

Layers in PhotoShop Elements

Hilton Head Island Computer Club Workshop

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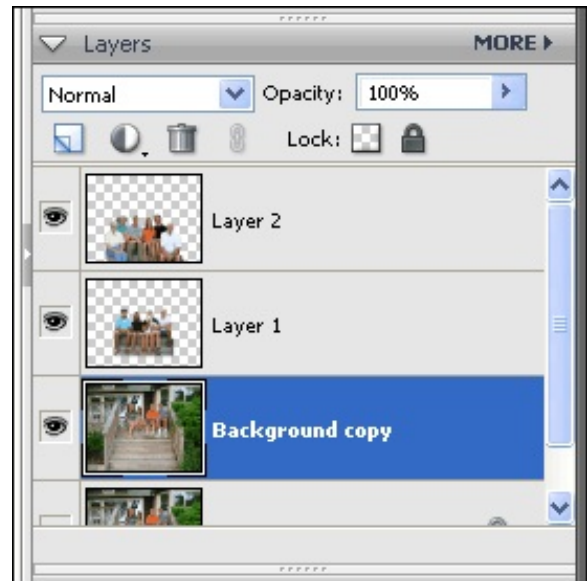
The Layers palette is available in all versions of Photoshop & Photoshop Elements. It is a powerful tool which can help you enhance, change, embellish and title your images.

Layers work the same way animation cels or overhead projector transparencies work. Different components (layers) of an image or composite image can be moved, manipulated and enhanced separately from other layers to produce a final image quite different from the original or originals.

Each version of PS will have a slightly different layout, but all have a Menu list to work from as well as the “MORE” button to use layer functions and effects. You can also access this menu list by use of the Right Mouse Click.

To open your Layers palette, click on Window/Layers. I recommend you keep your Layers, Navigator and Undo History (or History) palettes open during editing. You can open and close other palettes as needed.

1. When you open an image, save it immediately with another name or click on File/Duplicate. This will create a copy of your original so you don't accidentally overwrite the file. Use the file format .psd (PhotoShop Document).
2. Please note that layers can only be saved in Photoshop's .psd format in Elements. If you need to use an image in another format, it is a good idea to save a copy in Photoshop format to retain the layers in case you want to edit it later. If you save a document with layers as a .jpg you will lose the layers. Once you are finished with your final product you can SaveAs in any format you need for your images final destination.
3. Set your Undo History to it's highest. Click on Edit/Preferences and on the General tab, change the History States to the highest setting (100 to 1000 depending on your version).
4. Make a duplicate background layer, especially when you are first working with Layers. This will allow you to go back to the beginning if you make errors and not have to reopen the original. You can also *hide* the new layer to compare the changes you've made with the original
 - a. Right Click on the Background Layer and Left Click on Duplicate Layer
 - b. Left Click on Layer in the Menu Bar and LC on Duplicate Layer
 - c. Left Click on the MORE button in the Layers palette and LC on Duplicate Layer.



Layers Palette from PSE 5.0



Add Text - Click on the Text Tool in the Tool Bar. This will change the cursor to an I bar style cursor. Click on the image where you want the text to be. Not the Tool Options Bar along the top of the page where you can choose the Font,



Style, Size, Color, Alignment, Leading and add any fancy Warp Text effect you like. Once the text is typed, you can select it and edit it in any way you like. Then use the Move Tool (click twice to set the text) to place the text where you want it on the image. Click the Text Tool again and then click the existing text to return to the edit text mode.



Composite Images - There are numbers of reasons to create composite images. You may need to create a montage of images for a special occasion. You may need to bring one individual or item into another image to bring folks together. You may not like the sky in the image the day you took the picture of that glorious view. Just a few pointers.

1. Make sure the resolution is the *same* for all “fragments” of the final image. If you try to put a 300 dpi image into a 100 dpi image, the inserted piece will be too big. Look at the resolution of each image to be put together prior to compiling the final piece.
2. Take the time to carefully “cut out” part of one image to insert in another. Use the great variety of Selection Tools (Rectangular & Elliptical Marquee, Lasso, Magnetic & Polygonal Lasso, Magic Wand and Selection & Magic Selection Brush Tools).
3. Remember each layer can be enhanced, lightened, sharpened, etc. separately from the other layers in a composite image. Each layer can be moved and placed individually. Each layer can be hidden and revealed as needed during the work session. Layers can be moved forward and backward in the “stack” if necessary.
4. Take the time to look at the Layer menu to see the options available.

Multiple Images in One - Open each image that contains a portion of the final output. Select each area of the image that you want and use the Edit/Copy function to copy that selection. Switch to the New image you are creating and Click Edit/Paste. You can then manipulate the selection/layer in the New image as you wish. Repeat for each additional part to add.

Simple Frames - You can create a simple rectangular or any shape “mask” and then cut out the portion you want to “see through” to the image behind the frame. Again, using the Selection tools, create your shape and then use Edit/Cut to clear the portion in the center of the frame so that you can see the other image. Use the Shape Tool to create unusual frames or multiple frames in a composite.

Photomerge™ Panorama - If you want to capture and share an extraordinarily wide vista, you can, with a little planning, capture the images needed to make a panoramic view. Gather those images and open them in Edit mode. Click File/New/Photomerge™ Panorama. The Photomerge window will open with the images just opened listed. Any image listed will be included in the merge. Click OK and the merge window will expand and automatically place (as possible) the images in order. It works, almost automatically. You may have to do some tweaking of each “layer”. When you click OK, the Photomerge window will close to the Edit mode and you can crop the composite to your liking.

FIND MORE TUTORIALS. Do a search for “photoshop + layers + tutorial” (exclude the quotations”. Use any particular function in the search to find specific tutorials for PhotoShop or any other program you need help with or want to learn more about.