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John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Photoshop® CS6 All-in-One For Dummies®

Published by
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
111 River Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

www.wiley.com

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Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2012937920

ISBN 978-1-118-17456-2 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-118-22707-7 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-118-24000-7 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-118-26470-6 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to Gary, Kylie, and Lucky, who constantly remind me of what's really important in life.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my excellent project editor, Beth Taylor, who kept me and this book on track; Bob Woerner, the world's best Executive Editor; Andy Cummings, who gives Dummies a good name; David Busch, for his great contribution to the first edition; Dennis Cohen, for his technical editing; and all the hard-working, dedicated production folks at Wiley. A special thanks to Ted Padova, colleague, fellow author, and friend, who always reminds me there is eventually an end to all those chapters.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments at <http://dummies.custhelp.com>. For other comments, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

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Introduction

There's a reason why Photoshop is the world's industry standard in image-editing software. The depth and breadth of the program is unparalleled. Photoshop immediately sucks you in with its easy-to-use interface and powerful tools and commands. It's so feature rich that you soon begin to lose track of time and start blowing off your commitments just to try one more thing. And just when you think you've finally explored every nook and cranny and mastered the program, you suddenly read a tip in a book or magazine that enlightens you about something you didn't know. Or even more likely, you stumble upon some great effect while working on a late-night project. That's the beauty of Photoshop. It's the program that just keeps giving.

The depth and breadth of Photoshop has downsides, too, of course. You must make a major time commitment and invest much effort to master it — hence the large number of books written on the program. Walk into your neighborhood bookstore or type `Photoshop` in the Search field at any online bookseller's site, and you see a barrage of choices. Some books are general reference books, some are targeted toward the novice user, and others focus on a specific mission, such as color management or restoration and retouching.

About This Book

This book is written for the person who has a good grasp of using a computer and navigating the operating system and at least a cursory knowledge of Photoshop. It is intended to be a comprehensive reference book that you can read cover to cover or reach for when you're looking for specific information about a particular task.

Wherever I can, I sneak in a useful tip or an interesting technique to help you put Photoshop to work for your project needs.

Sometimes, knowing *how* to use a tool doesn't necessarily mean that you know *what* to do with it. That's why this book contains several Putting It Together exercises that help you make a connection between the multiple Photoshop tools at your disposal and the very specific task you need to accomplish. Want to get the red out of a subject's eyes or create a collage? Just check out the Putting It Together sections in Books III through IX. These sections present info in easy-to-follow numbered steps, in a hands-on style, building on what's presented in the chapter so that you can go to the next level, put concepts to work, and move on to the next task.

What's in This Book

This book is broken into minibooks, each covering a general topic. Each minibook contains several chapters, each covering a more specific topic under the general one. Each chapter is then divided into sections, and some of those sections have subsections. I'm sure you get the picture.

You can read the book from front to back, or you can dive right into the minibook or chapter of your choice. Either way works just fine. Anytime a concept is mentioned that isn't covered in depth in that chapter, you find a cross-reference to another book and chapter where you find all the details. If you're looking for something specific, check out either the Table of Contents or the Index.

The Cheat Sheet at Dummies.com (find more information inside the front cover) helps you remember all the shortcuts you'll use most often. Print it, tape it to your monitor, and glance over it when you need to.

And finally, I have pictures. Lots of them. In full, living color. Many of these pictures have callouts that point to specific steps or identify important concepts, buttons, tools, or options. With a program like Photoshop, an image often speaks louder than words.

This book contains nine minibooks. The following sections offer a quick synopsis of what each book contains.

Book 1: Photoshop Fundamentals

Ready to get your feet wet with the basics of Photoshop? Head to Book 1. Here's where you get familiar with the Photoshop environment — the desktop, menus, and panels. I also briefly introduce the key tools and explain what each one does.

Photoshop has such an abundance of tools — and so many ways to use those tools — I can't possibly cover them all in this book. But if you're looking for details on the less commonly used features or perhaps more information about using tools you're already familiar with, you'll find them on this book's companion Web site (www.dummies.com/go/photoshopcs6aiofd).

In this book, I cover how to get started on Photoshop and how to view and navigate your image window. Here's also where I give you all the important details about the o'mighty Adobe Bridge, and its pint sized cousin, Mini Bridge, and how to customize your workspace and preference settings.

Finally, I go into the bare basics of printing, and then how to save files and close Photoshop.

Book II: Image Essentials

This book covers all those nitpicky — but critical — details about images, such as size, resolution, pixel dimension, image mode, and file format. Turn to this book to find out how to safely resize your image without causing undue damage.

You can also find out how to crop images and increase their canvas size. In addition, I breeze through basic color theory and get you started using and managing color.

But wait — there's more. I give you the lowdown on the History panel and brushing and erasing to history. And, if that's not enough, I throw in a chapter on using and creating actions for enhanced productivity.

Book III: Selections

This important book gives you all the juicy details and techniques on creating and modifying selections and paths. You find out about each of the selection tools and also the powerful — albeit sometimes unruly — Pen tool and its accompanying Paths panel.

Book IV: Painting, Drawing, and Typing

If you want to know about the drawing and painting tools, this book is for you. Here I cover the Brush and Pencil tools, including the Mixer Brush tool, along with the multifaceted Brush panel and Brush Preset panel. I also show you how to create vector shapes by using the shape tools, and how to fill and stroke selections.

Head to this book to find out how to create both gradients and patterns and, last but not least, become familiar with the type tools and how to use them to create and edit standard type, type on and in a path, and type with special effects.

Book V: Working with Layers

Layers are an integral component in a Photoshop image, and Book V is where I explain them. In this book, you discover how to create and edit layers and how to use multiple images to create a multilayered composite image. You find out various ways to manage layers for maximum efficiency, including using the Layer Comps panel. I also show you how to enhance layers by applying different blend modes, opacity settings, layer styles, and styles. I round out the minibook by covering Smart Objects. And finally, I introduce you to working with the Auto Align and Auto Blend features.

Book VI: Channels and Masks

This book gives you all the how-tos you need to work with channels and masks. I show you how to save and edit selections as alpha channels so that you can reload them later. And I show you how to work with the various kinds of masks — quick masks, clipping masks, layer masks, and channel masks — and how you can use each to select difficult elements. I also cover other masking techniques, such as erasing and using the Color Range command. Finally, I introduce you to the Properties panel, a powerful ally to the masking arsenal.

Book VII: Filters and Distortions

I filled this book with tons of handy tips and techniques on using filters to correct your images to make them sharper, blurrier, cleaner, and smoother — whatever fits your fancy. I give you the scoop on the Smart Filters feature, which enables you to apply filters nondestructively. You'll find out how to use filters to give your image a certain special effect, such as a deckled edge or water droplets. You also won't want to miss details on the new Oil Paint filter. Finally, I introduce the Liquify command so that you can see the wonder of its distortion tools — and how they can turn your image into digital taffy.

Book VIII: Retouching, Restoring, and Printing

You find everything you need to know about color correction or color enhancement in Book VIII — getting rid of colorcasts, improving contrast and saturation, remapping, and replacing colors.

In addition, I include a chapter on using the focus and toning tools to manually lighten, darken, smooth, soften, and sharpen areas of your image. You get to see how you can use the Clone Stamp tool, the Healing tools, and the Red Eye tool to fix flaws and imperfections in your images, making them good as new. I also show you the Color Replacement tool and how to replace your image's original color with the foreground color. You get some tidbits on how to work with the fascinating Vanishing Point feature, which can make editing and compositing images a whole lot easier. Finally, I give you the low-down on preparing your images for print. You find details on how to get the right resolution, image mode, and file format. You also discover how to set up both process and spot color separations for those offset print jobs.

About the Website

For those web graphics enthusiasts, you find lots of great bonus chapter material on this book's companion Web site (<http://www.dummies.com/>)

go/photoshopcs6aiofd). Find out how to optimize your images for maximum quality and quick download times. You find information on slicing and animating your images and creating a photo gallery that you can easily post on the web. You also find out how to use Photomerge as well as Merge to HDR Pro. Finally, you'll get information on how to use contact sheet II, which has been welcomed back into Photoshop with this latest release.

Conventions Used in This Book

You'll find that this book is cross-platform. Windows commands are given first, followed by Mac commands in parentheses, like this:

Press Enter (or Return on the Mac) to begin a new line.

And occasionally, text is specific to one platform or another. You'll find that figures are divided into both platforms as well.

Often, the commands given involve using the keyboard along with the mouse. For example, "Press Shift while dragging with the Rectangular Marquee tool to create a square," or "Alt-click (Option-click) on the eyeball to redisplay all layers."

When you see a command arrow (⇨) in the text, it indicates that you should select a command from the menu bar. For example, "choose Edit⇨Define Custom Shape" means to click the Edit menu and then choose the Define Custom Shape command.

This book has been written using Photoshop CS6 and, more specifically, the Standard version. Despite that fact, you can still glean valuable info if you're using version CS5 or CS4. It may take a little more time to understand how a panel or options have changed, and of course, the topics covering new features won't be applicable.

Speaking of new features, when writing this book, it wasn't exactly crystal clear what new CS6 features Adobe would be including in the Standard versus Extended versions of Photoshop. So if I've included (or not) a particular tool or command that you don't have, my apologies in advance.

Icons Used in This Book

While perusing this book, you'll notice some icons beckoning you for your attention. Don't ignore them; embrace them! These icons point out fun, useful, and memorable tidbits about Photoshop, plus facts you'd be unwise to ignore.



Seasoned users will appreciate this icon, which kindly points out new features introduced in Photoshop CS6.



This icon indicates information that makes your Photoshop experience easier. It also gives you an icebreaker at your next cocktail party. Whipping out, "Did you know that pressing the bracket keys enlarges or shrinks your brush tip?" is bound to make you the center of conversation.



This icon is a reminder of things that I already mentioned and want to gently reemphasize. Or I might be pointing out things that I want you to take note of in your future Photoshop excursions.



The little bomb icon is a red flag. Heed these warnings, or else Photoshop may show its ugly side.



This icon marks eggheady graphics or Photoshop info that goes beyond the basics.



This icon points to additional chapters we couldn't fit into the printed book. You'll find them on this book's companion website, which you can find at www.dummies.com/go/photoshopcs6aiofd.