

Working with Layers

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Photoshop provides multiple ways to do everything, so here are your choices. Clicks should be done with Move tool selected. Note that a right click on an active layer will open a drop-down Layers menu. These instructions are for Windows. For the Mac, substitute Command for Control and Option for Alt.

Function	Keyboard Shortcut	Layers Menu	Layers Panel	Document
Create new layer	Shift-Ctrl-N	Layer > New > Layer	Click New Layer icon	
Duplicate a layer	Ctrl- J	Layer > Duplicate Layer	Drag to New Layer icon	Alt-click-drag
Make layer active (select layer)			Click anywhere on the layer	On Option bar, click Auto-Select square; click desired image
Select multiple layers			Hold Ctrl and click desired layers	
Select multiple adjacent layers			Hold Shift and click first and last layers	
Hide visibility of one layer			Click Eye icon	
Hide visibility of all but one layer			Hold Alt and click Eye icon	
Make layer visible			Click square to left of thumbnail	

Function	Keyboard Shortcut	Layers Menu	Layers Panel	Document
Hide/restore visibility of adjacent layers			Drag cursor over desired Eye icons	
Delete selected layer(s)	Click Delete or Alt Delete	Layer > Delete Layer(s)	Drag to Trash icon or Hold Alt; click Trash icon	
Rename layer			Double click layer's name; type new name	
Merge an active layer with layer below	Ctrl-E	Layer > Merge Down		
Merge all active layers	Ctrl-E	Layer > Merge Layers		
Merge all visible layers	Shift-Ctrl-E	Layer > Merge Visible		
Flatten (merge) all layers		Layer > Flatten Image		
Turn background into a layer		Layer > New > Layer from Background	Dble-click lock icon next to "background"	
Create Clipping Mask	Ctrl-Alt-G	Layer > Create Clipping Mask	Hold Alt, hover cursor between layers; click	
Create Adjustment layer		Layer > New Adjustment Layer; click desired adjustment	Click Adjustment Layer icon	
Create Layer Mask		Layer > Layer Mask	Click Layer Mask icon	
Delete Layer Mask		Layer > Layer Mask > delete	Drag mask to trash icon	
View layer mask on screen; return to image			Hold Alt and click mask thumbnail	

Function	Keyboard Shortcut	Layers Menu	Layers Panel	Document
Create Style (Effect)		Layer>Layer Style; choose desired style	Double click in highlighted area, or click <i>fx</i> icon	
Copy and paste Style(s) onto another layer		Activate layer to copy from: Layer> Layer Style> Copy Layer Style. Activate layer copying to: Layer>Layer Style> Paste Layer Style	Hold Alt and drag effect name or <i>fx</i> icon to other layer	
Copy style to multiple layers or to another open document		As above		
Hide Style		Layer>Layer Style>Hide All Effects	Click eye next to style name	
Delete style		Layer> Layer Style> Clear Layer Style	Drag <i>fx</i> icon to trash icon	
Delete style in all active layers		Layer> Layer Style> Clear Layer Style		



Style icon



Mask icon



Adjustment Layer icon



New Layer icon

Adjustment Layer. Make your desired adjustment. Use a brush to paint with black to hide parts of the adjustment you don't want. Paint with white to correct mistakes.

Layer Mask. A Layer Mask lets you work with filters and make other changes not available with an Adjustment Layer. Make an overall change on a duplicate layer; go to Layer > Layer Mask > Reveal All if you want to leave the changes over a broad area. The layer mask will be white, so paint with black. Use Layer > Layer Mask > Hide if you only need changes in small areas. The layer mask will be black, so paint with white.

Paste Into. This is an easy way to place an image into a selected area on another document. Select the area you want to move and copy it (Edit > Copy, or Ctrl C). On the other document, select the desired area, then click Edit > Paste Into.

Blend If. On the top layer: Moving the white slider lets underneath areas start emerging through lighter areas of the top layer. Moving the black slider lets underneath areas emerge through darker areas. On the underneath area: Moving the white slider lets lighter areas of the underneath image start emerging through darker areas of the top image. Moving the black slider, lets darker areas emerge through light areas of the top image.

Clipping Mask. The image on the top layer will adhere only to pixels on the underneath area, ignoring transparent areas. This creates an image or text in the shape of the underneath image

Double exposure. In a double exposure, light areas "burn through" (lighten) darker areas. Accomplish this by using the Screen or Overlay mode.

Slide sandwich. In a slide sandwich, dark areas obscure light areas. Accomplish this by using the Darken mode

Monet effect. Duplicate the layer and lower its opacity a bit. Duplicate this layer several times, displacing each layer a little bit, using the Alt+ drag method. Keep lowering the opacity a little more with each layer. Change the top layer mode to Darken.

Remove color cast. Do these steps: 1. Duplicate the layer. 2. Filter > Blur > Average. 3. Image > Adjustments > Invert. 4. Mode Color. 5. Reduce opacity to exactly 50 percent.

Sharpen image. 1. Duplicate the layer. 2. Filter > Other > High Pass 25%. 3. Mode Soft Light or Overlay.

ESSENTIAL SHORTCUTS

Ctrl A– Select All

Ctrl D– Deselect

Ctrl C– Copy

Ctrl V– Paste

Ctrl Z– Delete last step

Ctrl J– Layer via copy

D– Default colors: black and white

Ctrl X– swap colors

Recommended book: *Photoshop Layers* by Matt Kloskowski