The Non-Designer's Photoshop Book

Essential imaging techniques for design

Robin Williams and John Tollett

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ROBIN WILLIAMS AND JOHN TOLLETT

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Berkeley, California 94710 510.524.2178 voice 510.524.2221 fax

Editor:	Nikki McDonald
Proofer:	Cathy Lane
Cover design and production:	John Tollett
Interior design:	Robin Williams
Production:	Robin Williams and John Tollett
Index:	Robin Williams
Prepress:	David Van Ness

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READ THIS FIRST

Chances are you've used Photoshop on some level, but never had the time to become familiar with as many of the features and techniques as you would like. The first two chapters in this book get you up and running quickly while creating small projects from start to finish. The remaining chapters provide more exercises and detailed information for the types of tasks that are frequently encountered in graphic design (as opposed to photography).

Because Photoshop is an advanced application, we expect that you know how to use your mouse and the windows; the difference between a single click and a double click; how to find, open, and save files; how to access contextual menus (right-click or Control-click); and how to use your computer in general. But you probably know all those things already or you wouldn't be jumping into Photoshop!

This is not a manual, but more of an image-editing cookbook. Many of the steps and techniques you might need for various projects are littered throughout, so check the index for specific things you need.

We can't explain every single option in Photoshop (no one can do that in a book this small). The more you know about Photoshop the more you realize there are multiple ways to do almost anything. We hope that when you find a technique you like, it will spur you to go to Photoshop Help (from the Help menu) and find out more about it. As you explore the lessons in this book, we expect you to poke around, click and prod, and experiment. Turn the eyeball icons on and off and see what happens, rearrange layers, explore different Blending Modes, etc.

Of course, we're in awe of what this software can do because for many years we worked in the design world before Photoshop was invented. To you it might be just an ordinary, everyday miracle thingy. In any case, prepare to have more fun with software than you ever thought possible.

Things to know before you begin

Right-click: Because most people these days have a two-button mouse, we use the phrase "right-click" to mean "right-click *or* if you don't have a two-button mouse on a Mac, Control-click."

We use the terms **press** and **drag**. *Press* means to hold down the mouse and don't release it until you finish the current instruction. *Drag* means to press on the mouse, then drag the cursor without releasing the mouse until you've completed the drag operation. We avoid the term "click-and-drag" because for many things, if you click (which implies you let go), the drag won't work.

To keep text short and easy to understand, most instructions for **choosing menu items** are in this form: From the Layer menu, choose New > Layer via Copy. This means go to the Layer menu, slide down to "New," and from its submenu, choose "Layer via Copy."

Brushes: Many tools have brush-like qualities but you don't think of them as brushes. See pages 170–175 for controlling the paint brushes and know that the same techniques control other "brushes" such as the Eraser tool, Quick Selection tool, Clone Stamp tool, Blur tool, etc. Get in the habit of using the [and] keys to reduce and enlarge the size of the brushes as you work.

Choose your tool, then check the Options bar to see what its settings are! That's one of the biggest causes of frustration—not realizing that there is some setting that is messing up your expectations. Photoshop does exactly what you tell it—it's *your* job to understand what you're telling it!

Check the **Cursors** preferences (page 171) so you understand that you have control over how it appears.

Learn your keyboard shortcuts. We often tell you to go to a menu and choose a command, but when you go to the menu, also take note of and learn the shortcut.

One that Photoshopped not wisely but too well

Almost Famous Quotes from Non-Designer Shakespeare



Photoshop: It's like a recipe for creativity.



In Photoshop, you'll find yourself doing two things over and over again. The first is **selecting** elements to modify them. Photoshop provides many different ways to select images or parts of images, and how you select an item can determine what you can do with it. The second is **transforming** elements. The transform commands in Photoshop—scale, rotate, skew, distort, perspective, warp, and flip—enable you to modify images in almost unlimited ways.

Experiment with selecting and cropping in this chapter. Photoshop can only undo that very last thing you did, so work on a photo you don't care about. If you don't save your changes to the image, you can always "Revert" to the original image from the File menu. Or, to preserve the original, you can also make a copy of the file you want to work on (and in Chapter 7 you'll learn how the History panel provides the equivalent of multiple undos).

What light through yonder Photoshop window breaks?

Almost Famous Quotes from Non-Designer Shakespeare

Selection tools

Shown below are the four main selection tools (and their variants) in the Tools panel: the **Marquee** tools, the **Lasso** tools, and the **Quick Selection** tools. To display the pop-up menus of the hidden tools, *press* (don't click) or right-click on tool icons that have a small triangle in the bottom-right corner.



We include the **Crop** tool as a selection tool because it selects parts of an image, then transforms it. (The **Slice** tools hidden beneath the Crop tool are used to slice images apart for web pages, a specialized feature we don't cover in this book.)



The **Pen** tool is an important selection tool because you can use it to draw paths around elements, then convert those paths to selections that you can save and edit endlessly. See pages 80–81.

TIP: To deselect your entire selection at any point, use the keyboard shortcut Command D (PC: Control D), *or* go to the Select menu and choose "Deselect."

The Rectangular Marquee tool

Select the **Rectangular Marquee** tool. Drag to draw a marquee around an area that you want to select. As with any rectangular tool, drag diagonally to create the shape.

With the selection made, you can modify just the selection in any way. For instance, you can crop the image: From the Image menu, choose "Crop."





The Elliptical Marquee tool

The **Elliptical Marquee** tool acts the same as above, except that it draws circles and ovals. As above, any modifications you make will apply to just the selected shape. For instance, you can desaturate the selection: From the Image menu, choose Adjustments > Desaturate.



TIP: To make a selection *outward* **from the** *center* of any marquee tool, hold down the Option key (PC: Alt key) as you drag.

TIP: To constrain the shape to a perfect square or circle, hold down the Shift key.

Single Row or Single Column Marquee tool

Click in an image with the **Single Row Marquee** or **Single Column Marquee** tool to select a row or column one-pixel wide (below-left). This is useful when you need to trim just a tiny wee bit from the edge of an image—instead of selecting the rest of the image and cropping that wee edge, use one of these tools to select just the edge. Or use it to add or subtract from an existing selection (see page 78). To create graphic design effects, fill the selection with color, add a stroke of color to the selection, or do both, as shown below.



Multiple Single Row selections.

To stroke or fill a selection with color, right-click it, then select "Fill" or "Stroke" and choose your options. (You must rightclick while the selection is **active**.)

1



When a marquee tool is selected, these buttons in the Options bar let you (from the left) make a new selection, add to selection, subtract from selection, and intersect with selection (see page 78).

The Lasso tool 🧟

Use the Lasso tool to draw freehand shapes around a selection when pinpoint accuracy is not critical. This is a useful tool for selecting elements that don't fit nicely inside a circular or rectangular selection.

- 1 Select the Lasso tool in the Tools panel.
- 2 Draw a path around a part of the image.



The Polygonal Lasso tool \checkmark .

The regular Lasso tool can be difficult to control with a mouse, but the **Polygonal Lasso** tool is another easy way to draw a complicated path. It only draws straight lines between clicks of the mouse.

- 1 Select the Polygonal Lasso tool.
- 2 Click once in the image.
- ³ Click a second time and a selection line appears between the two clicks. Every time you click, another straight line connects that point to the previous point.
- 4 To close the path and make the selection, click on the original firstclick point. Or double-click—wherever you double-click, that line will snap to the beginning point.



When you are close enough to the beginning point, this tiny little open dot will appear next to the lasso. That is your visual clue that you can now click and the path will close.

The Magnetic Lasso tool 😕

The Magnetic Lasso tool is hidden under the Lasso tool. Select it, then trace along an edge. The path it draws snaps to the edge like a magnet. This tool is not very accurate unless the image is a very high contrast image, so experiment with it, for instance, on hard-edge brush strokes you've made or on elements in an image that show a strong contrast between its colors and the background.

Feather the edge (make it soft and fuzzy)

A soft-edged or *feathered* selection is useful for special effects and for subtly blending a foreground image into a background. Feathered edges also enable you to create a montage of different images that blend seamlessly together.



This selection has a Feather setting of 40 pixels. Edges this soft almost disappear when overlayed on another image.



When you copy and paste a feathered selection into another image (above), the two images blend together seamlessly.

To make a feathered selection, choose your selection tool, then set an amount in the "Feather" field in the Options bar. Experiment with a 5 px feather, and then with a 20 px feather. You'll notice that the selection has rounded corners, your visual clue that a feather is being used.



Add a feather after you've made a selection

If you need to feather a selection after you've drawn it, do this:

- 1 From the Select menu, choose Modify > Feather.
- 2 In the little dialog that appears, enter the amount of feathering you want to apply. There's no preview, so you have to guess how much "Feather Radius" to use.

Feather Radius: 20	pixels	OK Cancel
--------------------	--------	--------------

Adjust a feather after you've made a selection

Not only can you add a feather after you've made the selection, this dialog lets you adjust the settings and preview them before committing.

 In the Options bar, click the "Refine Edge..." button (circled below), which brings up a dialog.

Feather: 40 px	Anti-alias Style: Normal 🗘 Width: 🚅 Height:	Refine Edge

- 2 In the Refine Edge dialog (below, left), set a Feather amount.
- 3 Choose how you want to preview the results: Single-click the *View* well in the "View Mode" section of the dialog (below, right).
- 4 Make your adjustments and click ок.





This is a "Marching Ants" preview, where the selection boundary looks like ants marching around the page.

To see an actual preview of the soft edge, choose the "Overlay" preview mode.

Modify your selection

In the Options bar, you have some great settings for modifying the selection. Experiment with these! They are hugely useful.



A New selection. This option is chosen by default.
 When you drag to select, existing selections are released.
 To *add* to a selection, hold down the Shift key as you drag multiple selections.

To *subtract* from a selection, hold down the Option key (PC: Alt key) as you drag.

TIP: If your selection isn't acting as you think it should, check to see which button is highlighted.

B Add to selection. Select this icon, then drag to select something. Each dragged selection is added to existing selections. You can make two or more *separate* selections this way, or you can *overlap* an existing selection to add to it.



To make this selection, I first used the Rectangular Marquee tool to drag the topright rectangular shape.

Then I dragged the lower-left overlapping rectangular shape.

Then I switched to the Elliptical Marquee tool, clicked the Add to selection button, then added two other shapes (the second rectangle and the circle).

- **C** Subtract from selection. Select this icon, then drag a shape to *deselect* part of an existing selection.
- **D** Intersect the selection. This selects only where the new selection intersects with the original selection.

TIP: To deselect everything, use the keyboard shortcut: Command D (PC: Control D).

The Quick Selection tool

With the **Quick Selection tool**, *brush* on the image and the tool automatically detects and selects up to the edges of the element you brush on. If the image has well-defined edges, this works great.

- 1 Choose the Quick Selection tool.
- 2 In the Brush Preset picker in the Options bar (shown below), choose a brush size and hardness (closer to zero is softer).
- **3** Brush inside an area to select it. **To add to the selection**, pick up the mouse and drag again in an unselected area (by default, the Add to selection option stays selected after the first brush stroke).
- 4 To subtract from the selection, select the Subtract from selection icon in the Options bar, then brush across unwanted areas.
- 5 If it's necessary to refine the selection, use the options in the "Refine Edge..." dialog from the Options bar (see page 77).



The Magic Wand tool 🖄

The Magic Wand tool is very similar to the Quick Selection tool, above, except you can refine the selection before you begin. Choose the Magic Wand, then in the Options bar:

- Set the "Tolerance" level to a low number to limit the color selection close to the first color on which you click; set a higher number to grab more colors outside that original range.
- Check "Anti-alias" for a smoother edge.
- To select all similar colors in the image with one click, uncheck "Contiguous" (if "Contiguous" is checked, only similar colors that are touching are selected).

Just single-click to select an area; click in another area to select more.

TIP: To select all similar colors, go to the Select menu and choose "Similar."

The Pen tool

To learn to use the Pen tool, see pages 160–163. The Pen tool is very different from any other tool. If you use a Pen tool in InDesign or Illustrator, you'll find this one similar.

PATHS

When you draw with the Pen tool, Photoshop automatically stores a *path* in the Paths panel. If you don't see the Paths panel on your screen, choose "Paths" from the Window menu.

You can have many paths on an individual Paths layer (although if they are unrelated to each other, make separate layers for each one). You can apply a fill and stroke to any path, but the fill and stroke do not stick to the path itself—they appear on another layer as raster images.

We often draw a path around irregular objects (or people) that we want to separate from a background. The path we draw can be made into a selection, then we can use that selection to delete the background. For instance, in the example below, we want to put the stones on a layer by themselves, so we can add whatever background we want. I've drawn a path around each stone. All three paths are on one *path layer* in the Paths panel.

- 1 Open an image, then open the Paths panel (as mentioned above).
- 2 Click the *Create new path* button at the bottom of the Paths panel.



Panel menu. Click here to see more options.

To change a Path name, double-click directly on the current name in the Paths panel.

Load path as a selection.

Create new path.

3 With the new path layer selected, select the Pen tool in the Tools panel and draw a path around each stone.



In this example, we're going to delete the background. But with the selection made, you can copy either the selection or its inverse, apply effects and filters to the selected area, change the colors, and so on.

- 4 Click the *Load path as a selection* button (bottom of the Paths panel). The path turns into a marching ants selection.
- 5 The stones are selected, but we want to inverse the selection so we can delete the image background: From the Select menu, choose "Inverse" (below, left).
- 6 Press Delete to erase the image background.

If the stones are on a *Background layer*, the background is replaced by the current Background color.

If the stones are on a regular layer, the background is replaced by transparency (shown below, right). We can now create another layer below the stones layer, and fill it with a new background color or image.



Background selected.



Background deleted.

7 To add drop shadows, double-click the stones layer and select the "Drop Shadow" option in the Layer Style dialog (see pages 102–103).



An example of how to use a path in Photoshop to wrap a caption (above) in InDesign.

The Crop tool 4.

The **Crop tool** is not a selection tool, but it is one you will use very often in combination with selecting.

You can crop an image in two quick steps without the Crop tool if all you want to do is get rid of an unnecessary part of an image:

- 1 With the Rectangular Marquee tool, select an area that contains the element you want to *keep* (make sure there is no feather on the selection; see page 76).
- 2 From the Image menu, choose "Crop." Ta da.

For more specific cropping, the **Crop tool** provides much more control. You can set the specific dimensions and resolution of the cropped area, and you can see a preview of the results.

- 1 Choose the Crop tool from the Tools panel.
- 2 In the Options bar, set the "Width" and "Height" that you want the finished image to be (or see the tip below).

For a measurement in inches, type "in" after the number. For a measurement in pixels, type "px" after the number.

3 You can set the "Resolution" if you understand clearly how it might affect the image. If not, leave it blank.

Set 300 pixels/inch if the image is to be printed in high-quality; set 72 pixels/inch for screen viewing.



TIP: If you leave the fields blank, Photoshop will maintain the current resolution of the image and resize according to the crop area that you draw with the tool.

4 Drag a rectangle around the area you want to crop, as shown below. If you have set a width and height, your rectangle will be limited to proportions matching that shape.



Press in the middle to **move** the crop area to another part of the image.

Resize it by dragging a corner handle; hold down the Shift key to keep the same proportion.

5 Once the crop area is drawn, the Options bar changes, as shown.



If you are on a regular layer, not a Background layer, you can choose to *Delete* or *Hide*. The *Hide* option allows you to later reposition the image within the cropped area: just move the image with the Move tool. (To convert a Background layer to a regular layer *before* you crop, double-click "Background" in the Layers panel, then click OK.)

- 6 Set the "Crop Guide Overlay" pop-up menu to *None, Rule of Thirds,* or *Grid.* The *Rule of Thirds,* a design theory that says compositional elements should fall within a grid of thirds, visually divides the crop area into thirds.
- 7 Check "Shield" if you want to shade the part of the image that will be deleted or hidden, as you can see above. Set a shield *Color* (default black works best), and set the *Opacity* of the shield to your taste.
- 8 To commit the current crop operation, hit the Enter key (or click the checkmark icon you see farther to the right in the Options bar).

To cancel, hit the Esc key (or click the Cancel icon next to the checkmark, as mentioned above).

To make the selection marquee disappear, click anywhere.

Crop based on another image

This is very useful when you have a number of photographs in a project that all need to be the same size. For instance, perhaps you have a number of staff member photos, and you want all their heads to be positioned in approximately the same area of the photo and about the same size.

- 1 Select the Crop tool in the Tools panel, then crop and size an image as you want.
- 2 Single-click the "Front Image" button in the Options bar.
- ³ Open another image, then drag the Crop tool, which is now constrained to the previous image's dimensions and resolution, to encompass the part of the image you want to preserve. It's up to you to position the cropping box to set someone's head, for instance, in the same position as the first image.
- ♦ ✓ 4 To commit the operation, click the Commit button in the Options bar (the checkmark), or press Return (PC: Enter).

To cancel the operation, click the Cancel icon in the Options bar (shown on the left), or hit the Escape key.

Before cropping.



After cropping.



Solomon Catt



Serena Pickering Catt



Riley Adkins Catt



Lydia Alice Beeson Catt

Crop in perspective

The "Perspective" checkbox used with the Crop tool not only allows you to crop the image, but make lens corrections at the same time. This is useful, for instance, when an image is distorted in the camera or because it was shot at an extreme angle. We often ignore lens distortion, especially when it occurs in personal photos, but occasionally you may want to fix it. If you don't adjust the lens distortion as you crop the image, you can adjust it later using one of the Transform tools, Distort or Perspective (see page 89). The Transform tools are a better choice for some images, because the Perspective Crop tool may crop away more of the image than you want (as shown below-right).

- 1 Open an image in which there is lens distortion.
- **2** Select the Crop tool.
- **3** Drag a rectangle around the image.
- 4 Check the "Perspective" box in the Options bar. Perspective

Drag the corners of the cropping area to align with the image perspective, as shown below-left.

S ✓ 5 To commit the crop operation, click the Commit button (the checkmark) in the Options bar, or hit Return (PC: Enter).

To cancel the operation, click the Cancel icon in the Options bar (shown on the left), or hit the Escape key.





Transform commands

As you can see in the Edit menu, there are two main Transform items, "Free Transform," which applies to a selected layer, and "Transform" with a submenu of options, all of which apply to *individually selected items*.

Before you can transform a layer or part of an image, you must make a selection with one of the selection tools. To select a layer, single-click on it in the Layers panel (details on working with layers are in Chapter 5).



Transform commands in the Edit menu.

Commit or Cancel transform tasks:

- To commit the transformation, hit the Enter key, or double-click inside the bounding box, or click the Commit checkmark icon in the Options bar.

0

- To cancel, hit the Esc key, or single-click the Cancel icon in the Options bar.
- To get rid of the selection marquee, click anywhere, or press Command D (PC: Control D),
 - or go to the Select menu and choose "Deselect."

Free Transform

"Free Transform" lets you do basic transforms, such as resize (scale) and rotate. Also see page 34–35 for another technique using this command.

- 1 Select a portion or all of the image. If you select it all, open the window wide enough that you can see the corners.
- 2 From the Edit menu, choose "Free Transform."

The Transform bounding box appears around the edges of the image. If you can't see the corner handles, make the window a little larger.



3 To resize the selection proportionately (to maintain its *aspect ratio*), hold down the Shift key as you drag a *corner* handle (shown above).

To resize in any way, just drag any handle. Side handles resize in just one direction; corner handles resize both sides at once.

4 To rotate the selection,

position the cursor a few pixels away from any corner handle (you definitely have to open your window larger for this). When the cursor changes to a curved double-arrow, press-anddrag the cursor.

See page 86 for commit/ cancel options.



Transform menu options

From the Edit menu, choose "Transform" to access the other transform options, shown below.

Again 쇼쁐T	The Scale and Rotate operations
Scale Rotate Skew Distort	are exactly the same as using "Free Transform" described on the previous page.
Perspective Warp	The items of interest here are <i>Skew, Distort, Perspective,</i> and <i>Warp</i> .
Rotate 180° Rotate 90° CW Rotate 90° CCW	The <i>Rotate</i> and the <i>Flip</i> options at the bottom of the menu are useful and self-explanatory.
Flip Horizontal Flip Vertical	Just remember that you must <i>select</i> first, <i>then</i> operate.

Skew a selection

Skewing an image slants it vertically or horizontally. You just never know when this might come in handy.

- 1 Select a portion or all of the image. If you select it all, open the window wide enough that you can see the corners.
- 2 From the Edit menu, choose Transform > Skew. Drag the middle handles to skew the image.

See page 86 for commit/cancel options.



Distort a selection

Distorting an image lets you drag each corner to any position, useful when you need to paste a photo into a shape in another image.

- 1 Select a portion or all of the image. If you select it all, open the window wide enough that you can see the corners.
- 2 From the Edit menu, choose Transform > Distort. Drag any corner handle to any position.

If you are matching a shape that is on another layer below this one, reduce the Opacity of this distortion layer to make it easy to align the two images. (See Chapter 5 for details about layers.)

See page 86 for commit/ cancel options.



Transform a selection in perspective

The Perspective option moves two opposite control handles equally, giving the illusion of perspective.

- 1 Select a portion or all of the image. If you select it all, open the window wide enough that you can see the corners.
- 2 From the Edit menu, choose Transform > Perspective.
- 3 Drag a top or bottom corner handle in toward the center; the opposite handle moves the same amount. Also experiment with dragging a corner handle downward.

See page 86 for commit/cancel options.



Warp a selection

The Warp option overlays a mesh on the image that you can manipulate. (For an advanced version, see Puppet Warp in Chapter 14.)

- 1 Select a portion or all of the image. If you select it all, open the window wide enough that you can see the corners.
- 2 From the Edit menu, choose Transform > Warp.



3 Drag any corner point or control handle to distort the mesh that overlays the image (see pages 161–163 about working with control handles).



Or drag the mesh intersections in the image interior.

Or click the "Custom" pop-up menu in the Options bar to choose from a list of preset warp options; customize the preset warp with the fields you see to the right of the "Custom" menu.



4 See page 86 for commit/cancel options.

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