

Photoshop 4-Layers

Part One-The Layers Panel

A background layer has certain properties that make it different from other layers. Any time you create a new image in Photoshop with a white or colored background it will be named “Background,” and will have those characteristics indicative of a background layer. You cannot change the opacity, blending mode, or stacking order of a Background layer; nor can you unlock it or move another layer below it. Sometimes, this complicates the process of editing or modifying an image. If the Background layer is not integral to an image, you can delete it. If you wish to make use of it, you can convert it to a regular layer quite easily.

- I. There are two ways to convert a Background layer into a regular layer
 - A. In the Menu Bar, select Layer>New>Layer From Background or...
 - B. Double-click the layer name and press Enter
- II. If, for some reason you want to make a regular layer into a Background layer
 - A. Select the layer you want to convert
 - B. In the Menu Bar, select Layer>New>Background From Layer
- III. Adding one image into another
 - A. There are two ways to add one image into another as a new layer
 1. **Open and Drag**-With the recipient image already open...
 - a. In Bridge, or Mini Bridge, find the file to add in and open it
 - b. There are two ways to drag one open image into another
 1. Using the Move tool (V) click in the middle of the image and drag it to the tab of the 04Working image and wait until the recipient image is activated and drag into the image area and release
 2. ...or you can use the straight image-to-image drag
 - A. In the options bar, click the Arrange Documents button
 - B. Select one of the “2 Up” layouts from the drop down menu
 - C. Using the Move tool (V), drag either the Layer from the Layers panel, or drag the image itself into the already open image area
 3. Close the image you opened to insert it

2. “Place” command-one of two ways...

a. Quick Place- With the recipient image already open

1. In Bridge, find the file you want to insert
2. Click on it and drag it to the Photoshop Icon in the Quick Launch menu at the bottom left of the screen and hold
3. When the Photoshop window opens, drag into the image area and release
4. This same technique will work from Mini-Bridge by clicking and dragging the new image directly from the Mini-Bridge panel into the open image in Photoshop

b. Slow Place

1. In the Menu bar in Photoshop, click File>Place...
2. Browse to the correct folder
3. Highlight the file you want to use and click “Place”, or just double-click the file

B. When the image is in place in Photoshop, double-click the name of the new layer in the Layers panel and rename it appropriately, if you want to

IV. Adding a border to a layer

A. Hide all layers except the layer you want to border by Alt-Clicking the Eye icon in the Layers panel for that layer (This is not necessary, but helps reduce distractions while working with a particular layer)

B. To open the Layer Style panel

1. In the Menu bar choose Layer>Layer Style>Stroke, or
2. In the Layers panel, double click the blue area of the layer you want to border and on the left side of the panel, click on the word Stroke, or
3. At the bottom of the Layers panel, click the Fx button and select Stroke from the pop-up menu

C. Adjust the settings as you see appropriate

V. Rearranging Layers

The arrangement of layers is called the “stack.” Layers at the bottom of the stack can be hidden behind those above them. The bottom is considered the “back” and the top is considered the “front.” Rearranging the stacking order is usually as simple as clicking on a layer in the Layers panel and dragging it up or down. You can also use the Menu bar by clicking Layer>Arrange and selecting one of the four options. There are a number of keyboard shortcuts that can be used as well.

VI. Controlling Opacity

- A.** Select the layer you need to adjust
- B.** Near the top right of the Layers panel click the box next to “Opacity”
- C.** To adjust the opacity of a layer
 - 1.** You can use the slider that appears when you click on the arrow
 - 2.** You can key a number into the percentage box
 - 3.** You can highlight the number in the box and use the arrow keys or the scroll wheel on the mouse
 - 4.** You can also use the scrubby slider

VII. Duplicating a layer

- A.** Right-click the layer you want to duplicate and choose “Duplicate Layer...”
- B.** Name it and Click “OK”

VIII. Using filters to enhance layers

- A.** In the Layers panel, select the layer you want to enhance
- B.** In the Layers panel, click the “Create a New Layer” button at the bottom right of the Layers panel
- C.** With the new layer still active, select Filter>and choose the filter you want to apply from the Menu bar

Filters are fickle friends. Some filters will not work on a blank layer and must be applied to an active pixel layer. Some filters will not work on text unless it has been rasterized, which makes it un-editable. Some filters will not work on 16 bit images. If you find you need to alter a layer to use a filter, it is a good idea to duplicate that layer and apply the filter to the duplicate and turn off visibility on the original layer. That way if you need to go back to the un-filtered layer, it is there for you to work with. This is especially crucial when working with text. There are numerous third party filters available (often called “plug-ins”) some are free, some are not. There are many free filters available at Adobe.com and it’s no sin to Google “photoshop filter download” to see what you can find. You’ll find a lot. Some are really great; some are really not great.

Part Two- Gradients and Layer Styles

A gradient is an area of an image that graduates from one color to another, or from one shade to another. This is generally controlled by the foreground and background color settings. In the Options bar is a gradient menu that allows you to select the shape of a gradient. The controls available for gradients would take hours and hours to cover. Advanced users are fond of gradients for controlling layer masks. A gradient can be used to create sunsets and to adjust exposure in an image and much, much more.

I. Gradients

- A.** In the Layers panel, select the layer to which you wish to apply a gradient
- B.** Select the foreground and background colors
- C.** In the Tools panel, select the Gradient Tool
- D.** In the Options bar, click on the Gradient Picker drop down and select the gradient option that best suits your needs
- E.** Gradients are applied by dragging the tool across the area you want to affect. Some gradients are linear and stretch across an area, some are radial and will radiate outwards in multiple directions from the starting point

II. Layer Styles

Layer styles are like mini-layers applied to a particular regular layer. They can be turned off and on in the Layers panel using the Eye icon, just like layers. A Layer Style can be copied and pasted (even into a different image), and can be dragged from one layer to another. Holding the Alt key while dragging will duplicate the effect onto another layer rather than moving it. Once a Layer Style has been applied, it can be edited later if adjustment should prove necessary. This is a handy form of non-destructive editing.

A. Three ways to apply a Layer Style

- 1.** In the Menu bar choose Layer>Layer Style> and pick a style, or
 - 2.** In the Layers panel, double click the blue area of the layer you want to affect and on the left side of the panel, click on the words that denote the style you want to apply
 - 3.** At the bottom of the Layers panel, click the Fx button and select the style from the pop-up menu
- B.** Adjust the settings until you are satisfied, and click “OK”
 - C.** In the Layer Styles panel, you can use the Preview checkbox to toggle the Layer Style off and on to get a better look at the effect.

III. Creating an Image Border

- A.** Select the top layer in your image
- B.** Create a new blank layer
- C.** In the Menu bar choose Select>All or Ctrl+A
- D.** In the Menu bar choose Select>Modify>Border
- E.** Set the border size, and click “OK”
- F.** Set the foreground color to the desired color of the border
- G.** In the Menu bar choose Edit>Fill or Shift+Back Space and Select “Foreground Color”
- H.** Deselect
- I.** Rename the new Layer 1 “Border”

IV. Flattening for delivery

- A.** Once you have saved your image with the layers all intact, in the Menu bar choose Image>Duplicate, name the new image, and click “OK”
- B.** Close the original file
- C.** Two ways to flatten the image
 - 1.** In the Menu bar choose Layer>Flatten Image
 - 2.** In the Layers panel menu at the top right, choose Flatten Image
- D.** Save your work

Thomas Gartman
P.O. Box 351
Point Harbor, NC 27964
252-573-8648
info@gartmanbeachpix.com