

Adobe Photoshop: The English Muffin of Applications

1. Spring-Loaded Tools

Whatever tool you are using when you hold down the spacebar it turns into the hand tool to allow you to move around the image. Releasing the spacebar returns you to the tool you were using.

2. Moving a Selection

When making a selection and you didn't get it positioned exactly right, press the spacebar and move it to the right location. Releasing the spacebar you can continue with the selection.

3. Select Colors Outside of Photoshop

Select the foreground color swatch. Take the eyedropper into Photoshop and click on a color. The becomes the foreground color. If you continue to hold down the mouse button and drag the eyedropper out of Photoshop you can select any color on your screen as the foreground color.

4. Color Replacement Tool

This is an often over-looked tool which is pretty powerful. It does have the sharp downside of being pretty destructive, but it's cool to know about and potentially use when the moment it right. This tool is located beneath the Brush tool. Look to the toolbar and choose a mode. Typically if I'm changing color, I'll work with either the Hue or Color modes. Hue replaces ONLY the color with that new hue of color, whereas the Color mode adjusts both hue and saturation. I like to choose the icon furthest to the left (Continuous Sampling Mode), set the Limits to Contiguous, and work with a tolerance of about 35%. There is a dot in the middle of this brush, whatever color the dot is hovering over is color that the brush will look to change. Paint with care and you can change color pretty quickly!

5. Heads Up Display - Brush Size Changing

Grab the Brush tool and you can quickly change the size and hardness of a brush by pressing Ctrl + Opt on the Mac or Alt +Right Clicking on PC and dragging side-to-side to increase/decrease the brush size. Drag up or down to harden/soften a brush as well. TIP: You can change the color of the brush preview by going to the Preferences (Cmd/Ctrl+ K) and selecting "Cursors" in the menu on the left and click on the color thumbnail for Brush Preview and change it to whatever you like.

6. HUD -Color Picker

Photoshop has a heads up display color picker that can be brought up when you're using the Brush tool. Make sure you have OpenGL settings turned on in your Preferences (Cmd/Ctrl + K) and on the Mac hit Ctrl + Opt + Cmd and click or Shift + Alt + Right click on the PC and you will see a color picker appear. You can release the hotkeys and still pick your color. Begin in the center and choose your desired brightness and saturation levels and then press and hold the spacebar and move to the hue strip outside of the inner color picker. Release the spacebar and choose your hue. NOTE: Pressing spacebar allows you to lock the position of the color picked in the center color picker area. Note #2: Go to your Preferences (Cmd/Ctrl + K) and find the drop down menu "HUD Color Picker" and choose the style of color picker that you like!

7. Reset Any Dialog Box With a Hot Key

With virtually any dialog box as you being making changes, you can hold down the Alt/Opt key and the “Cancel” button will flip to a “Reset” button which will undo all the changes you have made with that particular dialog box.

8. Revert to Original

When things get too far out of whack and there are too many steps to use the CMD-Cntrl Z to back out. You can revert to the original under the file menu. It returns the originally opened document.

9. Time-Saving Layers Panel Options

Look to the Layers panel and in the very top right corner of the panel you will have an icon which contains a fly out menu. Click that little icon and choose “Panel Options”. We’re going to ignore all options in this panel except the three check marks at the bottom of the panel.

“Use Default Masks on Fill Layers” is an option that will automatically place an empty mask whenever you add an Adjustment Layer. “Expand New Effects” is something that I like to leave checked off. With this option checked on, when you add any Layer Style to a layer, the Layer Style(s) will appear in a drop down beneath the layer. I kind of find it annoying. The last check box is simply about naming in your Layers Panel. When you duplicate a layer do you want the word “Copy” to be added, or not? Play with the options and see what you like. It’s the little things that can matter the most!

10. Hiding Layers for a Before and After Look

When you’re working with a Photoshop document that has lots of layers, you’ll often need to isolate a single layer to check out what is on that layer, or maybe you just want to do a complete before/after by showing only the “Background” layer. Hold your Alt/Opt key and click on the layer eyeball to hide all the other layers and click that eyeball again to make all of the layers visible again.

11. Blend Modes Hotkeys

Most of us may know that you can quickly switch between Blend Modes using the Shift + “+” hotkey, but did you know that every Blend Mode has its own hotkey? Hold down your Shift + Alt/Opt buttons and use any of the letters in the graphic I’ve created. The really important hotkeys that I use most regularly are for Multiply (M), Screen (S), Overlay (O), and Soft Light (F), and of course Normal (N).

12. Quick Export as JPEG

In the upper right of the layers panel, click on the hamburger menu dropdown there’s the option to Quick Export as JPEG. It will export the layer that you have selected. To quickly export all layers, select them and group them. You can then export the group as a JPEG.

13. Scrubby Sliders

When you see a number field in a dialog box, hold down Cmd/Cntrl and drag left or right to change the value. You can also drag on the word describing the value to change it as well. Holding the shift key will make it change at 10x speed. Holding down Alt/Option moves the value at 1/10th speed.

14. Copy Between Documents

Copy and paste a layer between documents and it will remain in memory and slow down Photoshop. It is more efficient to drag the layer you want to copy to the tab of the receiving document. You can also select multiple layers at once and drag them to the tab.

15. Pen Tool - Rubber Band

Grab the Pen tool and begin drawing a path. Often when you're drawing a path you're going to want to see where the path is being placed. By default, you cannot see where the path is being drawn, but if you need to see that path as you draw, look to the control bar and click on the little cog wheel icon and tick on the "Rubber Band" option.

16. Pen Tool – Move Point Before Dropping

A great little tip when using the Pen tool is that as you click to drop new points, you can hold down your spacebar key and move the newly placed point before finally committing the location. Simply click to add the anchor point and immediately press and hold the spacebar and drag the anchor point wherever you like.

17. Vanishing Point

To paste something in perspective use the vanishing point tool under filters. First open the image that you want to paste in perspective. Select all and copy. In the target image, click and drag to connect the corners of the plane that you want to use. Cmd/Cntrl V to paste the clipboard object. Drag the object to the defined plane and it will snap to the perspective of that plane. The Item can be resized. If you drag past the plane the item will retain its perspective.

18. Straighten Image with The Crop Tool

When the horizon line isn't horizontal you can use the crop tool to straighten it. Select the tool and with the grid showing rotate the image from any corner and with the grid showing rotate the image from any corner to line the horizon with the grid. With content aware selected in the options, Photoshop will fill the missing corners.

19. Place an Image in Text

Duplicate the background layer. Add a white adjustment fill layer at the top and drag it between the other two layers. Choose the top layer and the text tool. Set the color to white and type your title. Move that type layer above the white layer. Select the top layer, drop down the layers menu and select Clipping Mask. Select the clipped type and adjust the size or change the font. It remains editable even with the photo fill. Add a drop shadow for the full effect.

20. Easily Whiten Teeth

Go Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Vibrance and reduce the Vibrance to “-60”.

Next select the Vibrance layer in the layers panel and specifically choose the layer mask. In the Properties Panel (Window>Properties) select the “Invert” button to fill our mask with black to hide the desaturation that we just imposed on the Vibrance layer.

Next select the Brush tool (B) and I’ll grab a small, soft edged brush and look to the control bar across the top of the screen and set the Opacity to “50%”. Paint over the teeth you’d like to whiten for a realistic and beautiful smile!

21. Bird’s Eye View

This one is a fun and useful little trick for when you’re zoomed in on a document. While zoomed in, simply hold down on the “H” key and drag your mouse anywhere and the document will temporarily zoom out and give you a box to show where it will zoom back into when you let go of the mouse button. You really have to try it to see what I’m talking about. It’s pretty great though!

22. Easter Egg

Banana in the tool bar. Select Edit toolbar and hold the shift key when selecting done.