

Digital technology is fundamentally changing the realm of photography and printing. Photographers now have almost unlimited options for editing their images to the precise look that they intend. Printing has become infinitely more flexible and pushed closer to the image creator. We can now use images in almost any form of visual communication. They have become a key element of the information revolution. This added flexibility brings more and more attention to the process of editing images. **Adobe® Photoshop®** is the essential tool for visual imaging. There are other simpler programs on the market, but most don't provide the essential tools for editing images accurately.

Photoshop is a very comprehensive program – probably the most complex program I have ever used. **My goal is to present Photoshop in an accessible way.** Even though Photoshop provides thousands of complex techniques for editing images, most users and most images don't need all this complexity. In fact, you only need to do a few basic steps in Photoshop to get the vast majority of images to shine. In this book, **I introduce you to the basic step-by-step process I use on most of my images.** This includes steps for editing density, contrast, and color plus basic techniques for image processing like converting images from color to black and white and sharpening images. My workflow is complete, but **I do not include many of the more complex and esoteric techniques** common to the Photoshop marketplace.

Take a quick look at the chapters of this book. They include the basic workflow for editing images: opening digital camera images, cleaning up images, basic adjustments, local adjustments, photographic processes, printing, and output to the web. They also include some Photoshop lessons (layers and masks, elements of the interface, and some special features) and lots of image editing techniques. If this seems sufficient for your work, let's get working.

### Who Should Use this Book

This book is for people who want to learn the basic tools and image editing steps within Photoshop needed to create professional looking images. This, of course, includes **photographers, and graphics designers**, but also a wide range of **technicians and office workers who just want to do more effective image editing**. This book's focus is to provide insight into the how-to's of creating good

images, and not to showcase “cool” Photoshop techniques. I also don’t pull any punches. I include all the key techniques necessary for good image editing: using layers and layer blending, curves, color correction, printer profiles, and more.

In my experience, most of my students have a good grasp of working with computers, **so I expect users of this book will have no problem navigating the computer, the menus, dialogs, or dragging a mouse. I do not expect the reader to have any experience with Photoshop**, although many readers will have good, basic experience playing with Photoshop.

## Steps for Using this Book

This book includes three major chapters: Foundation, Workflow, and Advanced Tasks. The **Foundations** chapter includes basic information on Photoshop and digital imaging. The **Workflow** chapter describes the specific ordered tasks I recommend for a digital imaging workflow, including all the basic tasks necessary for image editing. The **Advanced Tasks** chapter includes a series of more complex step-by-step tasks for image editing that are used by imaging professionals. I have also included two chapters on **Printing** and **Web** images that provide instructions for outputting images to print and the web.

For those looking for a textbook on Photoshop image editing, you can work through the examples in this book in order. For those looking for a handbook on Photoshop, you can flip through the pages to find the specific task that interest you.

## Conventions

Some helpful conventions are used throughout the book. **Important points are in bold type** to make it easier to skim through for specific information.

Tasks are numbered step-by-step and printed in dark blue.

### **1** The first step in the example

The conventional abbreviation **File>Browse** is used for selecting the Browse command from the File menu.

Special icons are used for identifying different types of information in the book.



The Key icon identifies text in a chapter that summarizes a key point. Make sure you understand the key points of each chapter.



The Details icon identifies text that expands upon the details of a certain topic. Details can be skipped over. Mostly they provide additional detail some people might want.









### Photoshop Versions

This book is designed specifically for use with Photoshop CS2 released in the Spring of 2005. A number of new features are specifically addressed and identified by the Photoshop CS2 icon.

For the most part, the workflows and techniques described in this book still work well with the original Photoshop CS. For those specific to Photoshop CS2, a guide to similar techniques for Photoshop CS is available at the accompanying website to this book.

### Apple Macintosh OS X vs Microsoft Windows XP Operating Systems

Although most of the screen shots in the book are taken from a computer running Windows XP, I am completely platform agnostic. I use Mac screen shots for some of the sections so that Windows users could see how similar Photoshop is on both platforms. In fact, Photoshop happens to be one of the very best cross-platform programs ever developed. With very few exceptions, every step on the Mac is identical to the same command on Windows. The differences that exist are identified as necessary in the text.

Two differences throughout are with regard to keyboard modifiers and mouse clicks. The two keyboards have essentially the same function keys, but different names. The Mac Command key  functions the same as the Windows **Ctrl** key . This keyboard modifier is identified as  /  + (e.g.,  /  +N).

Similarly, the Mac “alt/option” key  functions the same as the Windows Alt key . This keyboard modifier is identified as  /  +.



Finally, the standard Mac mouse includes only one mouse button. The Windows mouse includes a second mouse button for additional functionality – often a Context menu. Mac users can achieve this same functionality by holding down the **control** key **ctrl** when clicking the mouse. This mouse modifier is identified by **ctrl**/**right-click+** (e.g., **ctrl**/**right-click** inside a selection). Mac users could also just buy a mouse with two buttons. Ironically, the Microsoft mouse works great when plugged into a Mac.

This book supports Mac OS X 10.4. Although Photoshop CS2 works on Mac OS X 10.2.8 and above, there may be some minor differences to screens and printer dialogs for earlier versions of OS X.

This book also supports Windows XP Home with service pack 2. Photoshop CS2 also works on Windows 2000 with service pack 4 and Windows XP with service pack 1, but with some screen differences for the earlier version. Windows XP service pack 2 is a very good upgrade for most users.

## Computer Requirements

What is the best computer for running Photoshop? Get a good, modest computer! Very high-end, expensive computers are definitely faster, but require careful configuration to achieve the best performance.

If you are purchasing a Windows-based computer, **buy the more advanced Intel Pentium or AMD Athlon processors**. They provide features that allow Photoshop increased performance over the lower priced processors. Apple has a simpler product line with the latest processor technologies.

I recently purchased two computers: a new iMac G5 and a new Sony Vaio RB30. Both are very modestly priced. The iMac was almost the cheapest configuration that I could buy, and the Sony had been recently heavily discounted. I then added an additional 1GB of RAM to both computers. Since **Photoshop performs much better with 1GB of RAM or more**, use the money you save on a cheap computer to buy the extra RAM. Both of these computers are faster than anything I had in my lab – frankly, I am very pleased with these systems. All you may need to do to your own computer to speed it up is to add more RAM.

**Buy a good monitor** The monitor is the interface between you and the image inside the computer. Bad monitors make it very difficult to edit images: you just can't see the details. Today's flat panel LCD monitors are excellent. The flicker free LCD display makes working in front of a computer much less tiring. You don't need to buy the best monitor on the market, but just avoid the cheapest LCD monitors. I suggest buying the second tier of any product line. Lastly, **if you want to do color correction, you need to calibrate your monitor**. Do it with a hardware device for calibration monitors. The Appendix on Monitor Calibration includes basic information on using a monitor calibration tool. **Calibrate your monitor as soon as practical.**

### Web Site



I created a companion web site to supplement the content of this book at ([www.EasyGuidetoPhotoshop.com](http://www.EasyGuidetoPhotoshop.com)). Most of the sample images used throughout this book are also available on the web site.

The web site also includes a number of additional sections on image editing provided as Adobe PDF files for download. These include:

- Steps for performing tasks in this book with Photoshop CS.
- A step-by-step lesson for learning the basics of layers.
- Instruction for scanning film.
- A chapter on combining multiple exposures into a single image.
- Advanced information on Printing.

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[www.bradhinkel.com](http://www.bradhinkel.com)