

Streamline your Photoshop Editing

by Steve Zimic

I thought I'd share my favorite keyboard shortcuts I've learned over the years to make working with Photoshop a little less painful and perhaps more fun. Photoshop has hundreds of keyboard shortcuts to avoid having to go to the menu, but many of the best ones are not well known or even available in the menu bar. These shortcuts will work with CS3 through CS6 and many will work with Photoshop Elements.

- The first and perhaps the most useful for me is the 'F' key. Pressing this key a few times will allow you to see your image against a black background without all those menu items and palettes. I find viewing the image this way allows me to see distracting elements and problem areas that I'd normally miss. You can also just hide all the palettes by pressing the tab key.**
- We've all made some changes to an image that we'd like to undo that are perhaps several operations backward. Rather than going to the history palette and trying to figure out which step we need to find, you can repeatedly hit command+option+ Z (PC control+alt+ Z) to continually step backward in history.**
- Many of us know that the left and right bracket keys will make a brush smaller or larger. But did you know that holding the shift key in combination with the bracket keys will make the brush softer or harder in 25% increments?**
- A really quick way of zooming in and out on the image is holding the option (PC - Alt) while using the scroll wheel on the mouse.**
- Any tool that has an opacity setting in the options bar, can be changed by hitting a number such as '3' which will change the opacity to 30%. Holding the shift key plus a number will change the flow. Hitting '0' resets to 100%. Caution: If the tool selected has no opacity setting, hitting a number will change the opacity of the targeted layer.**
- Holding down the space bar will temporarily invoke the hand tool. Command (PC - control) or option (PC - alt) plus the space bar temporarily invokes the zoom in or zoom out tool. BTW, both these shortcuts work even if an adjustment window is open, which is especially useful when applying sharpening.**

• How often to you have an adjustment window open - such as levels - and you make an adjustment that you're not quite happy with? Instead of cancelling and starting again hold down the option (PC - Alt) key which will change the cancel button to reset.

• Shift + delete invokes the 'fill' dialogue box. This one's very useful when doing a content aware fill on a selection.

• And finally my favorite, although this is a tough one - To make a merged copy of all visible layers hold down the shift+command+option (PC - shift+control+alt) and then press the 'E' key. This is very useful when you have a ton of layers and can't figure out which one to work on. Note: It's usually best to target the topmost layer before doing this. That way the merged copy is on top of all the other layers.