

NAVIGATING PHOTOSHOP WORKSPACE

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Photoshop is a massive application, usable for both graphic design and photograph development. As photographers, we don't usually need to use the features developed for graphics designers, and most of us only need to understand enough to make some beneficial changes. Few users know everything about Photoshop.

These notes describe the layout of the Photoshop window. Go through this document with Photoshop open.

These notes relate to working with Photoshop CC Version 20.2.2 on a Macintosh. They will apply to Windows versions, or earlier versions and may apply partially to Elements.

How Photoshop looks depends on the Preferences set. Go to MENU: Photoshop CC > Preferences, and look at the options under Interface, Workspace and Tools to make the screen look as you wish.

CREATIVE CLOUD (CC) HOME SCREEN

Opening Photoshop can be done in several ways, depending on which version you have and which computer system you are using. Many ways will lead you to the Home screen, which gives a number of options. The most common is to select one of the images you have been recently working on. Most of us regard this screen as an annoyance, and it is of most benefit to graphic artists who use the whole Adobe CC suite of applications.

Click on an image or import one to go to the Photoshop workspace.

OPENING IMAGES DIRECTLY INTO PHOTOSHOP – A CAUTION

Opening an image directly in Photoshop can be done in several ways, double clicking its ikon, clicking the "Open" button in the Home screen, or selecting MENU: File > Open in Photoshop, for example. A photograph directly from the camera will be either a JPEG or RAW file.

Opening a RAW file won't take you to Photoshop directly. It will open in Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) first. This enables you to perform many edits before you click the Done button, which will open it safely in Photoshop.

Opening a JPEG file will take it directly into Photoshop, but not safely. The first thing you *must* do is Save-As to a new file name. If you work on the original file and save, the original will be written over and therefore lost.

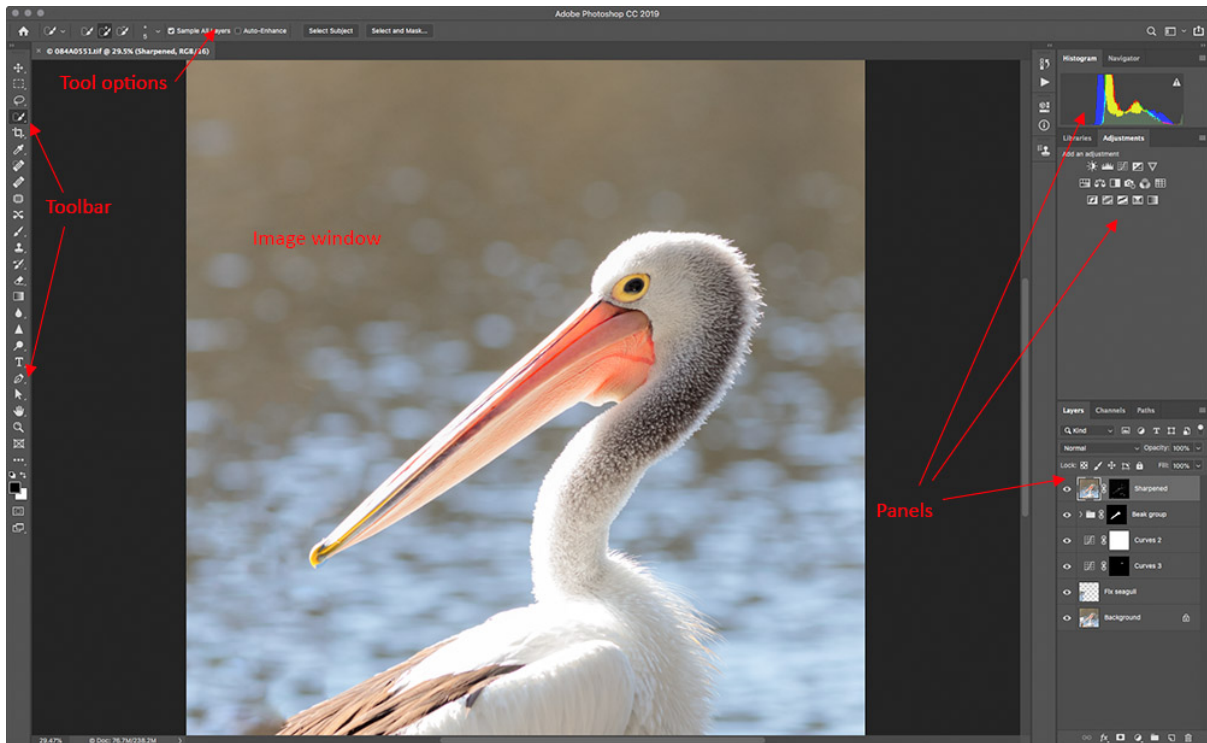
This way of working is risky. It is better to use Bridge or Lightroom to review your images first, and then open images from these applications into Photoshop.

YOUR WORKSPACE

The workspace is how the Photoshop window is displayed. Because Photoshop is so complicated, not every tool or feature can be displayed simultaneously in any one workspace. Photoshop has a variety of standard

workspaces for different applications. If you are starting photograph development, select the Photography workspace:

MENU: Window > Workspace > Photography



You can modify this later, adding features you use, and then saving it as your own workspace. If you want to sketch or draw, you can go to the Workspace - Graphic or Web.

Please select the Photography workspace and refer to it as you read through the rest of this document.

THE PHOTOSHOP MENU

Along the top of the Photoshop Window (or top of the screen for a Mac) is the Photoshop menu.

Photoshop CC File Edit Image Layer Type Select Filter 3D View Window

As always, menu items are selected by mousing down on a menu name, scrolling down and selecting an option. In my notes, I indicate this as:

MENU: Window > Workspace > Photography

THE IMAGE EDITING WINDOW

The rectangular section that occupies most of the Photoshop window is where the image you are editing is shown. The file name of the image is shown in the bar immediately above the window.

This window can contain more than one image, if you are working on several images, or want to combine images.

To create a new blank file: MENU: File > New.

You can control how multiple windows are displayed MENU: Window > Arrange

You can control how the image you are working on is displayed using the following keystrokes:

Control / Command + 0 (zero)	Makes the image fit to the window.
Control / Command + 1	Zooms to 100%
Control / Command + Plus	Zooms into the image. The magnification is shown at the bottom corner of the window. Repeat to zoom more.
Control / Command + Minus	Zooms out in steps. Repeat to zoom more.

At the bottom of the workspace you will also find the file size of the image, preceded by ©Doc: . The first number is the original size of the file. The second is the current size with all the work you have done, and is what you need to watch if your computer is lacking in RAM (working memory).

THE TOOLBAR

The strip to the left of the image window is the toolbar, which contains the most likely tools you will use to edit a photo.

CLICKING ON A TOOL CHANGES THE MOUSE POINTER TO BEHAVE AS THE CHOSEN TOOL.

Hold your mouse pointer over a tool, and you will get a written description and a demonstration of what the tool will do. If this does not happen, ensure the following Preference is set:

MENU: Photoshop CC > Preferences > Tools... > Use Rich Tooltips

You are also shown the keystroke that will quickly select the tool. To save time, remember the keystrokes of those you use most often (B for Brush).

Click on a tool, and when you move the mouse pointer over the image window the tool becomes active. Outside the image window the mouse pointer reverts to its use as a pointer.

The top tool is for moving selections or layers around. The next 4 tools are for making selections. Next there is the crop tool, followed by the Eyedropper (colour sampler) tool.

Some tool buttons have a tiny triangle in the right bottom corner. When you mouse down on this, you see alternative similar tools that can be selected.

The toolbar ends with one button with three dots. Clicking and holding on this button gives you access to a number of tools that are not available in the default toolbar. For example, the original toolbar does not have a paint bucket, which is used to fill a selection or window with a particular colour. Some photographers use this a lot, and add this to their toolbar.

Above the window tabs is the Tool Options bar. This shows the options available for the selected tool. It is important you understand the options available for each tool so you can change its behaviour to do what you want. Look up options in Photoshop help.

THE PANELS

On the right-hand side of the window you will find a row of panel windows. These give you access to making changes to your image, and give a visual representation of changes you make. There are three Panel Windows in the default Photography workspace, and each of these has tabs to select underlying Panels.

The top panel by default is the histogram. Use this to see the range of tones in your image. This is a far better way of determining the brightness range of a print than screen brightness, especially if the room you are working in has variable lighting.

The tab next to Histogram reveals the Navigator window. This can be used to move around a window when you are zoomed in. Just drag the red square to the part of the image you want to examine, or change the magnification with the slider under the little window.

The next panel window contains tabs to the Adjustments Panel, ikons for adding adjustment layers to your image. Click on one of these ikons to add an adjustment layer.

The bottom main panel contains tabs to the Layers, Channels and Paths Panels. The Layers panel is the most useful of these, and is selected by default. It is used to view your image as layers. At the bottom of the Layers panel is a row of ikons that can be used to add or modify layers.

ADDITIONAL USEFUL HIDDEN PANELS

To the left of the panels bar is a narrow bar with 5 ikons at the top. These panels provide useful additional resources. Clicking the top ikon will reveal the History panel – a record of the activities you have undertaken on the image. Click on earlier activities to step back in history. Look up History in Photoshop Help to find more.

The second hidden panel shows a list of available Actions. These are a series of recorded steps that can be played back to repeat these steps and automate Photoshop. There are controls to record Actions yourself. Photoshop has some Actions you may try out. You can obtain Actions from others, and even share them. We should look at setting up a library of useful Actions club members can share.

The third ikon will bring up the Properties panel for the active layer. In the case of an adjustment layer, the controls for the adjustment are displayed.

The fourth ikon will reveal Information about the part of the image the pointer is over when it is in 8-bit mode. Tones are shown as a number from 0 to 256. It is worth using to check if a dark spot is pure black (all values should be close to zero), or the highlights have blown or out of gamut (values of 256).

The 5th ikon shows the Properties window for the last Tool you used. It can be used to change the behaviour of the tool.

Additional Ikons will be added if you select some tools. For example, selecting the Brush tool will add a brush properties ikon to this list.

REARRANGING PANELS

You can rearrange any panel by dragging its title bar over the image, or onto a second screen (if you have one). Close it by clicking on the X in the top left corner of the window.

Additional panels can be selected from the Window menu. By default, the Panel's ikon is added to the hidden Panel ikons.

Any Panel can be added as a tab to another panel window by dragging and dropping.

The amount of space a panel window takes up can be adjusted by dragging the boundary between two adjacent panels, or dragging the edges of a free-standing Panel window.

AND FINALLY

This is a brief overview. If you want to learn more, look at the other articles I have written. You should also use the Photoshop help menu and search for keywords:

Workspace

Tools

Panels

Actions

History

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