

Examining the Photoshop Environment



In This Chapter

- ✓ Starting Photoshop
- ✓ Exploring the anatomy of dialog boxes
- ✓ Working with palettes
- ✓ Examining the Photoshop desktop
- ✓ Investigating the menu bar
- ✓ Discovering the Options bar

As environments go, the Photoshop working environment is pretty cool: as inviting as a landscaped backyard and not nearly as likely to work you into a sweat. Each of the many tools in Photoshop is custom-designed for a specific chore and chock-full of more options than a Swiss Army knife. When you're familiar with your surroundings, you'll be eager to make like Monet in his garden, surrounded by palettes, brushes, buckets of paint, and swatches of color, ready to tackle the canvas in front of you.

Getting a Warm Welcome



When you launch Photoshop CS for the first time, you're greeted by Photoshop's rendition of the friendly neighborhood welcome wagon. The handy Welcome Screen, shown in Figure 1-1, provides a virtual plethora of goodies for everyone from the beginner to the advanced user. New feature descriptions, tutorials, tips, tricks, and help with setting up color management are all at your fingertips. Don't worry about exploring every item when you first launch Photoshop. You can call up the Welcome Screen anytime by choosing **Help** → **Welcome Screen**. Some of the information provided is in PDF (Portable Document Format) format, which can be read in Adobe Acrobat Reader (a free download from www.adobe.com). Other information is available through links to the Adobe Web site. There's even a movie that details all the new features. So grab some popcorn and enjoy.

If you prefer to access the Welcome Screen at your own leisure and don't want it to appear every time you launch Photoshop, deselect the **Show This Dialog at Startup** option in the bottom-left corner of the Welcome Screen window.

Figure 1-1



Launching Photoshop and Customizing the Desktop

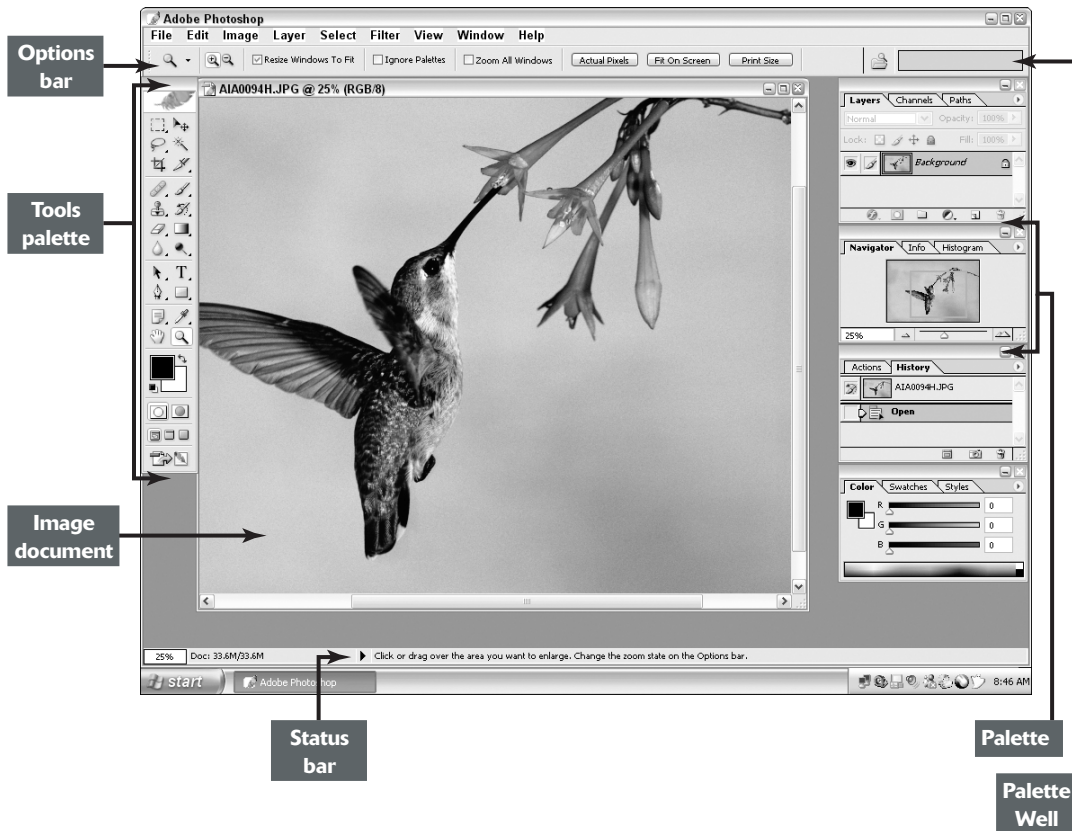
You start Photoshop just as you launch any other program under Windows or the Mac OS. As with other programs, you can choose the method you find the easiest and most convenient. Here's a quick summary of your options:

- ✔ **Launch from the Windows Start menu.** Windows PCs have a handy pop-up Programs menu that includes your most frequently used applications. Just locate the program on the menu and select it.
- ✔ **Launch from the Windows taskbar or Macintosh OS X Dock.** You may have inserted icons for your *really* mission-critical programs in these readily accessible launching bars, usually found at the bottom (or sometimes sides) of your screen. Click the Photoshop icon to start.
- ✔ **Launch Photoshop by double-clicking a shortcut or alias icon placed on your desktop.**
- ✔ **Double-click an image file associated with Photoshop.** When you installed Photoshop, the setup program let you specify which type of common image file types (.TIF, .PSD, .PCX, and so forth) you wanted to be associated with (or linked to, for launching purposes) Photoshop, ImageReady, or neither (Windows only). Double-clicking an icon, shortcut, or alias representing the file type you chose launches Photoshop.

When you launch Photoshop, the desktop workspace, shown in Figure 1-2, appears. Like the real-world desktop where your keyboard and monitor reside, the Photoshop desktop is a place for you to put all the documents you're working with.

The desktop consists of a main window, called the *application window* if you're using Windows (and called the *document window* if you're using the Mac OS), which takes up the majority of your screen by default. Within the main window, you see a variety of other windows and boxes, such as the *image document window* that enables you to view and edit images.

Figure 1-2

Book
1
Chapter
1

The main window contains the stuff you're probably used to seeing in other programs — a title bar at the top of the window, a status bar at the bottom (unless you have it turned off) if you're a Windows user, and menus to help you execute commands and get important information about your image files. But the arrangement of controls may be a little unfamiliar to you. Photoshop arranges controls into groups called *palettes*.



In Windows, borders mark the left and right edges of the Photoshop window — even if the main application window's contents fill up more than your screen can show.

Your virtual desktop can become as cluttered as the real thing, but Adobe has built in some special features (located on the Options bar, which I discuss later in this chapter) that let you keep stuff close at hand but tuck things away so they're not constantly underfoot (or under-mouse, so to speak). After you've arranged your Photoshop desktop just as you like it for a specific project, you can even save the desktop and reuse it whenever you work on that project.

Using Photoshop with two monitors

If you're serious about your graphics work, you may consider purchasing a second monitor (and video card if you don't own a *two head* video card that can operate a second display) to attach to your main computer system. A second monitor gives you additional monitor space to display multiple large image files and palettes of Photoshop tools. I often move stuff from screen to screen to maximize the area on my main screen for an image I'm working on.

If you have a dual-monitor setup, you can even move components from one display screen to another. Whether you're using Mac or Windows machines, whenever you want to use a tool that appears on your secondary screen, you just slide the mouse over to the alternate display and click.

In order to use a second monitor, your computer must have Windows 2000 or later installed. Or you should be running any recent Mac OS.

Every document you ever work on appears within the confines of this window and can't leave its borders. You can move around some other components, such as the various palettes and the Options bar, both inside and outside the Photoshop application window.



Windows users can close, minimize, and restore the main Photoshop window, just as you can with most windows in other programs. Mac users can choose Photoshop ⇨ Hide Photoshop. To display Photoshop again, simply click the icon in the Dock.



The Photoshop window hides one cool secret for Windows users: If you double-click anywhere in the gray empty area, the Open dialog box pops up, so you can navigate to a file you want to work on without wandering up to the File menu, using the Ctrl+O keyboard shortcut, or using File Browser.

The following sections show you how to customize the main working area so that you can get to work.

Setting display settings with the Window menu

The Window menu, shown in Figure 1-3, controls the display of palettes and some other elements of the Photoshop working area. (Find out more about maneuvering palettes later in this chapter.)

The top two entries on the Window menu enable you to control the display arrangement of your open documents and manage your workspaces. In the Window ⇨ Arrange submenu, you can tell Photoshop to cascade (stack) or tile (butt them edge to edge) all open documents. Here is the lowdown on the other options found on the Window ⇨ Arrange submenu:



The new Match Zoom command takes all your open documents and matches the magnification percentage of your currently active document.



The new Match Location command takes all your open documents and matches the location of your currently active document. In other words, if you are viewing the lower-left corner of your active document and choose Match location, all your open documents will also be displayed from the lower-left corner.

- ✓ And of course, Match Zoom and Location employs both commands simultaneously.
- ✓ Choose New Window to open another view of the same image, allowing you to work on a close-up of part of the image while viewing results on the entire image.
- ✓ The Arrange Icons command (Windows only) takes minimized files and arranges the title bar icons in a neat row directly above the status bar.
- ✓ Minimize (Mac only) hides the image while placing the image's thumbnail in the Dock. Click the thumbnail to restore the image in Photoshop.
- ✓ If you have multiple applications launched and document windows open, the Bring All to Front command (Mac only) will enable all Photoshop documents to come to the front, ahead of any open document windows from other applications.

Figure 1-3


On the Window⇨Workspace submenu, you can save your current desktop arrangement, load or delete a stored arrangement, or reset your palette locations. For step-by-step instructions, see Book I, Chapter 6. The remaining bulk of the Window menu contains a list of palettes in alphabetical order.



Photoshop CS has eliminated the Window⇨Documents menu. Consequently, you don't have to open a submenu to see a list of open documents. The list of all open documents is once again shown at the bottom of the Window menu. Hallelujah!

Setting up the status bar



By default, the status bar appears at the bottom of the Photoshop working area in Windows, as shown in Figure 1-4. If you're using the Mac OS, each document window has its own status bar.

On a PC, you can turn the status bar on or off by selecting it or deselecting it on the Window menu.



Figure 1-4

Many people tend to associate status with wealth, so I don't really think there's a reason not to accept the free wealth of information that the status bar offers:

- ✓ At the far left is a box that displays an active image's current zoom level (such as 66.67 percent). Incidentally, the title bar of the document itself also shows the zoom level.
- 
 If you installed Photoshop to a networked computer and you've activated the workgroup features, which enable file sharing and other perks, you see the icon for the Workgroup Services pop-up menu just to the right of the zoom info box.
- ✓ Next is the file and image information display area, which, by default, shows the document size information. You can customize this area to display other information. Click the size value to display a preview of how your image fits on your selected paper size.
- ✓ Because the good people at Adobe know just how complex a program Photoshop is, next to the file and info display area of the status bar is a description of the currently selected tool's functions, as well as information on how to select additional options for that tool. This extra tidbit will only be found on Windows machines, however.
- 
 Although each Macintosh document includes its own status bar, all the bars for all the open documents show the same category of information. That is, if you change the status bar of one image to display scratch sizes (defined a little later in this chapter), all the status bars of the other document images switch to display scratch sizes, as well.

Because Photoshop files can get pretty hefty in size, your status bar shows the file size of the active image by default. To display other types of information, click the right-pointing arrow in the status bar and select one of the following options from the menu that pops up:

- ✓ **Document Size:** When you select this option, Photoshop displays two numbers to approximate the size of the image. The first number shows you the size of the file if you were to flatten (combine) all the layers into one and save it to your hard drive. The number on the right shows the full size of the image — including all the individual layers, channels, and other components of the image. You'll want this option active when you need to keep track of how large your image is.
- ✓ **Document Profile:** When you select this option, the status bar displays the name of the color profile that the image uses. You probably won't use this option unless you need to know the profiles of all the open documents while making complex color corrections. You can find more information about profiles in Book II, Chapter 3.

- ✔ **Document Dimensions:** When you select this option, the status bar shows you the size of the image by using the default measurement increment you've set in Photoshop's Preferences (pixels, inches, picas, and so on). You might need this for instant reference to the physical dimensions of your open files. For information on setting preferences in Photoshop, see Book I, Chapter 6.
- ✔ **Scratch Sizes:** *Scratch space* is the virtual memory set aside on your hard drive to simulate RAM and make editing large files easier. Enabling this option shows two measurements for an active image. On the left, you see the amount of real memory and virtual memory that all open images are using. On the right, you see the total amount of RAM available for working with images. Photoshop needs a lot more memory and disk space to work on an image while it's open, and that's what's shown by the Scratch Sizes display, as opposed to the Document Size display that shows only the file size of the document itself.
- ✔ **Efficiency:** This indicator helps you gauge whether you really have enough RAM to perform a task. It shows the percentage of time Photoshop spends actually working on an operation, compared to the time it must spend reading or writing image information to or from your hard disk. If the value dips below 100 percent most of the time, you need to allocate more memory to Photoshop (if you're using a PC). For more information on parceling out RAM, see Book I, Chapter 6.
- ✔ **Timing:** This number shows you how long it took you to complete your last incredible feat.
- ✔ **Current Tool:** This option shows you the name of the tool currently in use.

Dissecting Dialog Box Jargon

In many respects, the Photoshop dialog boxes are very much like the dialog boxes you find in all other Windows and Mac applications. You'll find text boxes with space to type in information (such as the name of a new layer, or the width or height you want to apply to a new document), *pop-up menus* of parameters you can choose from (such as whether you want the width and height expressed in pixels, inches, millimeters, picas, or some other unit of measurement), and controls like *sliders* that you use to specify amounts (in percentages, pixels, or degrees) over a continuous range.



Some dialog boxes are very complex and perform multiple tasks. However, even though Photoshop's dialog boxes perform a variety of functions, the controls in them are standardized and familiar enough that, after you know how to use a few dialog boxes, you can use them all.

Photoshop dialog boxes, particularly filter dialog boxes, include preview windows so that you can check out the effects of your settings before clicking the OK button. The Photoshop Variations dialog box is one of the most complex of these. It includes a whole clutch of thumbnail images that show you the current image, plus several different renditions.

Dialog boxes generally appear when you choose a menu item followed by an ellipsis, such as Load Selection . . . The ellipsis is your tip-off that the menu selection needs additional information to complete the operation. Dialog boxes can also pop up at other times, such as when you double-click the Quick Mask icon in the Tools palette to produce the Quick Mask Options dialog box, or double-click the www.adobe.com icon at the top of the Tools palette.

If you know how to work with other applications, you already know how to use most of the controls in Photoshop dialog boxes. These include

- ✓ **Pop-up menus:** Drop-down lists of choices that have been preselected for you.
- ✓ **Spin buttons:** These are up-/down-arrow buttons that you click to increase or decrease values quickly.
- ✓ **Text boxes:** Areas in which you can type values of your own choosing.
- ✓ **Radio buttons:** A set of mutually exclusive buttons; you can select only one of them, such as the Inside, Center, or Outside radio button, which tells the Stroke dialog box where to apply the stroke.
- ✓ **Check boxes:** Boxes that you can select or deselect to turn a feature on or off, independently of other features.
- ✓ **Slider controls:** Controls for specifying any one of a continuous range of values.
- ✓ **Nested dialog boxes:** Some dialog boxes include a button with text followed by an ellipsis, indicating that when you click the button, a new, sub-dialog box appears.
- ✓ **Action buttons:** Labeled with text such as OK or Cancel, these buttons activate or cancel an operation when you click them.

Playing with Palettes

Many image-oriented programs use palettes of a sort, and Photoshop itself has had palettes since version 1.0, released in January of 1990. However, since Photoshop 3.0, the program has used a novel way of working with palettes. Instead of stand-alone windows, Photoshop uses grouped, tabbed palettes, which overlap each other in groups of two or three (or more, if you rearrange them yourself). To access a palette that falls behind the one displayed on top, click the palette's tab. By default, some palettes, such as Brushes, Info, Layer Comps, and Tool Presets, appear alone.

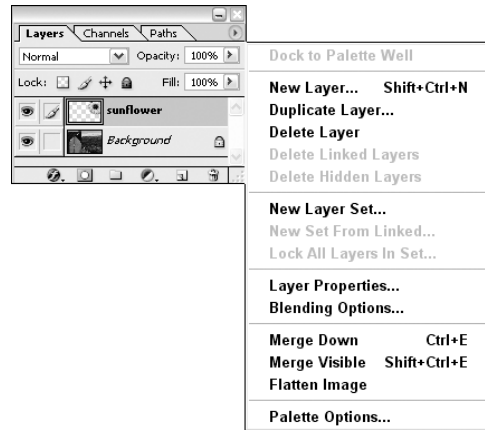
Palettes operate a little like dialog boxes and may contain sliders, buttons, drop-down lists, pop-up menus (as shown in Figure 1-5), and other controls. You'll also find icons at the bottom of many palettes. For example, at the base of the Layers palette are icons that let you create a new layer, add a layer style, or trash a layer that you no longer want.

Some palettes can change like chameleons. The Actions palette can be displayed in Button mode, in which you see only the name of each set of procedures you might want to invoke. Or you can flip the Actions palette to Normal mode, which lists each of the procedures in the action separately for you to view or edit.



Many palettes, such as the Brushes, Styles, Actions, and Colors palettes, include options for defining sets of parameters (called *presets*) that you can store for reuse at any time.

Figure 1-5



Here's how to open, close, and otherwise manipulate a palette group from the Window menu:

- ✔ **To bring a palette to the front of its group:** When the palette group is open, the palette that's visible is the palette that has a check mark next to it on the Window menu. In this mode, you can select only one palette in any group because only one tab in a group can be on top at one time.



When you select a palette from the Window menu, you have no way of knowing which palettes are grouped together because Adobe now lists palettes alphabetically instead of by groups.

- ✔ **To move a palette out of its group:** Grab the palette's tab and drag to its new location, such as another group, the Palette Well, or the Photoshop desktop. If you move the palettes out of their groups or drag them onto the desktop so that they stand alone, any of them can be check marked.
- ✔ **To hide a palette:** Select a check-marked palette on the Window menu or click the Close button at the top of the palette.
- ✔ **To access a palette from the desktop:** Find its group and click the palette's tab to bring it to the front.

Here are some palette-manipulation tips:

- ✔ **Save space by keeping palettes in groups.** You can drag all the palettes in a group by dragging the group's title bar. Access an individual palette by clicking its tab to bring it to the front. As a result, several palettes occupy only the screen space required by one.
- ✔ **Use the Window menu if you can't find a palette.** If you can't find a palette or suspect that it's hidden, access the Window menu and select the palette's name to make it visible or to bring it to the top of its group.
- ✔ **Rearrange groups by dragging.** If you'd like to move a palette to another group or to display it as a stand-alone palette, grab its tab and drag. Release the mouse button where you'd like the palette to reside in the workspace, or in the destination palette group.

- ✓ **Customize, customize, customize.** After you've used Photoshop for a while, creating your own custom palette groups based on the palettes you most often use can be a real time saver. For example, if you don't use the Paths palette very often but can't live without the Actions palette, you can drag the Paths palette to another group or the Palette Well and put the Actions palette in the same group as the mission-critical Layers and Channels palettes.
- ✓ **Minimize palettes to save even more space.** You can double-click a palette's title bar (or tab if you're using the Mac OS) to shrink the palette or palette group down to its title bar and tabs alone. You can also click the Minimize button at the top of palette.
- ✓ **Restore default palette locations whenever you need a change.** If you decide you don't like the way you've arranged your palettes, you can choose Window⇨Workspace⇨Reset Palette Locations to return them to the default configuration (the one they had when Photoshop was installed).



Some individual palettes, such as the Swatches and Character palettes, allow you to reset the settings back to their defaults. Select Reset from the palette's pop-up menu located in the top-right corner.

Working with Your First Photoshop File

So many menus, so little time! The second you begin working with Photoshop, you may be convinced that Adobe's flagship image editor has somewhere on the order of 8,192 different menu selections for you to choose from. In truth, Photoshop has only about 500-plus separate menu items, including some that are duplicated. That figure doesn't count the 100 or so entries for filter plug-ins (which can expand alarmingly as you add third-party goodies). However, even 500-plus menu items are considerably more than you'll find in the most ambitious restaurants. Basically, if you want to do something in Photoshop, you need to use the menu bar. The menu bar consists of nine main entries, each of which holds a dozen or more nested subentries and sub-subentries that cascade into view as you drag the cursor down the list. If you're using the Mac OS, the Photoshop menu bar may share space with Finder components, such as the Apple menu or the Clock.

You'll find pop-up menus everywhere, next to icons on the Options bar, on menus that fly out from palettes, in the status bar, and especially in the menu bar. You can find detailed descriptions of the menus and how to use them elsewhere in this book, but the following sections offer a summary of what you can find and where you can find it.



Photoshop also helps you by providing context-sensitive menus, which change their listings depending on what you're doing. You don't see options you don't need and do see options appropriate to what you're working on.

Opening and saving files

The File menu offers a cornucopia of file options, from opening new images and opening saved files to browsing existing files, closing files, and saving files. The first layer of file options is shown in Figure 1-6.

Figure 1-6

File	
New...	Ctrl+N
Open...	Ctrl+O
Browse...	Shift+Ctrl+O
Open As...	Alt+Ctrl+O
Open Recent	▶
Edit in ImageReady	Shift+Ctrl+M
Close	Ctrl+W
Close All	Alt+Ctrl+W
Save	Ctrl+S
Save As...	Shift+Ctrl+S
Save a Version...	
Save for Web...	Alt+Shift+Ctrl+S
Revert	F12
Place...	
Online Services...	
Import	▶
Export	▶
Automate	▶
Scripts	▶
File Info...	Alt+Ctrl+I
Versions...	
Page Setup...	Shift+Ctrl+P
Print with Preview...	Alt+Ctrl+P
Print...	Ctrl+P
Print One Copy	Alt+Shift+Ctrl+P
Jump To	▶
Exit	Ctrl+Q

You can edit a file in ImageReady, save a file optimized for the Web, import and export special file types, grab an image from your scanner or digital camera, and apply automated tasks to certain files or batches of files. You can even enter or retrieve specialized information about a file.

You'll find the page setup, preview, and printing commands on the File menu. And on a PC, there's even an entry for leaving Photoshop entirely (Mac users can find the Quit command on the Photoshop menu). To open a file, choose File⇨Open and navigate to the folder containing the file you want to open. Select the file and click OK to open it.



Choose Online Services to access Adobe partners and providers offering a variety of services such as ordering prints, photo books, and calendars.

For detailed instructions on all the many different ways you can open files, see Book I, Chapter 3.

Making selections

Selections let you work with only part of an image. You can choose all of a layer or only portions of a layer that you select with one of the selection tools, such as the Marquee or Magic Wand. The Select menu (shown in Figure 1-7) is short and sweet, but the capability and control that the menu unleashes is nothing short of an image-editing miracle.

Figure 1-7



Understanding selections is such an important cornerstone to your Photoshop knowledge that I devote an entire book (Book III) to showing you how to use them.

I describe the Selection menu options in Table 1-1.

TABLE 1-1: SELECTION MENU OPTIONS

Menu Option	What It Lets You Do	Windows Keyboard Shortcut	Mac Keyboard Shortcut
All	Select a layer (and everything in the layer).	Ctrl+A	⌘+A
Deselect	Undo (or <i>deselect</i>) a selection.	Ctrl+D	⌘+D
Reselect	Re-create your most recent selection.	Shift+Ctrl+D	Shift+⌘+D
Inverse	Reverse a selection so that everything that wasn't selected is now selected (and vice versa).	Shift+Ctrl+I	Shift+⌘+I
Color Range	Select areas based only on a range of pixel colors (rather than on both brightness and color range).	None	None
Feather	Blend a selection's edges into the surrounding area.	Alt+Ctrl+D	Option+⌘+D

Menu Option	What It Lets You Do	Windows Keyboard Shortcut	Mac Keyboard Shortcut
Modify⇨Border	Frame the original selection with a new selection based on a specified number of pixels.	None	None
Modify⇨Smooth	Smooth stray pixels inside or outside a selection, within a specified range of pixels.	None	None
Modify⇨Expand	Expand a selection a specified number of pixels.	None	None
Modify⇨Contract	Contract a selection a specified number of pixels.	None	None
Grow	Expand or contract a selection.	None	None
Similar	Select similar pixels that aren't adjacent to those you've already selected.	None	None
Transform Selection	Resize and reshape a selection by dragging handles.	None	None

Another important capability is the option of saving selections and loading them later for reuse. As you find out in Book VI, not only can you load a selection you've already made, but you can also subtract the saved selection from another selection or add it to another new or saved selection.

To save a selection, choose Select⇨Save Selection. In the Save Selection dialog box that appears, type a name for the selection and click OK.

Making simple image edits

The Edit menu, shown in Figure 1-8, contains tools that enable you to cut, copy, or paste image selections in several different ways. You can fill selections or *stroke* their outlines (create a line along their edges). And you can use this menu to rotate, resize, distort, or perform other *transformations* (changes in size or shape) on your selections. You can undo the change you made in Photoshop, fade a filter, check your spelling, or find and replace text.

The Edit menu also offers some choices that may not logically belong here but which don't fit anywhere else. For example, you can define brushes, patterns, and shapes. You can clear the Photoshop clipboard, dump Photoshop's list of the changes you've made, and establish your color management settings and tool presets. On a PC, you also access Photoshop's Preferences (your personal settings for things such as memory, how cursors look, and so on) from the Edit menu. You find out more about preferences in Book I, Chapter 6.



Mac users will find Color Settings and Preferences located on the Photoshop menu. For details on establishing your color settings, see Book II, Chapter 2.

Figure 1-8

Edit	
Undo	Ctrl+Z
Step Forward	Shift+Ctrl+Z
Step Backward	Alt+Ctrl+Z
Fade...	Shift+Ctrl+F
Cut	Ctrl+X
Copy	Ctrl+C
Copy Merged	Shift+Ctrl+C
Paste	Ctrl+V
Paste Into	Shift+Ctrl+V
Clear	
Check Spelling...	
Find and Replace Text...	
Fill...	Shift+F5
Stroke...	
Free Transform	Ctrl+T
Transform	▶
Define Brush Preset...	
Define Pattern...	
Define Custom Shape...	
Purge	▶
Color Settings...	Shift+Ctrl+K
Keyboard Shortcuts...	Alt+Shift+Ctrl+K
Preset Manager...	
Preferences	▶



You'll also find a new command that allows you to customize your own set of keyboard shortcuts. For more details, see Book 1, Chapter 6.

Making changes by using the Image menu

You'd think the Image menu (shown in Figure 1-9) might have something to do with making changes to an image document as a whole, wouldn't you? In practice, some of the entries you'll find here do apply to the whole document, but others apply only to particular layers or selections.

For example, the Mode menu item allows you to change an entire image from grayscale to color. The Duplicate, Image Size, Canvas Size, Rotate Canvas, Crop, and Trim selections all change the whole document in some way. (Their functions are obvious from their names, except for Trim, which removes pixels from the edge of an image.)



A new command on the Image menu is Pixel Aspect Ratio. This command allows you to view your image in common digital video aspect ratios that aren't square (such as 16:9), thereby simulating the display of the image on a device that uses non-square pixels, such as a movie screen or a wide-screen TV.

Figure 1-9



On the other hand, the changes wrought from the Adjustments submenu *can't* be applied to an entire image if the document has more than one layer. Adjustments such as Color Balance, Hue/Saturation, or Brightness/Contrast work only with a single layer or a selection on that layer.

You'll find yourself turning to the Image menu more often than many of the other menus, partially because it's so useful, and partially because, for some reason, many of the options don't have keyboard shortcuts that let you bypass the menu.



By the way, Adobe removed the Histogram option from the Image menu in favor of its own palette. For details on this new palette, see Book VIII, Chapter 1.

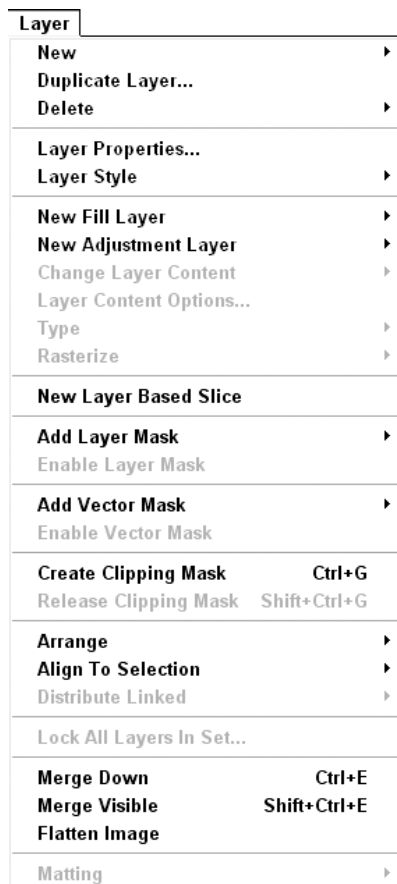
Creating layers

Layers give you a way of stacking portions of an image — overlay style — on top of one another so that you can work on individual pieces separately. Then, when you're satisfied with your changes, you can combine the changes into a final image.

The Photoshop Layers feature, which gets an entire book of its own (Book V), is so useful it's hard to imagine that it hasn't always been present in Photoshop. (Thank your lucky stars if you didn't have to use versions of Photoshop that preceded version 3.0.) Those of us who worked with Photoshop 2.5 and earlier still wake up from nightmares in which a floating selection (the predecessor to the layer feature) permanently merged with the background because of an ill-timed sneeze.

The Layer menu in Photoshop cs (shown in Figure 1-10) lets you create new and duplicate layers, delete one or several layers, change layer properties (such as a layer's name), or add special features, such as drop shadows or beveled edges, to objects in a layer. You can also create special kinds of layers to make adjustments or mask out portions of an image. The menu has selections for changing the order of the layers (moving a specific layer to the front or top of the stack, and so on) and grouping layers together so that you can treat them as a set.

Figure 1-10



You also can merge layers down, combine them with all other visible layers, or flatten them into one single-layer image. Although merging your layers makes the file smaller, flattening is irreversible after you close the file. It's always a good idea to store an unflattened version of a file in case you want to make more changes later on.



Photoshop has *two* key layer facilities, the Layer menu and the Layers palette. Some of their functions are duplicated, but some are not, so make sure you're using both of them. You find out the distinctions in Book V.



The latest member of the layers family is the Layer Comps palette. This palette enables you to capture different versions of your document by recording the configuration of your layers at a point in time. Again, for all the pertinent details on layers, see Book V.

Applying filters

A *filter* is an effect that changes an entire layer, channel, or selection. Some common filters include the Blur and Sharpen filters as well as distortion filters such as Spherize. The Filter menu,

shown in Figure 1-11, consists almost entirely of cascading categories of image-transmogrifying plug-ins. You can wade through this menu to find the perfect effect to apply to an image or selection. Book VII has everything you need to know about filters.

Figure 1-11



After you apply a filter, Photoshop moves the filter to the top of the Filter menu for easy accessibility in case you want to reapply the filter with the exact same settings.



The new Filter Gallery command allows you to apply several filters simultaneously in one neat editing window.



To choose the last filter you used, use the Ctrl+F (⌘+F on the Mac) keyboard shortcut.

Extract, Liquify, and Pattern Maker are more like miniprograms than filters. The rest of the Filter menu consists of 14 different filter categories, each containing from zero to a dozen or more options:

- Single-step filters are pretty basic to use but can make a huge impact on an image. These include simple filters such as the Blur, Facet, and Clouds filters. Just click each filter to apply it; it has no options to choose.
- Dialog box-based filters let you choose options galore. These filters come complete with preview windows, buttons, slider controls, and menus. You can distort, pixelate, sharpen, stylize, apply textures, and perform other functions with these filters.



If you've installed additional filters from third parties, Photoshop lists them at the very bottom of the Filter menu. You can find third-party filters at Web sites such as www.alienskin.com, www.andromeda.com, and www.autofx.com.

Simplifying your edits with the Options bar

The Options bar, shown in Figure 1-12, was a welcomed addition to Photoshop because it eliminated the need to access a separate options palette for each tool. The bar remains available at all times, docked beneath the menu bar (unless you decide to hide it for some bizarre reason), and the options change as you switch tools.

Figure 1-12



Because the Options bar changes its appearance with each active tool, it's difficult to explain all the components you might find there; but every Options bar does have some characteristics in common:

- ✔ **Gripper bar:** Grab this bar and drag to undock or dock the Options bar at the top or bottom of the Photoshop window. You can also let the Options bar float anywhere in the working space.
- ✔ **Tool options:** This box displays the icon of the currently active tool and may include some options for that tool.
- ✔ **Options pop-up menu:** The Options bar may have a pop-up menu that includes a selection of brush tips (for painting and erasing tools), a flyout-type options menu that lets you select presets (saved settings) for various tools, and additional options, such as the size of the icons used to represent brush tips. You may also reset a particular tool or all tools to their Photoshop default values.
- ✔ **Bar options:** Additional options, such as mode, opacity, feather, type styles, and fonts are arrayed on the rest of the Options bar.
- ✔ **File Browser button:** The File Browser button (a folder with magnifying glass icon) allows you to display and hide the File Browser window with a mere click. See Book 1, Chapter 5 for lots of details.



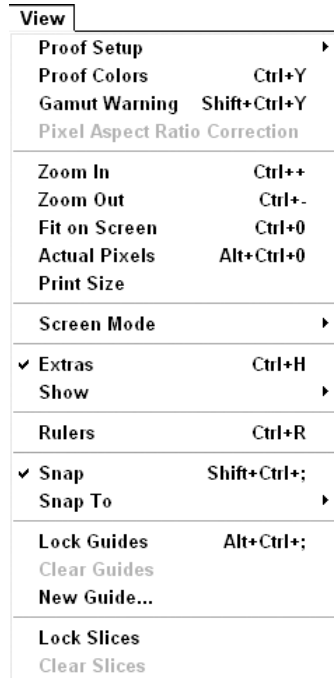
The File Browser button is a new member to the Options bar.

- ✔ **Palette Well:** If your monitor has a screen resolution higher than 800 x 600 pixels, the Palette Well appears at the right side of the Options bar. You can drag palettes from their groups into the Palette Well, where only their tabs appear. Click the tab, and the palette appears, ready for use. When you click again in your document, the palette shrinks down to its tab. The Palette Well is a great tool for keeping your frequently used palettes accessible. I like to keep some palettes, particularly the Layers and Channels palettes, open in the workspace at all times, but some others (such as the Swatches or Styles palettes) don't need to be visible on-screen at all times.

Proofing and finalizing the image

A hodgepodge of functions is sprinkled throughout the View menu, shown in Figure 1-13. Some of them, like Proof Setup, Proof Colors, and Gamut Warning, won't trouble you until you've become a fairly advanced Photoshop user.

Figure 1-13



If you prefer using the View menu instead of the Zoom tool, you'll find various commands to zoom into and out of the image. You can also choose your screen mode, which lets you view your image full screen with the menu bar and palettes, or full screen with just palettes.

From the View menu, you can select which extras Photoshop displays. You can choose to see (or hide) the following:

- ✓ **Selection Edges:** Moving lines that define the boundary of a selection and are very useful for obvious reasons.
- ✓ **Target Path:** Lines and curves that define a shape or are used to select part of an image. You definitely want to see them if they need editing.
- ✓ **Grids and Guides:** Lines that display on screen and are great when you're aligning selections, objects, or other components, and potentially distracting when you're not.

- ✓ **Slices:** Rectangular pieces of an image to which you can optimize or apply Web features. If you've sliced the image, you probably want to view the results.
- ✓ **Annotations:** On-screen notes and audio annotations that you can create and view (or play). Annotations can sometimes be confusing, unless you're already confused; then annotations can help you sort out what's what.

The View menu holds the controls for turning on and off the *snap* feature in Photoshop. (The snap feature makes objects magnetically attracted to grids and guides.) You can also create new guides, lock and clear *slices* (see Book IX, Chapter 3, for slice-and-dice information), and turn rulers on or off.



Some functions, especially the zoom features, are better accessed through tools or keyboard shortcuts. Trust me, when you've learned to zoom in and out by pressing Ctrl++ (⌘++ [plus sign] on the Mac) and Ctrl+- (⌘+- [minus sign] on the Mac), you won't be spending a lot of time in this menu searching for those functions.

Accessing Help When You Need It

To access the Photoshop Help system, plus some other useful information, look no further than the handy-dandy Help menu, as shown in Figure 1-14.



If you're using the Mac OS, the Help menu also lets you turn Balloon Help on and off.

Figure 1-14



Because you can view the Help screens (they pop up in a Web browser window) simply by pressing F1 (or ⌘+? on the Mac), you may not visit the Help menu very often, but if you ever want to find all your help resources in one location, this is the place to be. Here are some other help sources:



The Welcome Screen allows you to access valuable tips and tutorials.

See the earlier section, "Getting a Warm Welcome," that describes this new feature.

- ✓ The About Photoshop splash screen displays the version number of your Photoshop program. That way you'll always know if you've installed the latest patches and updates to Photoshop CS.
- ✓ The About Plug-In entry displays a list of all the plug-ins you've installed for Photoshop. Selecting an item in the list shows an About screen of version information for that plug-in.



On a Mac, both the About Photoshop splash screen and About Plug-In menu are on the Photoshop menu.

- ✓ The Export Transparent Image and Resize Image choices launch a wizard (assistant on the Mac) that leads you step by step through all the decisions you need to make to create an image that includes transparency. For example, you might want to create some text in Photoshop and then have it appear to “float” above your Web page’s background. The Resize Image Wizard (Assistant on the Mac) leads you through adjusting the image size so the document will print at the size you want.
- ✓ The System Info entry displays information about your computer, its operating system, and available memory, plus Photoshop-specific data such as the location you set for your Plug-Ins folder. If you like, you can click the Copy button to copy this information to the clipboard, and then paste it in a text document and print it out.
- ✓ The Updates, Registration, and Photoshop Online choices access Internet resources for Photoshop.

