

Photoshop 6 - Basic Questions FAQ

1. What will improve performance?

Get more RAM.

Have your scratch disk on a different disk to the Operating System swap file in Windows. Use a good video card. Current recommendations are ATi Radeon and NVIDIA-based cards, though Matrox is used by a number of people too. Matrox is particularly good for multi-monitor set-ups.

2. Why have I got a precise cursor (it looks like a crosshair when I don't want that)?

Because you have Caps Lock turned on. You can toggle the cursor using Caps Lock.

3. Why does Photoshop fail to run/freeze/keep accessing the floppy drive?

If you have PS 6, make sure you have the 6.01 update installed, that is freely available from www.adobe.com

If you have error codes coming up in a dialog box, look those codes up in the Adobe |Support Knowledgebase here <http://www.adobe.com/support/main.html> Click on the title: Support by Product, select Photoshop and then enter the code in the Search box on the new page.

If you don't have any error codes, and can't get PS started, try uninstalling and reinstalling Photoshop. If Photoshop freezes after it loads, go to the Knowledgebase as above and type in the word freeze and see if it solves your problem.

If you are having problems, but PS loads, and doesn't go wrong for a while, but then consistently goes wrong with, say the same tool, try closing PS, then deleting your preferences file. The file has the extension .psd and you can find it by searching for it in Explorer (Windows) or the equivalent in MacOS.

If none of this works, then ask in a Photoshop Newsgroup. But, when you do make sure you include **all** the details, and all relevant details of your machine (OS, amount of RAM, hard disk space, etc). And **never** forget to say what version of PS you are using.

4. What Operating System should I use?

This is really a Windows question, as with Macs it depends on when you bought your Mac. So, for Windows, you can use 98 or ME, but they will not use your memory as efficiently as 2000 or Xp. Plus, the filing system is, well let's say less than optimal :) Different people will tell you different things about this, but personally I would suggest Win2k as it's stable and not new. Others would say XP.

5. Where can I get a plugin to do.....?

Type "Photoshop" + "Plug ins" at www.google.com

Type "Photoshop" + "actions" at www.google.com

For actions you can also go to www.actionexchange.com

There are some useful sites in this FAQ.

6. Why do I get jaggies when I draw in Photoshop?

Mainly because PS is a bitmap/pixel editing program. (although your resolution may have something to do with it). If you want to draw things which look good at any size, then you need a vector program. PS 6 does have vector shapes and vector Text (At least, until you want to use a filter on them anyway) but for vector drawing you need something like Illustrator, Corel Draw, Freehand, XaraX or RealDraw Pro.

If it's just your text or a line, select it and try selection>modify>smooth

7. I've lost my serial number, can someone....?

No, they can't, and they won't. With one or two exceptions anyway. If you are a legitimate Adobe customer, mail them or ask on their site. If you're not, tough.

8. I can't.....on my image?

If you are trying to do something on your background layer, remember that it's locked. To unlock it, double click on it in the layers palette.

9. I'm having problems scanning/printing.....

Have you checked for the latest drivers for your scanner/printer? If not, do so, and install them if they are newer, then see if it works. If it doesn't, **then** ask your question, but give all the info about your system and PS (See 3.)

10. Where is the gradient/whatever tool?

The gradient tool is behind the paint bucket on the tool bar. See the little arrow on the paint bucket? Click and hold and you will get a fly out that has the gradient tool on it. Change tools by clicking it. And that applies for a lot of tools. All the ones with the small arrow in the corner have other tools behind them. Try these first before asking about where a particular tool is. If you do that and still can't find it, then people here will be happy to help.

11. How do I...?

Have you read the manual/looked for it in the help (which is the manual in electronic form)? If you haven't, don't be surprised if people get a little irate when you ask the question. **Always** see if you can find the answer in the manual first. If you can't find it, or don't quite understand it, then feel free to ask. People here are always willing to help if people have done the basics for themselves first. Here is one tip for a common question:

Red Eye: Select the iris, Image>Adjust>Selective Color and get the red out. And for retouching photos generally, read the tutorials at: <http://www.retouchpro.com/>

12. What graphics tablet should I get? Should I get one?

Yes, you should if you use Photoshop for anything other than applying filters.

Only one maker is worth buying from: www.wacom.com

13. I'm thinking of getting an LCD/TFT screen...

Don't if you're interested in good colour purity. While they have, and are improving, these screens are nowhere near good enough for serious work yet. Stick to a CRT, the bigger the better. For the price of a TFT you could get a 22" CRT.

14. I want to make gold/silver/metal whatever...

Go to <http://www.digitalwebgold.com/resources/tutorials.htm>

15. Where can I find some good tutorials?

www.myjanee.com

<http://user.fundy.net/morris/>

After that, go to Google and try entering "Photoshop" + "tutorial". Then come back in 5 years time when you've read them all <g>

16. How can I transfer a face from one picture onto the body in another picture?

There is a tutorial for this in the manual. Also, you can try these two sites:

<http://www.lairofluxlucre.com/fake-u/index.html>

<http://users.supernet.com/guntcher/tutor/procedure.htm>

17. What type of file should I scan in as?

Scan files in as TIFFs at the highest resolution you can. It's easy to make a file smaller, and lose pixels, but you can't put in information

that wasn't there in the first place..

18. How can I make my colours more accurate?

A big subject, but the starting point is using the Adobe Gamma software to calibrate your monitor. Instructions are in the manual.

19. What book should I get?

There's a lot of different books recommended by different people. So, got to your local bookshop and look at them. Buy the one **you** feel comfortable with. That one that makes you say "Wow! I never knew you could do that". One recommendation, if you're new to PS - take a look at the Photoshop Visual QuickStart Guide for Windows and Macintosh. And you might like to try the Adobe Photoshop Classroom in a Book.

20. Why can't I edit my text?

Have you applied any effects/filters to it? If you have the layer has been rasterised and you can no longer edit the text.

21. I want to make my image bigger, can I do it?

You can try, but you're trying to put in information that isn't there in the first place. While you can get products like Genuine Fractals, you might like to try the free download at <http://www.fredmiranda.com/>.

22. When I make a transparent gif it shows up with a white line around it?

That's because you haven't set the matte. Use Save for Web to save the gif and on the right you will see a box with white in it and the word matte. Click on the colour and select the same colour as the background that you are putting it on.

23. Why won't my scanner.....?

Try looking at: <http://www.scantips.com/>

24. Do I have to keep highlighting, changing the font, picking another, highlighting again, etc?

No, you don't. Just do the following:

Type in your text, then highlight it. With the text highlighted click on the font dropped down box in the toolbar but don't drop it down. Now using the up and down arrow keys to scroll through your list of fonts. As you move to each font your text will change to show you the font.

To lose the highlight so you can see better, use Ctrl-H

25. Where can I find the Photoshop keyboard shortcuts?

Apart from in the documentation that comes with PS, there is a good version at:
<http://user.fundy.net/morris/redirect.html?photoshop1.shtml>

This is in pdf format.

26. How do I make an image with only one/two/three colour(s)?

Image>greyscale followed by image>monotone/duotone/tritone.