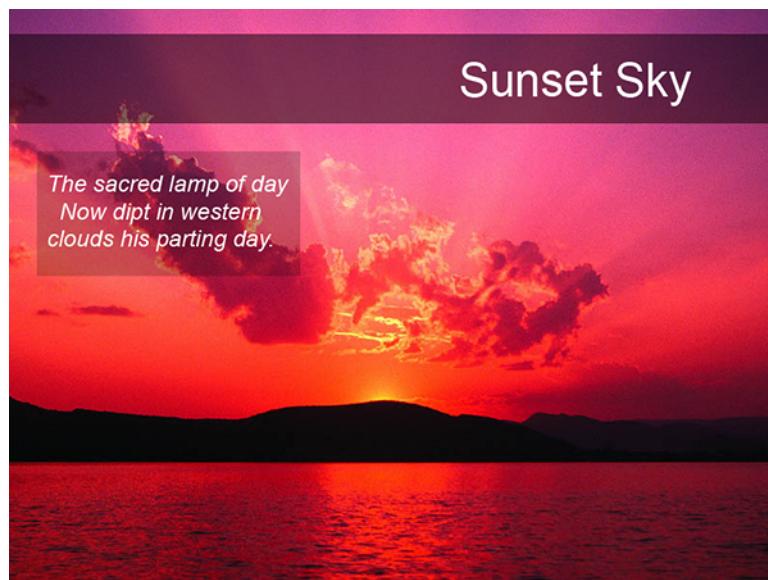


Figure 1.7. Layered Photoshop document

Figure 1.8 reveals how the layers stack together.

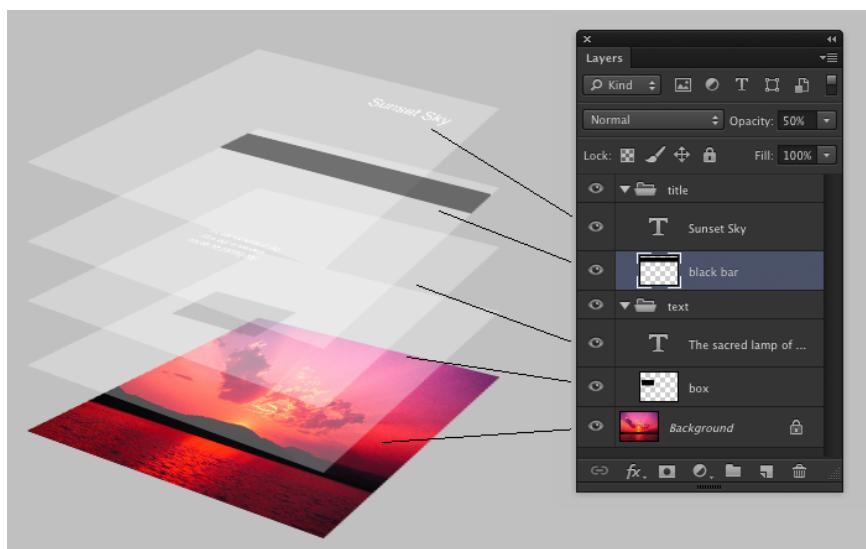


Figure 1.8. The layers in a layered Photoshop document

The transparent parts of any layer, shown by a checkered grid, allow the layers beneath that layer to show through. You can show and hide each layer in an image by clicking on its corresponding eye icon in the **Layers** panel, as shown in Figure 1.9.



Figure 1.9. Hiding a layer

To organize your layers, you can arrange them into layer groups by going to **Layer > New > Group....**. Each layer group displays in the same way as any ungrouped layers on the **Layers** panel. A layer

group is signified by a folder icon. You can collapse or expand layer groups by clicking on the triangle to the left of the folder icon, and nest layer groups within each other by dragging one folder icon into another.

## Layer Shortcuts and Tasks

- Rename layers by double-clicking on the layer name.
- Change the transparency of a layer by changing its opacity with the **Opacity** slider, or typing a value into the **Opacity** box.
- Duplicate a selected layer by pressing **Command-J** (**Ctrl-J** on Windows). You can also duplicate a layer by dragging it while pressing the **Option** (**Alt**) key. Or you could type **Shift-Option** (**Shift-Alt**) and then hit an arrow key to duplicate the layer and nudge it ten pixels in your desired direction (note that this only works when you have the Move Tool invoked).
- Select multiple layers by holding down **Command** (**Ctrl**) and clicking the layer names. This forms a temporary link between the selected layers that allows you to move them as one unit, delete them all, and so on.
- You can also link layers together. Select layers by clicking on them while holding down **Shift** or **Command** (**Shift** or **Ctrl** on Windows). Once you've selected all the layers you wish to link, click the **Link layers** button at the bottom-left of the **Layers** panel (signified by the chain). Linking layers allows the link relationship to remain even after you select a different layer (unlike the process of simply selecting multiple layers).

To unlink all the layers, select one of the linked layers and go to **Layer > Select Linked Layers** to select all of them automatically; then go to **Layer > Unlink Layers**. To unlink a single layer, select the layer you wish to remove from the link and click the **Link layers** button at the bottom-left of the **Layers** panel; the other layers will stay linked. To temporarily unlink a layer, hold down **Shift** and click on its corresponding link icon (a red “X” will appear over the link icon). Reactivate the link by holding down **Shift** and clicking the link icon again.

- Rearrange layers by dragging the layer above or below other layers. Use the “move down” shortcut **Command-[** (**Ctrl-[**) and the “move up” shortcut **Command-]** (**Ctrl-]**) to move selected layers up and down. **Command-Shift-[** and **Command-Shift-]** (**Ctrl-Shift-[** and **CtrlShift--]** on Windows) will bring layers to the very top or very bottom of the stack.
- Select a layer by using the keyboard shortcuts **Option-[** and **Option-]** (**Alt-[** and **Alt-]** on Windows). These keystrokes let you move up and down through layers in the **Layers** panel.
- Create a new layer by pressing **Shift-Command-N** (**Shift-Ctrl-N** on Windows). This will bring up the **New Layer** dialog box. Want to create new layers quickly without having to deal with the dialog box? Simply press **Command-Option-Shift-N** (**Ctrl-Alt-Shift-N**).

- Merge a layer into the one beneath it by pressing **Command-E (Ctrl-E)**. If you've selected layers, this shortcut will merge those selected layers together.

## Finding Layers

Some Photoshop documents grow to have dozens of layers. Even if you've diligently named your layers so that they're easily identifiable, it might be challenging to find the specific layer you want to work on. This is where the top section of the **Layers** panel comes in and saves the day.

My sunset document only has a few layers, but it has enough to make my point. In Figure 1.10, the top row of the **Layers** panel in the image on the left shows the search and filtering tools. By default, the filter type is set to **Kind**, which allows you to filter the different types of layers: image layers, adjustment layers, text layers, shape layers, or smart object layers. In the middle diagram, I've selected the **Filter for type layers** option, and instantaneously, only the text layers of the document are shown! You can imagine how this would simplify finding a layer in a document with a hundred layers.

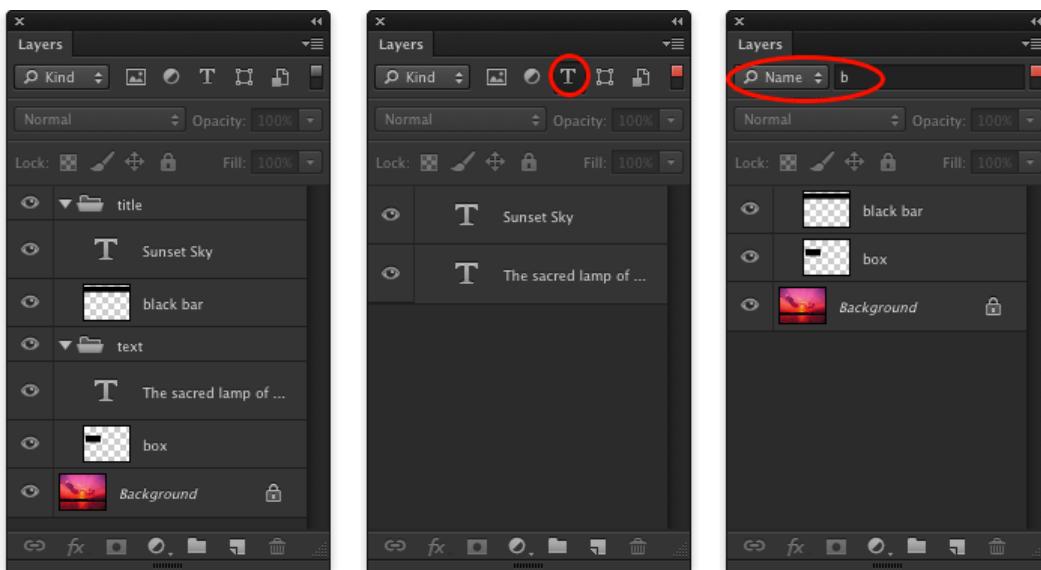


Figure 1.10. Filtering and searching layers

The right-hand side image of Figure 1.10 reveals that I've changed the filter type to **Name**, enabling me to search for a string of letters across layers. As you explore the other filter types, you'll find them to be invaluable when navigating documents containing many layers.

## Photoshop Toolbox

In this section, I'll introduce some of the most frequently used tools found in the toolbox. I'll discuss more tools in later chapters as we apply them to solutions.

You'll notice that some of the tool icons have small triangles in their bottom right-hand corners. These icons contain hidden treasures! The triangle indicates that there are more related tools available. If you right-click on the tool icon (or click and hold it down), a fly-out menu will appear as displaying the additional tools.

### Quick Keyboard Shortcuts



Naturally, most of the tools in the toolbox have a keyboard shortcut. You can learn each tool's shortcut by hovering your cursor over a tool for a few seconds; a tooltip box will appear, displaying the name of the tool and its shortcut as in Figure 1.11. If additional tools are available in the fly-out menu, you can cycle through them by pressing **Shift-keyboard shortcut**. Keyboard shortcuts can save you valuable time—pressing **V** to bring up the Move Tool, for instance, is certainly a lot quicker than moving the cursor over the toolbox to select it. It may seem insignificant right now, but the time you take to access tools will add up over the course of a project. For your convenience, whenever I mention a tool, I'll list its shortcut in parentheses; for example, the Move Tool (**V**).



Figure 1.11. Tooltip for a keyboard shortcut

## Selection Tools

You can use the selection tools to select certain areas of your document for editing. If you use this type of tool, only the area that's selected will be affected by any changes you make. You can “feather” selections (that is, specify a fuzzy radius for them) using the **Feather** field in the options bar.

Figure 1.12 shows two rectangles: one created by filling in a selection with a feather of zero pixels, and one that's created by filling in the same selection with a feather of five pixels.

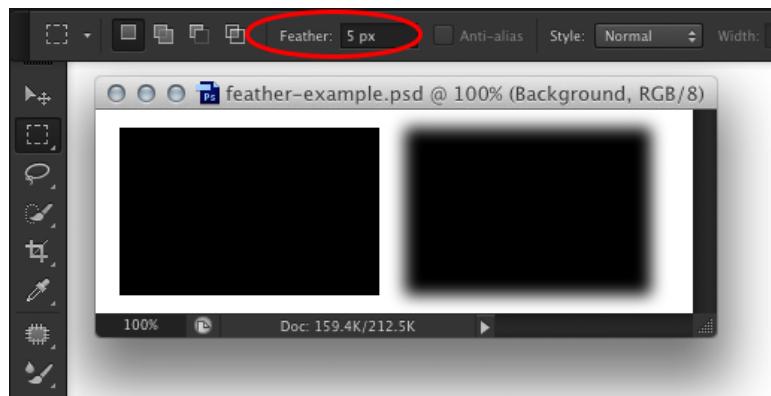


Figure 1.12. Fuzzy edges with feathered selections



## Secret Selections

Selections can have varying levels of transparency, known as the degree of **opacity**. It's actually possible to make a selection with an opacity of 100% in one area, but only 20% in another area. If a selection has an opacity that's more than 50%, it will be displayed with a border of dotted lines. Photoshop won't visibly outline areas with less than 50% opacity (though they will still be selected).

Selection tools automatically select at 100% opacity. We'll learn about creating transparent selections using quick masks and alpha channels later in the section called "Other Useful Tasks and Shortcuts".

Marquee tools (**M**), as shown in Figure 1.13, are used to create rectangular or elliptical selections, including selections that are "single row" (one pixel tall, stretching across the entire width of the document) and "single column" (one pixel wide, stretching through the entire height of the document). To make single-row or single-column selections, click with the appropriate tool on the image area where you want to select a row or column.

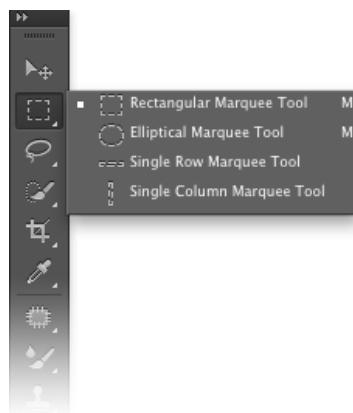


Figure 1.13. Marquee tools

You can use the lasso tools (**L**), shown in Figure 1.14, to create freeform selections.

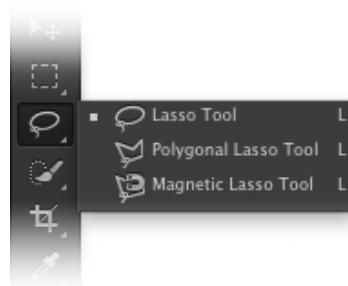


Figure 1.14. Lasso tools

There are three forms:

**Lasso Tool (L)**

Click and drag the Lasso Tool to draw a selection area. Releasing the mouse button will close the selection by joining the start and end points with a straight line.

**Polygonal Lasso Tool (L)**

Click at different points to create vertices of a polygonal shape using the Polygonal Lasso Tool. Close the selection by moving your cursor to the beginning of your selection and clicking once, or pressing the **Enter** key.

**Magnetic Lasso Tool (L)**

If you think you need help with making your selection, try the Magnetic Lasso Tool. Photoshop will attempt to make a “smart” selection by following the edges of contrast and color difference. Click once near the “edge” of an object and follow around it; Photoshop will automatically lay down a path with fastening points. You can also click as you direct the line to create your own points along on the path. Close the selection by pressing the **Enter** key or clicking at a point near the beginning of the selection.

**No Selection Sometimes Equals All Selected**

If you’ve made a selection, only the pixels within the selection are active and can be worked on. Some tools can be used without making a selection at all. Be aware, however, that if no specific selection has been made, Photoshop will assume that you’re working on the *entire* layer with any changes that you make affecting all pixels in the layer.

**Quick Selection Tool**

The Quick Selection Tool (**W**) allows you to “paint” a selection, grabbing the nearby areas with similar colors and excluding areas of contrasting colors. Using your brush cursor, more areas are included in your selection as you paint over them; for example, Figure 1.15.

You can use the options bar to change your brush size, or type [ or ] to increase or decrease the brush size. If you select a bit more than you intended to, hold the **Option (Alt)** key and you’ll see the cursor change from a plus to a minus sign. Now the areas that you paint with the Quick Selection Tool will be excluded from your selection.



Figure 1.15. Using the Quick Selection Tool to create a selection

## Magic Wand Tool

The Magic Wand Tool (**W**), shown in Figure 1.16, selects areas of similar color. You can change the **tolerance** of a Magic Wand selection—that is, how close the color values should be to the sampled color in order to be selected—and choose whether you want the selection to be **contiguous**, meaning pixels that are touching, or not. In the case of the latter, matching colors across the entire document will be selected.

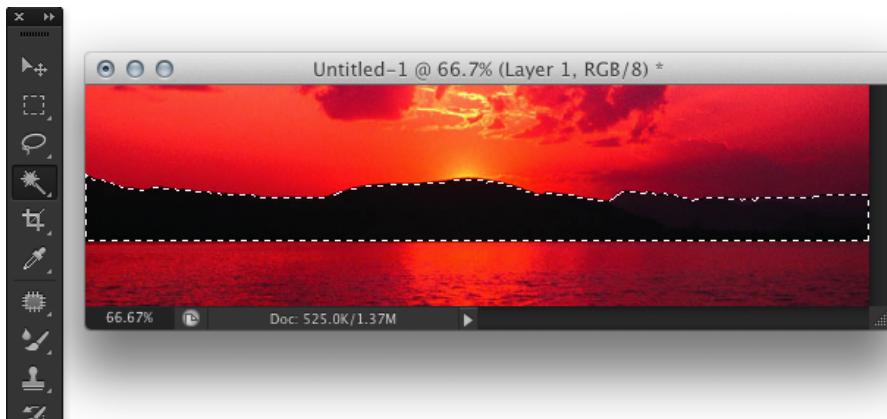


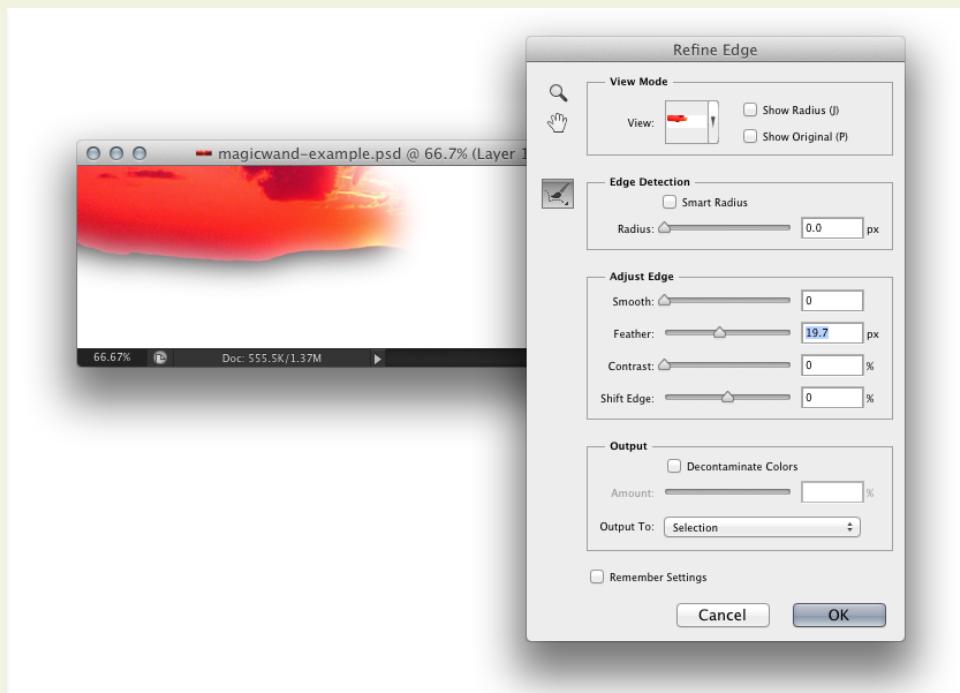
Figure 1.16. Using the Magic Wand to create a selection



### Selection Shortcuts and Tasks

- Hold the **Shift** key to add another selection to the first selection.
- Hold the **Option** key (**Alt** key on Windows) to subtract your new selection from the first.
- Hold **Option-Shift** (**Alt-Shift**) to select the intersection of your first and second selections.

- Use the arrow keys to move the selection pixel by pixel. If this is too slow, hold down **Shift** and use the arrow keys to move the selection ten pixels at a time.
- Press **Command-J (Ctrl-J)** to copy the selection into its own layer. If this seems familiar to you, it's because I mentioned earlier how to copy a layer using the same keyboard shortcut. Now that you know that not selecting anything sometimes means that everything is selected, it makes sense that by simply selecting a layer in the **Layers** panel, you can copy the entire layer by pressing **Command-J (Ctrl-J)**.
- To *cut* the selection into its own layer, press **Command-Shift-J (Ctrl-Shift-J)**.
- To deselect a selected area, click outside of it with one of the Marquee tools or press **Command-D (Ctrl-D)**.
- To reactivate your last selection, press **Command-Shift-D (Ctrl-Shift-D)**.
- Clicking the **Refine Edge...** button in the options bar brings up a dialog box (seen in Figure 1.17) that allows you to make adjustments to the edges of the selection that you've made; for example, you can feather your selection or smooth it out. The real-time preview shows how your changes affect what's selected.

Figure 1.17. The **Refine Edge** dialog box

## The Move Tool

The Move Tool (V) moves a selected area, as in Figure 1.18, or an entire layer. You can invoke the Move Tool temporarily when using most other tools by holding down the **Command** key (**Ctrl** key on Windows).



Figure 1.18. The Move Tool in action

You can also duplicate a layer by holding down the **Option** (**Alt**) key while using the Move Tool, as shown in Figure 1.19.



Figure 1.19. Copying a layer with the Move Tool



### Move and Copy Shortcut

For most tools, holding **Command-Option** (**Ctrl-Alt**) and dragging a selected area will temporarily invoke the Move Tool, allowing you to move and duplicate the selected layer quickly.



### Auto-Select

With **Auto-Select** on (circled in Figure 1.20), the object that your cursor is on will be moved. Without checking the **Auto-Select** option, you'll move whatever layer/s are selected in the **Layers** panel.

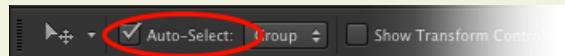


Figure 1.20. Auto-Select option

If you prefer to work with **Auto-Select** off, you can still utilize some of the functionality of **Auto-Select** by holding down **Command (Ctrl)** and clicking on an object in your document. This will temporarily allow the Move Tool to select the clicked layer (or group, depending on what setting you have in your options bar), just as **Auto-Select** does.

## The Crop Tool

The Crop Tool (**C**) is used to trim images. When you first select the Crop Tool, you'll see a boundary box around the entire image. You can drag on the edges of that box to select your crop area, as shown in Figure 1.21, or draw your own boundary edge by clicking and dragging using the Crop Tool; then double-click the center of the selection or press **Enter** to crop the image to the size of the selection.

To cancel without cropping, select another tool or press the **Esc** key.

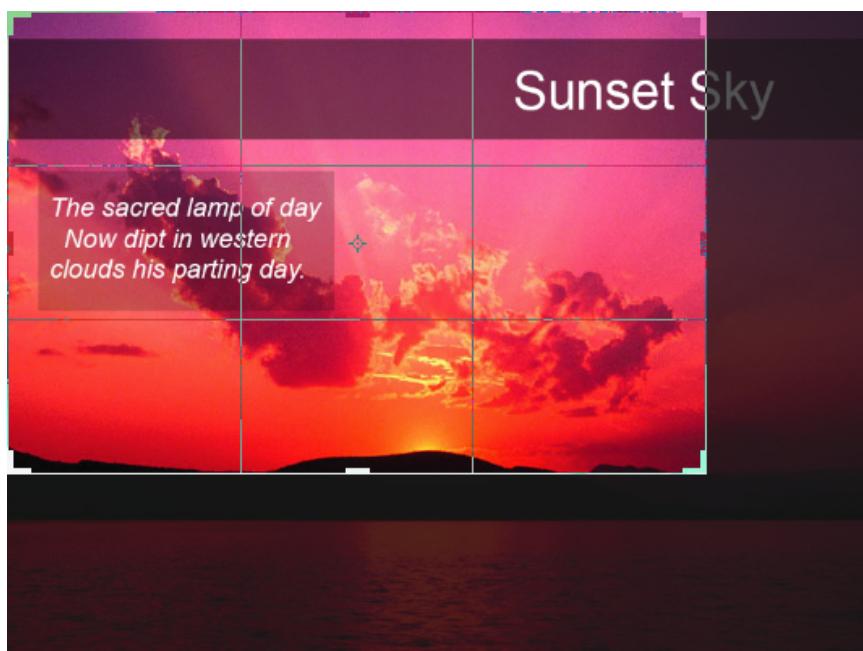


Figure 1.21. Creating a selection using the Crop Tool



## Resize Your Canvas with the Crop Tool

You can use the Crop Tool to resize your canvas. Clicking and dragging the boundaries of the Crop Tool will allow you to see objects hidden outside the canvas area, as well as make the boundaries larger than the canvas area very easily.

## Drawing and Painting Tools

Apart from its extraordinary photo-editing abilities, the multi-talented Photoshop also provides a multitude of drawing and painting tools (as indicated in Figure 1.22) that allow you to create your own shapes and backgrounds.

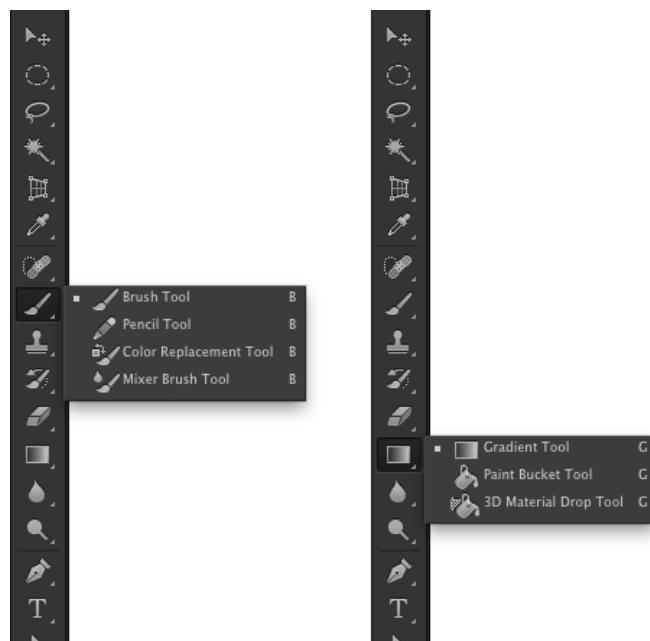


Figure 1.22. Drawing and painting tools

Let's look at some of the main options:

### Brush

The Brush Tool (**B**) is suitable for soft-edged painting or drawing. Draw strokes by clicking and dragging the mouse over the canvas. You can change the brush size and other settings in the options bar, shown at the top of the window in Figure 1.23.

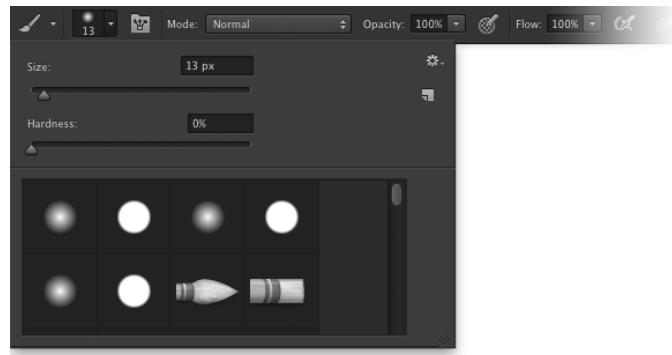


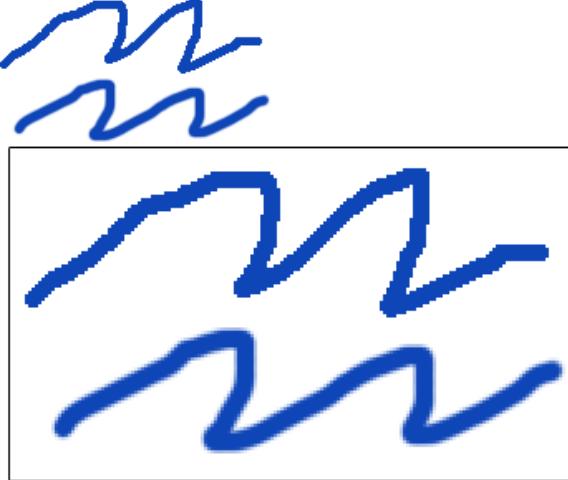
Figure 1.23. Brush options

## Pencil

The Pencil Tool (**B**) is suitable for hard-edged drawing or painting, and has similar options to the Brush Tool for setting its size, opacity, and more. The Pencil Tool is often used for drawing on, and editing individual pixels in, zoomed-in images.

 **Alias versus Anti-aliased**

Unlike the Brush Tool, the Pencil Tool's edges are **aliased**, meaning that the edges of an object are jagged, in contrast to the smooth edges of an anti-aliased object. In the two examples shown in Figure 1.24, the top shape in each example was created using the Pencil Tool, while the bottom shapes were created using the Brush Tool. Notice the difference in the jagged edges of these curves.



The image shows a comparison of line drawing quality. At the top, there are two wavy blue lines: the top one is drawn with the Pencil tool and exhibits significant aliasing (jagged edges), while the bottom one is drawn with the Brush tool and appears smoother and anti-aliased. Below this comparison, there is a larger inset showing the same two types of lines on a larger scale. The top line in the inset is very jagged and pixelated, while the bottom line is smooth and continuous.

Figure 1.24. Aliased versus anti-aliased lines

## Eraser

The Eraser Tool (**E**) removes pixels from the canvas. You can choose between Pencil, Brush, or Block mode from the **Mode** drop-down menu in the options bar.

## Paint Bucket

The Paint Bucket Tool (**G**) fills a selection with a flat color. To use the Paint Bucket Tool, click once in the area that you wish to fill. If the chosen area is not within a selection, the Paint Bucket Tool will fill all similarly-colored pixels within the vicinity of the clicked area.

## Gradient

The Gradient Tool (**G**) fills a selection with a blend of two or more colors, which is called a **gradient**. You can easily create your own gradient, or use any of the preset gradients available in Photoshop.

Display the presets and tools by clicking on the small triangle on the right-hand side of the Gradient Tool, seen in Figure 1.25. Apply a gradient by setting your desired colors, choosing your gradient style, then clicking and dragging the cursor over the area to be filled.

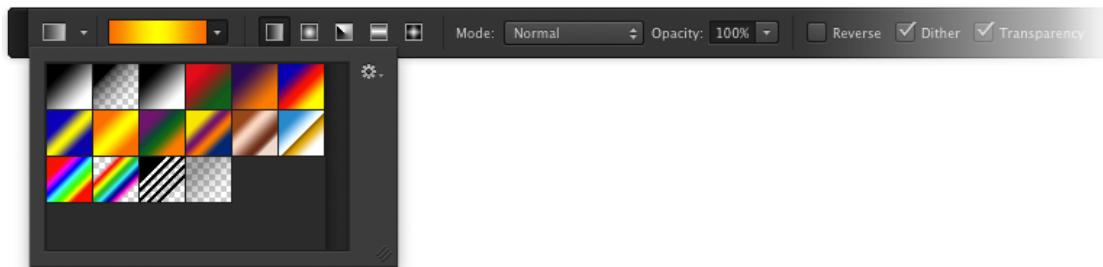


Figure 1.25. Gradient options

I find that I use the first two gradients in the **Gradient picker** most often: the foreground-to-background gradient, and the foreground-to-transparent gradient. The former will blend your foreground color into your background color, while the latter will blend your foreground color into a transparent background, giving it a fade-out effect.

## The Type Tool

The Type Tool (**T**), commonly referred to as the text tool, creates text layers. This one's easy to use—just select the Type Tool, click on the canvas, and start typing! You can also click and drag to create a rectangular text area that will force text to wrap within its boundaries. You can change the font size, color, and other text properties using the options bar along the top of the window.

When the Type Tool is active, you can move the cursor outside of the text area. The cursor will change from the “text insert” cursor to the “move” cursor, and you’ll be able to move the text layer around.

It's worth noting that when the Type Tool is active, you can't use keyboard shortcuts to access other tools. This may seem obvious now, but it won't always be so apparent, especially when your text mysteriously starts spouting strange characters because you've been trying to use the shortcut keys.

To finish using the Type Tool, press **Command-Return** (**Ctrl-Enter** on Windows). You can then resume your regular keyboard shortcutting!

## Shape Tools

You can create shapes simply by clicking and dragging Photoshop's Rectangle, Rounded Rectangle, Ellipse, Polygon, Line, and Custom Shape (U).

If you've used previous versions of Photoshop, you'll notice several new options in the options bar, seen in Figure 1.26. We'll have them all covered by the end of this section!

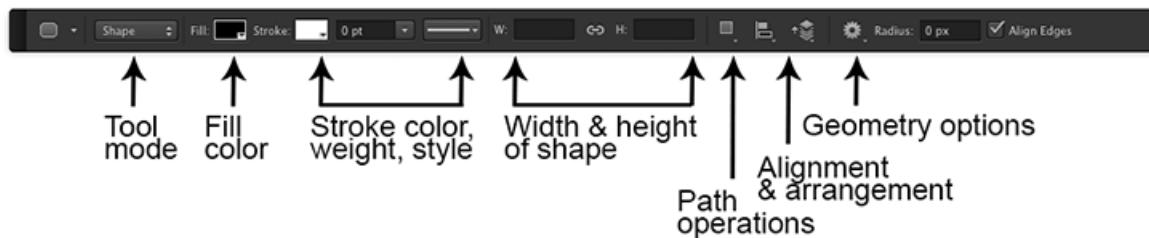


Figure 1.26. Shape options

Let's walk through the shape options:

### Tool Mode

Tool mode determines how your shape is created, as demonstrated in Figure 1.27.

**Shape** As a shape layer (the default), your shape will be created as a vector shape, such as "Shape 1" in Figure 1.27, editable with vector editing tools.

**Path** As a path, your shape will be created as a path in the **Paths** panel, as shown in Figure 1.27 (in which the path has been named **Work Path**).

**Pixels** As pixels, your shape will be created on whichever layer is currently selected. I created a new layer, then created a shape using the Pixels option on "Layer 1" in Figure 1.27.

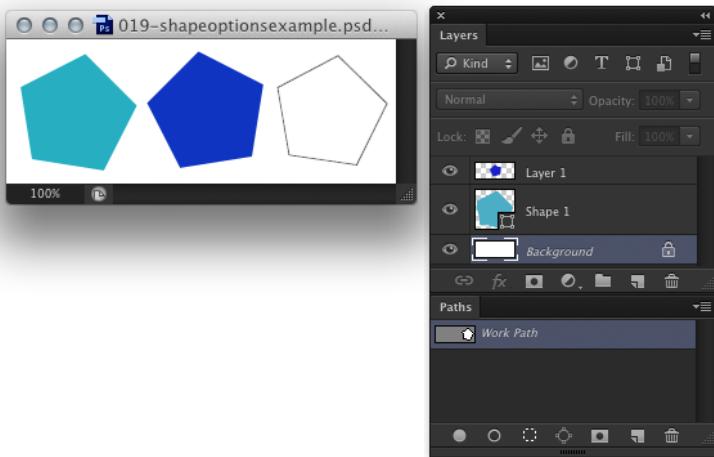


Figure 1.27. Different ways to create shapes

## Fill Color

Fill color allows you to select the color of the shape. Note that you can choose no fill, a solid color, a gradient, or even a pattern. In previous versions of Photoshop, you had to apply layer styles to change the fill of a shape, so this is a nice time-saver in Photoshop CS6.

## Stroke Color

Stroke color allows you to select the color that will outline the shape. Setting the stroke weight or stroke type (dashed, dotted, or solid, to name a few) gives you control over the stroke.

## Width and Height

Changing the width and height can be done dynamically even after you've created the shape. (This is not an option if you create a filled pixel shape.)

## Path Operations

Path operations allow you to determine how the vector shapes in the same layer relate to each other. For example, you can set vector shapes to overlap where the overlapping area looks cut-out.

## Path Alignment and Arrangement

Path alignment and arrangement (ordering) are used when editing vector shapes.

## Geometry Options

Geometry options contain more shape-specific choices. For example, if you're making a line shape, it enables you to put arrowheads on the end of the line.

Some shapes provide more shape options next to the geometry options button. For example, if you're making a rounded rectangle, you'll be able to set the radius of the rounded corners in the

**Radius** field. (Unfortunately, you cannot dynamically change the radius once your rounded rectangle is created.)

## Align Edges

Finally, selecting the **Align Edges** checkbox will ensure that your shapes are aligned to the underlying pixel grid, which ensures sharp edges for your vector shapes.

## Color Selection Tools

Set foreground and background colors by clicking on the appropriate tile and choosing a color from the **Color Picker**, as demonstrated in Figure 1.28.

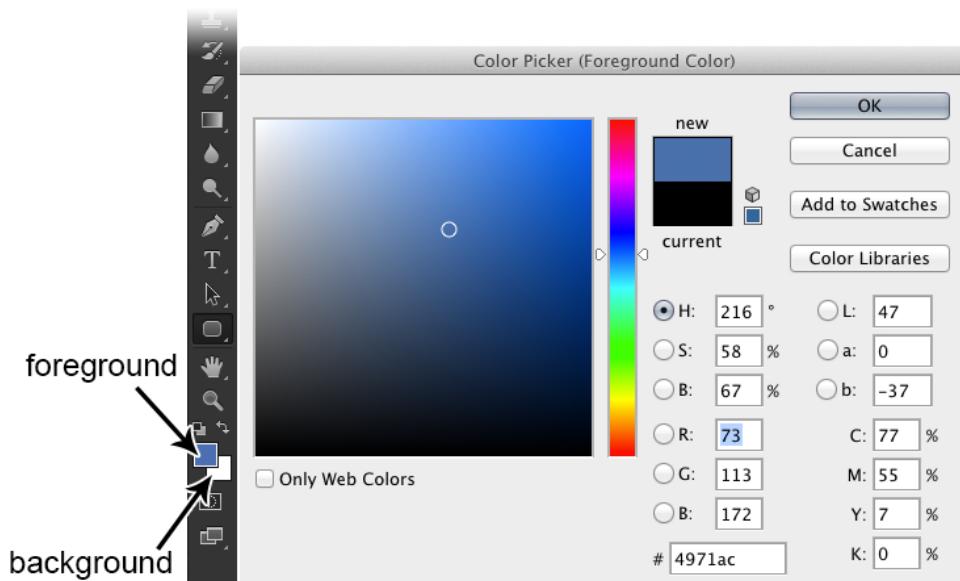


Figure 1.28. Selecting foreground and background colors using the **Color Picker**



### Color Picker Shortcuts

Press **X** if you want to switch the foreground and background colors. Press **D** if you want to revert to a black foreground and white background.

## Eyedropper

The Eyedropper Tool (**I**) lets you sample another color from your image and set this as the foreground color. In fact, it's possible to sample colors from anywhere in your display, even from applications outside of Photoshop. Simply click inside the document window, then drag the cursor to the color you wish to sample.

The Eyedropper Tool also allows you to set the background color. To do so, hold down the **Option** key (**Alt** key on Windows) as you select colors using the eyedropper. If your **Swatch** panel is open, use the **Command** key (**Ctrl** key on Windows) instead.

The Paint Brush, Pencil, Paint Bucket, and any of the other painting or drawing tools can temporarily be turned into the Eyedropper Tool by holding down **Option (Alt)**.

## The Hand Tool

The Hand Tool (**H**) moves your canvas, which is handy (pardon the pun) when you're zoomed into an image or have a very large document open.

What's even handier is that you can invoke the Hand Tool while you're using any other tool (except the Type Tool) by holding down **spacebar**. This is a neat way to position your image exactly where you want it without having to chop and change between tools to do so.

## The Rotate View Tool

The Rotate View Tool (**R**) is within the Hand Tool fly-out and allows you to rotate your canvas, as you can see in Figure 1.29. Click and drag to twirl your canvas around. Click the **Reset View** button in the options bar to rotate it back to normal.

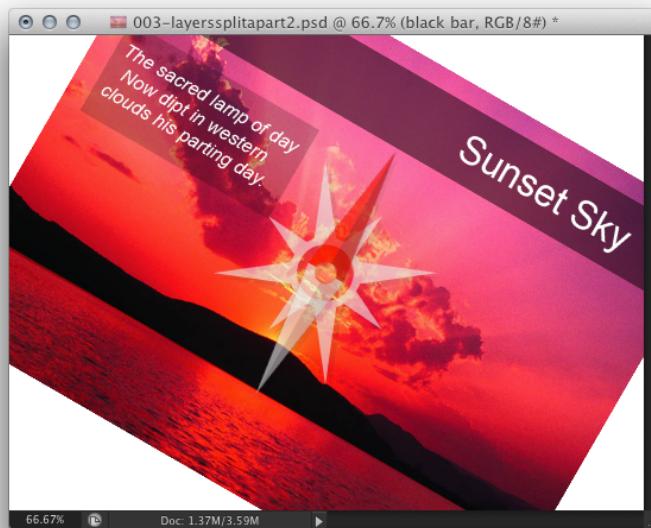


Figure 1.29. Rotate View

## Other Useful Tasks and Shortcuts

### Zooming

Zooming right into your image is the only way to make subtle changes at the pixel level. Use **Command-+** (**Ctrl-+** on Windows) to zoom in and **Command--** (**Ctrl--**) to zoom out. You can also zoom using the slider on the **Navigator** panel or, of course, using the **Zoom Tool** (**Z**).

### Making a Selection Using the Layers Panel

To select the pixels on a particular layer, press **Command** (**Ctrl** on Windows) and click the thumbnail of the layer. This selection also takes into account the transparency of any pixels, so painting in the selection will recreate the transparency settings of the original layer. Figure 1.30 shows a selection I made based on one of the text layers in my sunset document.

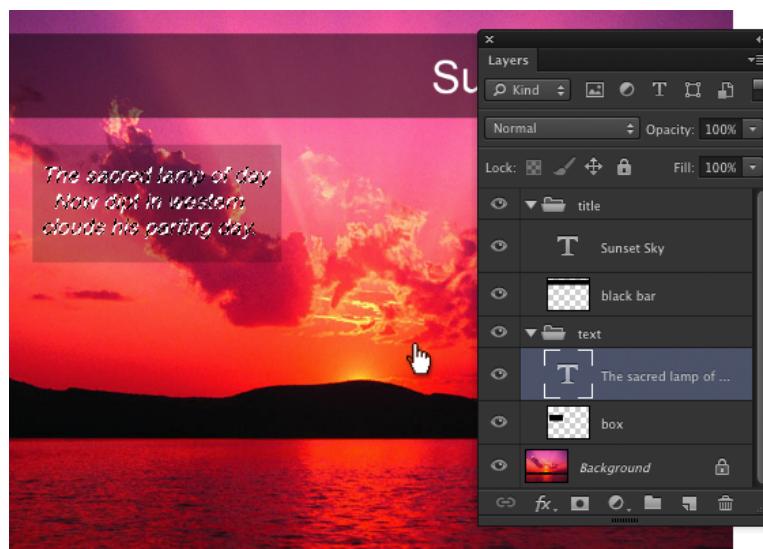


Figure 1.30. Creating a selection based on a layer

### Making a Selection Using a Quick Mask

Quick masks are one of those closely guarded trade secrets that professional designers use all the time, but beginners are often wary of trying because they seem complicated at first. Well, they're not!

A quick mask is an alternative way of making a selection. The standard way of using a quick mask is to go into quick mask mode (**Q**) and, using a tool such as the Brush Tool, paint what you *don't* want to select. This is called painting a "mask," where the resulting reverse-selection will display as the transparent red (or pink, depending on your perspective) color seen in the left of Figure 1.31. You can edit this layer—honing the mask shape, for instance—using the drawing and painting tools.

Such alterations have no effect on the actual image, though; only the selection. Switching back to standard mode (Q) as in the right-hand side of Figure 1.31 will complete your selection.

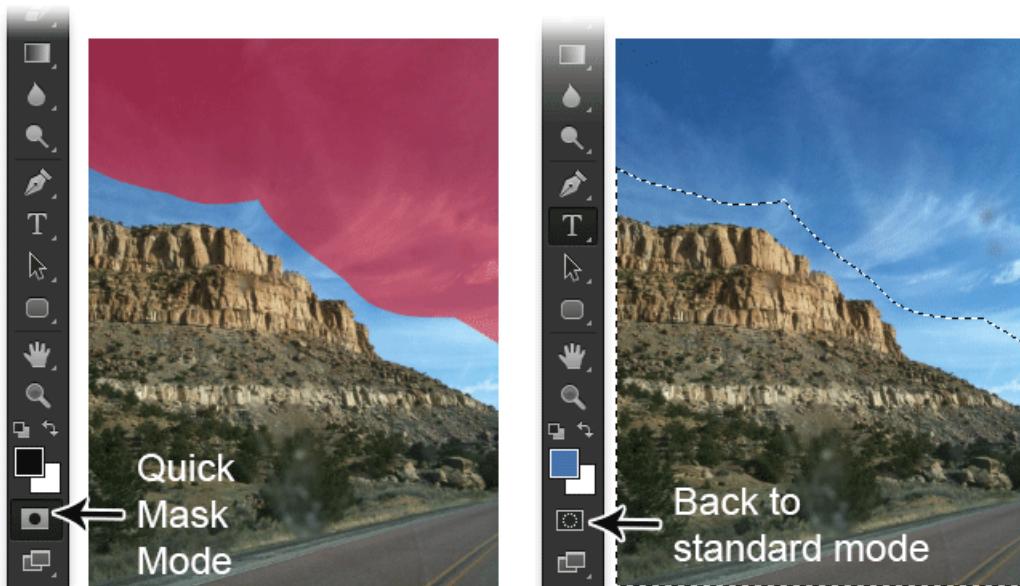


Figure 1.31. From quick mask mode ... back to standard mode

Why would we use this technique instead of those trusty selection tools that we've all come to depend on so heavily? Well, quick masks have a couple of advantages over the standard tools:

- They allow you to control the level of transparency of your selection.
- It's easier to color in an object than to carefully draw a line around it.

Initially, it can be difficult to get your head around the fact that you aren't painting on your image; you're just painting the selection. Once you master that concept, you'll be confident enough to make a selection quickly on any shape, no matter how difficult it seems!



### Quick Mask Options

I prefer to set quick mask mode to let me paint in the *selected* areas rather than the *nonselected* areas, as shown in Figure 1.32. To alter your settings to perform the same task, double-click on the **Quick Mask Mode** icon and change the **Color Indicates** option to **Selected Areas**, shown in Figure 1.33.

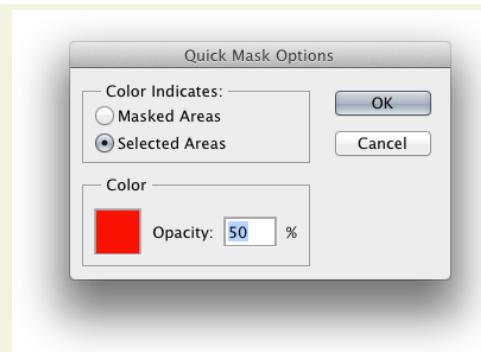
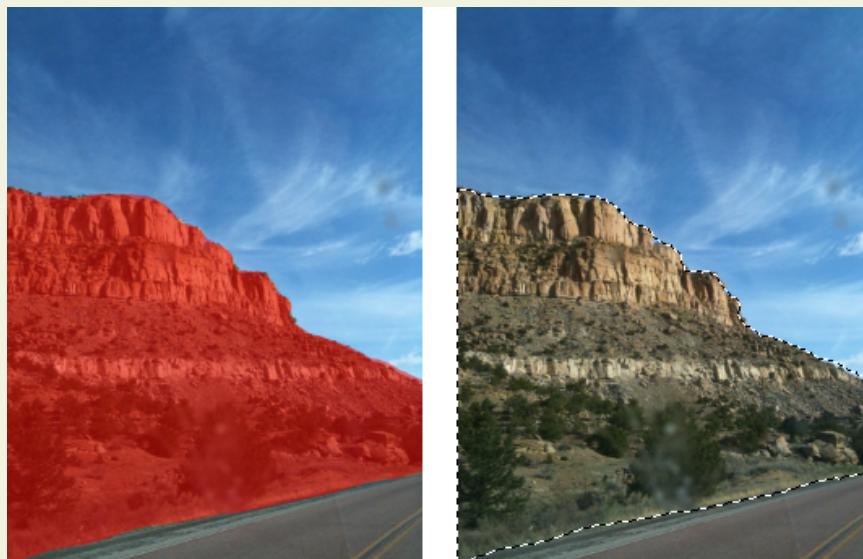
Figure 1.32. The **Quick Mask Options** dialog box

Figure 1.33. Painted areas are now selected areas

## Alpha Channels and Selections

You can use alpha channels to create selections and save them for later use. If you open the **Channels** panel, you'll see several channels that are displayed in a similar way to layers in the **Layers** panel. By default, you'll see the color channels, which indicate how much of each color is represented in the document. You can create your own alpha channel by clicking on the **Create new channel** icon at the bottom of the panel, shown in Figure 1.34.



Figure 1.34. Creating a new alpha channel

You can then use any of Photoshop's painting or drawing tools to create a grayscale image that represents your selection. As Figure 1.35 shows, white areas represent selected areas, black areas represent deselected areas, and grays represent the levels of transparency in the selection.

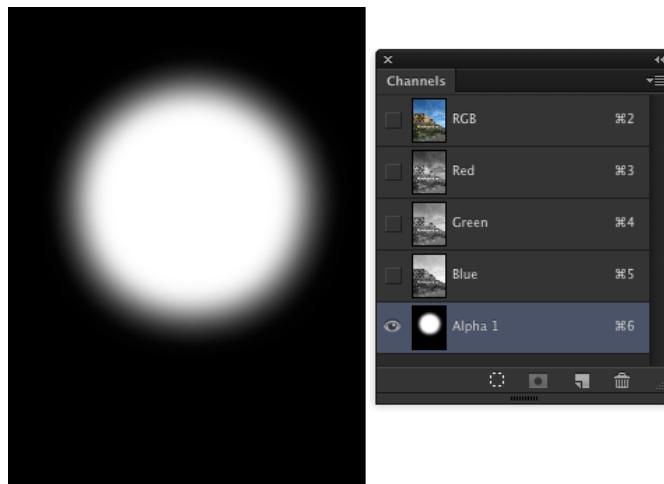


Figure 1.35. Creating a grayscale image

To turn your alpha channel masterpiece into a selection, simply hold down **Command** (**Ctrl** on Windows) and click the channel's thumbnail, as shown in Figure 1.36.

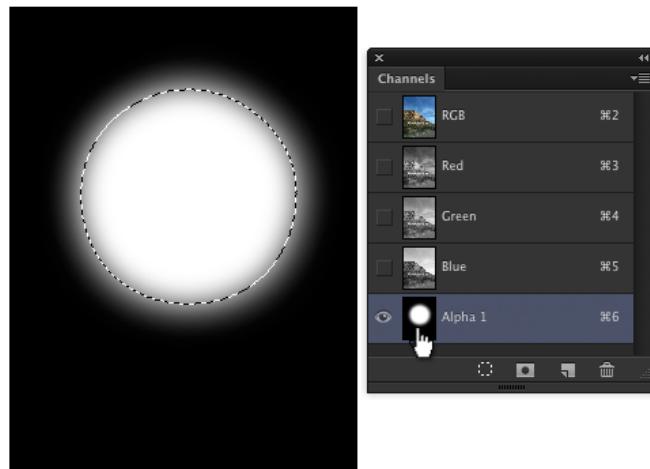


Figure 1.36. Creating a channel-based selection

To return to the regular image view, click on the **Layers** panel tab and select any layer. Your selection will still be visible, as shown in Figure 1.37.

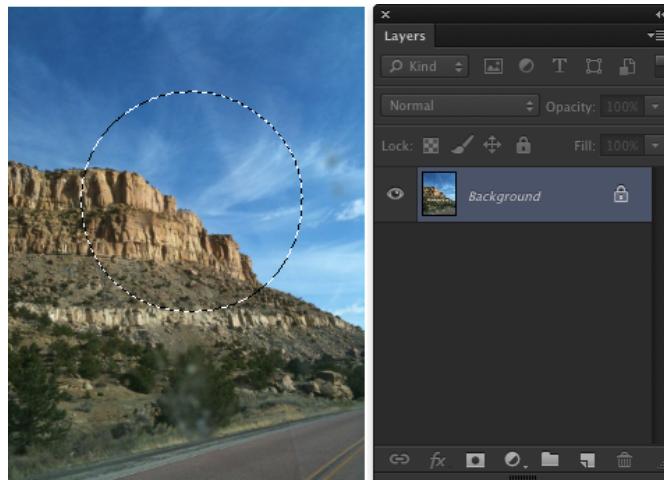


Figure 1.37. Returning to the Layers panel

You can also create your own alpha channels from existing selections—a capability that can be very useful! For example, let's say you've created a selection of the sky like the one shown in Figure 1.38. You have a feeling that you'll be reselecting the sky fairly often, and you'd rather not recreate the selection each time. No problem! Once the selection has been made, use **Select > Save Selection....**. Name your selection (in this example, *Sky*), and click **OK**.

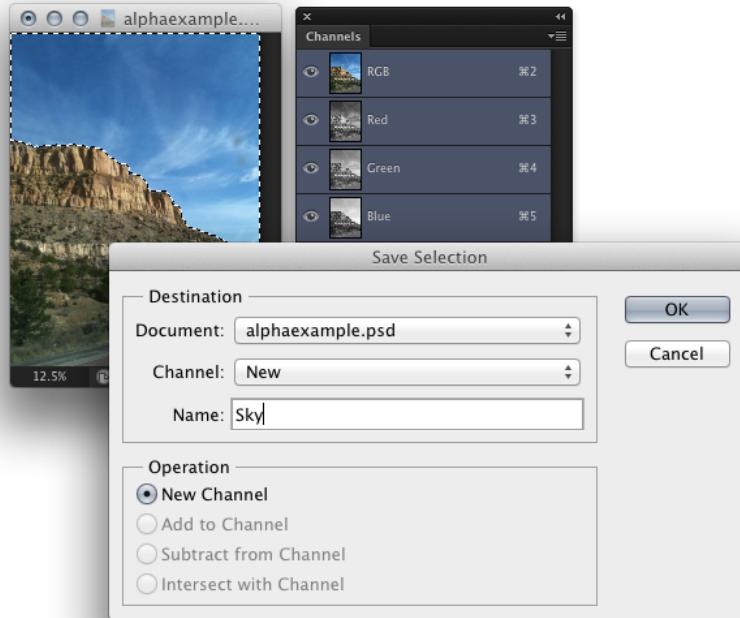


Figure 1.38. Saving the selection to a channel

If you go to the **Channels** panel, you'll see a new selection at the bottom of the list named *Sky* in Figure 1.39; that's your saved selection. Now you can reload your *Sky* selection as many times as you need!

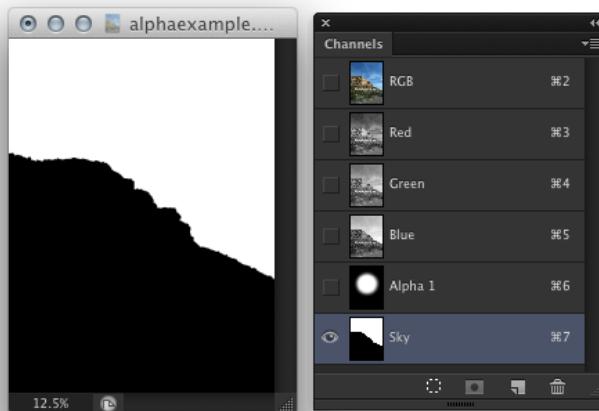


Figure 1.39. The new channel in the **Channels** panel

## The History Panel

The **History** panel is your key to time travel (in Photoshop, anyway). It lists the most recent steps you've made, and allows you to undo your actions by rolling your image back to a previous state. You can set the number of steps stored in the memory by selecting **Photoshop > Preferences > Performance...** (**Edit > Preferences > Performance...** on Windows) and changing the value in the **History States** text box.

Like most of Photoshop's tools, the **History** panel has a set of useful keyboard shortcuts for quick access:

- **Command-Z** (**Ctrl-Z** on Windows) lets you undo and redo the previous step.
- **Command-Option-Z** (**Ctrl-Alt-Z**) steps back through the **History** panel.
- **Command-Shift-Z** (**Ctrl-Shift-Z**) steps forward through the **History** panel.

As only a limited number of history states are available, there may be cases in which you want to save a snapshot of your document so that you can revert back to it later if required. To do so, click on the small triangle on the top-right of the **History** panel and choose **New Snapshot...**, as shown in Figure 1.40. You can save a snapshot of the whole document, the current layer, or merged layers.

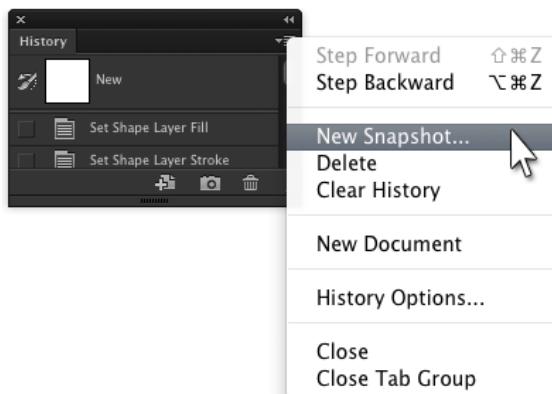


Figure 1.40. Creating a history snapshot

## All Tooled Up

This chapter provided an overview of the Photoshop interface and common tools while explaining basic tasks such as creating new documents and saving files for the Web. You also took a quick tour of handy keyboard shortcuts and other time-saving tips. Even if you're a Photoshop newbie, you now have the tools that you'll need to work with the examples we'll discuss throughout the rest of this book.

# Chapter 2

## Adjusting Images

Often, you'll find yourself working with photos that particularly ordinary. You know what I'm talking about. We've all seen them (you may even have taken some of them!): the overexposed, the underexposed, the "whoops, I forgot to turn on the flash," and the scary red-eye snaps. It's just as well that we've made friends with Photoshop, because it has some handy tools that we can use to salvage those photos.

In the following solutions, I'll introduce you to these tools. The ways in which you use them will depend on the images you work with, though, so feel free to make adjustments so that these techniques work for you.

### Straightening Crooked Images

Photoshop's improved Crop Tool (**C**) allows you to easily straighten images.

#### Solution

With your image open, select the Crop Tool (**C**). Click the **Straighten** button in the options bar, then click and drag along a line that you want to use as the horizontal guide. In the example in Figure 2.1, my photo's horizon line is off-kilter, so I have dragged along the horizon line to mark that as my horizontal guide.

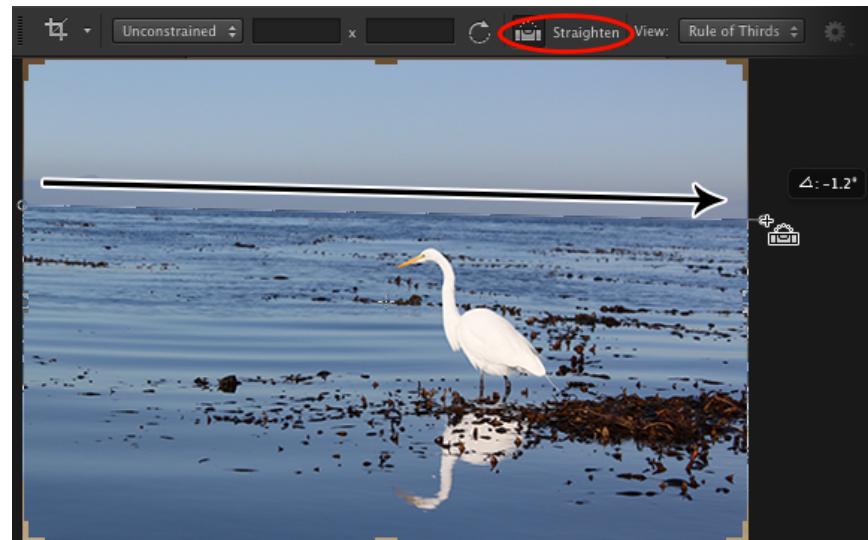


Figure 2.1. Using the **Straighten** option on the horizon line

When you release the mouse, the picture will automatically straighten, as shown in Figure 2.2.



Figure 2.2. Picture straightened and ready for cropping



### Tooltip Information

You may have noticed the little tooltips that periodically pop up—such as the “ $-1.2^\circ$ ” angle tooltip in Figure 2.1. Photoshop provides dimension information in these tooltips to help you know by exactly how much you’re moving an object or how big an object you’re creating.

If you need to, adjust the crop area. Then double-click to apply your crop.

## Lightening Areas on an Image

In this solution, I'm going to add a ray of light to a photograph of a lighthouse by lightening certain areas of the image.

### Solution

Create a new layer on top of the image layer, and give the new layer a fill by selecting **Edit > Fill**. In the dialog box that appears, choose **50% Gray** from the first drop-down menu, set the **Opacity** to **100%**, and click **OK**. In the **Layers** panel, change the mode of the layer to **Vivid Light** by selecting it from the drop-down menu near the top of the panel, as shown in Figure 2.3. Then select the Dodge Tool (**O**) from the toolbox.

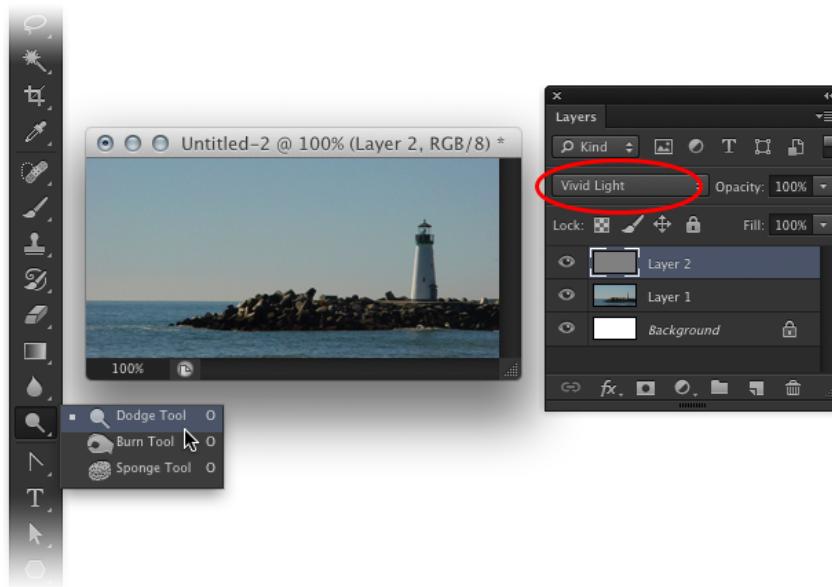


Figure 2.3. Changing the blend mode to **Vivid Light**, then selecting the Dodge Tool

With a medium-sized brush (I used one with a diameter of 80 pixels), make a stroke on the gray layer to simulate a ray of light coming down from the sky. This is illustrated in Figure 2.4.

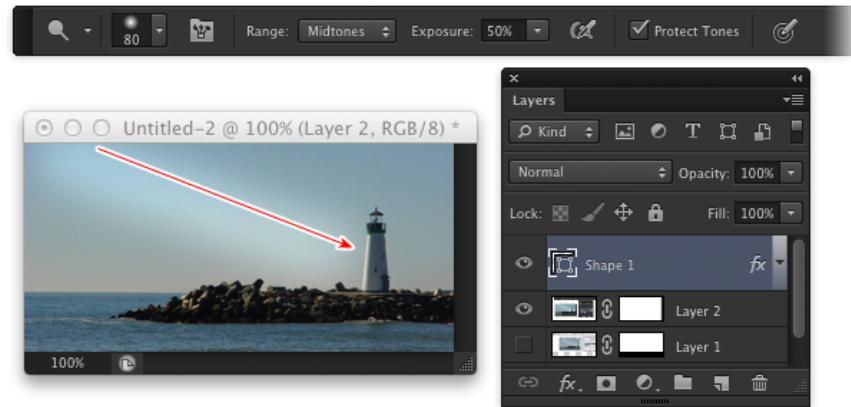


Figure 2.4. Simulating a ray of light

Next, use the Dodge Tool (O) along the surface of the object that is being “lit.” In our case, it’s the left-hand side of the lighthouse, as shown in Figure 2.5.



Figure 2.5. Intensifying the lighting effect on the object

In Figure 2.6, we can compare our glowing lighthouse with the original image. The dodge effect is really cool, if I do say so myself!

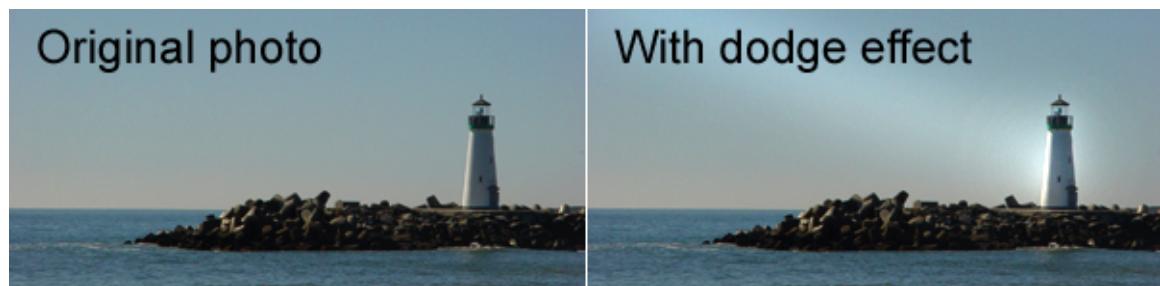


Figure 2.6. Final results achieved with the Dodge Tool

## Discussion

### Vivid Light and Linear Light Blending Modes

Using the **Vivid Light** or **Linear Light** blending modes on the gray layer affects the image underneath, depending on the layer's gray values. Pixels that are lighter than 50% gray lighten the image underneath, while pixels darker than 50% gray darken the image; pixels that remain 50% gray leave the image looking untouched. The difference between the two blending modes is that **Vivid Light** increases or decreases the *contrast* of the “dodged” area on the image, whereas **Linear Light** increases or decreases the *lightness* of that dodged area.

Experiment with these blending modes to determine which one works best for you. Figure 2.7 show the subtle difference between the two blending modes.



Figure 2.7. Contrasting the Vivid Light and Linear Light modes

### Using the Dodge Tool on the Image Layer

If you look at the options bar for the Dodge Tool, you'll see that additional settings are available. To use these settings, you'll need to use the Dodge Tool directly on the image layer. Since this will alter the image permanently, it's a good idea to duplicate the photo layer first so that you have a backup.

## Combining Two Distinct Images

A web graphic that combines two or more images can be enhanced with the use of the match color adjustment.

### Solution

Arrange your Photoshop document so that the two images you want to combine are on separate layers, as shown in Figure 2.8. I'm using the lighthouse photo from an earlier solution and a photo of some clouds. I want to modify the cloud image so that its colors match those of the lighthouse image.

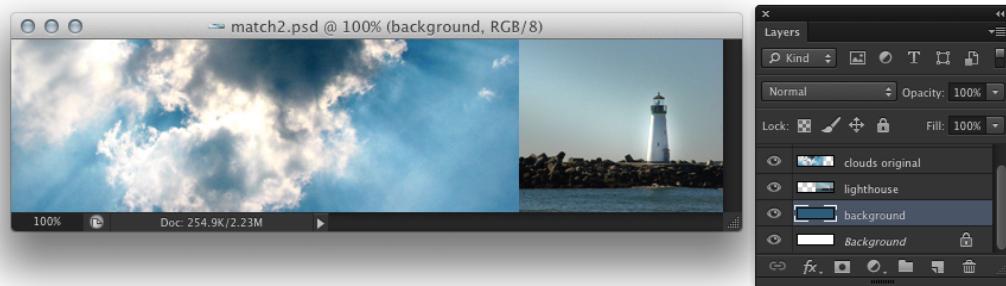


Figure 2.8. Our Photoshop document with images on two layers

First, let's match the colors. Bring up the **Match Color** dialog box by clicking on the cloud layer in the **Layers** panel, and then going into **Image > Adjustments > Match Color**. In the dialog box that appears, select your currently open document from the **Source** drop-down, and select the source layer (which is the lighthouse layer, in this case) from the **Layer** drop-down, as shown in Figure 2.9.

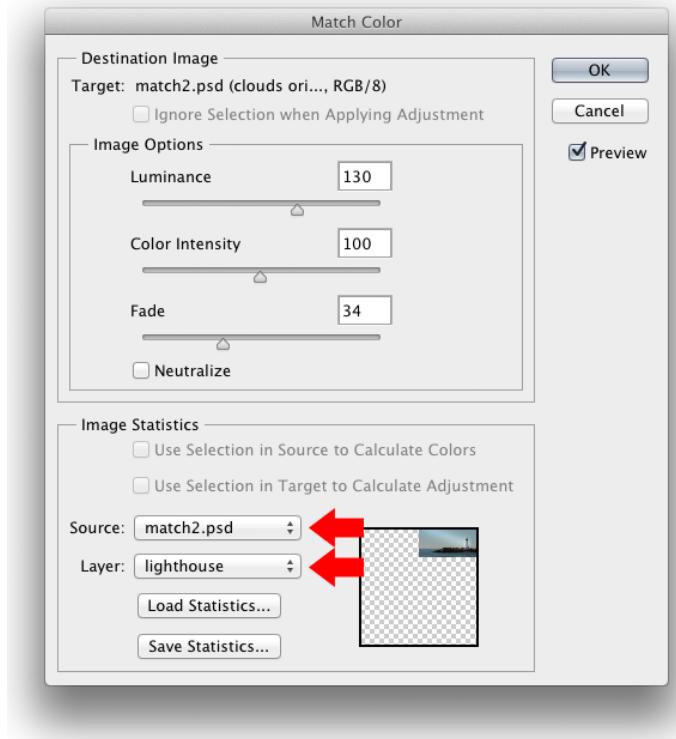


Figure 2.9. Selecting your source and layer in the **Match Color** dialog box

With the **Preview** checkbox ticked, adjust the other settings until the color tones for both images match as closely as possible. Click **OK** to apply the changes.

Now that the two images have similar color tones, it's easy to combine them.

In Figure 2.10, I've used a layer mask on the cloud layer to create a fade effect. (For more details on how to use layer masks to combine two images, see the full book.)



Figure 2.10. Our final image employing a fade effect

## Adjusting Dark Shadows and Bright Highlights

Photoshop has a nifty little feature that helps you fix photos containing dark shadows and bright highlights.

### Solution

The photograph of the quilt in Figure 2.11 was taken in partial shade. Notice how the quilt appears washed out in areas where the sunlight fell.



Figure 2.11. Our original photograph is a bit patchy

Let's recover some detail from those shadowed areas. Select **Image > Adjustments > Shadow/Highlight**. In the dialog box that appears, check the **Show More Options** checkbox and adjust the values for **Shadows** and **Highlights**. If the shadowed areas start to look too gray or dull, increase the **Color Correction** amount. Click **OK** once you're happy with the effect.

For additional enhancement, try adding a levels or curves adjustment layer.

Figure 2.12 compares the original with the adjusted photo. The difference is subtle, but the adjustment allows us to see more of the detail on the quilt and bolder colors.

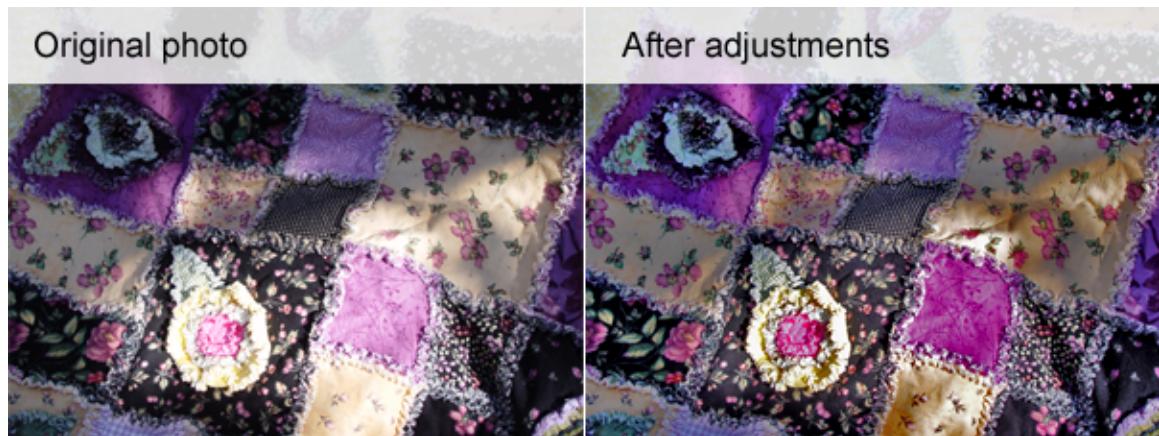


Figure 2.12. Richer color and detail after image adjustments



### Knowing the Limits

While we've come to expect great things from our good friend Photoshop, it does have its limitations. Unfortunately, even Photoshop won't be able to rescue you from the perils of misguided photography. When using this solution in particular, bear in mind that Photoshop will probably be unable to recover detail from images that are too under- or over-exposed.

## Photo Op

In this chapter, we explored the many features that Photoshop provides for adjusting images. We learned about the powerful levels and curves commands, how to add adjustment layers, channel mixing, how to use filters to repair images, and much, much more. With the skills we've learned in this chapter, we weave our photography into gold, covering the traces of our own embarrassing point-and-shoot blunders, as well as those of others! In the next chapter, we'll explore the tools and effects that can help us to manipulate and use images for web design.

# Chapter 3

## Designing a Website

Up to this point, we've covered solutions for creating different graphical and type elements. You've probably amassed quite a collection of techniques by now, and you may be wondering what you're going to do with them all ...

### Before Firing up Photoshop

Before you start your mockup magic in Photoshop, there are a few matters to consider:

- Will you be using a grid? If yes, take a look at the solution in the section called "Setting up a Grid in Photoshop".
- Will your design be responsive; that is, will you be using media queries or JavaScript to reformat your site for different browser window sizes? If the answer is yes, wireframing and sketching out your site will be even more important.
- Which browsers do you have to target? If you're free to target just the more recent browsers, you can achieve many of the graphic effects without needing to save tons of web images in Photoshop; for example, rounded corners, gradients, and shadows can all be achieved with CSS3. But if you need to think about backwards-compatibility with older browsers such as IE8, you may want to create some web graphics for those effects. Pay particular attention to the section called "Creating Web-optimized Images from a Photoshop Site Mockup".

Thinking through these questions ahead of time will assist you in determining which solutions will be best for your particular project.

# Setting up a Grid in Photoshop

If you're using a grid framework to help determine your layout, you may customize Photoshop's grid dimensions to make it easier to create and align your layout to the grid.

## Solution

In this example, I'm going to use the popular 960 grid system.<sup>1</sup> The base of the grid is 12 columns, with each column being 60 pixels wide with a left and right margin of 10 pixels (so there are gutters of 20 pixels in between the columns), as you can see along the top of Figure 3.1. The columns can then be combined in different ways depending on how many layout columns you want to have. In Figure 3.1, you can see what a two-column layout might look like using the grid system, or a one-column layout below that.

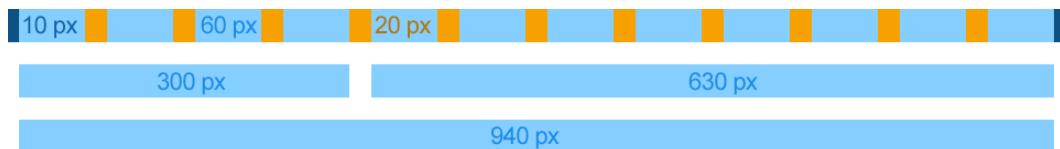


Figure 3.1. 960 grid system

If you were to have just one column in this grid, the column itself would be 940 pixels wide with a 10-pixel margin on each side. So, to start out, create a new document that is 940 pixels wide and however high you want your mockup to be (I've set mine at 750 pixels).

Go to **Photoshop > Preferences > Guides, Grid & Slices...** (**Edit > Preferences > Guides, Grid & Slices...** on Windows). In the **Grid** section, set the **Gridline Every** value to 80 pixels, and the **Subdivisions** to 4, as seen in Figure 3.2. Now click **OK**.

<sup>1</sup> <http://960.gs>

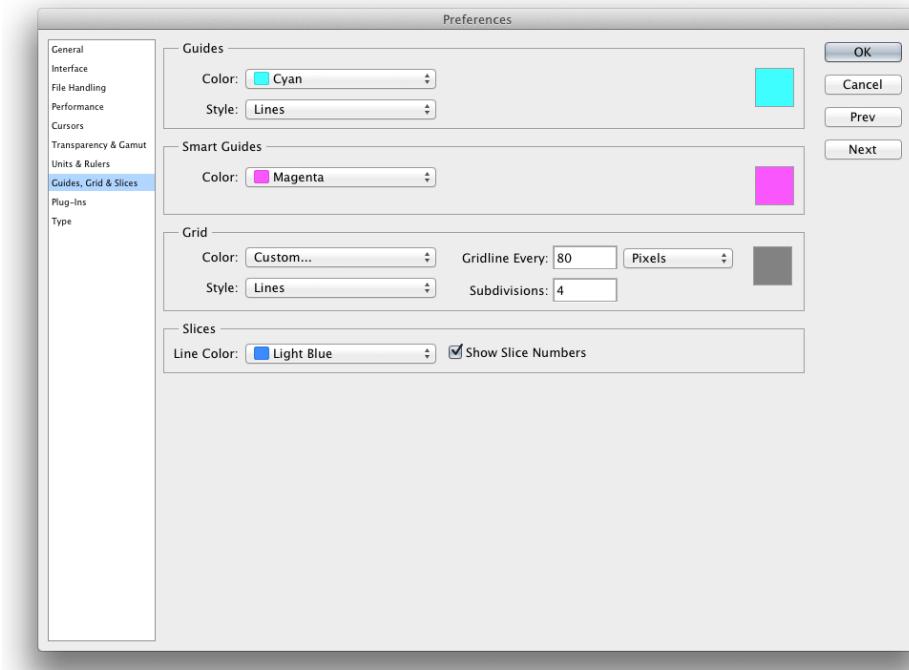


Figure 3.2. Setting up the grid dimensions

Go to **View > Show > Grid**. Photoshop will overlay the grid on your document. As you can see in Figure 3.3, each main gridline is set at every 80 pixels with smaller subdivisions set every 20 pixels. This allows our 960 grid system to match up perfectly with the divisions. You may show or hide the gridlines by using the keyboard shortcut **Command-'** (**Ctrl-'** on Windows).

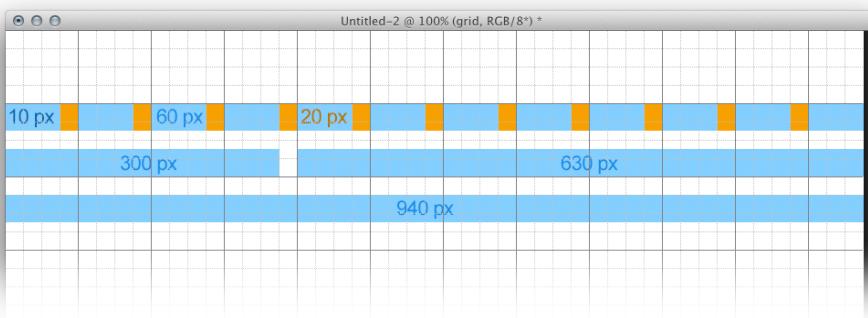


Figure 3.3. Showing the gridlines

To make your grid even more useful, go to **View > Snap To > Grid**. This will allow objects to automatically align themselves to the grid, saving you from having to zoom in and painstakingly move your objects to match up with the gridlines.

If you want to modify the size of the canvas to show more of the background, add on 80 pixels to either side; this will enable the main gridlines to line up nicely with your content columns. In this case, I want to extend my canvas to 940 pixels + 80 pixels + 80 pixels, or 1100-pixels wide.

Go to **Image > Canvas Size...** to apply the new dimensions, as in Figure 3.4.

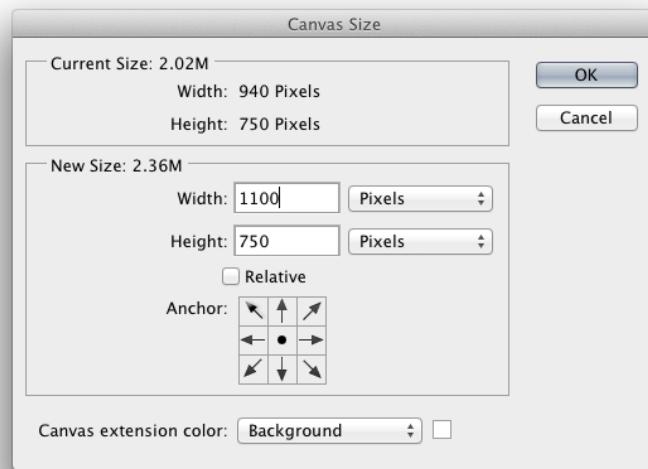


Figure 3.4. Making the canvas larger

This allows me to make a mockup that shows the background around the edges of the content columns, as in Figure 3.5. Your new document is ready to be used.

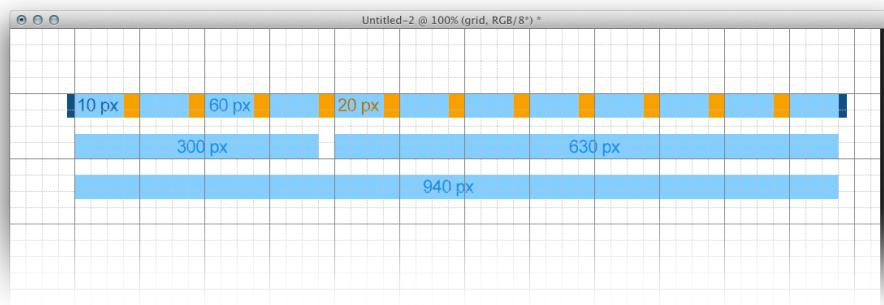


Figure 3.5. Extended canvas

## Creating Web-optimized Images from a Photoshop Site Mockup

In this solution, we'll talk about how to generate web-optimized images from a site mockup you've created in Photoshop. There are two main methods: the crop-and-save method and the slice method.

You may find that, like me, you'll use both methods in the same project. I'll also show you how to create a sprite image file.

## Solution

### The Crop-and-save Method

The concept of the crop-and-save method is simple:

1. Duplicate your web design mockup image.
2. Delete the unnecessary layers.
3. Use the Crop Tool (C) or the trim command to chop out a slice for the image you need to optimize.
4. Export the optimized file.

(Alternatively, you can create a new blank document, drag and drop or copy the layers from your original mockup image into the new document, then crop or trim the new document so that it fits tightly around the edges of your layers.)

First, duplicate your image by selecting **Image > Duplicate....** In the **Duplicate Image** dialog box that appears, type in a name for the image you're creating, and click **OK**. I'm working on isolating the product image.

In the **Layers** panel, select all the unwanted layers and click the **Delete layer** icon at the bottom of the panel. In Figure 3.6, I'm keeping the layers that make up the product image and removing everything else.

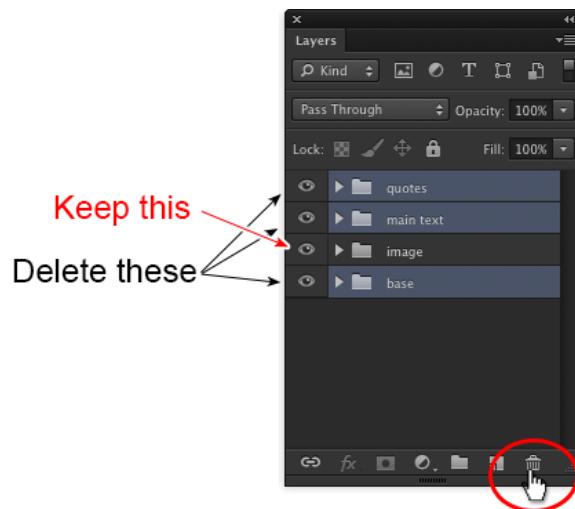


Figure 3.6. Deleting unnecessary layers

Depending on your image, you may either want to use the **Trim...** command (found under the **Image** menu to remove empty pixels, or the Crop Tool (C) to limit your file to the pixels you want to display.

To trim the image, go to **Image > Trim...** and select **Transparent Pixels** in the dialog box shown in Figure 3.7, then click **OK**. Photoshop will crop out the transparent pixels, preserving your image pixels and thus making your document boundaries as tight as possible.

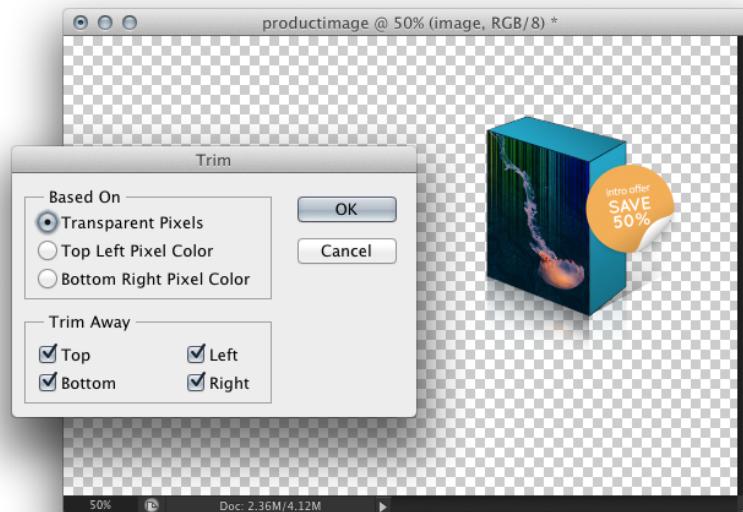


Figure 3.7. Trimming the image

As an example of using the Crop Tool instead, refer to Figure 3.8, where I've duplicated the image to save the top page gradient. After deleting the other layers, I'm still left with a large image after trimming.

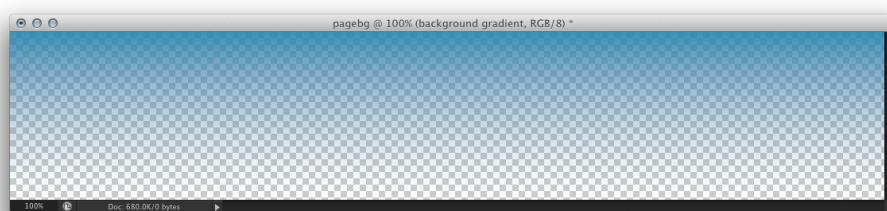


Figure 3.8. Using the trim command still results in a large image

Now use the Crop Tool (**C**) to crop out the sides of the image, as demonstrated in Figure 3.9. You'll end up with a narrow gradient image that can tile in the browser. Apply the crop command by double-clicking within the boundaries of the crop area.

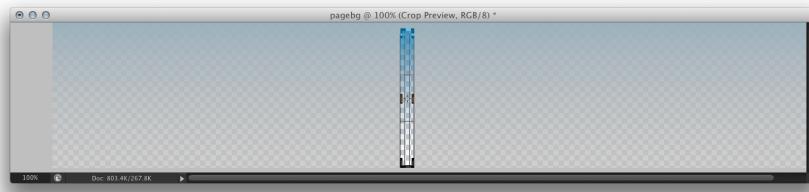


Figure 3.9. Cropping the gradient

After you've trimmed or cropped it, save the file. We're now ready to optimize the file for the Web. Select **File > Save for Web...**, optimize your image using the settings in the **Save for Web** dialog box, and save your image.

## The Slice Method

The slice method works nicely with web design elements that involve lots of layers, layer styles, or integrated design elements. For example, imagine you have a box with rounded corners and a drop shadow that you'd like to cut into a top, bottom, and middle repeating image. If you did this using the crop-and-save method, any future changes that you made to the box would involve modifying each individual box piece, or going through the crop-and-save process again. Using the slice method keeps your box intact in the one document, where you can define slices to cut it into the necessary pieces. This way, you'll just need to resave the slices if you modify the box.

In Figure 3.10, I've used the crop-and-save method to isolate the quote box. Now we'll use the slice method to create the web-optimized images that we need to create the box.

Select the Slice Tool (C), which you can find in the fly-out menu of the Crop Tool. Create a slice simply by drawing a rectangular area in your layout document.

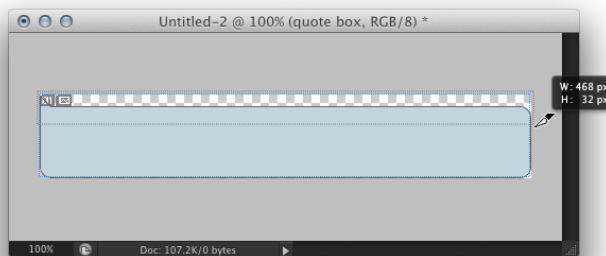


Figure 3.10. Creating a slice

Move your mouse over the slice after you've drawn it. The Slice Tool will temporarily turn into the Slice Select Tool (C). Double-click inside the slice to bring up the **Slice Options** dialog box. Give

your slice a name; this will become the filename of your final optimized image. Here, I've called my slice "quotebox-top."

Create slices for the other elements you need, and save them. In this case, we just need one more for the bottom portion of the quote box, shown in Figure 3.11.

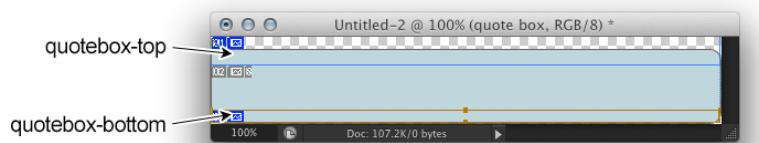


Figure 3.11. Creating further slices for our quote box

Now go to **File > Save for Web....** With the Slice Select Tool (C)—highlighted in Figure 3.12—click on a slice and, if you need to, adjust the optimization settings just as you would when optimizing any web image (refer to the section called “Saving Files for the Web” in Chapter 1). Repeat for the other slices.

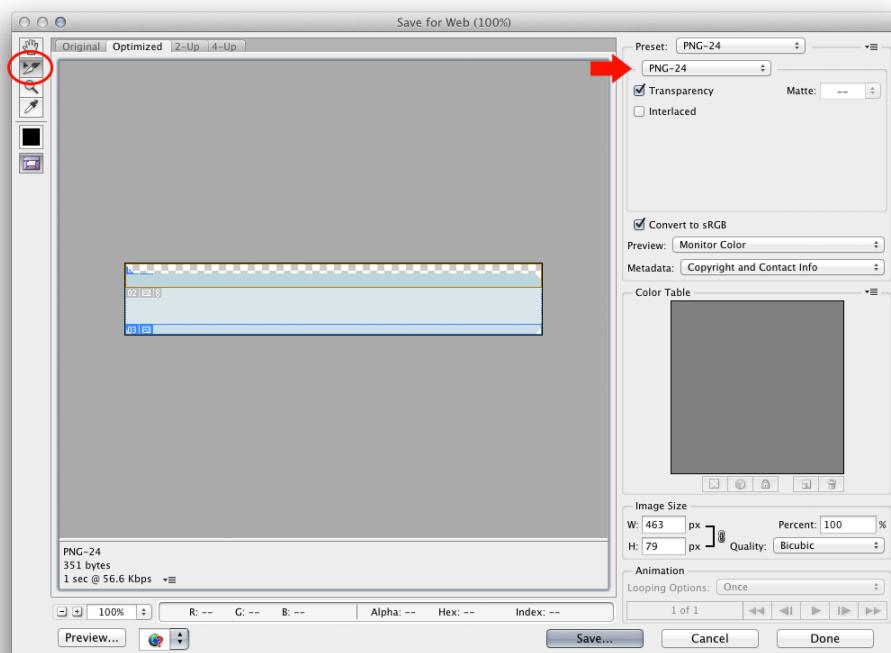


Figure 3.12. Optimizing our slices

Click **Save...**, and then change the **Slices** drop-down to “All User Slices.” If you want, try modifying the **Settings**. For instance, the images will be saved into a new subfolder called “images” by default, but you may want them to be saved somewhere else.

Figure 3.13 shows the web-optimized images that I've saved.

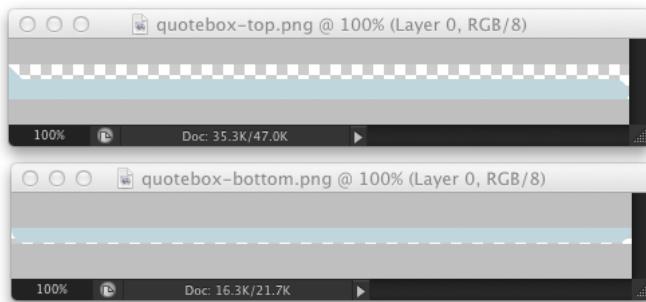


Figure 3.13. Web-optimized images using the slice method

## Creating a Sprite Image

Sprite images are used by web designers to combine smaller background image elements into one file in order to minimize server requests. While many designers use sprite-generating tools, you can also use Photoshop to create your own. Here's how to do it.

Create a new document that's big enough to hold the various background image elements. In this case, I'll be combining my logo image and button images because none of them repeat.

Open your website mockup document, if you're yet to open it, and position the windows side by side. Start dragging and dropping layers from your mockup document into the new sprite document by clicking on the layer thumbnails and dragging them on top of the new document, as illustrated in Figure 3.14. You may select multiple layers by **Command**-clicking (**Ctrl**-clicking on Windows), and drag them over all at once.



Figure 3.14. Dragging and dropping layers into the sprite document

Figure 3.15 shows what our sprite file looks like after dragging over all the layers (I've added a black background so that you can see the logo layer more easily).

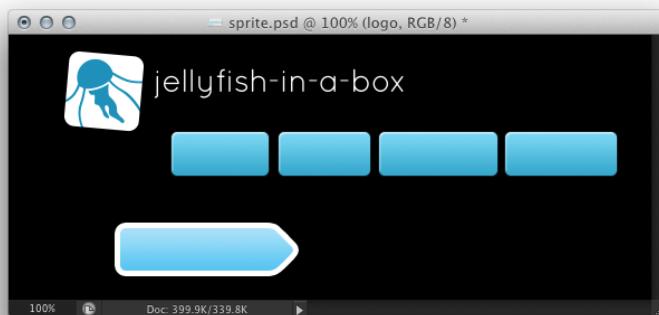


Figure 3.15. All relevant layers added to our sprite document

Now, move the layers so that they're as close as possible to the edges of the document and to each other without overlapping. Trim your image (**Image > Trim...**) to crop out transparent pixels and make the file as small as possible. Then, go to **File > Save for Web...** and optimize for the Web.



### Smarter Positioning, Faster Coding

I like to position my sprite objects so that the upper left of the object is positioned from the top and left of the document by a multiple of ten. For example, in my sprite image, shown with measurements in Figure 3.16, I positioned the navigation buttons exactly 80 pixels down from the top of the file, just enough to put them past the logo. Each button was then positioned from the left at 0 pixels, 90 pixels, 180 pixels, and 290 pixels. When I'm creating my CSS file, I can now easily specify the background position of the graphic without too much guesswork.

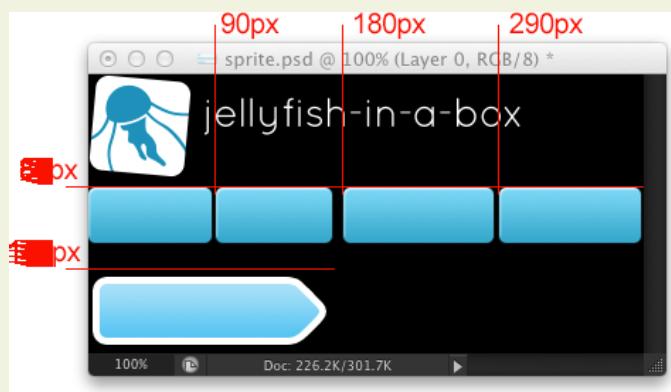


Figure 3.16. Positioning sprite objects on the page

If you'd like to try positioning your sprite elements this way, move your layer with the Move Tool (V) so that it starts out at the upper left of the document. Then hold the **Shift** key and use your right

and/or down arrow buttons to move your layer in increments of 10 pixels until it's no longer overlapping other objects.

Figure 3.17 shows all the created files that we'll need to optimize for the website, as well as the filenames of the actual web images.

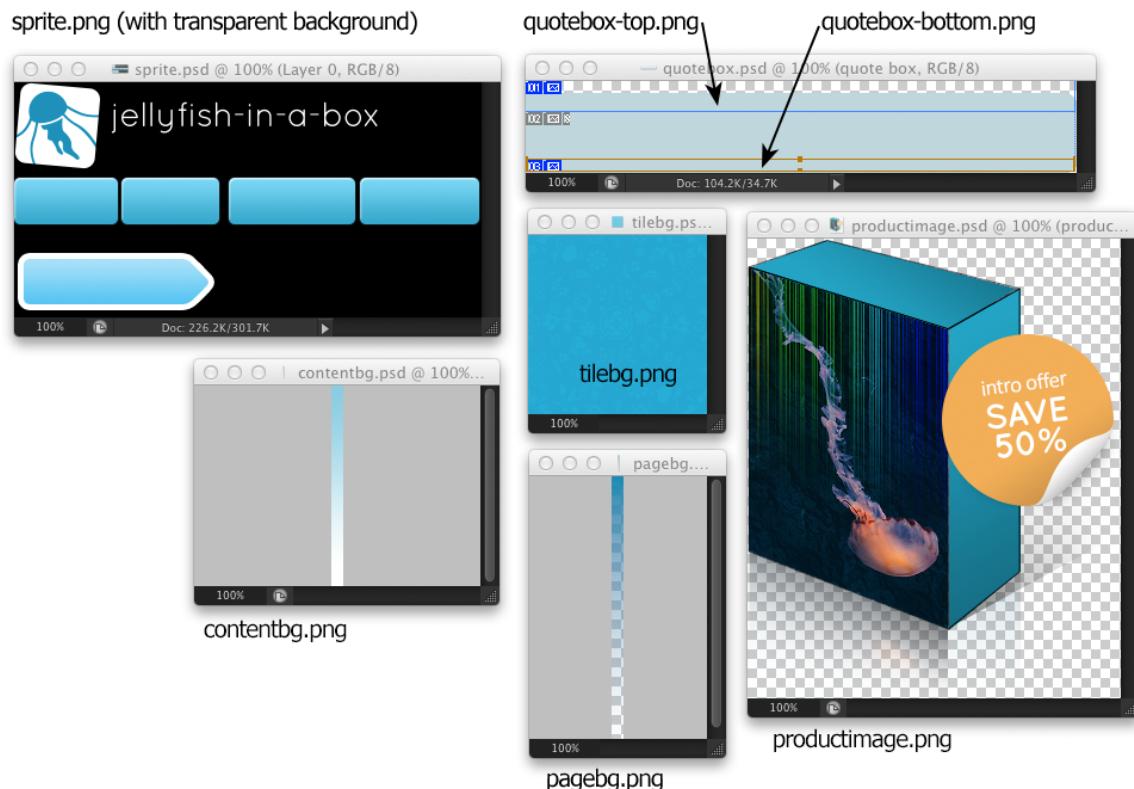


Figure 3.17. Our web image files

## Taking It to the Web

In this chapter, we learned how to tie graphical elements into a cohesive website mockup. I showed you how to slice and dice your layout comps using the Slice Tool and the crop-and-save method, and how to optimize and save elements to use on your web pages. I also explained a few other tips and tricks along the way to help you convert your Photoshop mockups into fully-fledged websites.

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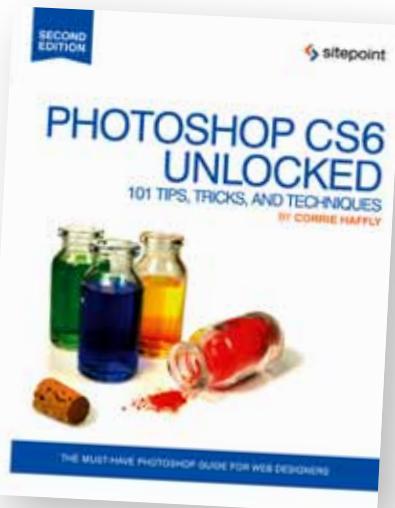
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**Corrie HAFFLY**

Corrie Haffly graduated from UC Davis with a degree in math, but found web design to be more interesting. She created her first simple HTML page in 1998, after which she began working for Advantrics LLC in 2000, where she brought its PixelMill and John Galt's Templates brands to the top of the web template market. Corrie went freelance from 2004 to 2010, before joining Synteractive as their lead designer.

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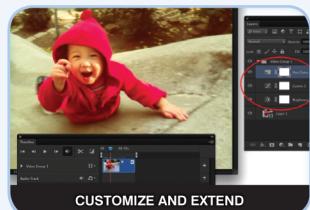
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