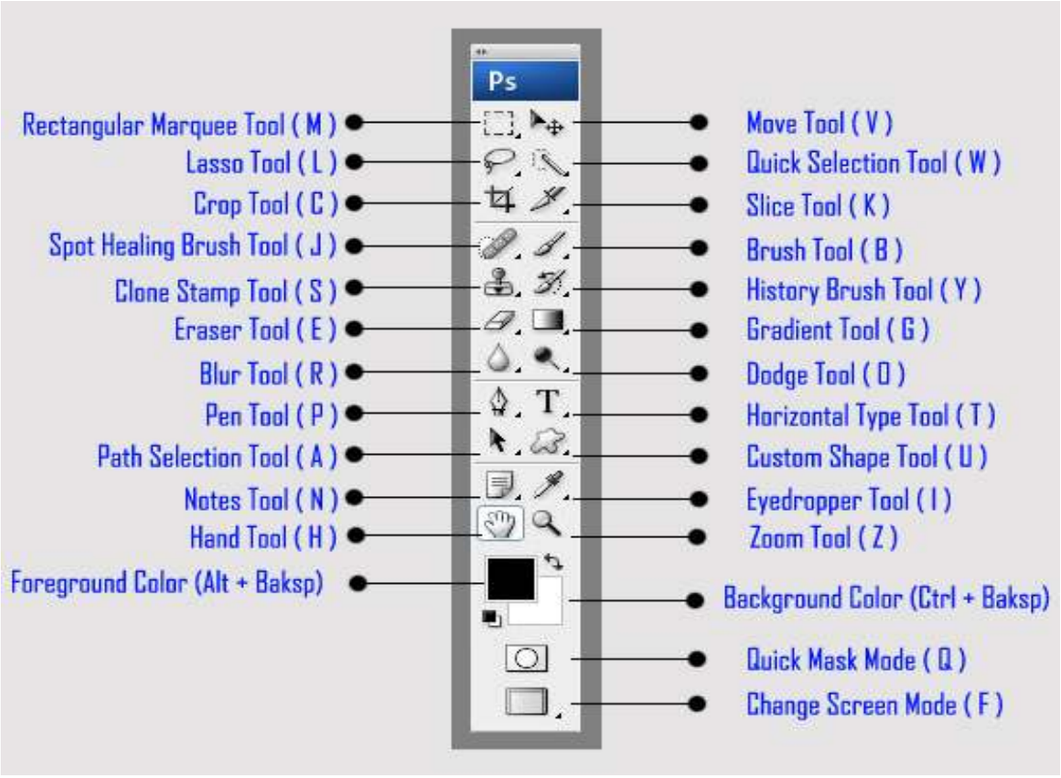
PHOTOSHOP TOOLS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS



Rectangular Marquee Tool (M)

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

Move Tool (V)

Use this tool to, well, move things. Usually you use it to move a Layer around after it has been placed. Hold the [Shift] key to limit the movements to vertical/horizontal.

Polygon Lasso Tool (L)

Ok, this should be the Lasso Tool, but I use the Polygon Lasso a lot more often. Use this to draw selections in whatever shape you would like. To close the selection, either click on the beginning point (you'll see the cursor change when you're on it), or just double-click. When holding the [Ctrl] key, you'll see the cursor change, and the next time you click, it will close your selection.

Magic Wand Tool (W)

Use this to select a color range. It will select the block of color, or transparency, based on wherever you click. In the Options Bar at the top, you can change the Tolerance to make your selections more/less precise.

Crop Tool (C)

The Crop Tool works similarly to the Rectangular Marquee tool (see above if you have no short-term memory). The difference is when you press the [Enter/Return] key, it crops your image to the size of the box. Any information that was on the outside of the box is now gone. Not permanently, you can still undo.

Slice Tool (K)

This is used mostly for building websites, or splitting up one image into smaller ones when saving out. It's kind of an advanced tool, and since you're in here for the basics, we'll kind of skip over it. Kinda makes you mad I made you read all that for nothing, huh?

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

Brush Tool (B)
This is one of the first tools ever. It's what Photoshop is based off of. Well, not really, but it's pretty basic. It paints one your image, in whatever color you have selected, and whatever size you have selected. There's a lot of options for it, but this is basic, so you don't get to learn them.

Clone Stamp Tool (S)
This is very similar to the Healing Brush Tool (see above). You use it the exact same way, except this tool doesn't blend at the end. It's a direct copy of the information from the first selected area to the second. When you learn to use both of these tools together in perfect harmony, you will be a Photoshop MASTA! Not really, it's just less irritating.

History Brush Tool (H)
This tool works just like the Brush Tool (see above) except the information that it paints with is from the original state of your image. If you go Window>History, you can see the History Palette. The History Brush tool paints with the information from whatever History state is selected.

Eraser Tool (E)
This is the anti-Brush tool. It works like an eraser (duh) and erases whatever information wherever you click and drag it. If you're on a Layer, it will erase the information transparent. If you are on the background layer, it erases with whatever secondary color you have selected.

Gradient Tool (G)
You can use this to make a gradiation of colors. Gradiation doesn't appear to be a word, but it makes sense anyway. It creates a blending of your foreground color and background color when you click and drag it. Like a gradient.

Blur Tool (R)
The Blur tool is cool. It makes things blurry. Click and drag to make things blurry. The more you click and drag, the blurrier things get.

Dodge Tool (O)
This tool isn't as crappy as the car brand. It's actually used to lighten whatever area you use it on. As long as it is not absolute black. Absolute black won't lighten.

Path Selection Tool (A)
You use this tool when working with paths. Since this is all about the basics, I won't go into details. It's related to the Pen Tool (see below) though.

Horizontal Type Tool (T)
It makes type. Or text. Or whatever you want to call it. You can click a single point, and start typing right away. Or you can click and drag to make a bounding box of where your text/type goes. There's a lot of options for the Type Tool. Just play around, it's fairly straight-forward.

Pen Tool (P)
I mentioned this tool above. It's for creating paths, in which you would use the Path Selection Tool to select the path. Paths can be used in a few different ways, mostly to create clipping paths, or to create selections. You use the tool by clicking to add a point. If you click and drag, it will change the shape of your path, allowing you to bend and shape the path for accurate selections and such.

Rectangle Tool (U)
By default it draws a Shape Layer in the form of a rectangle. It fills the rectangle with whatever foreground color you have selected. It's pretty complicated, don't hurt yourself with this one.

Notes Tool (N)
Like post-it notes, but digital. You can use this tool to add small little note boxes to your image. These are useful if you're very forgetful or if you're sharing your Photoshop file with someone else. I'm pretty sure it only works with .PSD files.

Eyedropper Tool (I)
This tool works by changing your foreground color to whatever color you click on. Holding the [Alt] key will change your background color.

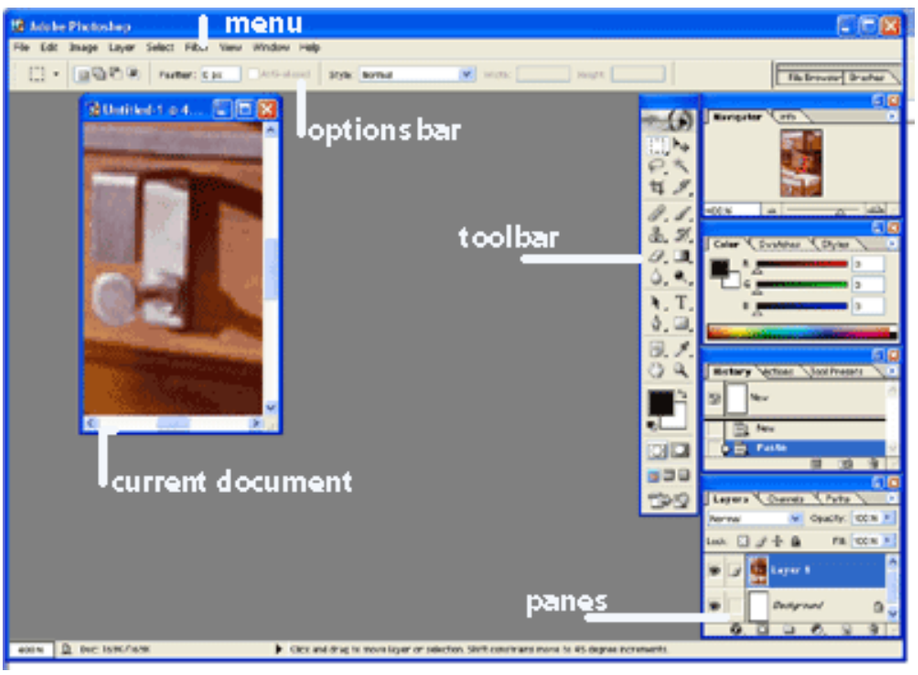
Hand Tool (T)
You can really make short work of your job with the Hand Tool. It's for moving your entire image within a window. So if you're zoomed in and your image area is larger than the window, you can use the Hand Tool to navigate around your image. Just click and drag. You can get to this tool at any time when using any other tool by pressing and holding the [Spacebar].

Zoom Tool (Z)
Pretty obvious what this tool does. It allows you to zoom into your image. Don't be dumb, it doesn't actually change the size of your image. Hold the [Alt] key to zoom out. Holding the [Shift] key will zoom all of the windows you have open at the same time. Double-click on the Zoom Tool in the palette to go back to 100% view.

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

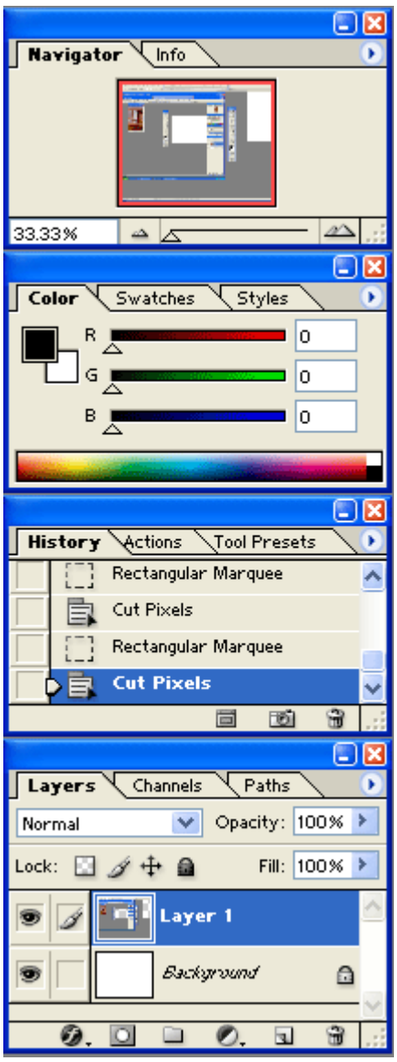
PHOTOSHOP INTERFACE

Elements of the Interface



The Photoshop Toolbar *The Workspace*

Perhaps the most important element of the Photoshop interface is the **toolbar**. It contains a bunch of icons that represent the different tools Photoshop offers to alter and create images. These include tools for selecting specific areas of images, changing the colors of the image, stretching, transforming, and erasing parts of an image, and many more.



Various Photoshop Panels

Panels are also important features of the Photoshop interface. All sorts of information is displayed in these panels, and therefore they can get a little confusing. They display location information, tool options, and history, among other things. If you ever lose track of a specific panel (they tend to stack up), go to the windows menu and select that pane to view it. I'll talk more about the specific panes later on in the tutorial.

Menus are probably the most familiar interface elements to a new Photoshop user. They contain all sorts of options, but since there are not as visible as panes or the toolbar, they are often only partially explored. I'll take time right now to go over the menus and give a brief description to orient you to each.

- **File** contains all of the stuff you'd expect it to, with a few extras including Import, which deals with scanning, and Save for Web, which allows you to export a web-ready image from your Photoshop file.
- **Edit** is another familiar menu. In Photoshop, edit houses all of the expected options as well as Fill & Stroke, and other image-altering functions.
- Items on the **Image menu** effect a whole image, for the most part. Here you'll find color adjustments, size adjustments, and any other changes you need to make globally when working with a Photoshop file.
- The **layer menu** is similar to the image menu, but it contains options that effect only current or selected layers. I'll explain layers a little later, but for now, just understand that an image in Photoshop consists of stacked transparent layers; options in the Layer menu affect these pieces of the image rather than the complete image.
- The **select menu** deals with selections you make. Selecting the specific parts of an image you'd like to alter is a difficult part of working in Photoshop. This menu gives you some options regarding selections, including the ability to save selections, reverse them, or add to them. Learning the options on the selection menu can really save you some time.
- The **filter menu** is probably what most people think about when they think about Photoshop. The filter menu allows you to apply filters to any part of your image. These filters include ways to change the texture of the image, with some potentially radical results.
- The **view menu** is where you change the view settings. You can use this to show and display guidelines on the image, and to zoom in and out, among other things.
- The **window menu** allows you to toggle back and forth between hide and show for each interface element. This is the first place you should go if you lose track of a particular window while you're working.

- Last and least, of course, is the **help menu**. The help documentation isn't so helpful, but for some reason, this menu contains two nice features: resize image, and export transparent image, which I'll get to later.

The **options bar**, which is located directly underneath the menus, is a useful tool when working with the different Photoshop tools. As you can see right now, when the selection tool is in use, the options bar reflects the changes that can be made to how that specific tool operates. Here, you have selection options, and style options, which includes the ability to make the selection tool a specific size in pixels. When you switch tools, to the paintbrush tool for instance, these options change. When a tool in Photoshop isn't behaving as you expect it to, the options bar should be the first place you look to fix it.

The options bar

Some definitions to get you started:

.psd: A **.psd** file is the file format in which Photoshop saves documents by default. It is a multi-layer document that retains its full editing options when saved. In many cases you will export webgraphics from a .psd document.

layers: Photoshop documents are composed of **layers**, which can basically be described as single transparent sheets which hold particular pieces of an image. These layers can contain images, text, and vector graphics, and can be rearranged and grouped according to user needs. Layers are controlled with the use of the Layers panel. Often times, when you find yourself frustrated with Photoshop, it is because you are trying to perform operations on a layer that is not currently selected. Simply click on the name of a layer in order to designate it as the current layer. Whenever you add text to an image in Photoshop, the text appears on a new layer. You can "merge down" layers to consolidate them, and "flatten image" to force the entire contents of the image onto one layer.

Selections: Selections refer to regions in an image that will be affected by the various tools. A selection in Photoshop is similar to a selection that you highlight in a word processing application. Once you have selected an area, you can apply a tool to it, such as paintbrush, or perform an operation such as copy or crop. Selections can be any shape and size; the shape depends on which selection tool you are working with.

Your selection will apply only to the current layer. If that layer is empty in the region selected, you will get an error message. When this happens, go to the layers pane and select the correct layer.

Resolution: Resolution refers to the number of pixels in a full size image. An image with hi resolution contains more information than an image with lo resolution, and therefore, one can always convert a hi-res image to a lo-res image. However, because information is lost in the conversion, the reverse is not true. If you were to increase the resolution of a lo-res image, the result would be fuzzy.

Screen resolution is close to 72 pixels per inch, so if you are working with graphics to be viewed only on screen, 72 should be fine. Depending on the printer you are using, you would want to increase this above 72 for graphics that will be printed. 300 is usually an acceptable resolution for images to be printed; 150 would be the lowest acceptable resolution for printing.

Image Size: Resolution should not be confused with image size, which is also expressed in pixels. Image size deals with the actual number of pixels tall and wide an image is. For an idea of

how the two differ, go to Image Size in the Image menu, and plug in different numbers for image size and resolution.

Color mode: Color mode refers to the types of colors you will be using in your image. CMYK and RGB are the most important of these modes to be familiar with.

- CMYK is the setting for images that will be printed to paper. The letters refer to the four channels of color used to create every color available: **c**yan, **m**agenta, **y**ellow, and **b**lack.
- RGB refers to the three channel color mode suitable for images to be viewed on the web: **r**ed , **g**reen, and **b**lue.