



## Basic Troubleshooting

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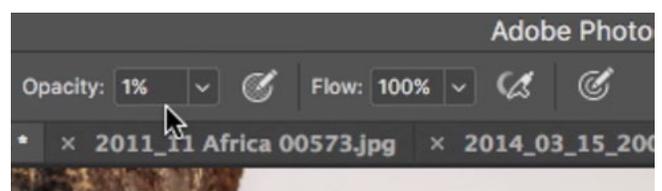
Troubleshooting might not be the most exciting thing to learn, but it sure will prove to be useful if something doesn't work the way you expect it to when working in Photoshop. In this lesson, we'll cover the basic troubleshooting techniques that could potentially save you from a lot of frustration in the future.

## Feature not working: Selection active?

If you ever try to make a change to your image and nothing seems to happen, there are a few things that could be going on. The first thing to check is whether or not you have a selection active. If there is a selection active, it's isolating part of your document, making it the only area that you can work on. If the selection is very small, it might not be easily visible on your screen. Often times, you might be zoomed in to a particular location and don't realize that there is an active selection somewhere in the document that is outside of your current view. To check if there is a selection active, click on the Select menu at the top of the screen. If the Deselect option is available to you, it means that you DO have a selection active. Click Deselect to clear the selection.

## Brush Tool not working: Options Bar settings?

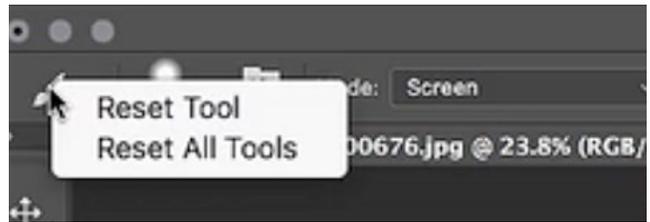
If you are using the Brush Tool, nothing seems to be working and there is no active selection, the next place to look would be in the Options Bar above the image window. There, you will find the Opacity and Flow settings. If one or both of these settings is at zero or close to it, you're not going to see any change being applied with the Brush Tool. The Mode menu can also be found in the Options Bar and if it is set to anything other than normal, the Brush Tool will not act in the way that you probably expect.



**Here, the Opacity setting for the Brush Tool is only at 1%. This made it appear as if nothing was happening when we painted in the document.**

## Reset tool settings

If the tool is still not working properly after checking the things mentioned above, you can completely reset the tool settings. The icon at the far left side of the Options Bar represents the active tool. Right-click on the icon and a little menu will pop up. Choose “Reset Tool” from that menu. This will take all of the options within that Options Bar and change them back to their default settings.



**Reset a tool to its default settings by right-clicking on the tool icon at the far left side of the Options Bar and choose “Reset Tool” from the menu that pops up.**

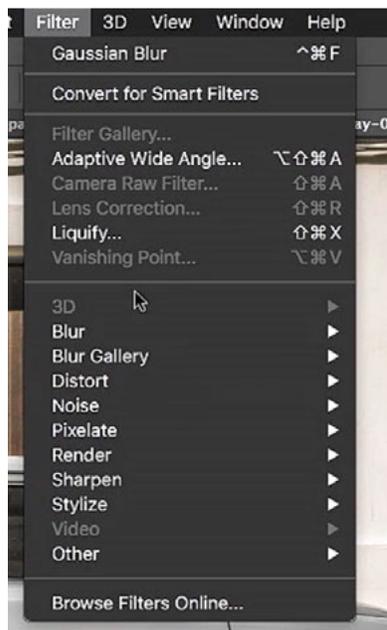
## Adjustment not working: Type layer active?

If you ever go to the Adjustments menu (accessed by going to the main menu and choosing Image > Adjustments) and find that all of the adjustments are grayed out, there could be a couple of reasons why. Check the Layers panel to make sure that the layer you want to work on is actually active and that it’s a normal layer. Know that adjustments will not be accessible if the active layer is a text layer. To apply an adjustment to a text layer, you would need to either use an adjustment layer or rasterize the text layer so that you can apply a regular adjustment. You can rasterize a type layer by going to the Type menu and choosing “Rasterize Type Layer.” After a type layer has been rasterized, it will no longer be editable. Photoshop will just think of it as another image layer.

## Filters not available: RGB mode and 16/bit mode?

All of the filters available in Photoshop can be accessed within the Filter menu at the top of the screen. There are some instances, however, where certain filters may be grayed out and therefore unusable. If this ever happens, it may have something to do with the mode your image is in. You can tell what mode the image is in by

going to the Image menu at the top of the screen and choosing Mode. Most images are in RGB mode and some of Photoshop's filters require the image to be in RGB mode. If the image is in another mode, like CMYK, you will need to switch the mode to RGB in order for those filters to work. Some of the filters also may not be available if the image is in something other than 8-bit mode. You can see what bit-depth your image is in (and change the bit depth setting) by going to that same Mode menu.



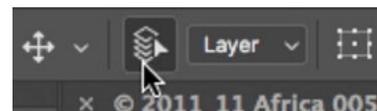
In the Filter menu, you can see that some filters are grayed out, meaning they're unavailable. This could have to do with the mode your image is in.

## Multiple layers active

There are many features in Photoshop that will not be available if you have more than one layer active. If you ever notice that loads of menu items are grayed out, look in your Layers panel and make sure that only one layer is active. If you need to apply an adjustment to more than one layer, you can do so by using an adjustment layer. An adjustment layer will affect all the layers that lie beneath it in the Layers panel.

## Auto-Select Layer

The Auto-Select Layer feature can really mess you up when trying to move layers. Let's say that you activate a layer and then use the Move Tool to try and reposition the layer but it's a different layer that ends up moving. This could happen if the Auto-Select Layer feature is turned on. When the Move Tool is active, the Auto-Select Layer

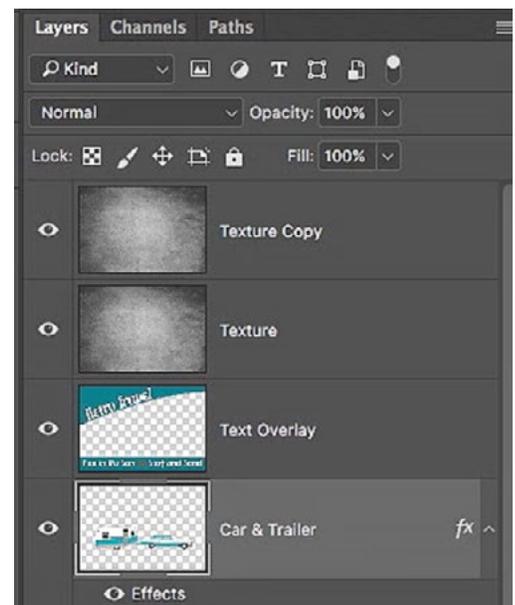


The Auto-Select Layer setting can be found on the left side of the Options Bar when the Move Tool is active. It will appear as an icon or a check box.

setting can be found near the left side of the Options Bar. Depending on your interface, it may appear as an icon or it may appear as a check box. When this setting is turned on, any time you click with the Move Tool, it looks at what layer contains something directly below your mouse and targets that layer. If you're not used to this setting being turned on, it could become very frustrating when the targeted layer keeps changing. When the Auto-Select Layer feature is turned off, it will not automatically switch layers. You can activate a layer in the Layers panel and then reposition it by using the Move Tool to drag anywhere inside the image window. It doesn't even have to be in a place where the layer contains content.

**Temporarily access Auto-Select Layer feature** Note that you can temporarily activate the Auto-Select Layer feature while using the Move Tool. To do this, hold down the Command key (Ctrl on Win). When the key is held down, the Auto-Select Layer feature will be on and you can change layers simply by clicking on objects within the document. When you release the key, the feature will turn off again.

If you decide to keep the Auto-Select Layer feature turned on, there is one situation that could really mess you up. Any layers that are near the top of the Layers panel and take up the entire canvas space will always be targeted when using the Move Tool. An example of this would be a texture layer. If you have a layer at the top of the layer stack that is designed to create a texture effect in your image, it will be impossible to target any other layer using the Move Tool with the Auto-Select Layer feature turned on. That's because the Move Tool will always target the layer containing information directly beneath the cursor, and a texture layer will ALWAYS be the layer beneath the cursor because it takes up the entire document. In order to select any other layers, you will need to turn Auto-Select Layers off.

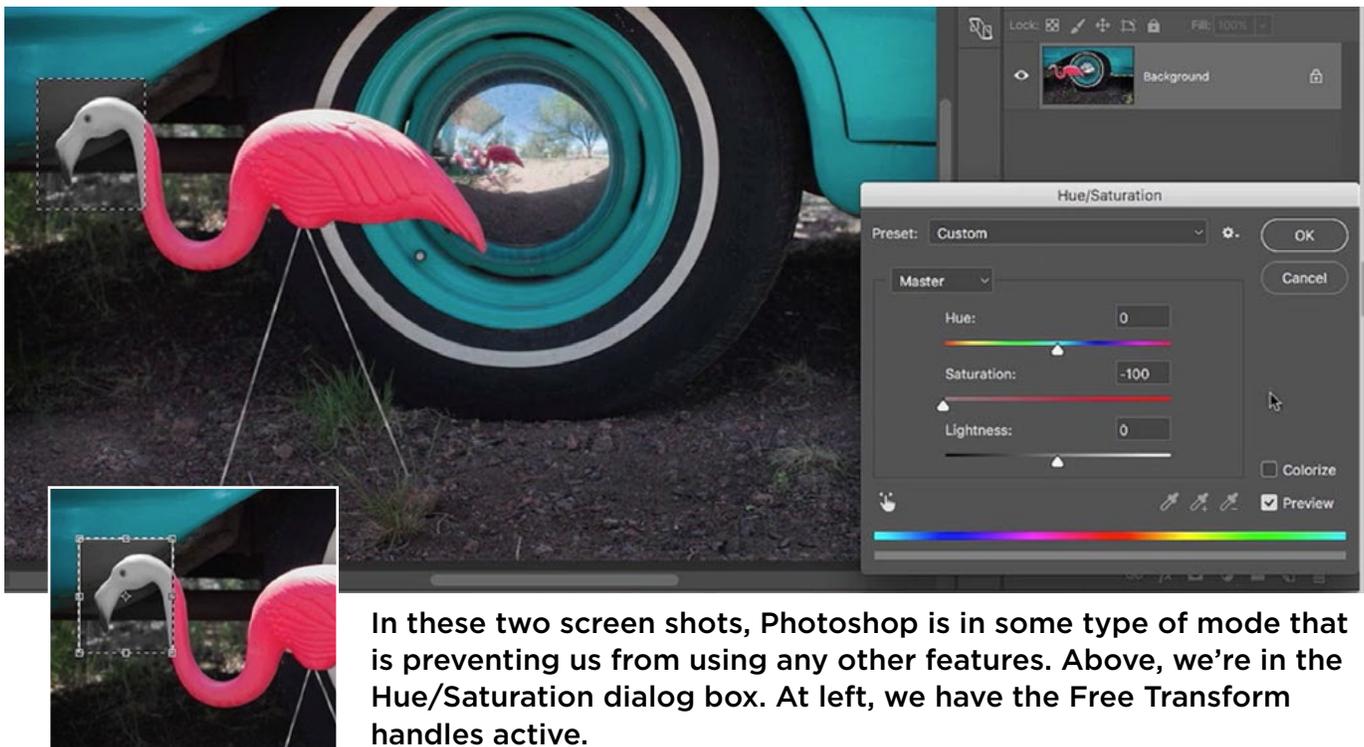


**There is a texture layer at the top of the Layers panel. When using the Move Tool with the Auto-Select Layer setting turned on, it will ALWAYS target that texture layer because it takes up the entire document.**

## Feature not working: Finish modal feature?

Photoshop can tend to be very modal, meaning it will enter a certain mode and you may have to finish the task you are doing before you will be able to do anything else. For example, when you have an adjustment dialog box open, you will not be able to do other things like work with tools. You will need to finish adjusting the settings in the dialog box and then click OK or Cancel to close it. Only then will you be able to move on and use another feature. Another example would be the Free Transform command. If you are using the Free Transform command and those Free Transform handles are active in your document, you will not be able to apply a filter, adjustment, etc. Those features will be grayed out (meaning unavailable) in the menus.

If features are not available to you and you're not sure whether or not you're in some type of mode, hit the Return/Enter key and then hit the Escape key. If you are in any kind of mode, the Return/Enter key will usually finish that task and take you out of that mode. The Escape key will abort whatever task you are doing. Therefore, hitting those two keys should ensure that you are exited out of any modes.

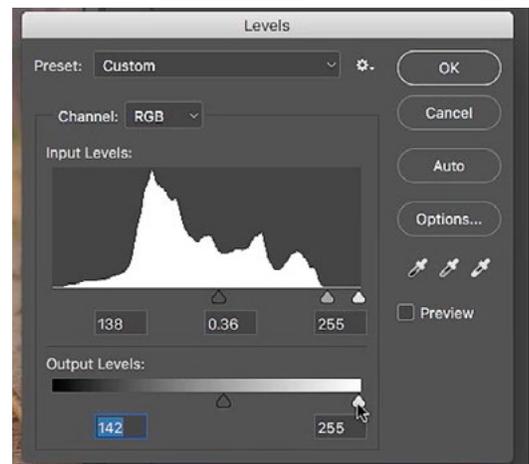


## Shortcuts not working: Text field active?

You may notice, at some point, that your keyboard shortcuts stop working. If this happens, you likely have an active text field somewhere in your interface and Photoshop thinks that you're entering text. For example, if you were manually entering an opacity setting into the Opacity text field, Photoshop will think that whatever you're typing should be entered into that field. You will have to click away from the text field in order for the shortcuts to continue working.

## Adjustment not affecting image: Preview Off?

When working with the settings for an adjustment, you will usually be able to preview how the settings are affecting the image within the image window. But what if you change the settings around and don't see any change to your image? In a case like this, the Preview checkbox is likely turned off. You simply need to turn it on again. The Preview checkbox is usually somewhere near the bottom of the adjustment dialog and this is a "sticky" setting. If a setting is sticky, it means that if you change the setting, it will remain that way until you change it back.



**The Preview check box is turned off so the image window is not reflecting the changes we're making to the adjustment settings.**

## Text not appearing: White on white?

One of the snags you might run into when using the Text Tool is that you start to type in text but nothing appears on the screen. If this happens, first look to see what font you're using. Some fonts have special characters (ex: emojis) that might not have a character that coordinates with what you're typing. However, more often than not, this happens when you are using white text on a white background.

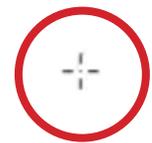
Check to see what your foreground color is to make sure that it's not blending in with the document background. If you ARE typing with white (on a white background), simply highlight all of the text by tapping Command+A (Ctrl+A on Win) and then clicking on the color swatch within the Options Bar at the top of the image window. This will bring up the Color Picker and allow you to change the text to a different color.



**We're changing the color of the text with the Color Picker, which was accessed by clicking on the color swatch in the Options Bar.**

## **Brush tip issues: Caps lock? Brush size huge? Preference change?**

When using the Brush Tool, your cursor should turn into a round tool tip representing the size and shape of the brush. If, instead, your cursor only appears as a little crosshair, there are a few different things that could be going on. In most cases, you probably have Caps Lock turned on. This is a feature designed to help you pinpoint the exact center point of your brush, but it can be very frustrating if you're used to seeing the tool tip preview. Simply turn Caps Lock off to get the regular brush view again.



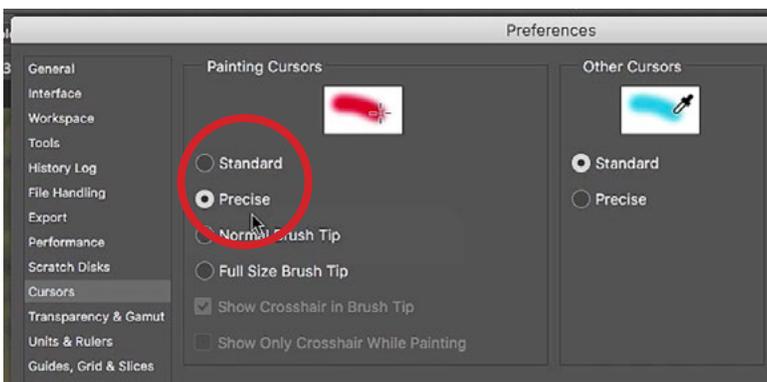
**If your cursor looks like this crosshair when using the Brush Tool, check to make sure that Caps Lock is not turned on.**

If Caps Lock is not turned on but you still only see the little crosshair representing your brush, then look at the size of the brush. This can happen if your brush is so big that it covers a larger area than what is currently visible on your canvas. You



Here, you can see that the brush is so large that if we zoomed in on the document, it would no longer be visible. If you ever can't find your brush tip, check to see how big your brush is. The size setting is in the upper left side of the Options Bar (circled).

will need to either zoom out on your image or make the brush smaller in order to see the brush tip preview.



The brush tip will look like a crosshair if the **Painting Cursors** setting in your Preferences is set to **Precise**. Set it back to **Standard** to get the regular brush tip.

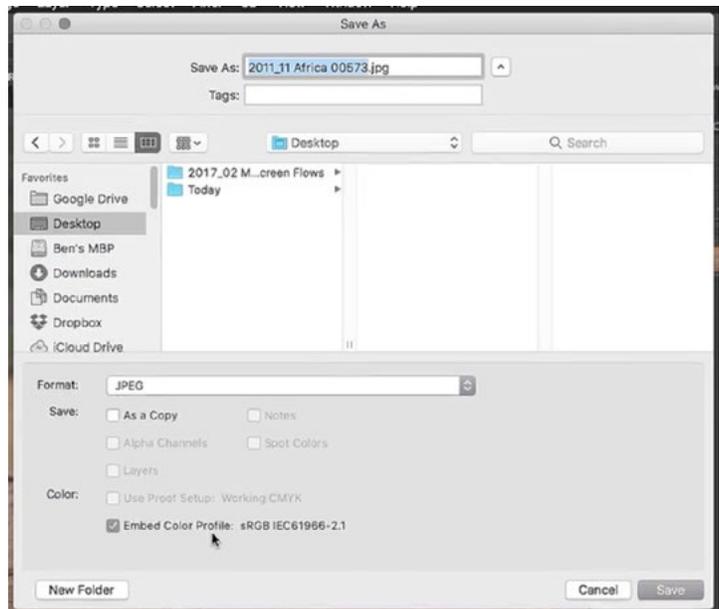
The last thing that could cause your cursor to look like a crosshair instead of the brush tip would be a setting in your preferences. Go to the main menu and choose Photoshop > Preferences > Cursors. (On Win, that's Edit > Preferences > Cursors.) If the Painting Cursors setting is set to Precise, change it back to Standard.

## Revert document

If you are unhappy with the changes you've made to a document and you don't know how to return the image back to a state that you like, you can always revert the image, which will bring it back to the state it was in when you originally opened it in Photoshop. Do this by going to the File menu and choosing Revert.

## Image looks different on other screen: No Color Profile?

The appearance of your image depends a good amount on the color profile. If you ever send an image to someone else or view the image in a web browser and you find that it looks different than the way it did when you adjusted it in Photoshop, the image may have been saved with no color profile. When you save an image in Photoshop, there will be an "Embed Color Profile" check box at the bottom of the Save dialog. It's very important to always have this setting turned on. It must be turned on in order for Photoshop to save enough information about the document so that it can accurately present the image in a different program or screen.



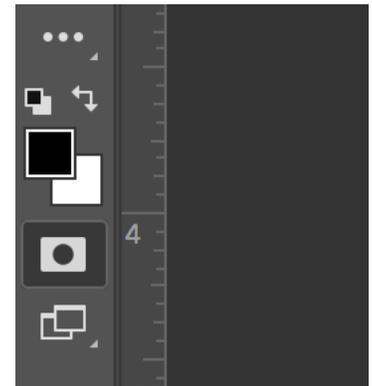
**Make sure the "Embed Color Profile" check box is turned on when you save your images.**

## Color looks wrong: Is image in sRGB?

Many computer programs aren't designed to accurately represent color unless your image is set up in a certain way. If you want your images to look good in programs that aren't geared toward professional imaging (email programs, databases, web browsers, etc.), it's a good idea to use the sRGB color space. When creating a new Photoshop document, there will be a Color Mode option within the New Document dialog. If it's not a new document, or you're working with a document that was given to you by someone else, you can always export the image in the sRGB mode. To do this, go to the File menu and choose Export > Save for Web OR Export > Save As. Choosing either of these options will give you a checkbox option to "Convert to sRGB."

## Filters/adjustments not working: Quick Mask Mode?

Quick Mask Mode allows you to view an active selection as a red overlay on your image. It's designed to help you better see, evaluate and edit a selection. It can also mess you up if you get into this mode accidentally. When you're in Quick Mask Mode, any filter or adjustment you use will be applied to the selection, not the image. If you happened to enter this mode accidentally, and you had no selection active, there will be no red overlay and therefore no visual indication that you're in Quick Mask Mode. When you try to apply a filter or adjustment, it will appear to do nothing because its applying it to the [nonexistent] selection. You can get in and out of Quick Mask Mode by hitting the Q key on your keyboard or clicking the Quick Mask icon at the very bottom of the Toolbar. After you get out of Quick Mask Mode, all of your filters, adjustments, etc. should work properly again.



**The Quick Mask icon at the bottom of the Toolbar.**