

## Tips and Tricks with Photoshop...

Some of these you may already know and use every day, but some maybe little tricks you never knew existed and just might make things that little bit easier and efficient the next time around.

### Keyboard Shortcuts I use every day ...

**(Alt + Backspace)** – Fill your selection with your Foreground colour

**(Ctl + Backspace)** – Fills your selection with your Background colour

**(Ctl + D)** - Sets the swatches to the default colours (Black / White)

**(Ctl + X)** – Reverses your Foreground/Background swatches – this is very handy when using the brush tool to edit Alpha Masks.

**(Shift + Ctl + I)** – Inverts your marquee selection

**(Ctl + I)** – Inverts the colour of your selection (black becomes white, white becomes black) – this is very handy when using Alpha Masks.

**(Ctl + D)** – Deselects your current marquee selection

[ ] – Square Brackets increase/decrease your brush size (when using the Brush tool).

**Numeral Keys** change opacity settings. I use this mostly with Layers and the Brush tool.

For Example: Click on a layer, hit '5' on your keyboard and you will notice that your layer opacity setting has changed to 50%. ( **1**=10%, **2**=20%, **3**=30% --- **0**=100% ). You can also change the opacity on the fly, when using the brush tool, by hitting the numeral keys while painting. Very handy!!

**(Ctl + E)** – Merges Down shortcut – does one of 2 things,

- 1) If you have only 1 layer selected, it will merge that layer with the layer directly below it in the Layers palette. Merge means effectively flattening the 2 layers together. Layer effects, text or smart objects will also be flattened / rasterised.
- 2) Alternatively, you can click and select separate layers and apply Merge down to flatten only those layers without effecting any of the layers that happen to be in between the layers selected. \*NICE\*

**(Ctl + Click)** to select separate layers not in a range

**(Ctl + Shift + Click 2 layers)** to select the 2 layers and all layers in between (range).

### Selection Tool

This is commonly used but some people still don't know you can move your marquee selection (while still in the process of selecting) by **holding down SPACE BAR**.

- 1) Select your marquee tool
- 2) Click and drag to make a selection (and while still holding your mouse click) hold Space Bar down to move the position of your selection.
- 3) Release space bar to continue adjusting your selection (if required).

Other handy tools when selecting:

- **Hold Shift** while dragging a marquee, your selection stays square or perfectly circular.

- **Hold Shift + Alt** while dragging a marquee, your selection will grow from the origin point at which you clicked your mouse.

## Text Modifiers

Text Size (**Shift + Ctl + < >**)

Kerning or Tracking (**Alt + Left/Right Arrows**) – works with individual or whole words

Reset to default “0” Tracking (**Shift + Ctl + Q**)

Leading (**Alt + Up/Down Arrows**)

Select Auto Leading (**Shift + Ctl + Alt + A**)

**Palette Sliders** – Hover over individual field icons (within the Text Palette) you will notice that your cursor changes to left/right arrows. Click and drag left/right to decrease/increase values in that field.

## Keyboard ALT CODES FOR GLYPHS / SYMBOLS (PC)

® = Alt + 0174

© = Alt + 0169

™ = Alt + 0153

• = Alt + 0149

So for the above, you hold Alt then type in sequence the number code and the glyph should appear on screen where your text cursor is located.

Keyboard Shortcuts for **MAC** – simply use the following shortcuts (much simpler):

® = Option + R

© = Option + G

™ = Option + 2

• = Option + 8

## Difference Between Opacity and Fill (Layers Palette)

- Opacity % value effects the opacity of the layer and all objects and effects associated and applied to that layer.
- Fill % value effects the opacity of an object, not the layer nor the effects applied to the object.

For example: If you have a vector shape with a drop shadow or a stroke effect applied, setting Fill = 0% will only effect the shape opacity not the drop shadow or stroke opacity.

## Assigning the Eye Dropper Tool to the Background Swatch

This one took me a little while to troubleshoot...

If you find that your eye dropper tool in changing your Background swatch instead of your Foreground swatch (Colour palette). You may have your Background swatch selected (black outline will appear around the Background colour swatch instead of the Foreground colour swatch in the colour palette). Just click on the border of your Foreground swatch (highlight it in black) to reassign the eye dropper back to the Foreground colour.

## Alpha Mask

**(Ctl+Click)** on an Alpha Mask to make a selection based off that alpha mask

**(Shift + Click)** on an Alpha Mask to disable the mask effect (hide mask). Just simply Shift + Click on the Alpha Mask again to enable the mask effect.

**(Alt + Click)** on an Alpha Mask to preview the Alpha Mask (you can edit from this view). Simply Alt + Click on the Alpha Mask again to return to the Layer preview.

**Remember when creating Alpha Masks**

Black = Masked (invisible)  
White = Unmasked (visible)

**When creating an Alpha Mask for selection**

Black = Unselected  
White = Selected

## Vector Shapes Vs Saved Paths

### Vector Shape

Appears as a layer in the Layers palette and can be linked, scaled and moved with other layers. This can be very handy. You can also assign layer effects to a Vector Shape object.

### Path

Saved in the Paths palette, they cannot (to my knowledge) be linked to layers in the Layer palette. They stay in the position and size that you save them in unless you manually transform or edit them.

### Paths objects

You can change the selection value of your path. But first you need to select the **Path Selection Tool** (press the 'A' key). With the Path Selection Tool, click on your path and using the Shape tool settings in the toolbar across the top of your stage area, you can select one of the following:

- Add to shape area (+)
- Subtract to shape area (-)
- Intersect Shape Areas
- Exclude overlapping shape areas

I have never really used the last 2 options, but **Add to shape area** and **Subtract to shape area** work like this:

Say you have drawn a path around a person in an image. If you assign **Add to shape area**, the path will contain the person and therefore when you make a selection from the path, you will select the person. If you assign **Subtract to shape area** then the path will contain the background around the person and therefore when you make a selection from the path, you will select everything except the person.

Add = Everything inside the path

Subtract = Everything outside the path

### Here's a TIP!

When looking at a Path layer (Paths palette);

White area = contained within the path (selected)

Grey area = contained outside the path (unselected).

## Pen Tool – Keyboard Shortcuts

**(P)** – Pen Tool

With the Pen Tool selected the following applies:

**(Hold Ctl)** – Changes cursor to the **Direct Selection Tool** (White Arrow) which allows you to select nodes, reposition nodes, or manipulate node handles.

**(Hold Alt)** – While hovering over node handles, changes the cursor to the **Convert Point Tool**, which enables you to change the angle of the path from that selected node (handles).

**(Hold Alt)** – While dragging handles for a new node will allow you to manipulate the angle of the last handle and therefore change the direction of the path on the fly.

## Handy Brush Tool Cheat

**Click Point A + Hold Shift + Click Point B** to draw a perfectly straight line between Point A and Point B. Be mindful, if you have Tapering or Shape Dynamics applied to your brush (when using a Wacom), the line will taper to Point B. You may need to switch off some of the Shape Dynamic settings to use this feature effectively.