

INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOSHOP

Preparing photos for use on the web

Learn how to edit
photographs and images,
and prepare them for use on
the web

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Introduction to Photoshop

Preparing photos for the web

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1. Opening

First, open up Photoshop.

- If the picture you want to edit is already somewhere on your computer or on a shared network drive somewhere, you can use **'File' > 'Open'** to find your way to it and open it.
- If you've got the pictures on a CD, when you insert the CD a window will pop up and ask if you want to explore the contents; click it and browse to the thumbnail images until you see the pictures you want. Click the right hand button on your mouse, and you get a dropdown menu; select **'open with..'** and then select Photoshop from the list.

2. Your workspace

Before you start there are a couple of things you can set up in Photoshop to make your life easier.

- Info palette - if it's not already showing on your screen, go to **'Window' > 'Info'**. This lets you see the width and height of an area when you select it.
- History palette - if it's not already showing on your screen, go to **'Window' > 'History'**. This keeps track of any changes you make to a file. Each change adds a new layer to the palette, so to go back one stage, click on the layer above the current layer.
- Units: for the web, you need to know measurements in pixels. If for any reason the units show in any other format, go to **'Edit' > 'Preferences' > 'Units and Rulers'** and select pixels.
- Rulers – it's can be handy to have horizontal and vertical rulers showing along the sides of your workspace as a quick reference: go to **'View' > 'Rulers'**.
- Colour – for making images to use on the web, choose sRGB for your Photoshop workspace. Go to **'Edit' > 'Color Settings' > 'Working Spaces'** section > select the **'sRGB IEC61966-2.1'** profile from the RGB dropdown.

3. Keyboard shortcuts

- it helps if you can see all of the picture on your screen, so you can see where the edges are. You can zoom in and out of the picture using the **'Ctrl'** and **'-'** or **'+'** keys
- a handy tip make sure the 'selected' area always keeps the same proportions is to **hold down the 'shift' key** on the keyboard while you are dragging and selecting.
- to see the dimensions of the whole image, press **'Ctrl'** and **'A'**

4. Resizing

Let's assume you have a photo which looks ideal for the website, it's just the wrong size. We use some standard widths for images: **700 pixels** wide (for 'full page' images), and **300 pixels** wide (for 'inset' images, aligned right), although you may be using other templates which require different specific sizes.

To resize a rectangular landscape photo, go to **'Image' > 'Image size'** and a new window opens which lets you change the height or width of your picture. Change the width of the picture to 300 pixels. Make sure you keep the checkbox which says 'constrain proportions' **checked**, otherwise you'll stretch the picture and distort it.

NB remember, you can keep track of the size of the selected area of your image in the panel on the right of your screen labelled **'Info'** (if not you can see it by going to **'Window' > 'Info'**).

5. Cropping

Sometimes you might just want to select part of a photo for your website, in which case you can select and crop an area of the picture first. Consider things like the composition of the picture, or whether there is something in the background or foreground you want to crop out.

A: using the 'Crop' tool

Select the crop tool, click on the picture and, holding your left mouse button down, click and drag the rectangle over the picture - the area outside your selection will appear greyed out.

- to resize your selection, drag the corners or sides
- to move the selection, use the arrow keys on your keyboard
- to finish cropping, press 'enter'
- to deselect the crop tool without saving the selection, hit the escape key (**'Esc'**).

B: using the 'Rectangular marquee' tool

Alternatively, you can select the rectangular marquee tool (the dotted square symbol) and, holding your left mouse button down, click and drag the rectangle over the picture. You can just drag it until you reach the right width, but remember you can hold down the 'Shift' key to drag a square.

It might take a couple of stages to select the exact area you want, but once you're happy, you can go through the same resizing process as in 4.

6. Image adjustment

If you're given a photo taken in poor light, or with strong shadows which make it difficult to make out easily, you can often improve it.

Photoshop has three tools which can improve pictures automatically:

- Auto Levels: **'Image' > 'Adjustments' > 'Auto Levels'**
- Auto Contrast: **'Image' > 'Adjustments' > 'Auto Contrast'**
- Auto Colour: **'Image' > 'Adjustments' > 'Auto Colour'**

NB don't feel obliged to use all (or any) of them, or to save the changes - sometimes it's a judgement call.

It's worth trying these 'automatic' tools to see how much the quality improves. However, if you want to experiment you can do it by hand using **'Image' > 'Adjustments' > 'Brightness/Levels'** or **'Colour Balance'** or **'Contrast'**.

Again, it's often down to your judgement. If you're not sure of the results, or if you're not confident using these tools you can always contact us on webdev@brookes.ac.uk

7. Sharpening

Similarly, you might have a particularly blurry picture. If you go to **'Filter' > 'Sharpen' > 'Sharpen'** you can make it look, well, sharper.

NB this tool can make your finished picture look grainy, and the result may not always be an improvement on the original – it depends on the photo. Try it, but be prepared to make a judgement call on which version to use.

8. Undoing changes

If you want to undo a change, you can go to "**Edit**" > "**Undo**". Photoshop also keeps track of the changes you make as you go along in the panel called "**History**". Each change adds a new layer to the palette, so to go back one stage, click on the layer above the current layer.

9. Rotating

If you have something you've scanned in, chances are it'll be at a slight angle. You can correct this and straighten it up by using "**Image**" > "**Rotate Canvas**". The last option on this drop-down menu is "**Arbitrary**": select this and type in the number of degrees you want to rotate the image clockwise (CW) or counter-clockwise (CCW). This usually needs a bit of trial and error!

10. Saving and optimising

Finally, save your finished picture. Go to "**File**" > "**Save for web**", and a new window will open. Photos should always be saved as jpeg files (.jpg), so go to the 'Settings' drop-down menu and click on the down arrow. There are three options for jpegs: high, medium and low. These relate to the size of the finished image file – the better the image quality, the larger the file size.

In most cases the dimensions of the photos on the Brookes website are fairly small, so saving them as high quality jpegs won't create huge file sizes: so choose "**High**", and then click "**Save**".

If you are saving fairly large images it may be better to compromise on quality, so choose "**Medium**", and then click "**Save**".

A third window will now open, "**Save Optimised As**", where you can enter a name for your finished file, and a location to save it.

*NB don't forget, when you close the original picture in Photoshop, you **don't** want to save the changes you've made to the original!*