



THE PHOTOSHOP ANTHOLOGY

101 WEB DESIGN TIPS, TRICKS & TECHNIQUES

BY CORRIE HAFFLY



THE ULTIMATE PHOTOSHOP BOOK FOR WEB DESIGNERS

The Photoshop Anthology (Sample Chapter)

Thank you for downloading this sample chapter of Corrie Haffly's book, *The Photoshop Anthology*, published by SitePoint.

This excerpt includes the Summary of Contents, Information about the Author, Editors and SitePoint, Table of Contents, Preface, a sample chapter from the book, and the index.

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THE PHOTOSHOP ANTHOLOGY

101 WEB DESIGN TIPS, TRICKS & TECHNIQUES

BY CORRIE HAFFLY

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About SitePoint

SitePoint specializes in publishing fun, practical, and easy-to-understand content for web professionals. Visit <http://www.sitepoint.com/> to access our books, newsletters, articles, and community forums.

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Preface

This book is a resource for web designers who want to use Photoshop to create better-looking web graphics.

Unlike the many other web-related Photoshop books on the market, this book does not encourage you to use Photoshop's generated HTML code, which, as of this writing, does not use semantic markup or conform to W3C guidelines. I view Photoshop as only one of many tools in the web development process; knowledge of how to actually *code* a web site using HTML, CSS, and other web languages is equally important but is not covered in this book, which is strictly about *using Photoshop to create graphics for web sites*. I encourage you to look into the many other resources, both in online and book form, that will teach you the basics of web development if you need to pick up skills in those areas.

Unlike other Photoshop books geared towards web designers, this book comes with downloadable files that you can also create yourself, following my instructions! Many of the glossy, colorful books already on the market have stunning web graphics, but provide them in nearly-complete source files that are designed to help you learn a basic principle in Photoshop, but do not actually show you how to create those graphic effects yourself. This book was written to give you some of the *building blocks and techniques* that will help you to create your own cool web graphics. There's no need to dedicate several hours each week to work through an extensive "project"—the anthology format of this title allows you to quickly look up a task or effect you're curious about, and accomplish it immediately, following clearly outlined instructions.

There are hundreds of online tutorials about creating various web graphic effects in Photoshop. This book shows you how to create many of those same effects, but most solutions include a "Discussion" section that goes beyond the "step-by-step" stage to explain some of the *concepts behind the solution*, enabling you to understand more of how Photoshop works so that you can apply that knowledge in other situations. One of the most valuable solutions in this book, and which can be found at the beginning of Chapter 8, gives you a conceptual "road map" of how to use Photoshop in the web design process and illustrates it with an example that combines many of the techniques explained in earlier chapters (see Chapter 8, *Designing a Web Site*).

Because this book is focused towards web designers, I cover only some of the basic and intermediate tasks related to photo adjustments and retouching. If this area interests you, there are many excellent books, geared towards professional photographers and artists, which provide more advanced instruction than does this title.

My primary hope is that this book will help you to build up the skills and knowledge you need to become comfortable and confident while using Photoshop to create web graphics. Good luck, and have fun!

Who Should Read this Book?

This book is ideal for all web designers working with Photoshop: if you're new to the application, there's enough beginner material here to give you a great grounding in the basics, but if you've got a bit more experience up your sleeve, there's coverage of a multitude of advanced tutorials for you to get your designs looking beautiful.

What Version of Photoshop do I Need?

Most of the techniques in the book will work regardless of the version of Adobe Photoshop that you're using. However, the book is intended for web designers using Photoshop CS2, and there are some solutions that make use of the newer features in this version. Some of the shortcuts differ between versions of Photoshop, so keep this in mind if you're working with an older version.

What's in this Book?

Chapter 1: 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.

Chapter 2: Basic Skills

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

Chapter 3: Creating Buttons

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

Chapter 4: Creating Backgrounds

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

Chapter 5: Working with Text

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

Chapter 6: 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!

Chapter 7: Manipulating Images

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

Chapter 8: Designing a Web Site

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.

Chapter 9: 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 and ImageReady to create animations.

The Book's Web Site

Located at <http://www.sitepoint.com/books/photoshop1/>, the web site supporting this book will give you access to the following facilities.

The File Archive

The file archive is a downloadable ZIP archive that contains all of the examples presented in the book as PSD files. It contains a file for every example covered, including original photos used and final versions. You can get it from <http://www.sitepoint.com/books/photoshop1/archive.php>.

Updates and Errata

The Corrections and Typos page on the book's web site will always have the latest information about known typographical and code errors, and necessary updates. Visit it at <http://www.sitepoint.com/books/photoshop1/errata.php>.

The SitePoint Forums

While we've made every attempt to anticipate any questions you may have, and answer them in this book, there's no way that *any* book could teach you everything you'll ever need to know about using Photoshop. So, if you have a question about anything in this book, or about the implementation of the techniques you've learned here in other projects, the best place to go for a quick, helpful and friendly answer is <http://www.sitepoint.com/forums/>—SitePoint's vibrant and knowledgeable community.

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The SitePoint Tech Times covers the latest news, product releases, trends, tips, and techniques for all technical aspects of web development. The long-running SitePoint Tribune is a biweekly digest of the business and moneymaking aspects of the Web. Whether you're a freelance developer looking for tips to score that dream contract, or a marketer striving to keep abreast of changes to the major search engines, this is the newsletter for you. The SitePoint Design View is a monthly compilation of the best in web design. Covering everything from new CSS layout methods to subtle Photoshop techniques, the newsletter delivers a wealth of practical information compiled by SitePoint's chief designer.

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If you can't find an answer through the forums, or you wish to contact us for any other reason, the best place to write is books@sitepoint.com. We have a friendly and helpful email support team available to help you with your inquiries, and if our staff are unable to answer your question, they send it straight to the author. Suggestions for improvement, as well as notices of any mistakes you may find, are especially welcome.

1

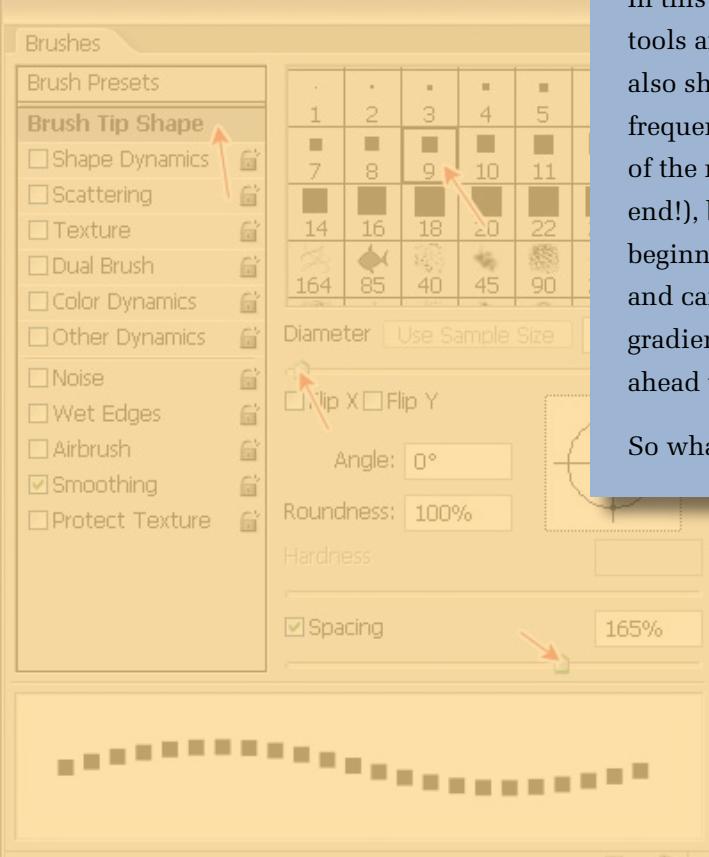
Getting Started with Photoshop

You've heard of Photoshop, right? Of course you have—you wouldn't be reading this book otherwise! You've probably heard of Photoshop's sidekick, ImageReady, too, but you might not be quite sure of what it does or where it fits in.

Photoshop and ImageReady are two 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 these two programs.

In this introductory chapter, I'll cover some of the basic tools and tasks that we'll draw on in the later chapters. I'll also share some of the shortcuts and time-savers that I use frequently. This chapter won't give you an exhaustive review of the many things that Photoshop can do (where would it end!), but it should provide the bare bones that will help get beginners 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!



The Photoshop Workspace

Photoshop's "out of the box" workspace consists of the following components:

■ menu bar

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

■ options bar

The **options bar** sits beneath the menu bar and holds contextualized options for different tools. It also contains the **palette well**, where you can "dock" palettes.

■ toolbox

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

■ palettes

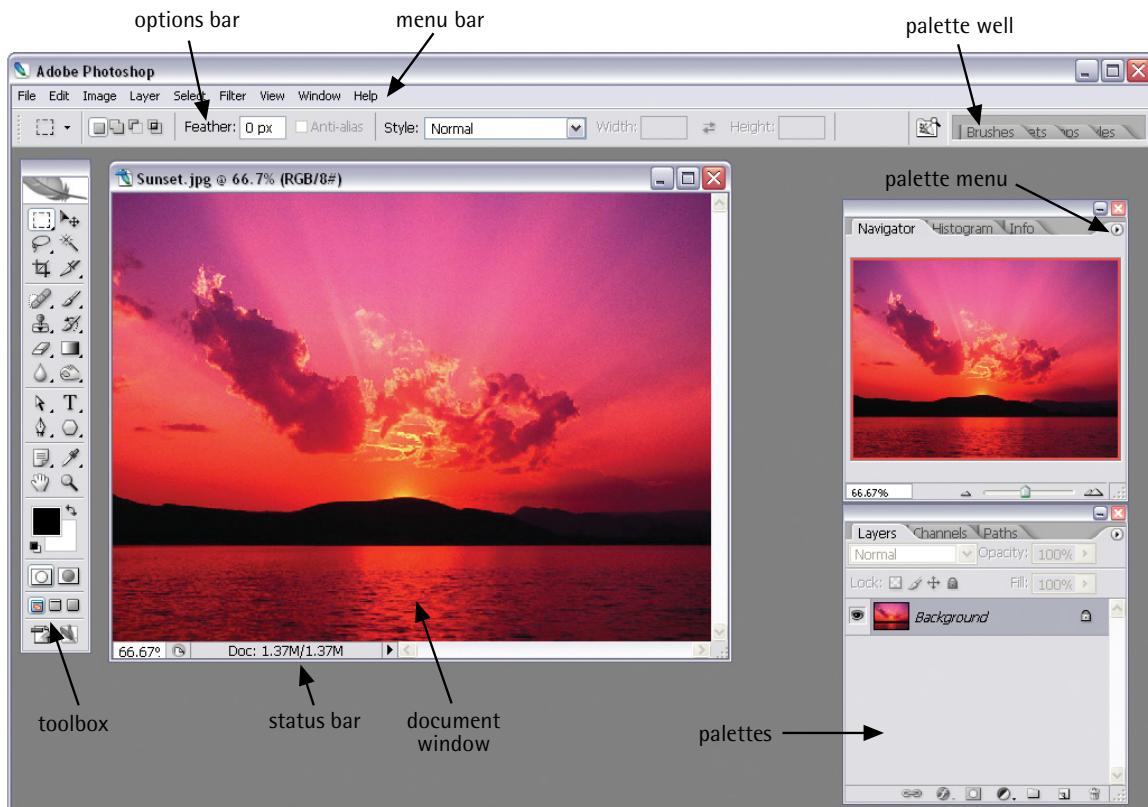
Individual "panes" that hold information or options for working with your file, known as **palettes**, float on the right-hand side. Each palette is labeled with a tab, and can be minimized, closed, grouped with other palettes, or dragged to the palette well. In the example at the top of the next page, the Navigator palette contains a thumbnail of the image that allows you to zoom in or out of the image quickly, and to change the part of the image displayed on the screen.

■ document windows

Each open document has its own **document window** with a **status bar** along the bottom. The status bar sits to the right of the zoom percentage displayed in the bottom left-hand corner, and displays information that's specific to the document.

**TIP 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 and words for things. A comp (short for "composite") refers to a mockup of the final solution that a designer has in mind. Traditionally, "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 he or she decides to proceed. You might even hear it being used as a verb: "comping" is the process of creating that mockup site.



The Photoshop workspace

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, and even add color to your menu items. If you wanted, you could also assign new or different keyboard shortcuts to menu commands (which I don't recommend 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 palette menus.

■ moving the options bar

If you want to move the options bar, you can do so by clicking on 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 gray area at the top of it and dragging it around.

■ rearranging palettes

There are many ways to rearrange your palettes. You might want to separate a palette from its palette group, and move it into another group. You can do this by dragging the palette tab out of its original group and into the new group. You might also decide to drag some of your palette tabs into the palette well, and close the rest. To display a palette that has been closed, go to **Window** and select the palette 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), and 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, or the version number of the file. To do this, click on the arrow icon next to the status bar, select **Show** and choose the information you’d like to see.



Changing the status bar

Saving your Customized Workspace

As you become more proficient with Photoshop, you may discover that you use certain sets of palettes for different types of projects, and that there are some palettes that you don’t use at all. Photoshop allows you to save and load different

workspaces—different arrangements of palettes, menus, and even different keyboard shortcuts—to help you work more efficiently.

After you've customized your workspace to your satisfaction, select **Window > Workspace > Save 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.

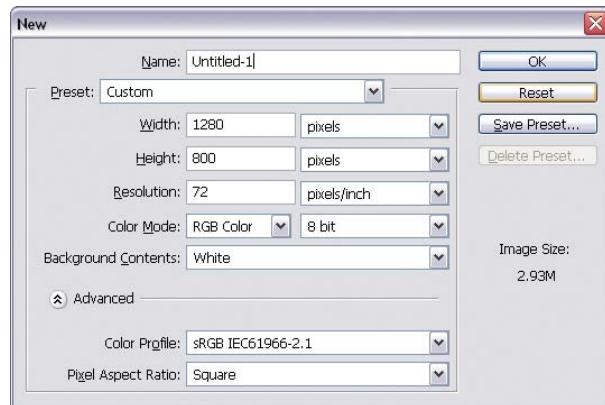
Working in Photoshop

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 **Ctrl-N** on a PC or **Command-N** on a Mac.

The **New** dialog box will appear, where you can specify the document size and other settings.



The **New** dialog box

Opening Files

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

Saving Files

Save a file by selecting **File > Save**, or pressing **Ctrl-S** (**Command-S** on a Mac). For a newly-created document, this will save your work in *Photoshop Document* (PSD)

TIP Snappy Presets

If you're designing for a web site with a minimum screen size of 800×600 pixels, I'd recommend you start with a 750×550 pixel document. The smaller dimensions give you a better estimate of your actual screen area after you take into account scroll bars and menu bars. Also, be sure to set the resolution at 72dpi to reflect the actual screen resolution.

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 will be able to load your *Web Page* settings from the Preset list.

format. If you would prefer to save a copy of the document, you can use **File > Save As** or pressing ***Ctrl-Shift-S*** (***Command-Shift-S*** on a Mac) instead.

Saving Files for the Web

Photoshop files themselves can't be embedded into a web page. You will 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 “jiff” or “giff” depending on which side of the tracks you grew up) 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 below.

■ **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 on the opposite page. Images saved in JPEG format are compressed, which means that image information will actually be lost, causing the image to degrade in quality.

■ **PNG**

The **PNG** format (pronounced “ping”) is similar to the GIF format in that it supports transparency and works best with solid-color images like the logo shown to the right, but it’s superior to the GIF format as it has the ability to



Example of an image that should be saved as GIF or PNG

TIP 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 gray area behind the document windows. If your shortcuts aren't working, check that you are clicking on an empty spot on the work area, and not in one of the document windows or Photoshop tools! Alas, Photoshop on a Mac does not have a work area, so Mac users won't get to enjoy the goodness of double-click shortcuts.

support true levels of transparency for colored areas. Transparent PNGs are currently not in widespread use on the Web because older versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer do not support them; however, they're often used in Macromedia Flash movies. 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 (which allows for millions of colors as well as variable transparency).

To save for the Web in Photoshop, select **File > Save for Web...** or press **Ctrl-Alt-Shift-S** (**Command-Option-Shift-S** on a Mac). This will bring up the **Save For Web** dialog box shown overleaf, which will show you a preview of the image that will 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 your result, click **Save** and give your image a filename.

If you tried the above 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 make the biggest difference in the final image.

■ dither amount and type (No Dither, Diffusion, Pattern, Noise)

This setting has nothing to do with being nervous or agitated (although it's quite possible that you may have been a few moments ago!). 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.



Example of an image that should be saved as JPEG

■ transparency

If you want transparent areas in your graphic, check this box. We'll look more closely at transparency in Chapter 2.

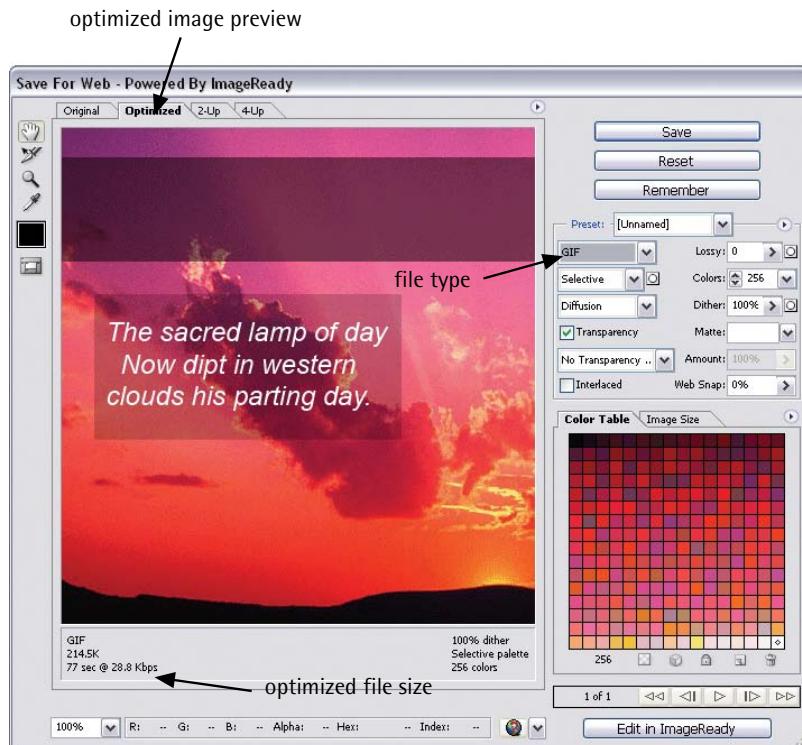
■ matte color

For transparent images, the matte color is used to help blend the edges of your image into the background of the web page. For non-transparent images, the matte color defines the background color of the image. Using matte color with transparent images is covered in more detail in Chapter 2.

JPEG

■ quality

Changing the value in the **Quality** drop-down box 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.



Save For Web dialog box

Saving Files for the Web in ImageReady

You can optimize images for the Web in ImageReady using the **Optimize** palette, shown at right. Set the file type and options in the **Optimize** palette in advance, and when you're ready to export your web image, select **File > Save Optimized** or press **Ctrl-Alt-S** (**Command-Option-S** on a Mac). ImageReady will save the image based on the settings that you've defined.

TIP Why Two Tools?

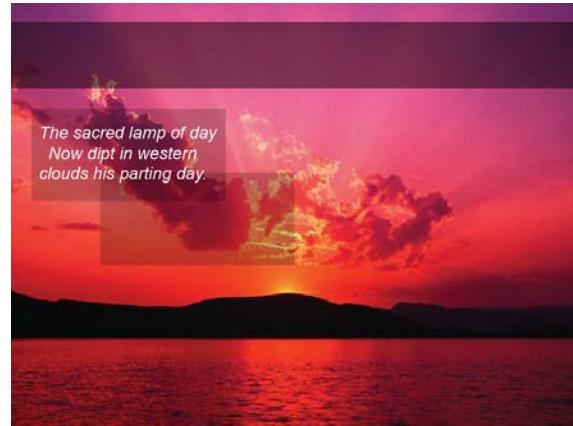
Considering that it's possible to save files for the Web in Photoshop, it's perfectly reasonable for you to wonder why ImageReady even exists! While it's true that both programs can perform many of the same tasks, there are certain things that ImageReady can do that Photoshop can't, for example, creating animated GIFs. ImageReady also makes web-specific tasks easier, and since it's a smaller program that doesn't contain the full suite of Photoshop effects, it loads more quickly than Photoshop. As you work through this book you'll come to learn which tool is more suitable for particular tasks.



Optimize palette in ImageReady

Photoshop Layers

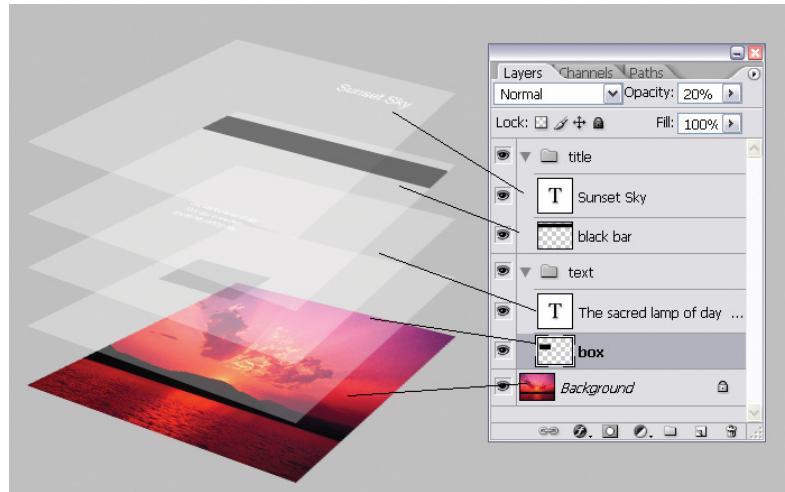
Layers are a powerful feature of Photoshop that allow you to work on one part of an image without disturbing the rest of it. While the concept of layers may seem intimidating at first, once you get the hang of using layers you'll wonder how you ever survived without them! The examples on the next page show how the layers in the Photoshop document to the right stack together.



Layered Photoshop document

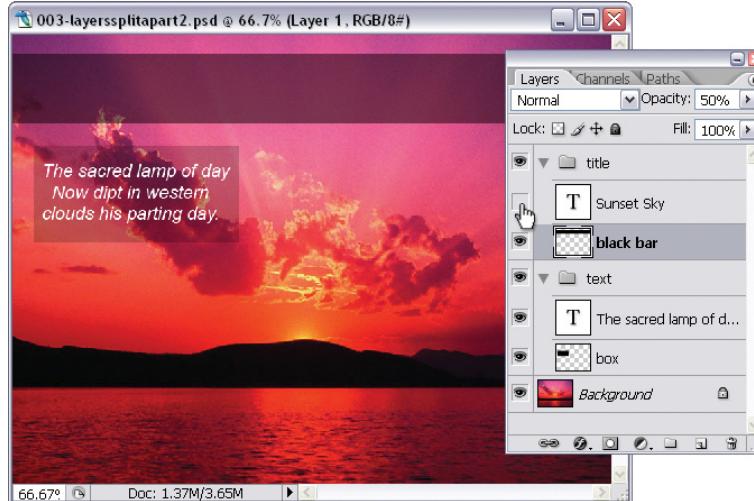
The transparent parts of any layer, shown by the checkered grid, allow the layers beneath that layer to show through.

You can show and hide each layer in an image by clicking on its corresponding eye icon in the **Layers** palette, as shown at the bottom of the following page.



The layers in a layered Photoshop document

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** palette. 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.



Hiding a layer

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 (which is visible when you have the Selection, Move, or Crop tools selected).

- Duplicate a selected layer by pressing ***Ctrl-J (Command-J)*** on a Mac). You can also duplicate a layer by dragging it while pressing the ***Alt (Option)*** key.
- Select multiple layers by holding down ***Ctrl (Command)*** on a Mac) 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 ***Ctrl (Command)*** on a Mac). Once you have selected all the layers you wish to link, click the **Link Layers** button at the bottom-left of the **Layers** palette (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 > Unlink Layers**. To unlink a single layer, select the layer you wish to remove from the link and click its corresponding link icon; the other layers will stay linked. To temporarily unlink a layer, hold down ***Shift*** and click on its 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 ***Ctrl-[(Command-[*** on a Mac) and the “move up” shortcut ***Ctrl-J (Command-J)*** to move selected layers up and down. ***Shift-Ctrl-[*** and ***Shift-Ctrl-] (Shift-Command-[and Shift-Command-]*** on a Mac) will bring layers to the very top or the very bottom of the stack.
- Select a layer by using the keyboard shortcuts ***Alt-[*** and ***Alt-] (Option-[*** and ***Option-]*** on a Mac). These keystrokes let you move up and down through the layers in the **Layers** palette.
- Create a new layer by pressing ***Shift-Ctrl-N (Shift-Command-N)*** on a Mac). This will bring up the **New Layer** dialog box. Want to create new layers quickly without having to deal with the dialogue box? Simply press ***Shift-Ctrl-Alt-N (Shift-Command-Option-N)***.
- Merge a layer into the one beneath it by pressing ***Ctrl-E (Command-E)***. If you have selected layers, this shortcut will merge those selected layers together.

TIP 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. If additional tools are available in the flyout 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 is certainly a lot quicker than moving the cursor over to the toolbox to select it. It may not seem all *that* significant 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, e.g., the Move Tool (**V**).

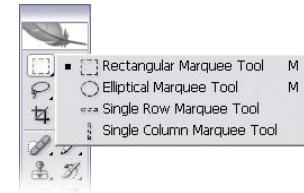


Tooltip for a keyboard shortcut

Photoshop Toolbox

You've probably been hanging out to get stuck into the very nifty Photoshop toolbox. In this section, I'll introduce some of the most frequently used tools found in the toolbox. I'll discuss some of the other tools in later chapters as we apply them to solutions.

You'll notice that some of the tool icons have small black triangles in their bottom right-hand corners. These icons contain hidden treasures! The triangle indicates that there are more related tools available; if you click on the tool icon and hold it down, a “flyout” menu will appear, displaying the additional tools.



Finding the “hidden” tools

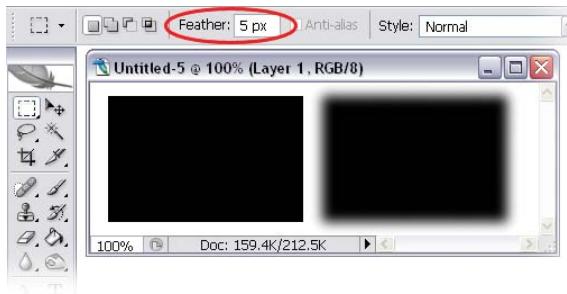
NOTE Secret Selections

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 contains any pixels for which the opacity is more than 50%, they 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).

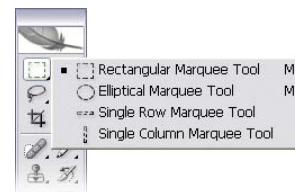
Selection tools automatically select at 100% opacity. We'll learn about creating transparent selections using Quick Masks and alpha channels later in this chapter.

Selection Tools

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



"Fuzzy" edges with feathered selections



Marquee tools

Marquee tools (**M**) 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.

You can use the Lasso tools (**L**) to create freeform selections.

The Lasso Tool comes in three different forms:



Lasso tools

■ **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)**

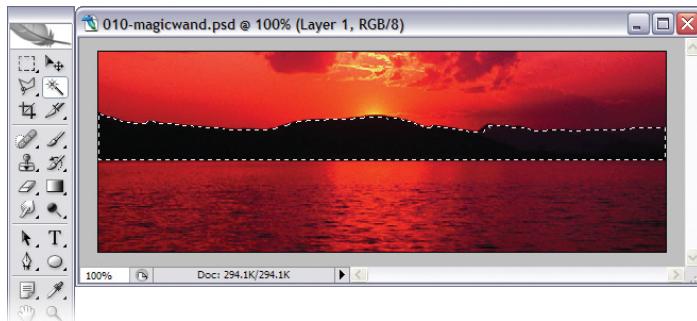
Click at different points to create vertices of a polygonal shape. Close the selection by moving your cursor to the beginning and clicking once, or pressing the **Enter** key.

NOTE *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. However, be aware that if you have not made a specific selection, Photoshop will assume that you are working on the entire layer and any changes you make will affect all pixels in the layer.

■ **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. You can also click as you follow the line to force points to be created on the path. Close the selection by pressing the **Enter** key or clicking at a point near the beginning of the selection. The Magnetic Lasso Tool is not available in ImageReady.



Using the Magic Wand to create a selection

Magic Wand

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

TIP Selection Shortcuts and Tasks

- Hold the **Shift** key to add another selection to the first.
- Hold the **Alt** key (**Option** key on a Mac) to subtract your new selection from the first.
- Hold **Shift-Alt (Shift-Option)** to select the intersection of your first and second selections.
- Use the arrow keys to move the selection pixel by pixel. If you feel that this doesn't move your selection quickly enough, hold down **Shift** and use the arrow keys to move the selection ten pixels at a time.
- Press **Ctrl-J (Command-J)** to copy the selection into its own layer.
- To *cut* the selection into its own layer, press **Shift-Ctrl-J (Shift-Command-J)**. 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 simply by selecting a layer in the **Layers** palette, you can copy the entire layer by pressing **Ctrl-J (Command-J)**.
- To deselect a selected area, click outside of it with one of the Marquee tools, or press **Ctrl-D (Command-D** on a Mac).
- To reactivate your last selection, press **Shift-Ctrl-D (Shift-Command-D)**.

The Move Tool

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



The Move Tool in action

TIP Move and Copy Shortcut

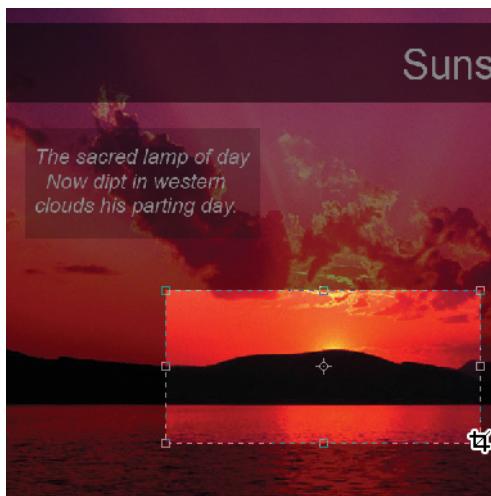
For most tools, holding **Ctrl-Alt** (**Command-Option** on a Mac) and dragging a selected area will temporarily invoke the Move Tool, allowing you to move and duplicate the selected layer quickly.

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



Copying a layer with the Move Tool

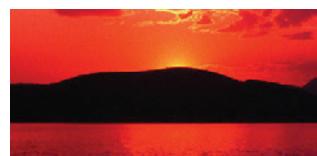
The Crop Tool



Creating a selection using the Crop Tool

The Crop Tool (**C**) is used to trim images. Create a selection 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.



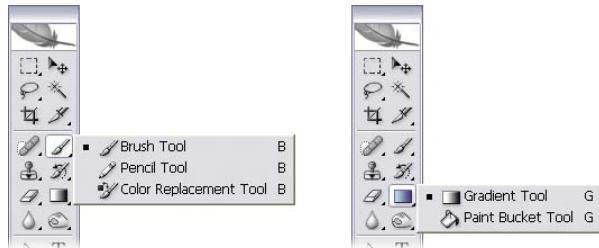
Cropped image

TIP Crop Outside the Box

You can use the Crop Tool to resize your canvas. Expand your document window so that it's larger than the image area, and create a crop selection that includes the image and extends onto the gray areas "outside" the image. Applying this crop will resize your canvas to include those extended boundaries, making your canvas larger.

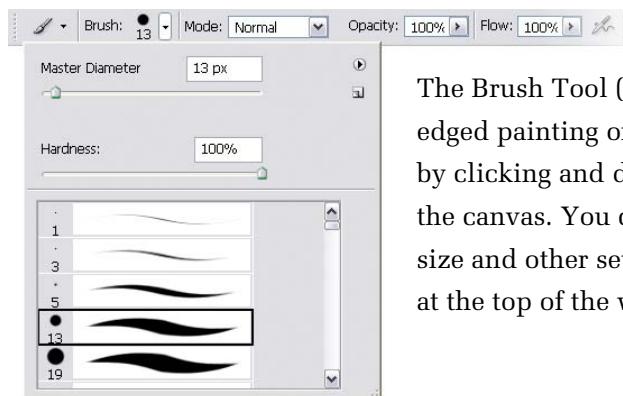
Drawing and Painting Tools

Apart from its extraordinary photo editing abilities, the multi-talented Photoshop also provides drawing and painting tools that allow you to create your own shapes and backgrounds.



Drawing and painting tools

Brush



Brush options

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 at the top of the window.

Pencil

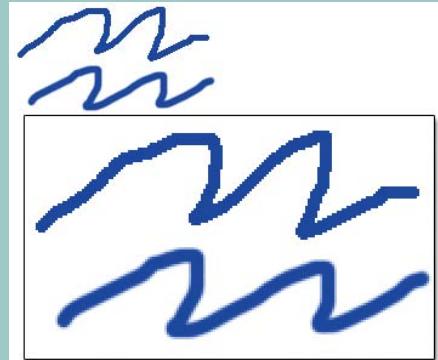
The Pencil Tool (**B**) is suitable for hard-edged drawing or painting and has similar options to the Brush Tool for setting its size, opacity, and more. The Pencil Tool is often used for drawing on, and editing individual pixels in, zoomed-in images.

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.

NOTE Aliased vs Anti-aliased

Unlike the Brush Tool, the Pencil Tool's edges are **aliased**. The term *aliased* refers to the edges of an object being "jagged," in contrast to an anti-aliased object, in which the edges are "smooth." In the two examples shown here, the top shape in each example was created using the Pencil Tool, while the bottom shape was created using the Brush Tool. Notice the difference in the "jaggedness" of the edges of these curves. We'll look more closely at anti-aliasing when we discuss the Text Tool.

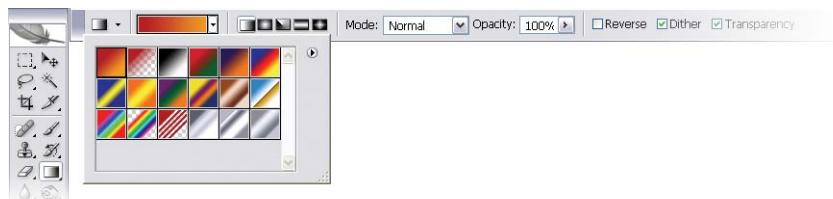


Aliased vs anti-aliased lines

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



Gradient options

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

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

The Gradient Tool is not available in ImageReady.

I find that I use the first two gradients—the foreground-to-background gradient, and the foreground-to-transparent gradient—most often. 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 “fading out” effect.

Text Tool

The Text Tool (*T*), true to its name, creates text layers. This one’s easy to use—just select the Text 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 Text 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 Text Tool is active, you can’t use keyboard shortcuts to access other tools. This may seem like an obvious thing to point out 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!

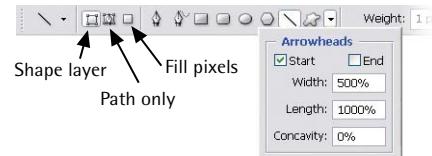
To finish using the Text Tool, press ***Ctrl-Enter (Command-Return*** on a Mac). You can then resume your regular keyboard shortcutting!

Shape Tools

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

The specific options for each shape tool are displayed in the options bar, and you can access additional options by clicking on the arrow to the right of the Custom Shape button. For example, the Line Tool has options for displaying arrowheads, and for controlling the shapes and sizes of those arrowheads, as shown in the example below.

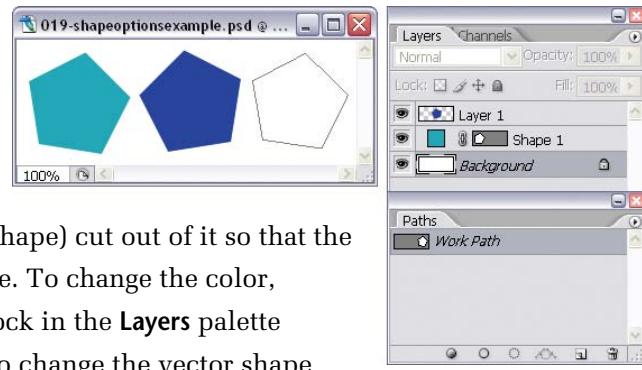
If you look at the options for each shape, you’ll notice that there are three different methods you can use to create a shape:



Shape options

■ as a shape layer (default)

Your shape will be created as a solid-colored layer covered with a vector shape mask. Confused? Think of the mask as a sheet of dark paper that has a hole (your shape) cut out of it so that the color shines through the hole. To change the color, double-click on the color block in the **Layers** palette as shown in this example. To change the vector shape mask, use the vector editing tools.



Different ways to create shapes

■ as a path

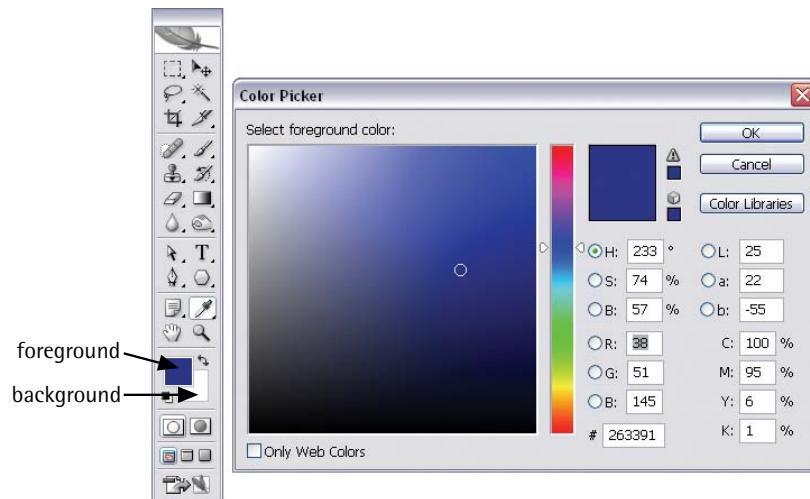
Your shape will be created as a path in the **Paths** palette, as shown in the example above (in which the path has been named **Work Path**).

■ as filled pixels

Your shape will be created on whichever layer is currently selected. I created a new layer, then created a shape using the **Fill pixels** option on **Layer 1** in the above example.

Selecting Colors

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



Selecting foreground and background colors using the Color Picker

TIP 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 actually possible to sample colors from anywhere in your display and even from other applications outside of Photoshop. Simply click inside the document window, then drag the cursor to the color you wish to sample. Click to select that color.

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

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 **Alt** (**Option**).

The Hand Tool

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

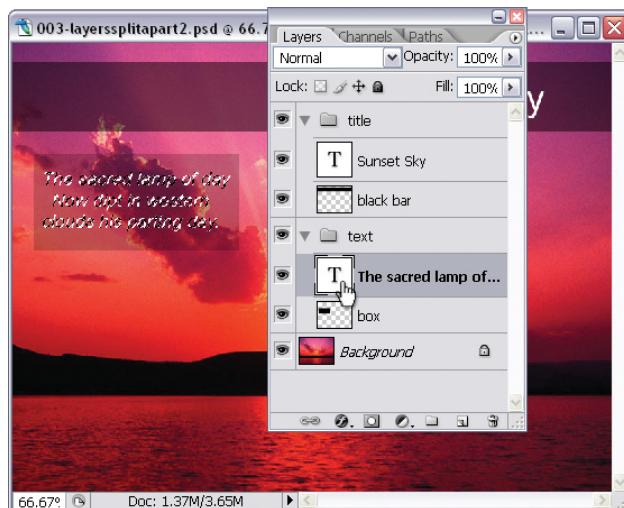
What's even handier is the fact that you can invoke the Hand Tool while you're using any other tool (except the Text Tool) by holding down the spacebar. This is a neat way to position your image exactly where you want it without having to chop and change between tools to do so.

Other Useful Tasks and Shortcuts**Zooming**

Zooming right into your image is the only way to make subtle changes at the pixel level. Use **Ctrl +** to zoom in and **Ctrl -** to zoom out. You can also zoom using the slider on the **Navigator** palette.

Making a Selection Using the Layers Palette

To select the pixels on a particular layer, press **Ctrl** (**Command** on a Mac) and click the thumbnail of the layer. This selection will also take into account the transparency of any pixels, so painting in the selection will recreate the transparency settings of the original layer. The example at the top of the next page shows a selection I made based on one of the text layers in my sunset document.



Creating a selection based on a layer

Making a Selection Using a Quick Mask

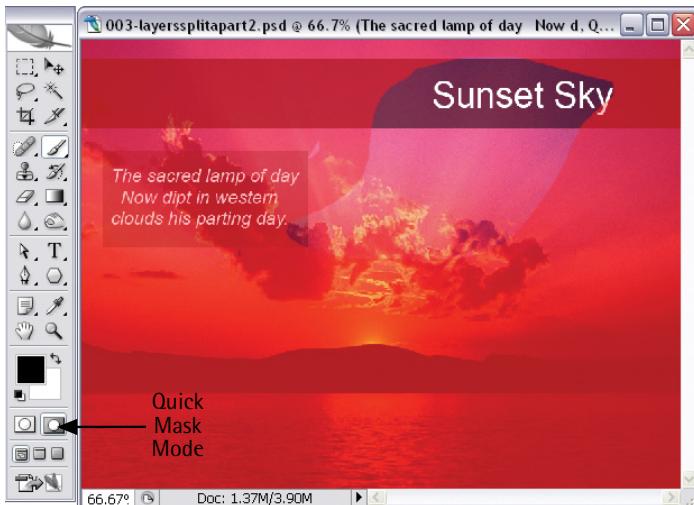
Quick Masks are one of those closely guarded trade secrets that professional designers use all the time, but beginners often are wary of trying because they seem complicated at first. Well, they're not!

A Quick Mask is an alternative way of making a selection. The usual way to use a Quick Mask is to go into Quick Mask Mode (**Q**) and, using a tool such as the Brush Tool, painting the things you *don't* want to select. This is called painting a "mask," and the resulting reverse-selection will display as the transparent red color that you can see in the example overleaf. You can edit this red layer—honing the mask shape, for instance—using the drawing and painting tools. Those alterations won't affect your image, though: they impact only on your final selection. Switching back to Standard Mode (**Q**) will complete your selection.

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 selection tools:

- 1 They allow you to control the level of transparency of your selection.
- 2 It's easier to color an object in, than it is 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. But once you master that concept, you'll feel confident to be able to make a selection quickly on any shape, no matter how difficult it seems!



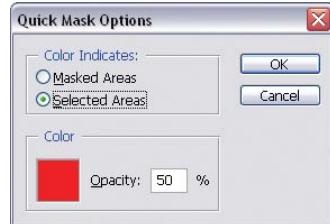
Painting a reverse selection in Quick Mask Mode



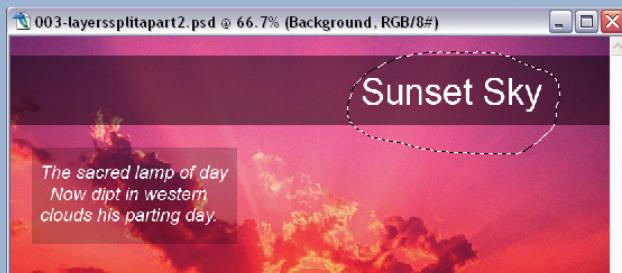
Returning to Standard Mode

TIP Quick Mask Options

I prefer to set Quick Mask Mode so that it lets me paint in the *selected* areas rather than the *non-selected* areas, as shown in this example. To alter your settings to do the same thing, double-click on the Quick Mask Mode icon and change the **Color Indicates:** option to **Selected Areas**.



The Quick Mask Options dialog

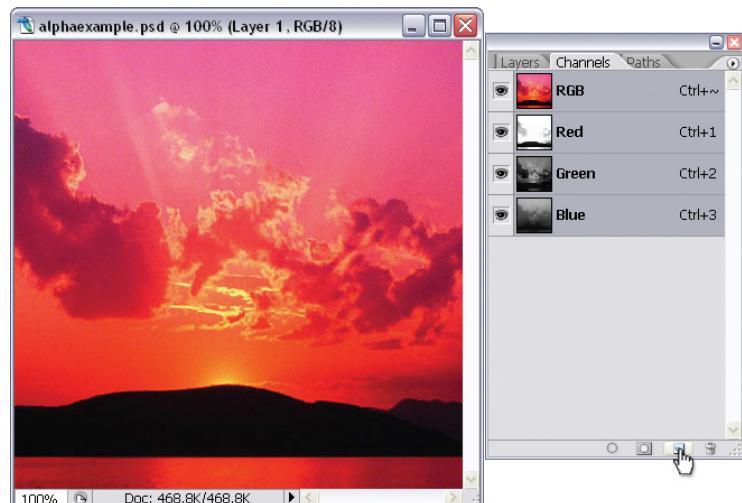


Painted areas are now selected areas

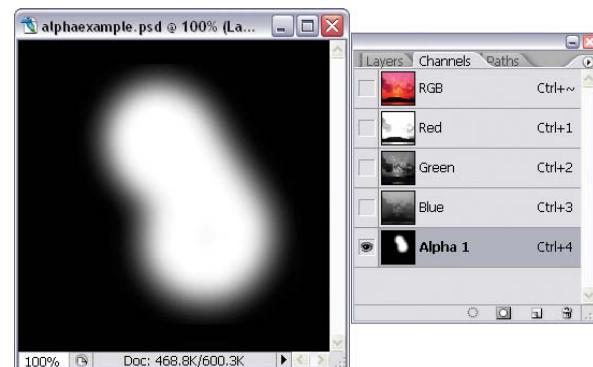
Alpha Channels and Selections

You can use alpha channels to create selections and save them for later use. If you open the **Channels** palette, you'll see several channels, displayed in a similar way to layers in the **Layers** palette. By default, you'll see the color channels, which represent how much of each color is represented in the document. You can click the **Create New Channel** icon at the bottom of the palette to create your own alpha channel.

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

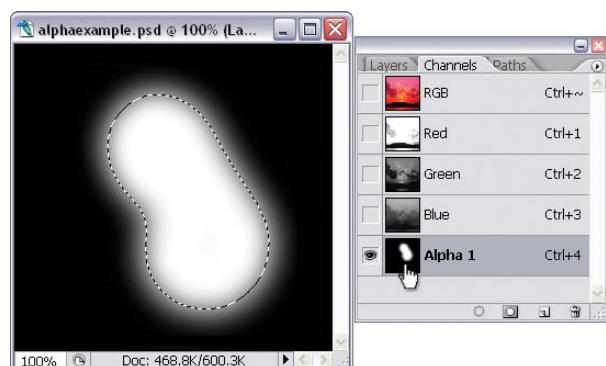


Creating a new alpha channel



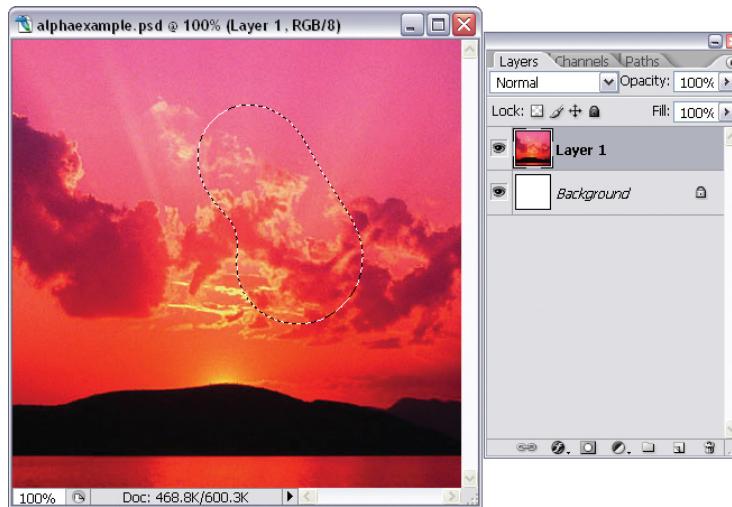
Creating a grayscale image

To turn your alpha channel masterpiece into a selection, simply hold down **Ctrl** and click the channel's thumbnail (hold **Command** and click if you're on a Mac).

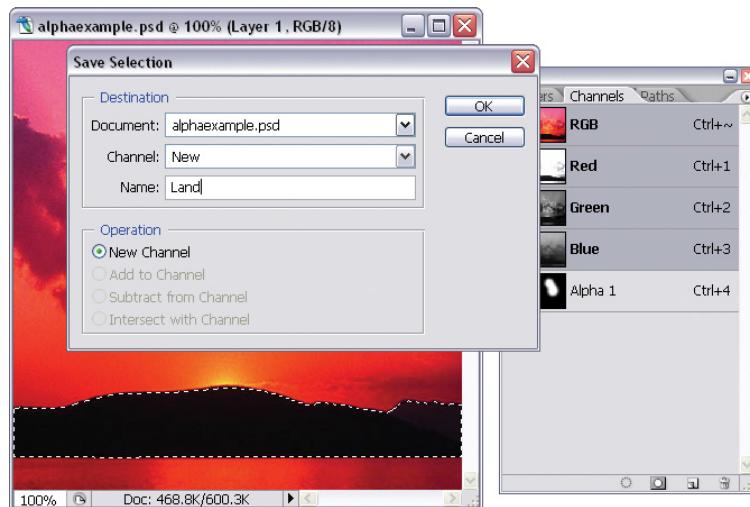


Creating a channel-based selection

To return to the normal image view, click on the **Layers** palette tab, and select any layer. Your selection will still be visible.

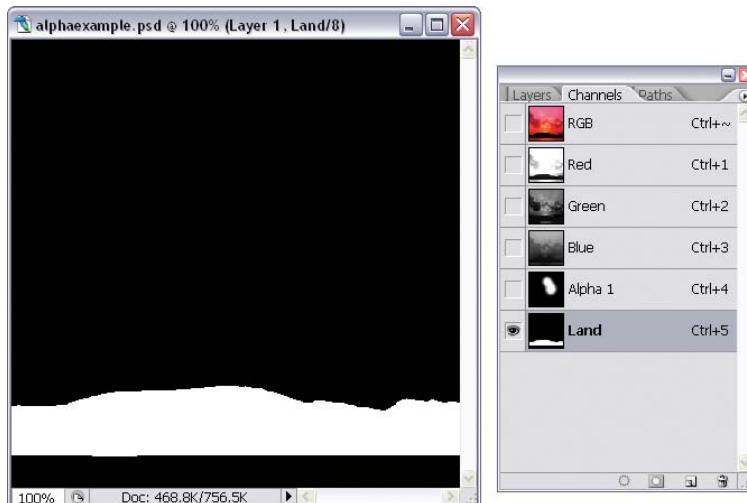
Returning to the **Layers** palette

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 an island silhouette like the one shown in the example below. You have a feeling that you'll be reselecting this island pretty often, but 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, *Land*), and click **OK**.



Saving the selection to a channel

If you go to the **Channels** palette, you'll see a new selection at the bottom of the list, named *Land* in the following image—that's your saved selection. Now you can reload your *Land* selection as many times as you need to!

New channel in **Channels** palette

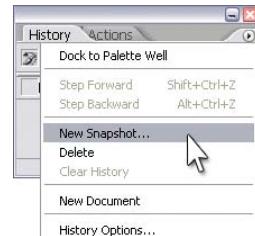
The History Palette

The **History** palette is your key to time travel (in Photoshop, anyway). It lists the most recent steps that 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 that are stored in the memory by selecting **Edit > Preferences > General** (**Photoshop > Preferences > General** on a Mac) and changing the value in the **History States** text box.

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

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

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** palette and choose **New Snapshot....** You can save a snapshot of the whole document, the current layer, or merged layers.



Creating a history snapshot

When Photoshop Stops Working

Woah! Photoshop stops working? That certainly doesn't sound too promising! Before you panic, let me explain. Given the multitude of powerful features and fantastic

tools it offers, it's no wonder that, on occasion, Photoshop can exhaust itself. It may start behaving a bit erratically, and might even freeze, crash, or automatically exit during startup. If you find yourself in this situation, the first thing to do is reset the preferences file. The preferences file (which you can customize by going to **Edit > Preferences** on a PC, or **Photoshop > Preferences** on a Mac) holds Photoshop settings and can often become corrupted.

The location of the preferences file depends on the operating system and version of Photoshop you are using. For Photoshop CS2, the preferences file is named ***Adobe Photoshop CS2 Prefs.psp***. The preference file for other versions of Photoshop will have a similar name.

TIP Backing Up Your Preferences File

It's a good idea to back up your preferences file by copying and pasting it into a location *outside* of the Photoshop settings folder. Then, if the preferences file Photoshop is using becomes corrupted, you can copy your backup back into the settings folder to replace the corrupted file, without losing any of your settings.

To reset the preferences file, locate the current preferences file, delete it (while Photoshop is closed), and restart Photoshop—it will recreate the preferences file using default settings. Creativepro.com provides a detailed tutorial¹ that explains how to find and replace your preferences file, and includes preference filenames for different versions of Photoshop.

If Photoshop continues to act up, restart it while holding down the ***Shift-Ctrl-Alt*** keys (***Shift-Command-Option*** on a Mac), and click **OK** when asked if you wish to delete the Photoshop settings file. Unfortunately, this will also delete your custom actions, tools, and other settings, but the good news is that it should fix your Photoshop problems.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the Photoshop and ImageReady interfaces and common tools, and also explained a few 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 haven't used Photoshop before, you now have the tools that you'll need to work with the examples we'll discuss throughout the rest of this book.

¹ <http://www.creativepro.com/story/feature/17478.html>

What's Next?

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SitePoint's first full color book, *The Photoshop Anthology: 101 Web Design Tips, Tricks & Techniques* provides you with over 100 tried and tested real-world Photoshop solutions for you to use on your projects. If you've ever been stuck for inspiration, or have puzzled over just how to create that shiny "Aqua" style button or that seamlessly tiling background image you saw on a web site recently, you need a copy of this book.

Author Corrie Haffly has drawn on her extensive Photoshop experience to show you how to create a multitude of web graphics, ranging from buttons to backgrounds to other user interface elements. Corrie also covers ways to greatly improve your workflow and make working with Photoshop more efficient through batch processing and the automation of repetitive tasks.

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- Master the basics: image sizing, layers, vector shapes, transparency, and more.
- Create a multitude of different buttons: aqua-style, metallic, glassy, and more.
- Create seamless tiling backgrounds: rice paper, brushed metal, granite, and more.
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- Isolate objects from images.

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