



**Wish I Knew: Essentials**

# Wish I Knew: Essentials

In this lesson of the “Wish I Knew” series, we’re going to talk about some of the essential features and tips that I wish I had known when learning Photoshop.

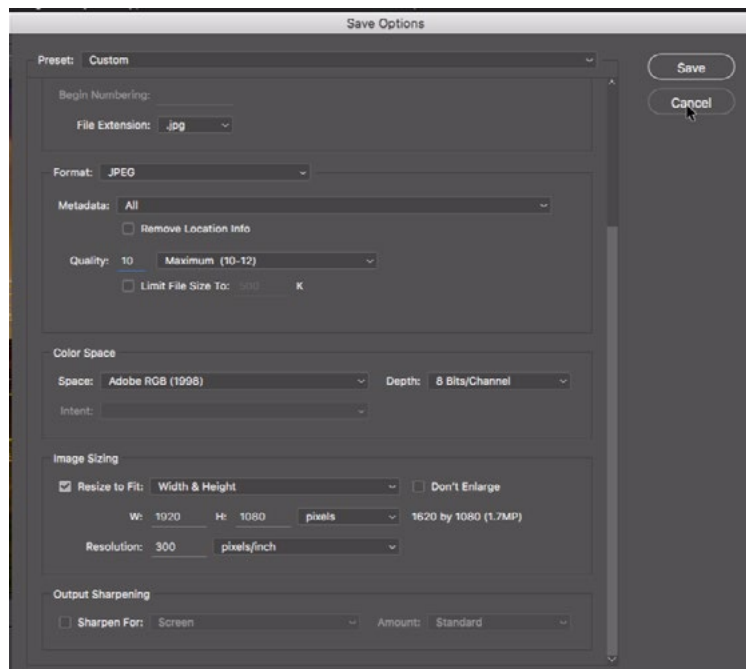
## Save Image: Saving RAW files as JPGs

Often times, you will want to share some RAW files you’ve been working on with someone else. If you need to quickly save out a JPG in order to share an image, double-click on the file within Bridge to open it in Camera Raw. Then click on the Save Image button in the bottom left corner of the interface. The Save Image dialog will appear.

In the Save Image dialog, use the Destination setting to specify where you would like the file to end up. The Select Folder button will allow you to specify an exact location. I usually set this to my desktop. If you want to rename your file[s] when saving, you can use the File Naming settings to do so. If you don’t care to rename, simply skip this section.

Next, you’ll need to specify what file format to use. When sending an image to someone else, I generally choose the JPG format. The Quality setting will depend on what the image will be used for. If you’re just sending the image to show a friend or to post online, a lower quality setting (~7) will give you a smaller file size. If the image is going to be printed, you’ll want a high quality setting of 10-12.

The next setting you’ll need to specify is Color Space. If the goal is high quality output, I would use the Adobe RGB option. If the person you’re



**The Save Image settings, which can be accessed by clicking the Save Image button at the bottom right corner of ACR.**

sending the image to is not computer savvy or image savvy, I'd set the color space to sRGB. This is also the appropriate setting for posting images on the Internet.

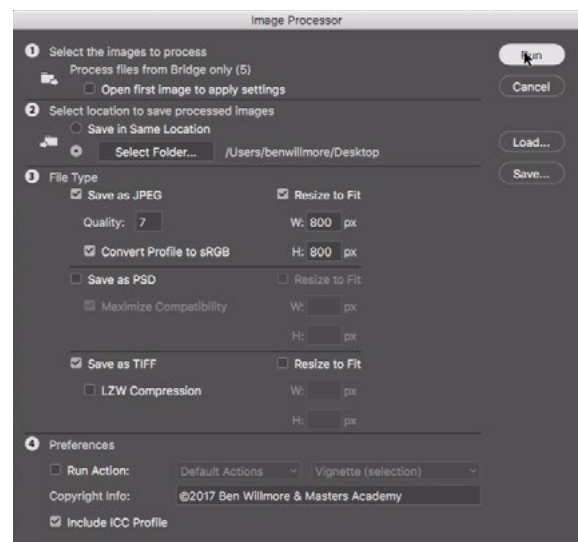
The Image Sizing settings will allow you to resize the image as it's being saved. If you want to send the original file size, keep the "Resize to Fit" check box turned off. If you'd like the image to be scaled, turn this check box on and then specify your desired pixel dimensions and resolution.

After you've specified all the settings, click the Save button. Note that you can save out more than one image at once. Just make sure you have all the desired images open and selected in ACR. To make sure all open images are selected, click on the little menu icon at the top corner of the image filmstrip on the left side of the interface and choose Select All.

After specifying all of your settings in the Save Image dialog, you can save those settings as a preset by clicking on the Preset menu at the top of the dialog and choosing New Save Options Preset. You'll be prompted to give the preset a name and then click OK. Now, your preset will be available in that menu and when you choose it, all of the setting fields will be filled in automatically.

## The Image Processor: Saving mixed file formats as JPGS

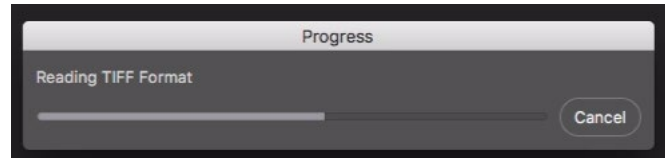
If you have images of various file formats, you can save them together by selecting them all in Bridge, going to the main menu and choosing Tools > Photoshop > Image Processor. You will notice that the settings are nearly the same as those we just used in the Save Image dialog. With the Image Processor, you have the ability to save out more than one file type at a time by turning on the check boxes and specifying the settings for more than one file type. Make sure that the "Include ICC Profile" check box at the bottom of the dialog is turned on before hitting the Run button.



The Image Processor dialog.

## Working with large files

If you have a very large, complex file, it may take a while to open in Photoshop. A progress bar will appear as it's trying to open. What if you only wanted to do a simple thing like crop the image? It would be a bummer to have to wait that long just to accomplish a small task. Here is a trick for getting around that.



**When trying to open a really large file, you may get a progress bar that takes a while.**

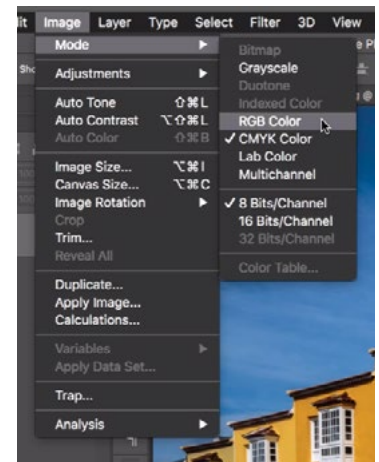
Instantly after double-clicking on the file in Bridge, hold down the Shift+Option keys (Shift+Alt on Win). Photoshop will ask if you'd like to "Read the composite data instead?" If you choose OK, a flattened version of the image will open. This will take a fraction of the time that opening the full document would have taken. Now, you can crop the image (or do whatever you'd like with this flattened version) and use the Save As command to save the image out as a JPEG or other file format.



**If we click OK, Photoshop will load a flattened version of the document.**

## Working with files sent from others

**Image Mode** Sometimes, after receiving a file from someone else, the Photoshop filters won't behave the way you expect them to. For example, the filters that usually create a 50% gray appearance suddenly give you a brownish output instead. You may also find that some filters are simply not available. They're grayed out in the menu system. When these things happen, the first thing to check is what mode the picture is in. The Mode menu can be found under the Image menu and when working with photographs, the mode should usually be set to RGB Color. If it's set to one of the other modes, Photoshop may treat it differently.



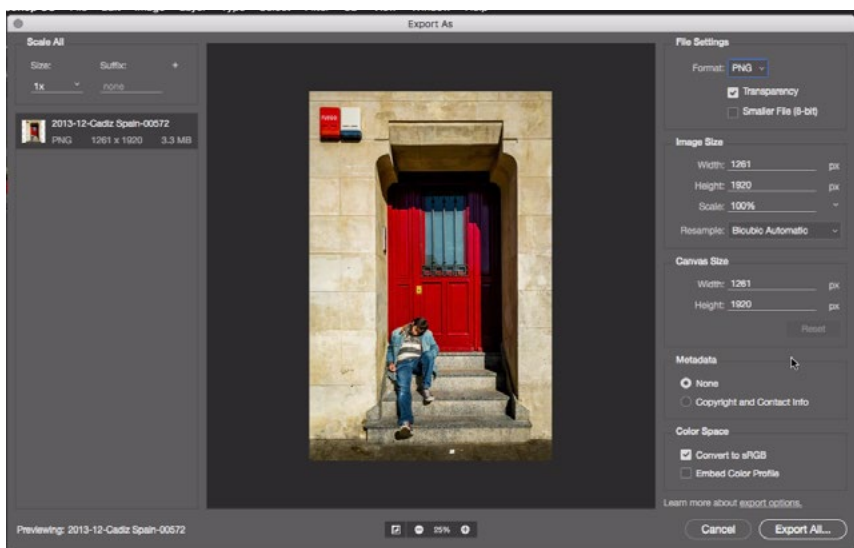
**The Image Mode menu**

Another thing that might happen after you've received a file from someone is that you are unable to do anything involving layers. Everything in the Layer menu will be grayed out as well as the icons at the bottom of the Layers panel. This is also something that could be caused by the mode of the image. If the Image > Mode menu is set to Indexed Color, you will not have access to filters or anything involving layers. Changing the mode to RGB should fix the problem quickly.

## Working file formats & delivery file formats

When saving out working files, the two file formats I will use are PSD and TIFF. These are the two file formats that will not degrade the image at all. They are also the formats that support layers. I tend to use the TIFF format the most because I have incredibly complex, large documents and the TIFF format will save files that are larger than the max PSD size.

When saving out delivery files (files I want to send to someone else), I will use the JPG format if it's a photograph and PNG if it's a graphic (logo, signature, etc.). If the file's ultimate destination is the Internet, I will use the Export As command or the Save for Web command. Both of these can be found by going to the File menu and choosing Export.

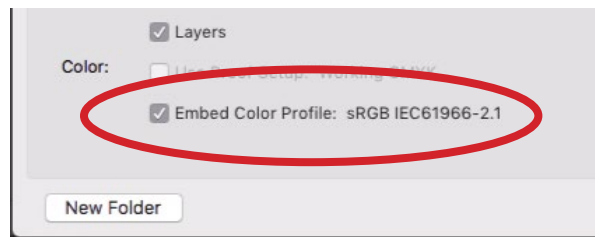


**If I am exporting an image to use on the Internet, I will use either the Save for Web dialog or the Export As dialog (shown above).**

Within the Export As dialog, I will use the Format menu at the top to specify JPG (for a photograph) or PNG (for a graphic). If I chose the JPG format, I will specify the Quality setting depending on the image's destination. The higher the quality setting, the higher the file size will be. If I'm just posting an image online, I will not use a high quality setting.

## Embed Color Profile

Every time you save an image using the Save As command, make sure that the “Embed Color Profile” check box is turned on. This will ensure color consistency between devices. If you don’t have this turned on, anyone else that opens the file may see colors other than the ones on your screen.



**Every time you save an image using the Save As command, make sure the Embed Color Profile check box is turned on.**

## Working with large files

If your computer’s hard drive is nearly full and you start working on very large files in Photoshop, you may start to get error messages that tell you your “scratch disk is full.” The scratch disk is Photoshop’s term for your hard drive.

To provide a backup scratch disk, go to the Photoshop menu and choose Preferences > Scratch disks. (In Windows, your preferences may be found under your Edit menu.) If you have more than one hard drive connected to your computer, they will all be listed in this dialog. If you choose one of these drives from the list and turn on the check box to the left of its name, Photoshop will use this as a secondary hard drive when your scratch disk becomes full. If you have more than one hard drive listed with the check boxes turned on, you can reposition them in order of how fast they are. This will tell Photoshop to use the fastest one first, and so on. Reposition a hard drive by clicking to activate it and then using the up and down arrows to the right of the hard drive list.

## Troubleshooting

**Crosshair instead of a brush** If you activate a brush tool and find that your cursor looks like a crosshair instead of a brush tip, there are a few possible reasons. The first is your Caps lock key being on. If this



**If the Caps lock key is active, the brush tip will turn into a crosshair.**

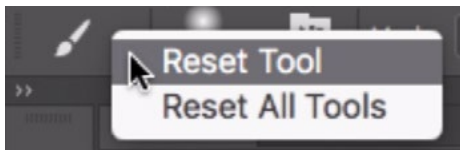
is the case, simply click on the Caps lock key again to get the regular brush tip back. Another reason you may be seeing a crosshair instead of a brush tip is that the brush is so large that its edges extend beyond your document window. The crosshair you see is actually the very center of the brush tip. To fix this, simply make your brush smaller. You can use the left and right bracket keys ( [ ] ) to re-size your brush tip.

**The brush tip** The circle you see that represents your brush tip will only represent the edges of your brush if you are using a hard-edged brush. If you are using a soft-edged brush, then the edge of the brush tip represents the half-way point between where the fade-out starts and where it ends. This is important to understand when you're trying to prevent overspray while painting in specific areas of your image.



**When using a soft brush, the brush tip represents the half-way point in the fade-out.**

**Reset a tool** If you start to paint with the Brush Tool and find that nothing is happening or it's not behaving in the way it's supposed to, there may be a setting that was changed without you being aware of it. Restoring the tool to its default settings should fix the problem. You can reset any tool to its default settings by clicking on the little triangle to the right of the tool's icon in the left side of the Options Bar and choosing Reset Tool from the menu that pops up.

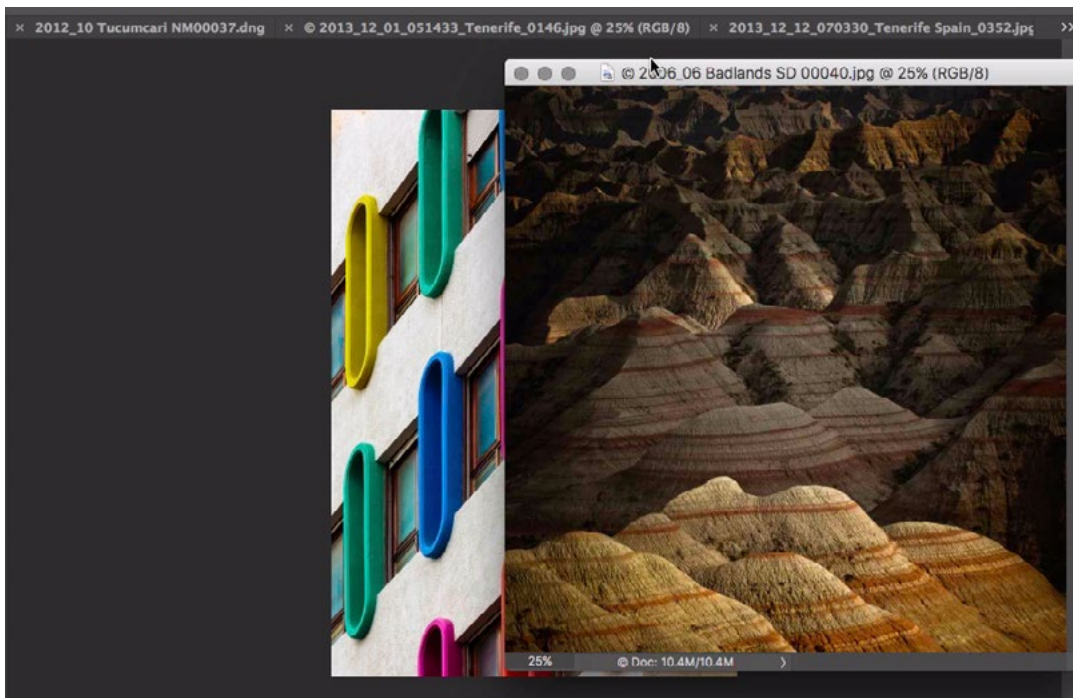


**Reset a tool by clicking the tool's icon in the Options bar and choosing Reset Tool.**

**Tool isn't moving smoothly** You may find that you're trying to use something like a selection tool or the Crop Tool, or something similar, and instead of moving smoothly, it's snapping to different areas in your document. It's trying to help you align elements in your document, but it can be annoying if that's not your desire. To prevent this snapping, hold down the Control key while you drag the tool with your mouse. Note this only works when your mouse button is being held down.

## Photoshop Tabs

When you open multiple images, each image appears as its own tab in Photoshop. You can click on the different tabs to switch between documents or you can use the keyboard shortcut Control+Tab to switch to the next tab (on the right). The shortcut Shift+Control+Tab will move you to the previous tab (on the left). If you click and drag a tab, it will become a free-floating window that you can move around. If you have one or more free-floating documents, you can consolidate them all by going to the Window menu and choosing Arrange > Consolidate All to Tabs. To view all of the tabbed images side by side to compare them, go back to the Window menu and choose Arrange > Tile.



Here, we dragged one of the tabs into the middle of the Photoshop window. It is now a free-floating document. We can dock it back with the other tabs by dragging the header bar into the tab bar.

**Move an image between tabs** You can use the Move Tool to move a layer from one open document to another. Start with your mouse inside the document canvas that you want to move and then drag the image layer to hover over the tab for the document you want to place it in. The destination document will become visible and, before releasing your mouse button, position the image within the document canvas. Then you can release your mouse button.