

28 More Exceptionally Useful Photoshop Shortcuts



This guest post was submitted by Brian Auer from [Epic Edits Weblog](#).

The last article I wrote for dPS titled “[18 Exceptionally Useful Photoshop Shortcuts](#)” was taken in very well by all the wonderful photographers here. Darren had the idea of creating a follow-up article that outlined additional shortcuts and keyboard commands in Photoshop, and naturally I was more than happy to whip something up.

There were so many comments that brought up additional shortcuts on the last post, that 80% of the following tips came from all of you. It was great to see that level of contribution from the readers, and I learned a few very useful Photoshop tricks along the way. The other 20% of the following tips are some that weren’t mentioned at all in the last post, and I’ve even included a few side notes and mouse-related shortcuts. **Also, be sure to read all the way to the bottom — I have a question for you.**

Again, I’m using the commands for Photoshop CS3 running on Windows, but most of these should also work with Photoshop CS2 and some versions lower. So to start things off, I’m admitting defeat. In the last post, apparently I left out THE most useful shortcut in Photoshop.

SPACEBAR (Temporary Hand Tool) — Hold down the spacebar to temporarily bring up the hand tool so you can move around while doing those zoomed-in edits. Also, use the *Ctrl* modifier to zoom in, and the *Alt* modifier to zoom out.



Essential Photoshop Shortcut Commands

- **F** (Cycle Screen Modes) — Switch between normal screen, full screen with task bar without title bar, and full screen with black background. Works great when used in conjunction with *Tab* to hide toolbars — maximum working space, no distractions.

- **X** (Switch Colors) — Swap your foreground and background colors. Very handy when working with masks.
- **D** (Default Colors) — Reset your foreground and background colors to black and white, respectively.
- **Ctrl + '+'/'-'** (Zoom In/Out) — Quickly zoom in or out without changing your current tool.
- **Alt + Mouse Scroll** (Zoom In/Out) — Fastest way to zoom — scroll up to zoom in, and scroll down to zoom out.
- **Ctrl + Alt + Z** (Step Back) — *Ctrl + Z* is OK if you catch a mistake immediately after it happens, but this command will continue to march its way up the history tree.
- **Ctrl + S** (Save) — You should get in the habit of just hitting this combo on impulse about every 5 to 10 minutes. Also use *Ctrl + Alt + Shift + S* to bring up the save for web dialog.
- **Ctrl + Alt + Shift + N** (New Layer No Dialog) — Quickly insert a new empty layer on top of the active layer. Get rid of the *Alt* key to bring up the new layer dialog for more options.



Useful Photoshop Shortcut Commands

- **Shift + Click Mask** (Enable/Disable Layer Mask) — When working with masks it's typically done in small increments. Disabling the mask allows you to check the results of your masking against the original.
- **Alt + Click Mask** (Toggle Mask Visibility) — Doing this will bring up the mask as a grayscale image so you can see what you're working with. Useful if you have areas that need to be filled in or smoothed out.
- **Ctrl + Click Mask** (Load Mask As Selection) — Selects the white part of the mask (grays are partially selected). Useful if you want to duplicate a mask or it's inverse. Using *Ctrl + Click* on a layer without a mask will select the non-transparent pixels in that layer.
- **Ctrl + J** (New Layer Via Copy) — Can be used to duplicate the active layer into a new layer. If a selection is made, this command will only copy the selected area into the new layer.
- **Caps Lock** (Toggle Cross Hairs) — Switch between the standard tool icon and a set of precision cross hairs. Useful for spot-on selections.
- **Shift + Backspace** (Fill Dialog) — Good time saver when working with masks. Also, use the *Ctrl + Backspace* to fill with background color and *Alt + Backspace* to fill with foreground color.
- **Ctrl + H** (Hide Selection Lines) — When working with selections, use this command to hide the “marching ants” while keeping the selection.
- **Ctrl + I** (Invert Selection) — Select the opposite of what is already selected. Also a good tool when working with mask creation.

- **Ctrl + D** (Deselect) — After working with your selection, use this combo to discard it.
- **Side Note:** When working with selections, they can be applied to a layer as a mask simply by adding a new layer mask using the little box-with-a-circle-inside icon at the bottom of the layer palette. This also works with adjustment layers by automatically applying the selection to the mask.

Handy Photoshop Shortcut Commands



- **Ctrl + G** (Group Layers) — This command groups selected layers in the layer tree. Adding *Shift* to this combo will ungroup layers when the grouped layer is selected.
- **Ctrl + A** (Select All) — Creates a selection around the entire canvas.
- **Ctrl + T** (Free Transform) — Brings up the free transform tool for resizing, rotating, and skewing the image using a draggable outline.
- **Ctrl + E** (Merge Layers) — Merges selected

layer with the layer directly below it. If multiple layers are selected, only those will be merged.

- **Ctrl + Shift + E** (Merge Visible) — Merges all visible layers into one. Not recommended practice in typical photo editing because you'll lose layer information.
- **Ctrl + Alt + E** (Stamp Down) — Merges all selected layers into one new layer. Add the *Shift* modifier to this combo and you'll get a new layer containing a merged representation of all visible layers (handy for sharpening adjustments)
- **Ctrl + Alt + Shift + R** (Rotate Arbitrary Dialog) — bring up the rotate dialog to straighten out your horizon... but it's not typically used since we all take perfect photos, right?
- **Side Note:** Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) has the ability to straighten photos before they ever make it into Photoshop. When straightening, you draw a line you'd like as your horizontal and ACR will take care of the rotation and crop for you.
- **CTRL + ALT + DEL** (Kill Photoshop) — Quite useful when Photoshop takes your computer hostage. Must have used the *Ctrl + S* command prior to the hostile takeover in order to prevent mental breakdown.

What are your Top Photoshop Shortcuts?



So I think we've gathered a fairly comprehensive list of Photoshop shortcuts that are useful for us photographers.

Now I'd like to take it a step further — let's make a top 10 list.

How can you help? Just leave a comment and include the top 3 shortcuts that are most useful to you, taking your selections from this list and the [previous list](#).

After the comments die down, Darren or I will gather up all the votes and make a top 10 list based on your input. I look forward to it, and thanks for reading.

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