

4. Layer Masks

click mask icon to create layer mask (white allows all of layer to be revealed)

applying black to mask hides the pixels on this layer, revealing the full intensity of the corresponding pixels from below

using tones between pure white & pure black will reveal more of the layer below, the darker the colour used the more it hides that part of the current layer

make sure you have the mask selected and not your layer image before attempting to create your mask, otherwise you will be painting over your image

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5. Layer Styles

to create

dbl click layer to open dialog box

or ... select blending options by clicking on the fx icon

apply special effects such as drop shadows, bevel & emboss, stroke etc

apply advanced blending using Blend If to hide or reveal various tones and colours, from the underlying layer

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1. What are layers & why use them?

1 or more image stacked on top of another - paper/cellophane cutout analogy

compositing images

image adjustment

adding text

creating versions

enable independent adjustment/editing of elements

non-destructive workflow

be aware of

image size/resolution

image mode

CMYK/RGB

8bit/16bit

Screen Shots have been taken using Photoshop CS4 and may appear differently if you are using another version. While Photoshop Elements users will not have the full functionality of Photoshop, the same principles and basic features will still apply when working with layers.

3. Working with layers

blend mode - shortcut keys to change mode shift + ( or shift - )

opacity - shortcut keys 1 - 0

fill

all

position

image pixels

transparent pixels

locking

linking

ordering

click & drag to new position

or... cmd/ctrl + [ to move down  
cmd/ctrl + ] to move up  
cmd/ctrl + shift + [ to move to top  
cmd/ctrl + shift + ] to move to bottom

click & drag existing layer onto new layer icon

or ... cmd/ctrl J (remember "jump" to new layer)

click eyeball to toggle layer visibility on/off

opt/alt click to toggle all other visible layers on/off

click & drag to trash

or... click to select layer, then click on trash

click to select layer the press cmd/ctrl + delete

deleting layer contents (fills layer with set background colour)

opt/alt + cmd/ctrl + e

with opt/alt key to make merged copy

flattening/merge visible

from Edit menu

Auto Align Layers

Auto Blend Layers

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2. Layers Panel

opening

from the menu - Window-Layers

or ... use shortcut keys - F7 (may need to use the function key fn + F7, depending how your keyboard is configured)

or ... click layers icon

adjusting

floating window

click & drag to position

click to collapse

click to close

click & drag to resize

protects from moving, paintbrush tools, layer effects

double click to show dialog box & unlock and turn into normal layer to allow full editing

double click while holding opt/alt to unlock without dialog box

background

locked

click on icon on bottom of layers panel

or ... from the menu - Layers-New-Layer...

to show options dialog box - cmd/ctrl + shift + n

or ... use shortcut keys

to create without dialog box - cmd/ctrl + shift+option/alt + n

drag layer from one file onto the window of another open image (holding shift while doing this will centre the image) to have two different images in the same file

name layer - easy identification

only enables you to change pixels in the same location as pixels exist in the previous layer (ie won't effect any areas that were transparent in the previous layer)

checkbox - use previous layer to create clipping mask

options while creating layer (can also be changed or added later if required)

allows non-destructive Image Adjustment (conversely, using the menu item - Image - Adjustment... command is a destructive process - ie once the image is saved, or the number of undos has been exceeded, there is no turning back)

adjustment layers

eg Hue/Saturation adjustment (allows later adjustment or return to original - also allows masking of the adjustment)

text layer - using the type tool will also create a separate layer for the type, allowing it to be later edited if req'd

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