

Photoshop Hints:

Selecting Just One Object on a Layer

If you have multiple objects on the same layer (like a few words of type that have already been rasterized) and you want to select just one item on that layer (for example, you want to put a selection around one letter so you can move it independently of the rest of the letters), here's how: Use the lasso tool to draw a very loose selection around the object. Hold the Command key (PC: Control key), and press the Up Arrow key once and the Down Arrow key once. The entire object will become perfectly selected without disturbing anything else on the layer. Now you can move it, edit it, or tweak it separately because it is now a "floating selection".

Photoshop CS2 Tip - Visual Control Over your Selections Using Quick Mask

Did you know that you can use Quick Mask mode to expand or contract your selections visually? Here's how: Create a selection (using any of Photoshop's selection tools), and then switch to Quick Mask mode (press the letter Q). Now you can go to the Levels dialog (under the Image menu, under Adjustments) and tweak the size of your selection. Moving the mid-tones Input Levels slider to the far left makes the selected area smaller (contracting the selection). Moving the mid-tones Input Levels slider to the far right makes the selected area larger (expanding the selection).

Bigger Font Previews

In Photoshop CS2, Adobe added font previews (where you can see a preview of how each font looks, right in the Font menu itself), but the previews are so small, it's still hard to tell the difference among fonts. Luckily, there is a way to make those previews large enough so they actually are usable—just press Command-K (PC: Control-K) to bring up Photoshop's Preferences, then Command-9 (PC: Control-9) to jump to the Type preferences. In the Font Preview Size pop-up menu, choose Large, and your font previews will be significantly larger.

Boss Around Your Color Swatches

You might already know that if you click on a color in the Swatches palette (under the Window menu), that color becomes your new Foreground color. Here's one you may not have realized—if you Command-click (PC: Control-click) on a swatch, that color now becomes your Background color. Also, you can delete any swatch by holding the Option key (PC: Alt key) and clicking on the swatch you want to remove. You can also add a color to your swatches by setting your Foreground color to the color you want to save and clicking on any open space at the bottom of the Swatches palette.

When Fonts Collide (Adding Ligatures In InDesign CS2)

Certain lowercase letters, because of their design, touch when used side by side, such as the lowercase “f” and “i” in the word “finally.” Typographers feel that collision looks really bad, so they invented ligatures. Ligatures are custom-made combinations of two normally colliding characters that have been engineered into one beautiful character. They’re designed to touch, but in an elegant way. Today, most professional quality typefaces include a set of ligatures; you just have to activate them by going to the Character palette’s flyout menu and choosing Ligatures. It then looks for instances of lowercase letter combinations (like fi or fl) and converts them on the fly. If you want your type to look its best, you’ll definitely want to start using ligatures.

Protect Your Proofs in InDesign

The next time you send a PDF to a client for proofing, spend a moment and protect the PDF from being printed. Choose File > Export Adobe PDF and select Security from the left-hand menu of the resulting dialog box. Turn on the Permissions option called “Use a password to restrict printing, editing, and other tasks.” Enter a password and select None from the Printing Allowed pop-up. Your client will be able to open and view the entire file, but all printing options will be grayed out.

Selection Marquee Goodness

When drawing a selection with either the Rectangular or Elliptical Marquee Tools, press and hold Option (PC: Alt) to draw the selection from the center outward. To restrain either Marquee to a perfect square or circle, press and hold the Shift key while you draw. To move a selection while in the throes of drawing it, press and hold the Spacebar and use the mouse to scoot it around. Release the Spacebar and continue drawing.

By Lesa Snider King: Get Svelte

Want to trim the subject of that photo ever so slightly, without a trip the gym? It’s easy. Just pop open a photo in either Photoshop or Photoshop Elements and press Command + T (PC: Ctrl + T) to invoke Free Transform. Fix your eyes on the photo’s width up in the Options bar at the top of your screen, then drag either the right or left middle handle inward exactly 5%. Don’t hold the shift key, and resist the urge to shrink the photo width beyond 95% (with great power comes great restraint!). Press Return to accept the transform, crop the photo, and go have a tasty treat—you’ve earned it.

Creating flames and burnt edges:

Start with a cardboard or other background.

Draw a selection with the lasso tool and paste into a new layer.

Blend mode for new layer: Color burn

Paintbrush all selection black except for the burnt edge of paper

Apply outer glow (dark red) Blend mode: burn

Apply inner glow (lighter red) Blend mode: burn

Border Selection: Select → Modify → Border to double line size

Cmd+Layer → Filter → render → clouds

Filter → artistic → plastic wrap

Erase outer edges of border, mudge over selection to reveal burnt edge

Filter → Liquify, brush upward to make flames (pressure 85)

Hue/Saturation, check Colorize box

Smudge tool 25% strength to soften flames

Duplicate → color dodge

Smoke flames: New layer

Paintbrush → paint white line (70 pt. @ 72%)

Smudge tool at 74% strength

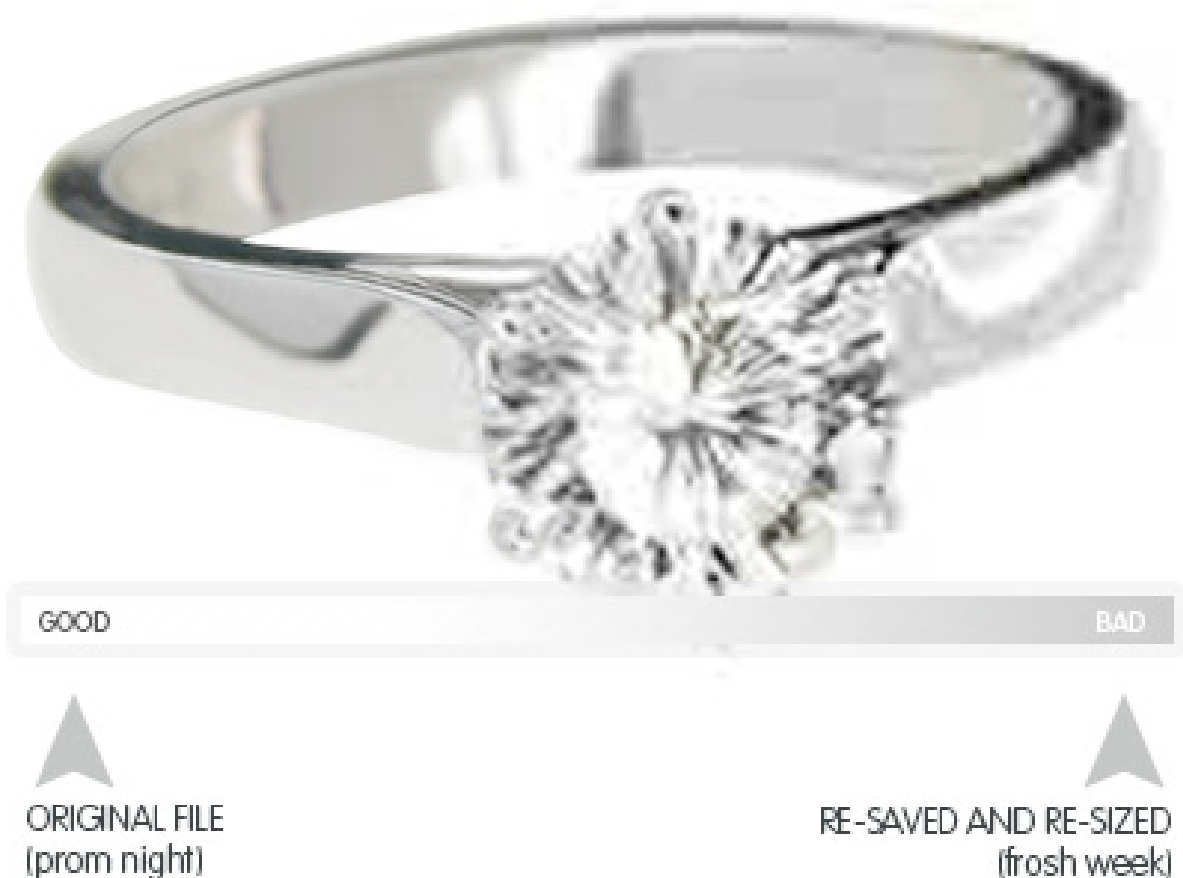
Opacity at 25%

Resizing without quality loss

Photo resolution is probably one of the most misunderstood aspects of digital image editing. The truth is, image resolution matters only if you're going to print the image. If the image is destined to live onscreen, it's the pixel dimensions that matter. Pixel widths and heights can be measured at any resolution. However, you have to be careful how you change it. Pop open the Image Size dialog in Photoshop and uncheck the Resample Image checkbox at the bottom left. This locks the pixel data, locking in quality. It's confusing because the onscreen image won't change a bit; the truth can be only revealed by the Image Size dialogue box.

Saving JPEGs

Re-sizing, re-sampling, and re-saving can all degrade the quality of a JPEG image, so be careful about re-saving JPEGs and always keep a copy of the original file. Remember, if a photo was re-saved 4 times (even at a quality of "12" or "Best") the image quality will become worse and worse.



Many beginner designers open the Curves tool, slide the point left or right, close the box and often undo the change. Once you master the subtleties of the Curves tool, it will be your most powerful tool for controlling tonality and color regardless of whether your image is too light or too dark. Think of Curves as a blind on a window. When the blind is all the way down, there's no light or total blackness, when it's all the way up you have maximum light or white.

1. If there's an area of the image you would like to darken to bring out the detail of a shot, open Image>Adjustments>Curves. Then click and hold the eye-dropper tool to see the area you want to lighten, noted by the hollow circle moving on the graph.
2. As you are using the eye-dropper control and click (PC) or command and click (Mac) and this will create a first point (**Point A**) on your Curves graph. From here you want to drag that point down (not left or right) to darken it. You may notice that this darkens the rest of your image, but don't worry.
3. To correct this extra darkness, create a new point (**Point B**) by clicking in the Curves graph just under **Point A**. **Point B** is your fixing point and you should move that point ever so slightly, keeping it beneath **Point A**, until the tonal range is to your liking.

