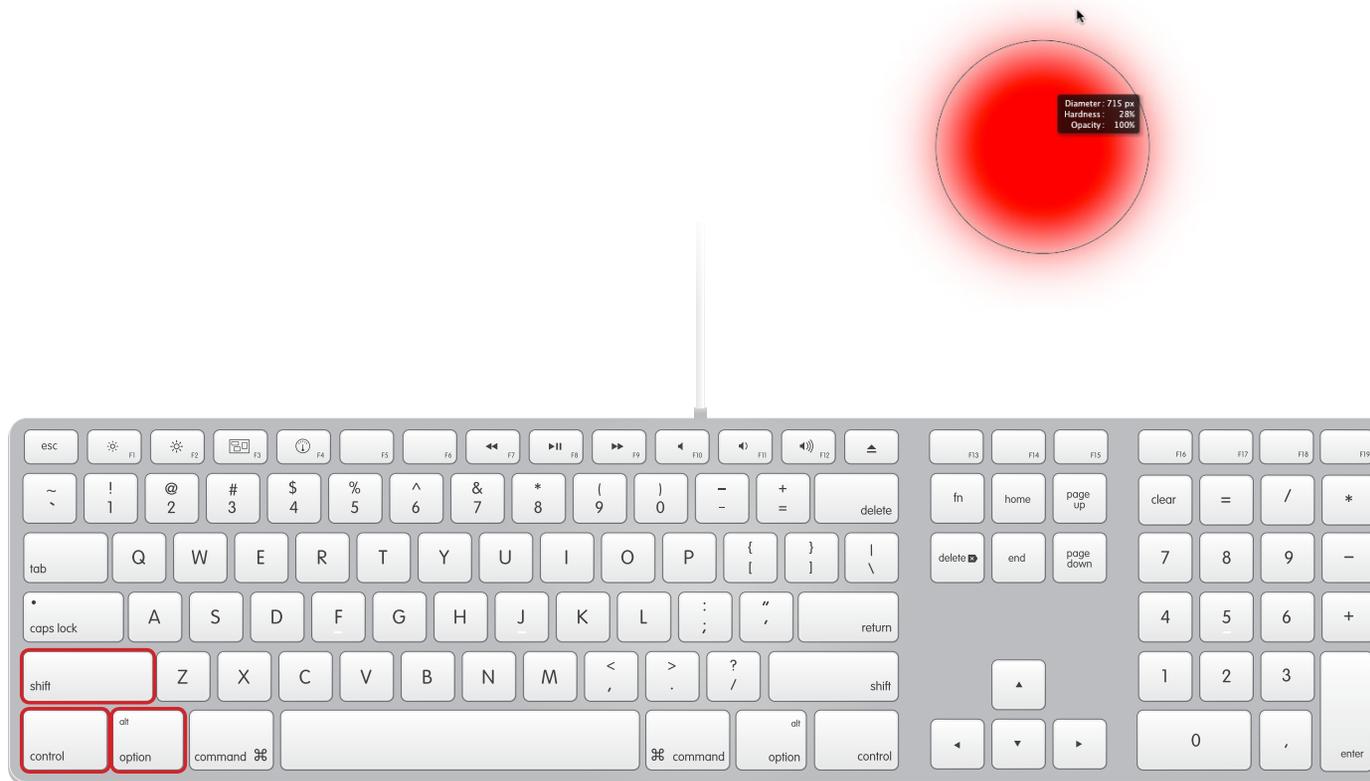




Photoshop CS6 Shortcuts and Tricks

Week 02
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The Adobe Creative Suite is incredibly powerful and at first blush it can seem a bit overwhelming. There are a lot of tools, panels and options. The trick to getting the job done in the most efficient manner is learning the tricks and shortcuts – and there are plenty.

If only there was someone who was willing to share their years of Adobe wisdom with you...

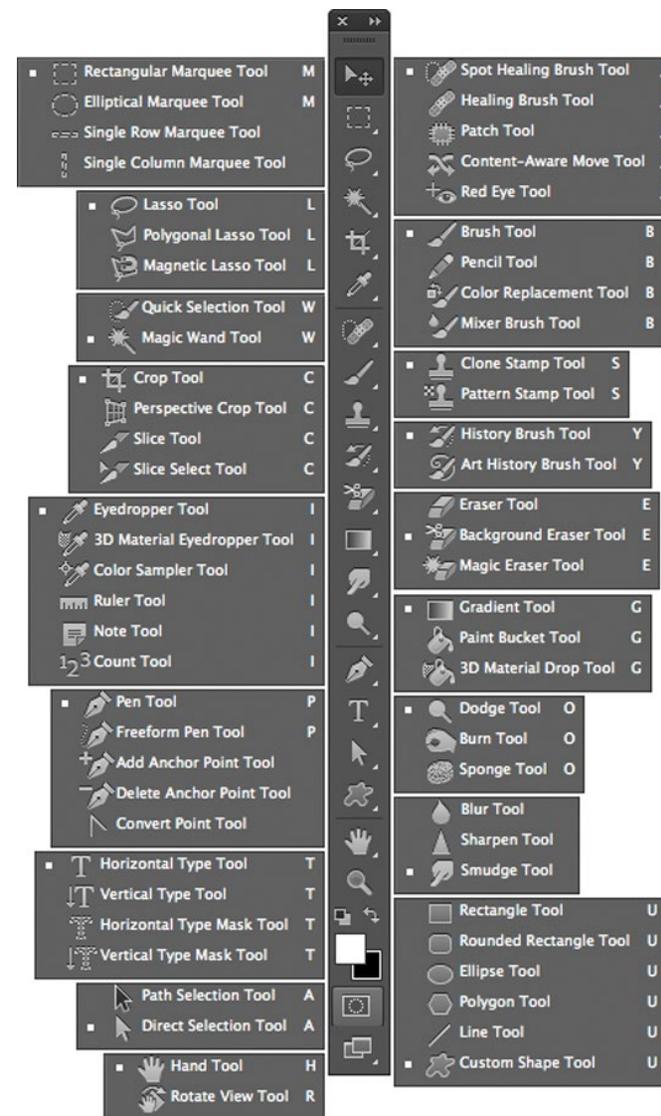
As we explore Adobe Photoshop, you will quickly learn two things about the way that I like to work. Firstly, whenever possible, I work in a non-destructive fashion, meaning I try not make any permanent alterations to my image. This allows me the creative freedom to change my mind or alter my design as I see fit. More importantly, I can quickly and more easily accommodate client changes. In case you haven't heard, clients love to make changes!

Throughout this document, I'll share just some of my favourite tricks and shortcuts to help transform you from an Adobe rookie to an Adobe master.

Let's start by having a look at Photoshop's main toolbar. Nearly every tool in the toolbar has a small white triangle to the lower right of it's icon. That is your visual cue that additional tools are there just waiting to be discovered. Click and hold on the tool's icon and a small menu appears revealing it's siblings.

You can quickly switch to most tools using your keyboard by pressing that key's shortcut. For example, pressing the letter L on my keyboard will select the Lasso Tool. I can then cycle through all three flavours of the Lasso Tool by pressing Shift L.

As you would expect, pressing B will switch me over to the Brush Tool and pressing Shift B will allow me to cycle through the four variants of the Brush Tool.



THE TOOLBAR'S COLOUR SWATCHES

Near the bottom of the tool bar, you will notice two overlapping colour swatches. These may look familiar to you if you've used Adobe Illustrator or Adobe InDesign – with one key difference. In Illustrator and InDesign, these two swatches represent Fill and Stroke. In Photoshop however, they represent Foreground Colour and Background Colour.

The swatch that is on top is the foreground colour and the swatch in back is the background colour. The colour that is on top is sometimes referred to as being “in focus”.

In figure 3.1, we see that white is our foreground colour and black is our background colour. The white swatch is also considered to be “in focus” as it's the topmost swatch.

Clicking directly on either swatch will open up Photoshop's colour picker dialogue where you can select a new colour. (Figure 3.2)

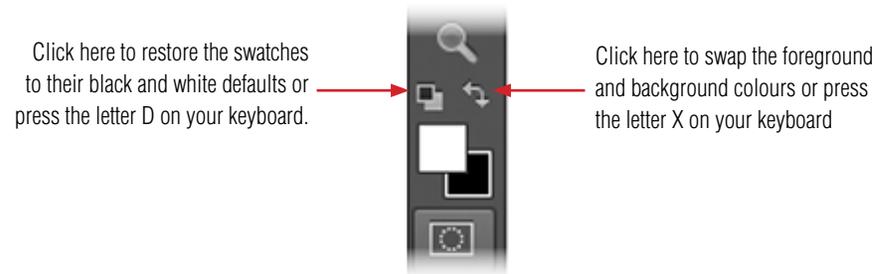


Figure 3.2

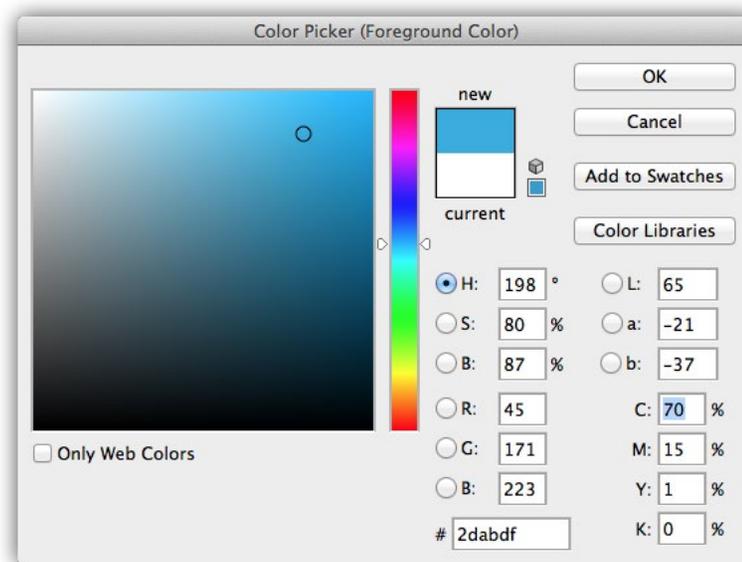


Figure 3.2

THE BRUSH TOOL

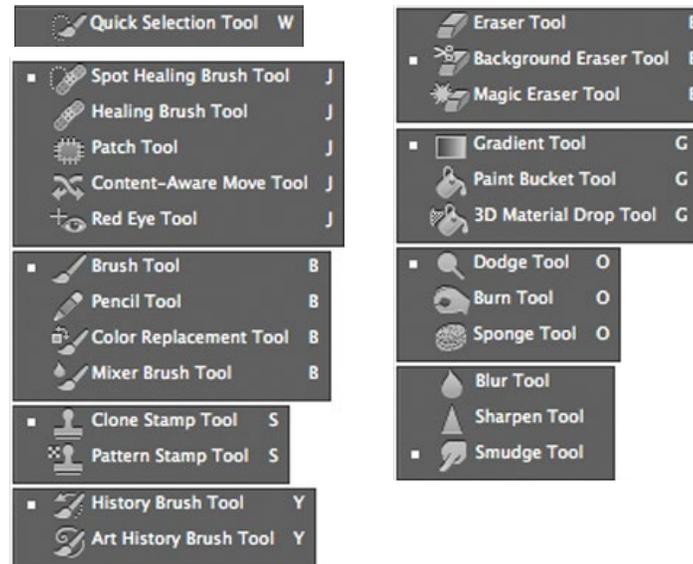
Before we begin, let's get this out of the way right up front. The Brush Tool has some cousins and these next few tips for changing the brush size and hardness also apply to these tools.

For example, you can use a small Clone Stamp Tool brush to do detailed cloning in a small area or you can use a large Clone Stamp Tool brush to clone into a large area.

All of these tools can use a small, fine brush for delicate, controlled work or a larger brush to affect more of your canvas with a single pass.

If at any time, you don't see the standard Brush Tool preview but instead see a crosshair, check to see if you have accidentally evoked the precise cursor option by turning on caps lock.

The precise cursor preview is sometimes helpful for detailed work. To turn it on, activate your caps lock. To return to the standard preview deactivate your caps lock.



All of these tools are "brush" style tools.



standard cursor Brush Tool preview
(caps lock off)

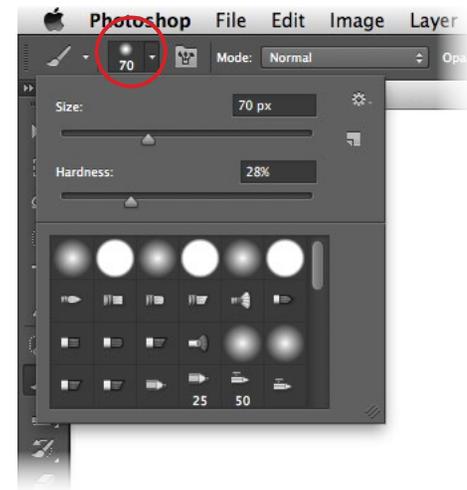


precise cursor Brush Tool preview
(caps lock on)

THE BRUSH TOOL MENU

You can display the Brush picker menu at any time from the options bar. From this menu, you will find sliders to control the brush size and the brush hardness as well as a brush style picker.

Pro Tip: If I'm working in the lower right of my canvas doing some detailed editing with any of Photoshop's brush-related tools, I don't want to travel way up to the options bar to access the Brush picker menu. Fortunately, I can quickly and easily display the Brush picker menu anywhere on my screen, by simply holding the control key and clicking on my canvas where I'd like it to appear.

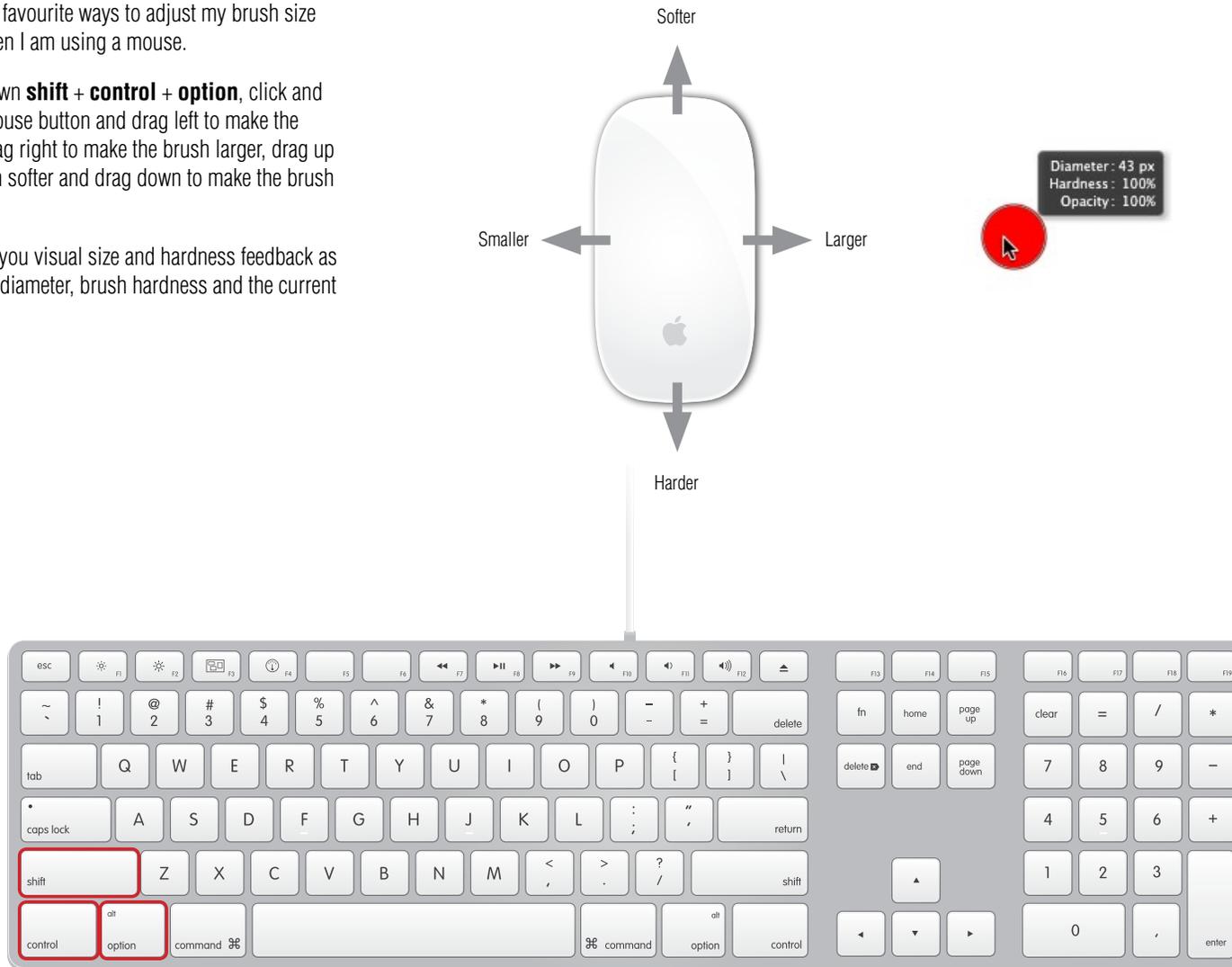


POWER TIP 1

This is one of my favourite ways to adjust my brush size and hardness when I am using a mouse.

While holding down **shift + control + option**, click and hold down the mouse button and drag left to make the brush smaller, drag right to make the brush larger, drag up to make the brush softer and drag down to make the brush harder.

Photoshop gives you visual size and hardness feedback as well as the brush diameter, brush hardness and the current opacity setting.



POWER TIP 2

I use this tip a lot, especially when I am using a laptop with no mouse. While using any of Photoshop's brush related tools, I can change the brush size and brush hardness directly from the keyboard.

Each time I press the left square bracket key, I make the brush smaller. Each time I press the right square bracket key, I make the brush larger.

I can adjust the hardness simply by adding the shift key to the equation. If I hold shift key, each time I press the left square bracket key, I make the brush softer. If I hold shift key, each time I press the right square bracket key, I make the brush harder.

Photoshop gives you visual feedback of the brush size but not the brush hardness.

Make the brush smaller..... [

Make the brush larger]

Decrease brush hardness..... shift + [

Increase brush hardness shift +]

