



Photoshop Misc. Tips

In this lesson, I'm sharing a collection of useful tips and tricks for Photoshop. These focus on techniques that improve workflow and efficiency when you're working with complex documents, managing layers, and using the tools.

Key Concepts

1. New Window for Document (01:51): Creates a duplicate tab of the same document, allowing simultaneous viewing and manipulation of different parts of the image.
2. Arrange Views (02:11): Splits the document into multiple side-by-side views so you can zoom into different areas independently.
3. Shift + Return for Zoom (03:31): Lets you make incremental zoom adjustments without committing to a final value—great for dialing in the exact percentage you need.
4. Channel Selection (04:51): Uses the Channels panel to create precise selections of elements like lines by leveraging the black and white areas.
5. Lock Transparent Pixels (08:18): Prevents painting or editing in transparent areas of a layer so changes only affect existing content.
6. Eyedropper Tool with Option/Alt (09:13): Temporarily activates the eyedropper while the Brush tool is selected by holding Option (Mac) or Alt (Windows) for quick color sampling.
7. Copy Hexadecimal Color Codes (09:33): Lets you copy the hex value from the color picker for precise color matching across documents or apps.
8. Temporary Auto Select with Command/Ctrl (11:13): Temporarily enables Auto Select on the Move tool so you can click to select layers quickly.
9. Add to Selection with Shift + Command/Ctrl (11:53): Holds Shift while Command/Ctrl-clicking to select multiple layers at once with the Move tool.
10. History Panel for Recovery (12:38): Keeps a record of every action so you can revert to previous states or recover lost selections and layers.
11. Save Selection (13:57): Saves the current selection as a channel in a new or existing document so you can retrieve it later.
12. Drag Layer to New Document (14:17): Duplicates a layer by dragging it into a new document, preserving its state from a specific point in history.
13. Load Selection (15:36): Imports a saved selection from a channel in another document into the current one.
14. Drag Layer Between Documents (15:54): Moves a layer from one document to another; hold Shift to center it if the dimensions differ.
15. Revert to Last Saved (17:26): Resets the document to its last saved state, discarding any unsaved changes.
16. Lightroom Style Zoom in ACR (17:46): Enables familiar zooming and panning behavior in Adobe Camera Raw that matches Lightroom's interface.

Efficiently Viewing Complex Diagrams

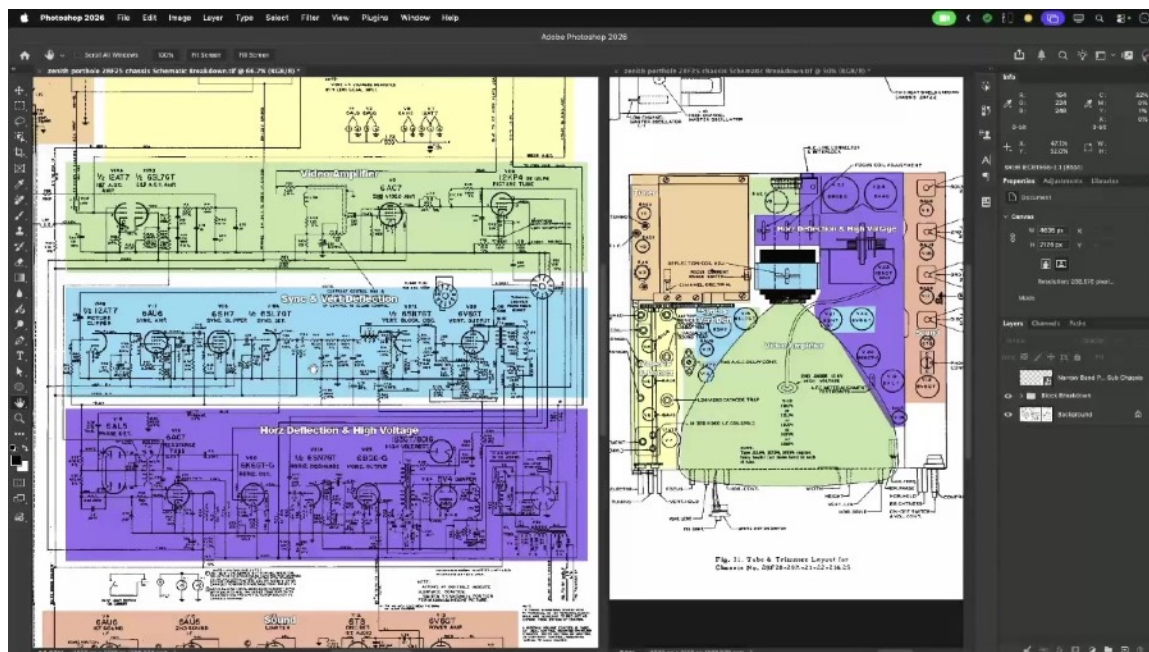
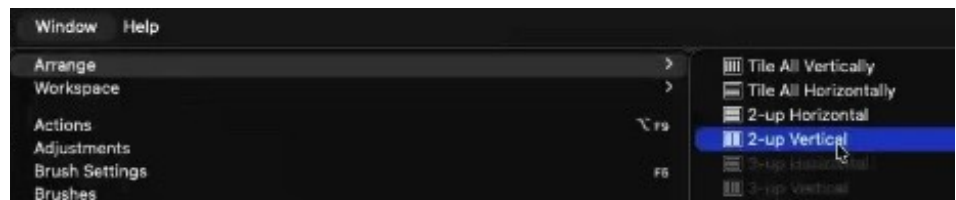
When I'm dealing with intricate diagrams, such as the schematic for a vintage television, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. To make the information more digestible, I use a "block breakdown" approach—coloring different sections of the schematic and adding titles so their function is clear.

Using Multiple Views of the Same Document

To effectively work with a detailed schematic, especially when I need to color-code different sections and refer to a physical layout at the same time, multiple views of the same document are invaluable. This lets me keep different zoom levels or focus on different areas simultaneously without constantly switching tabs.

Setting Up Multiple Views

1. Go to the Window menu.
2. Select Arrange.
3. Choose New Window for [Document Name]. This creates a new tab for the same document.
4. Go back to the Window menu.
5. Select Arrange.
6. Choose 2-up Vertical (or another arrangement option like Horizontal or Grid) to display the two views side-by-side.



This setup lets me zoom into specific components in one window while keeping the overall schematic visible in the other, or compare the schematic with a physical layout. I can then use the Hand tool to navigate each view independently.

Precise Zoom Level Adjustment

Sometimes the standard zoom increments (100%, 200%, etc.) aren't precise enough. Here's a quick way I fine-tune zoom levels with a keyboard shortcut.

1. In the lower-left corner of the Photoshop window, click the percentage value to open the zoom input field.
2. Type in the desired zoom percentage (for example, 120).
3. Instead of pressing Enter, hold down the Shift key and then press Return (or Enter).
4. This applies the zoom level but keeps the input field highlighted, so I can quickly type another percentage (like 115) and press Shift+Return again without re-selecting the field. Perfect for finding that exact zoom level for detailed work.

Color-Coding Schematics for Clarity

To keep track of progress on detailed diagrams or schematics, color-coding works really well. I use red for sections that haven't been checked yet and green for the ones I've verified.

Marking Unchecked Sections in Red

1. Navigate to the Channels panel.
2. Hold down Command (Mac) or Control (Windows).
3. Click on any of the thumbnail images (if the image is black and white, it doesn't matter which channel). This selects the white areas of the document.
4. Go to the Select menu and choose Inverse to select the black lines instead.
5. Create a new layer above the background layer in the Layers panel.
6. Set the foreground color to red.
7. Use Option + Delete (Mac) or Alt + Backspace (Windows) to fill the selection with the foreground color.
8. Deselect with Select > Deselect or Command+D (Mac) / Control+D (Windows).



Ensuring Layer Alignment

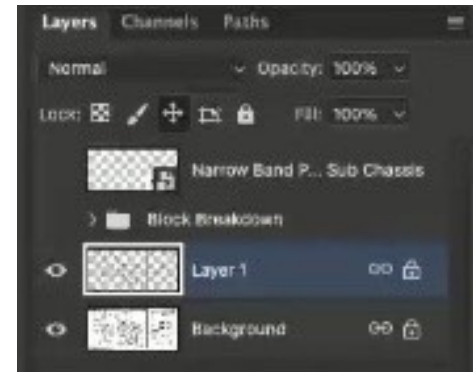
When I add colored overlays to a schematic, it's crucial that those layers stay perfectly aligned with the original.

Locking Layer Position

1. In the Layers panel, click the lock icon at the top to lock the position of the red layer.
2. Attempting to move this layer with the Move tool is now prevented, so it stays exactly where it belongs.

Linking Layers (Alternative)

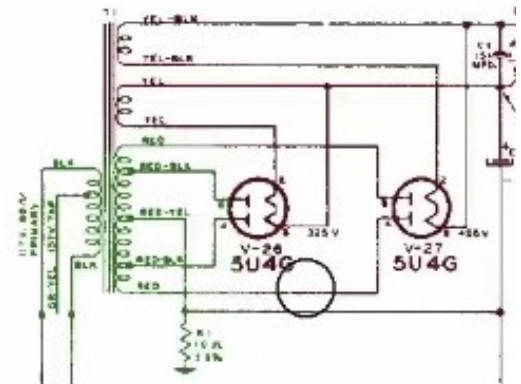
1. Select the original schematic layer and the new red layer.
2. Click the chain icon at the bottom of the Layers panel to link them.
3. Now if I move one layer, the other moves with it. To temporarily unlink, hold Shift and click the link icon.



Painting and Filling Only Existing Pixels

Once I've added colored lines on a transparent layer and want to change their color (say from red to green) without touching the transparent areas, I use the Lock Transparent Pixels feature.

1. Set the foreground color to green.
2. Make sure you're on the layer with the red lines.
3. In the Layers panel, click the Lock Transparent Pixels icon (the small checkerboard).
4. Now when I paint with the Brush tool, I can only color over the existing red lines—nothing spills into the empty transparent areas.
5. If a component needs replacement, I can also change the color to blue to flag it.



Effortless Color Sampling and Application

Photoshop gives me a couple of really convenient ways to sample and apply colors.

Sampling with the Eyedropper Tool

1. While using the Brush tool, hold down the Option key (Mac) or Alt key (Windows).
2. The cursor temporarily changes to the Eyedropper tool.
3. Click on any color in the image to sample it.
4. Release Option/Alt and resume painting with the sampled color.

Copying and Pasting Hexadecimal Color Codes

For precise color matching across documents or when I need to share a color with someone else, the hexadecimal code is invaluable.

1. If I have a colored shape layer, double-click its thumbnail in the Layers panel to open the Color Picker.
2. The hexadecimal value (the string of letters and numbers starting with #) is usually highlighted at the bottom of the Color Picker.
3. Copy it with Command+C (Mac) or Control+C (Windows).
4. To apply the color elsewhere, open the Color Picker for the target layer or tool.
5. Paste the hexadecimal value into the highlighted field with Command+V (Mac) or Control+V (Windows).
6. Click OK to apply the color.

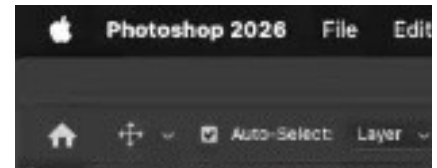


Quickly Identifying and Selecting Layers

When I'm working with a lot of layers, hunting for the exact one I want can eat up time. The Auto Select feature on the Move tool, combined with a modifier key, speeds this up a lot.

Temporarily Enabling Auto Select

1. Make sure the Move tool is active.
2. If Auto Select is turned off (I usually leave it off to avoid accidental changes), hold down the Command key (Mac) or Control key (Windows).
3. As long as I hold the modifier, Auto Select is temporarily enabled. Click on an element in the image and Photoshop selects the layer it belongs to.
4. Release the modifier and Auto Select reverts to its previous state.



Selecting Multiple Layers

1. Use the temporary Auto Select method (holding Command/Control) to select the first layer.
2. Hold down the Shift key in addition to Command/Control.
3. Click on other elements. Each click adds that layer to the current selection.

This lets me group multiple layers so I can move or transform them together.

Recovering Past States with the History Panel

The History panel is one of my favorite tools for undoing mistakes or grabbing earlier versions of the work.

Navigating and Reverting States

1. Open the History panel (Window > History).
2. The panel lists every step I've taken. I can click any previous state to revert the document to that point.
3. Just be aware that making any new changes after reverting discards all the subsequent history states.

Saving Selections for Future Use

If I've created a complex selection that took time to perfect, I can save it before undoing.

1. Go back in the History panel to the state where the desired selection was active.
2. Go to the Select menu and choose Save Selection.
3. In the dialog, make sure the New document option is selected and give the selection a name. This creates a new document containing only that selection as a channel.

Duplicating Layers from History

To recover a layer from a past state:

1. Navigate in the History panel to the point where the layer looked the way I wanted it.
2. Hold down the Option key (Mac) or Alt key (Windows).
3. Drag the desired layer from the Layers panel onto the New Layer icon (the square with a plus sign).
4. This prompts me to name the duplicated layer and choose whether to place it in a new document. Choosing New document creates a separate file with just that layer.

Loading Recovered Selections and Layers

To bring saved selections or layers back into the current document:

For Selections

1. Go to the Select menu and choose Load Selection.
2. If the selection was saved in a separate document, Photoshop may detect it. Select the document and the saved selection channel.
3. Choose to load it as a new selection.



For Layers

1. Open the document that contains the layer I want to recover.
2. Activate the Move tool.
3. Drag the desired layer from its document's Layers panel to the tab of the target document.

4. Before releasing the mouse, drag the cursor into the target document's canvas.
5. Hold down the Shift key to center the layer (or place it precisely if the document dimensions match).
6. Release the mouse, then release Shift. The layer appears in the target document, usually at the bottom of the layer stack.

Adjusting Zoom Behavior in Adobe Camera Raw

If you primarily work in Lightroom, the default zoom behavior in Adobe Camera Raw can feel jarring. There's a setting that makes ACR's zoom match Lightroom's.

1. Open an image in Adobe Camera Raw (either via the plug-in or the Camera Raw Filter).
2. Click the gear icon in the top right corner to access Preferences.
3. Navigate to the General tab.
4. Check the box for Use Lightroom Style Zoom and Pan.
5. With this enabled, clicking cycles between Fit and the last used zoom level. Dragging horizontally pans, and the usual zoom shortcuts (Command+/- or Control+/-) still work for precise control.

