

Keyboard Commands and Shortcuts



Keyboard shortcuts are the secret to unlocking Photoshop's speed. More than any NLE, Photoshop relies on key combos to get complex tasks done quickly.

Overlooked Commands

Command:	Shortcut:
File Menu	
Close All	Cmd+Option+W (Ctrl+Alt+W)
Save As	Choose from 18 formats (more through special plug-ins). Photoshop is the ultimate graphic converter. Shift+Cmd+S (Shift+Ctrl+S)
Save for Web	It doesn't get any more intuitive. Choose the two-up window, resize and compress your image for the web or e-mail. Now you can safely send the client an approval copy without having to worry about messing up your original. Shift+Option+Cmd+S (Shift+Alt+Ctrl+S)
Place	Can't open it? Try placing it. This is how you can bring in EPS, AI, or PDF files. It allows you to position and scale an image (via a bounding box). When you click OK, Photoshop will rasterize it at the proper size, position, and resolution.
Automate Submenu	These are some of the most useful tools for preparing client comps. Whether for print, web, or e-mail, the Automate options take boring tasks and make them quick and easy. Think of this menu as Photoshop's batch rendering option. (Think of batch rendering as the only chance you may get for caffeine, nicotine, or vending machine—the vices for an editor.) To learn more, see Chapter 11, "Automation."

Overlooked Commands (continued)

Command:	Shortcut:
Edit Menu	
Step Forward and Step Backward	Multiple undos. See Chapter 6, “A Sense of History.” The keyboard shortcut varies based on your user-specified preferences in the General Preferences tab.
Fade	Not happy with the results of a filter or an adjustment? Choose this immediately after running the filter. By the way, did I mention this adds blending modes to <i>all</i> filters? Your filter collection just grew 2100%. Try it now! Give your filters new life! Remember: you must choose this immediately after running a filter. This is quite possibly Photoshop’s most underused feature. (Shift+Cmd+F/Shift+Ctrl+F)
Copy Merged	Copy multiple layers into one layer on your clipboard. Why flatten unnecessarily? (Shift+Cmd+C/Shift+Ctrl+C)
Check Spelling, Find and Replace Text	We asked; Adobe listened. In my opinion, worth the upgrade price alone. (Literally, because spelling errors are generally nonbillable).
Free Transform	This tool does it all. Access every layer transformation by Ctrl +clicking (right-clicking) while in free transform mode. Cut downs on image degradation by applying all your sizing, warping, and perspective changes at once. Cmd+T (Ctrl+T)
Purge	Free up space by deleting undos, clipboards, history! This will enable you to save and close when you get the dreaded “Scratch Disks Are Full” message.
Layer Menu	
Group and Ungroup	Similar to using a track matte. Apply a layer to its downstairs neighbor, but only in areas where there is opacity. This is often used to constrain a fill layer to a lower text layer for a Paste Into effect. It is also used internally by many layer styles to create proper clipping for bevel effects. Group: Cmd+G (Ctrl+G) Ungroup: Cmd+Shift+G (Ctrl+Shift+G)
Arrange Layers	You can move layers around from the keyboard.
Bring to Front	Cmd+Shift+[(Ctrl+Shift+[)
Bring Forward	Cmd+[(Ctrl+[)
Send Backward	Cmd+] (Ctrl+])
Send to Back	Cmd+Shift+] (Ctrl+Shift+])
Align Linked and Distribute Linked	Because your eyes aren’t that good. Link the layers together and access these controls from the menu (or use the Move tool and Options bar for a graphical interface). Want something centered on the screen? Link to the background layer and highlight it. The highlighted layer is the basis for all centering and distribution.

Overlooked Commands (continued)

Command:	Shortcut:
Select Menu	
Reselect	Brings back the last selection made, even if it was a long time ago. (Shift+Cmd+D/Shift+Ctl+D)
Feather	Proper feathering is the difference between good glows and shadows and bad ones. It is also a critical step when creating masks and alpha channels. Use this method to feather <i>after</i> you have made a selection. Several tools have their own feathering which can be applied from the Options bar. Cmd+Option+D (Ctrl+Alt+D)
Select Color Range	This tool uses an interface similar to After Effects Linear Color Key effect. Use the Eyedropper to click on the color you want to select, then add or subtract with the Plus and Minus Eyedroppers . You can smooth your selection out using the Fuzziness slider. This powerful selection tool does not get enough use.
View Menu	
Zoom In	Cmd++ (Ctrl++)
Zoom Out	Cmd+- (Ctrl+-)
Fit On Screen	Cmd+0 (Ctrl+0)
Show Actual Pixels	Cmd+Option+0 (Ctrl+Alt+0)
Show	Hide selections and guides. Very useful to see your work and nothing else. By the way, slices are for the web. If you see annoying white numbers in the corner of your document, you've turned slices on accidentally (by selecting the Slice tool, for example). Get rid of them by accessing View>Show>Slices and unchecking it. To hide all, press Cmd+H (Ctrl+H)
Snap	Use those guides for something useful. Objects will snap to position as you drag them near a guide. (Shift+Cmd+;/Shift+Ctrl+;)
New Guide	A more precise way to add guides to your project. Choose View>New Guide and specify an exact location.
Window Menu	
Cycle through open windows	Ctrl+Tab
Hide Tools	Tab
Steal Attributes for New Image Size or Canvas Size	This one is tricky. By default, Photoshop offers to make a new document from the size of the image on your clipboard. You can choose from more options, however. First, make a new window. Before clicking OK for the size, access the Window menu. You can now select from any open document in the list.

Overlooked Commands (continued)

Command:	Shortcut:
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Help Menu

There is no shame in using the Help menu. It's all there (at least the dryly written official answer). The Help menu allows you to keep the users manual in a quick access format (it uses a standard web browser).

System Info	You'll need this when calling tech support. It's also a great way to call up a list of all your filters so that you can check on manufacturer's web sites for updates.
Adobe Online	Get updates and news on your favorite products. You can access software updates directly.

Full Screen Modes

One picture at a time, please! Cutting down on clutter can be tough with all of Photoshop's floating palettes and open windows. Fortunately, there are two full-screen modes that help you isolate your active window. You can cycle through these by pressing the F key. If you'd like to apply a full-screen mode to all open documents, Shift+click on the corresponding icon.

Full Screen Mode With Menu Bar	This mode puts you into a windows-like environment where the active window blocks the others out. The area outside your image is filled with gray, and scroll bars disappear. You can cycle to other windows by pressing Ctrl+Tab or selecting the item from the Window menu.
Full Screen Mode	This mode blacks out the background and loses the menu bars. To complement this environment, press the Tab key to hide all of your palettes, and press Cmd+0 (Ctrl+0) to zoom your image to full screen. This mode works well for reviewing and approving images. The Ctrl+Tab shortcut will work here as well to cycle through open windows.

Shortcuts

There are many valuable shortcuts when it comes to layers. Think of the **Layers** palette as your timeline, and you will grasp the importance of mastering these. And remember, you can activate multiple visibility and link switches by clicking on one then dragging through the other layers in the palette.

Layer Shortcuts

Command:	Shortcut:
Load a Layer	Cmd+click (Ctrl+click) on layer icon
Add to Loaded Layer selection	Shift+Cmd+click (Shift+Ctrl+click) on other layer icons
Subtract to Loaded Layer selection	Cmd+Option+click on other layer icons Ctrl+Alt+click on other layer icons
Activate Layers palette	F7
New Layer	Cmd+Shift+N (Ctrl+Shift+N) or Click on New Layer button
New Layer via Copy	Cmd+J (Ctrl+J)(must have item selected)
New Layer via Cut	Cmd+Shift+J (Ctrl+Shift+J) (must have item selected)
Duplicate Layer	Cmd+J (Ctrl+J) or Drag Layer to the New Layer Button
Delete a Layer	Click Delete Layer Button or Drag Layer to the Delete Layer Button
Delete Multiple Layers	Step 1 Link them together. Step 2 Cmd+click (Ctrl+click) on the Trash icon in the Layers palette.
Solo a Layer	Option+click (Alt+click)on Eye icon
Activate Next Visible Layer	Option+] (Alt +)]
Activate Previous Visible Layer	Option+[Alt+[]
Activate Top Layer	Option+Shift +] (Alt+Shift +)]
Activate Bottom Layer	Option+Shift+[(Alt+Shift+[]
Move a Layer Up One Position	Cmd+] (Ctrl +)]
Move a Layer Down One Position	Cmd+[(Ctrl +[]
Move a Layer to Top	Cmd+Shift +] (Ctrl+Shift +)]
Move a Layer to Bottom	Cmd+Shift+[(Ctrl+Shift +[]

Layer Shortcuts (continued)

Command:	Shortcut:
Change Opacity by 10% increments	Type a single number (i.e., 3 = 30%)
Change Opacity by 1% increments	Type two numbers quickly (i.e., 67 = 67%)
Cycle through Blend Modes	(must have tool selected <i>without</i> blending modes)
Cycle to Next Blend Mode	Shift++ (plus)
Cycle to Previous Blend Mode	Shift+- (minus)
Convert a Background Layer	Double-click on icon and rename
Group Layer	Option+G (Alt+G) Option+click (Alt+click) between layers
Ungroup Layer	Cmd+Shift+G (Ctrl+Shift+G) Option+click (Alt+click) between layers
Merge Active layer Down	Cmd+E (Ctrl+E)
Merge to Target Layer	Link desired layers to target, choose Merge Linked from submenu of Layers palette
Merge to Target and Preserve Layers	Step 1 Create new target layer. Step 2 Link desired layers to new target. Step 3 Hold down Option (Alt) key and choose Merge Linked from submenu of Layers palette.
Toggle Layer Mask Off/On	Shift+click on Layer Mask thumbnail
Toggle Layer Mask and composite	Option+click (Alt+click) on Layer Mask thumbnail
Turn on alpha channel	\ (toggles rubylith mask off/on)
Make Layer Active	Cmd+~ (Ctrl+~) Click on layer thumbnail
Modify Layer Mask View	Double-click on Layer Mask icon

NOTE: Holding down the **Shift** key while changing a type layer's attributes in the **Character** or **Paragraph** palette will change the same attribute on all linked layers.

Type Shortcuts

Command:	Shortcut:
Enter Edit Mode	Double-click on T icon in layer palette
Reposition Type without exiting	Hold down Cmd (Ctrl) and move with mouse
Toggle Eyedropper	Option (Alt)
Select a Word	Double-click on word
Select a Line	Triple-click on word
Select a Paragraph	Quadruple-click on word
Select All	Cmd+A (Ctrl+A)
Cycle through fonts	Click in Type field in Options bar and use up and down arrows to select font
Adjust point size	Click in Point Size field in Options bar and use up and down arrows to adjust size
Adjust point size of selection	Cmd+Shift+< or > Ctrl+Shift+< or >
Hide “reversed out” selection	Cmd+H (Ctrl+H)
Create new type layer	Shift+click with Type tool to create a new type layer (if you’re close to another type block)
Toggle Hyphenation	Cmd+Option+Shift+H (Ctrl+Alt+Shift+H)

Kerning Shortcuts (place cursor between characters)

Increase by 2/100 Em Space	Option+right arrow (Alt+right arrow)
Decrease by 2/100 Em Space	Option+left arrow (Alt+left arrow)
Increase by 10/100 Em Space	Cmd+Option+right arrow (Ctrl+Alt+right arrow)
Decrease by 10/100 Em Space	Cmd+Option+left arrow (Ctrl+Alt+left arrow)

Leading Adjustment Shortcuts (must highlight text)

Increase by 2 points	Option+down arrow (Alt+down arrow)
Decrease by 2 points	Option+up arrow (Alt+up arrow)
Increase by 10 points	Cmd+Option+down arrow (Ctrl+Alt+down arrow)
Decrease by 10 points	Cmd+Option+up arrow (Ctrl+Alt+up arrow)
Select Auto Leading	Cmd+Option+Shift+A (Ctrl+Alt+Shift+A)

History Palette Shortcuts

Command:	Shortcut:
<i>Redo Key Option 1</i>	(Cmd+Z)/(Ctrl+Z)
Toggles Undo/Redo	Cmd+Z (Ctrl+Z)
History State Backward	Cmd+Option+Z (Ctrl+Alt+Z)
History State Forward	Cmd+Shift+Z (Ctrl+Shift+Z)
<i>Redo Key Option 2</i>	(Cmd+Shift+Z)/(Ctrl+Shift+Z)
Toggles Undo/Redo	Cmd+Option+Z (Ctrl+Alt+Z)
History State Backward	Cmd+Z (Ctrl+Z)
History State Forward	Cmd+Shift+Z (Ctrl+Shift+Z)
<i>Redo Key Option 3</i>	(Cmd+Y)/(Ctrl+Y)
Toggles Undo/Redo	Cmd+Option+Z (Ctrl+Alt+Z)
History State Backward	Cmd+Z (Ctrl+Z)
History State Forward	Cmd+Y (Ctrl+Y)

Filter Shortcuts

Command:	Shortcut:
Extract	Filter>Extract Cmd+Option+X (Ctrl+Alt+X)
Repeat last filter	Cmd+F (Ctrl+F)
Reopen last filter with same settings	Cmd+Option+F (Ctrl+Alt+F)
Fade last filter	Cmd+Shift+F (Ctrl+Shift+F)
Cycle Through Gradients	Previous, (comma)/Next. (period)
Default Colors	D
Toggle Foreground/Background	X

Lighting Effects Filter

Duplicate light	Option+drag light (Alt+drag light)
Delete Light	Delete
Adjust light footprint w/o changing angle	Shift+drag handle
Adjust light Angle w/o changing footprint	Cmd+drag handle (Ctrl+drag handle)

Filter Shortcuts (continued)

Command:	Shortcut:
Retouching Tools	
Toggle Blur and Sharpen	Hold down Option (Alt) while using one of these tools
Toggle Fingerpainting Smudge	Hold down Option (Alt) while using the Smudge tool
Toggle Dodge and Burn	Hold down Option (Alt) while using one of these tools
Switch Modes while Toning	Shadows: Option (Alt)+Shift+S Midtones: Option (Alt)+Shift+M Highlights: Option (Alt)+Shift+H Cycle: Shift++ or Shift+-
Set the Sponge tool	Desaturate: Option (Alt)+Shift+D Saturate: Option (Alt)+Shift+S Cycle: Shift++ or Shift+-

Selection Shortcuts

Command:	Shortcut:
Add to a selection	Shift+Selection tool
Subtract from a selection	Option+Selection tool (Alt+Selection tool)
Create intersection selection	Shift+Option+tool (Shift+Alt+tool)
Select All	Cmd+A (Ctrl+A)
Deselect	Cmd+D (Ctrl+D)
Reselect last selection	Cmd+Shift+D (Ctrl+Shift+D)
Inverse selection	Cmd+Shift+I (Ctrl+Shift+I)
Hide Marching Ants	Cmd+H (Ctrl+H)
Use Move tool temporarily	Hold down the Cmd (Ctrl) key to temporarily switch (Except with vector tools)
Use Hand tool temporarily	Hold down the spacebar
Feather	Cmd+Option+D (Ctrl+Alt+D)
Load a Layer	Cmd+click (Ctrl+click) on a layer
Add to Loaded Layer	Cmd+Shift+click (Ctrl+Shift+click) on a layer
Subtract From Loaded Layer	Cmd+Option+click (Ctrl+Alt+click) on a layer
Intersect From Loaded Layer	Cmd+Option+Shift+click (Ctrl+Alt+click) on a layer

Selection Shortcuts (continued)

Command:	Shortcut:
Load a Channel	Cmd+Option (Ctrl+Alt) and the channel number Cmd+click (Ctrl+click) on the Channel icon
Constrain Marquee	Shift+drag with initial selection
Draw from Center with Marquee	Option+drag (Alt+drag) with Elliptical Marquee
Reposition Selection as it's drawn	Hold down spacebar
Move Selection 1 pixel	Arrow keys when Marquee/Lasso/Wand selected
Move Selection 10 pixels	Shift +arrow keys when Marquee/Lasso/Wand selected
Move Selected Pixels 1 pixel	Switch to Move tool; then use arrow keys
Move Selected Pixels 10 pixels	Switch to Move tool; then use Shift+arrow keys
Center selection in new document	Shift+drag selection to new document
Lasso Tool	
Activate Lasso tool	L
Toggle Lasso tools midselection	Hold down the Option (Alt) key and drag
Close Selection	Double-click or press Enter
Cancel	Escape

Levels, Curves, and Color Shortcuts

Command:	Shortcut:
Levels	
Levels	Cmd+L (Ctrl+L)
Use Last Levels Settings	Cmd+Option+L (Ctrl+ Alt+L)
Auto Levels	Cmd+Shift+L (Ctrl+Shift+L)
Auto Contrast	Cmd+Option+Shift+L (Ctrl+Alt+Shift+L)
Curves	
Curves	Cmd+M (Ctrl+M)
Use Last Curves Settings	Cmd+Option+M (Ctrl+Alt+M)
Pinpoint Color on Curve	Cmd+click (Ctrl+click) in image
Pinpoint Color on Each Curve	Cmd+Shift+click (Ctrl+Shift+click) in image

Levels, Curves, and Color Shortcuts (continued)

Command:	Shortcut:
<i>Color</i>	
Color Balance	Cmd+B (Ctrl+B)
Use Last Color Balance Settings	Cmd+Option+B (Ctrl+ Alt+B)
Auto Color	Cmd+Shift+B (Ctrl+Shift+B)
Hue/Saturation	Cmd+U (Ctrl+U)
Use Last Hue/Saturation Settings	Cmd+Option+U (Ctrl+ Alt+U)
Desaturate Image	Cmd+Shift+U (Ctrl+Shift+U)
Invert	Cmd+I (Ctrl+I)