



Beckham Digital Tutorials



Photoshop CS-5 Starter

One of the things that attracts us to Photoshop is the fact that it is packed with tools and has the power to do almost anything we can imagine with our images. Knowing we are not likely to out grow the software is a comforting thought, but all this power brings with it a curse for the newer user.



How does the person coming to Photoshop tell which of the tools and techniques are essential to get started and to begin the learning process and which ones are not. Photoshop is such an all encompassing software that there will be some tools and techniques you will never ever use. Others can be safely tucked away for now and we can return to those as our experience of Photoshop builds up.

If only we could press the [New User Button](#) in Photoshop that hides all of the tools and palettes we don't need and just leaves those we do. Think how much easier the initial learning would be without the screen cluttered with tools and palettes that we don't want?

Sadly there is no such thing as a [New User Button](#), but that is where we step in. What we do with this Starter DVD is make the assumption that the user is a relative newcomer to Photoshop and we guide you through the initial learning process. We know that most people are keen to quickly get into the manipulation of their photographs to make the improvements they are looking for.

So, what we do is use our years of experience with Photoshop to take the place of that [New User Button](#). We start by suggesting what palettes and tools we can clear from the screen and showing you how. Don't worry, they are easy to find when and if the time comes that you need them again. We then suggest which tools you will need and straight away we begin with a much simpler looking Photoshop with a clear screen and far fewer tools and palettes to get in the way of our learning.



Our next step is introduce you to the most useful tools in Photoshop and we try and do this in a logical order. We have asked ourselves what tools we first used when we was introduced to Photoshop and we start there. We use real projects and a large clear video to demonstrate how these tools work, how they are best applied and how you can quickly and easily begin to improve your photography.

The very best way to learn is in a structured way, taking the tools one at a time and applying them in real projects. Learning is easier when we apply it a little at a time. Cramming never works and it certainly won't help with a complex piece of software like Photoshop. We have many video demos on line and you can try our style and video quality before you buy. Take a look at our customer comments page at some of the feedback our customers have given us.

Setting up the screen in Photoshop's Bridge. - Video Running time 6:00



Taking a few minutes to set up Photoshop's companion [Bridge](#) is time well spent. As you can see from the length of the video, this will not be a time consuming process.

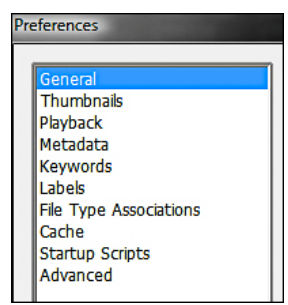
You're likely to be spending quite a bit of time using the Bridge so we may as well set it up to suit ourselves.

Setting up the Bridge preferences. - Video Running time 5:42

This is another small job we need to do before we dive into Photoshop and start work.

As you would expect, the preferences in Photoshop's Bridge are numerous and often we don't know which ones we need to change from those we don't.

Here we offer some guidance, but we limit our video to just the preferences worth speaking about in relation to a newer user of Photoshop. The last thing we want to do is spend an hour going over preferences we may never use. It just clutters our brain with information we don't want and gets in the way of our learning.



The basic operation of Photoshop's Bridge. - Video Running time 14:04



Given the complexity of Photoshop, it is possible to spend hours covering all the options that are available in Photoshop's Bridge, but what would be the point.

Once again would have to get involved into options we may never ever use and fog our brain into the process. However, there are a few neat things we can do using Photoshop's Bridge, the basic of which is a browser.

So here we cover a number of those options that we think you will use and find very useful even as a newer user of the software. After all 70% of what we do is the physical changes we make in Photoshop, but the remaining 30% is often all those other things like placing a label on an image we have sorted out.

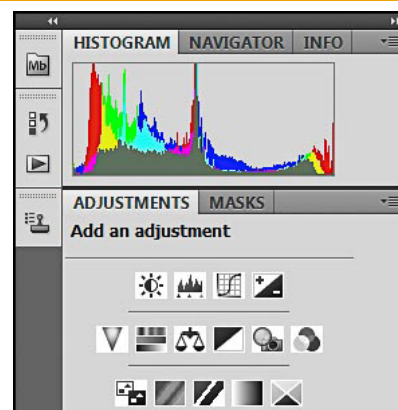
The Bridge actually does have a great way to review images and sort out those we want, from those we don't. That will be useful right from the start, so we include it in our video.

Setting up the Photoshop Screen. - Video Running time 6:00

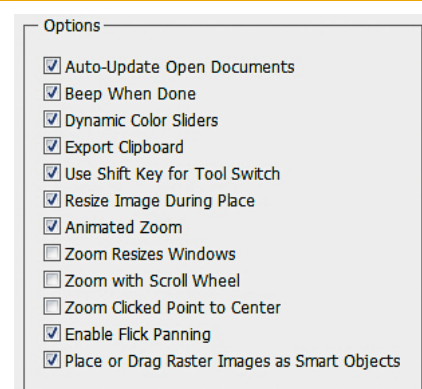
When we first launch Photoshop after installation the screen is packed with palettes. CS-5 allows us to jump from one screen setup to the next quickly and easily. So, if your producing images as a photographer you might choose the Photography palette setup. If your a web creator you may choose another.

As experienced users of Photoshop we believe that we can simplify a personal screen of our own and only show a fraction of the palettes that appear at the start. In other words we suggest what you can get rid of and what you need to keep and we show you how to use the maximum amount of your PC screen space. Basically, we are showing you what we have done for years and still do and it tends to suit us just fine.

We think that if it works for us, it will work for you too and it's another step towards simplifying Photoshop and making the learning just a little bit easier too..



Setting up Photoshop's preferences. - Video Running time 12:41



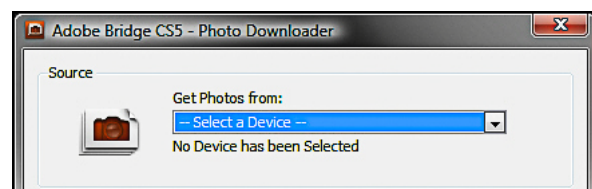
In this section we need just a little more time to explain and set up Photoshop's preferences, but it is something that is worth the time and we only need to do it this one time. You can see what we mean about knowing what preferences we need and those we don't by looking at a screen grab of one part of one screen.

There are in fact 11 preference screens, but it all sounds far more complicated than it really is. Most of the settings in these panels are set up to work fine for most users. So, even if we miss one, it's not likely to have a drastic effect on what we do inside Photoshop.

However, we think that 12 minutes is not a lot of time to spend and we will only take you to the options you need, not those you don't.

Using Photoshop to download images from our Media Card. - Video Running time 13:09

Well, before we can do any work in Photoshop we need to get our images onto the computer. Photoshop helps with that too and we have found this method a great way to get images from our media storage card into Photoshop's Bridge.



The Crop Tool - Used for Composition Purposes - Video Running time 11:35



There are two basic uses for the Crop Tool and one of those is going to be for composition reasons.

In this video we not only demonstrate how the Photoshop Crop Tool works, but also include some vital advice for the success of your photography. Composition is the Holy Grail of Photographers, second only to Exposure.



Improvements made to the Crop Tool in Photoshop CS-5 make it's use for compositional reasons simple and visual.

The Crop Tool and Cropping to reduce Size. - Video Running time 13:22



The second use of the Crop Tool is when we do want to make an image smaller and there are a number of reasons for that. For sending as an email attachment, preparing an image for a Camera Cub projected competition, creating images for a slide show and preparing images for the web. We are sure there are a few more too.

We can use the Crop Tool to predetermine the exact size and resolution we want and that is very useful. Here we demonstrate that fully.

Level up those Horizons. - Video Running time 6:00

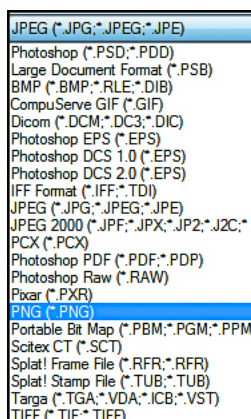


A photograph that has a sloping horizon can be spoiled by that, but most of us fall into the trap at some time.

It doesn't matter how good the image is, our eyes will constantly be drawn to that sloping horizon. Photoshop has always had tools to deal with this, but they have been greatly simplified in Photoshop CS-5. In this video we demonstrate just how easy it now is.



Save Formats - Video Running time 10:31



Here is another subject that could fill a whole chapter in a book, but as usual a myth has built up over some of these options and we hear lots of nonsense spoken about them.

Just take a look at the save options on the left, what one do we use and in what situation. Ask advice and we can almost guarantee it will be conflicting advice.

We think we have the answer. Bearing in mind this DVD is aimed at the newer user of Photoshop many of these options are like all the others. Many, we will never use, some, we may come back to later. We think we need just 2 and in this video we demonstrate which two and why

Photoshop Levels - Video Running time 20:10



No matter how we get images onto our computer and into Photoshop we need to look at the Levels. Flatbed scans, film scans and high resolution Jpeg images from our camera are all images we need to check.

Through no fault of the photographer or their equipment we can often notice that our images are very dull. You only have to take a look as these before and after images to see what we mean.

In this section we explain what the levels are using a few graphics we created in Photoshop and then we go on to demonstrate how to adjust the levels to improve our images.

In some cases the results can be marginal, but still essential and worthwhile as in the before and after thumbnails we show here.

Changes with some images can be significant and this is still the one tool that once applied, we often sit back and say Wow!

Take a look at the image we used for our [Stringing the Techniques Together Video](#) to see what we mean.



The Clone Tool - Video Running time 17:07



The Clone Tool is a tool we will use again and again and like any tool we use for the first time it just needs a little practice to get the best from it. Once mastered, which will not take too long, we can really make a significant difference to our images.

The uses are far too great to list, but here are a few things that we may want to remove from a Photograph.



Wires and TV aerials, general litter, people as in our example here, unwanted signs and birds in the sky. One of the most damaging areas of a photograph can be small highlights and the Clone Tool is good for that too.

Some of the tools of Photoshop need to be used in conjunction with other tools, such as the Clone and the Selection tools. We demonstrate it all here.

The Healing Brushes - Video Running time 10:04



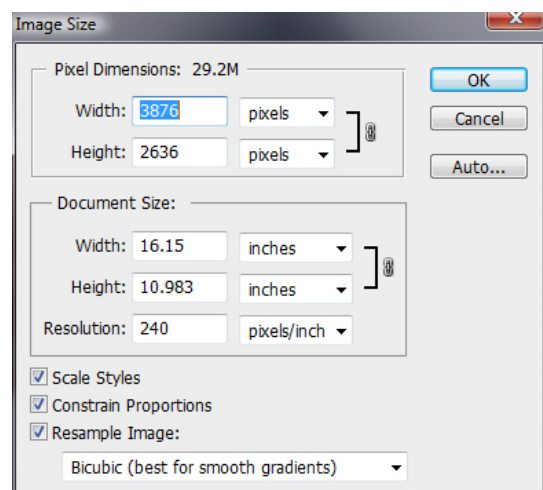
The Healing Brushes are a great set of tools and they have been improved in Photoshop CS-5 with the addition of the Content Aware option.

There are two Healing Brushes and it is the Spot Healing Brush that we have generally used to deal with dust marks caused by digital SLR cameras.



It has been perfect for the job, but in these examples we have added the Content Aware option and we removed the orange buoys, and the boat in the middle almost with one click.

Resolution - Video Running time 12:11



Resolution is another of those subjects that if not explained right can be made to sound far more complex than it really is. Let's hope we have not done that in this video.

Our images are made up of pixels, the more pixels we have then the sharper the images are, but there are a number of reasons why we don't want all those pixels. We looked at this a little in relation to the Crop Tool, but here we demonstrate how to prepare an image for printing, reducing the size, but making sure we retain all the quality our camera has captured.

We take a look at re-sampling the image when it is right to do so and we even compare a couple of images to demonstrate that in some circumstances there is a little difference between a high resolution image and a much lower one. For screen use purposes, not for printing.

Image Sharpening - Video Running time 09:31

Sharpening our images and getting it right is vitally important, but we can't adequately demonstrate it with a couple of thumbnails in this PDF, so we will leave the explanations and visuals to our video

Dealing with Harsh Shadows - Video Running time 3:24



You can tell from the length of this video that this technique is not difficult, but it makes the world of difference to images shot in harsh lighting conditions where the shadows are deep.

Our example here was not too bad to start with as the light was reflected from the light sandy soil to lighten the shadows a little, but in other circumstances this tool works every time.



Dealing with Converging Verticals - Video Running time 7:22



Converging verticals can be a blessing or a curse. When we are close to skyscrapers photographing upwards from close to the bottom, converging verticals are what gives the image interest and impact, but from further away it can look like a mistake.

It's caused by the use of wide angle lenses when we raise the lens to make sure we get the top of the building in shot.

The good news is we can fix this in Photoshop, but when we look at the transform tools we need, they are greyed out. Why?

Well, we cannot transform a locked layer, so what is a locked layer and how do we unlock it. All is explained here along with the straightening of the verticals.



Image Toning - Video Running time 5:24



Image toning is quick and easy to do in the digital world and we can in fact create any tone we want. Sepia is probably one of the better known, but we also demonstrate a blue tone when we have the right image to suit that technique.

With Sepia Tone images it is just as important to select the right image as it is to get the settings right. Many of the sepia toned images we see are far too saturated and the appeal we are trying to apply to the image can easily be lost.



Stringing the Techniques Together - Video Running time 21:07



When we demonstrate the tools of Photoshop we try to limit what we are doing to just one tool or process, but it is not always easy to do that. Often a tool that makes a physical change of an image will only work effectively when we apply it with one of the other support tools like the zoom or a selection.

When we work on our images we tend to apply a number of small, but separate changes to that image. Each one is insignificant on its own, but when we string the lot together we then have a remarkable effect. To demonstrate this we have turned to our Pelican shot on the left that while sharp and well composed, is dull and lifeless and destined not to be seen, but wait.

We can apply levels as we did in our levels demo, but also a lot more and as we said, none of them significant on their own.

We demonstrate this using layers too, so we even get a peek into that fascinating world. We use layers to lighten the eye and protect it from the other changes we made to the Pelican.

We also used the Sponge Tool, the Burn Tool and a neat way of using a Selection to focus attention more onto the main subject.

Now a web based PDF is not the best way to compare, but to help we have kept our final image large on this page, so you can see that the key to good image editing, is stringing the techniques together.



Making Effective Selections - Video Running time 32:57



The question that asks how we make an effective selection was like asking how long is a piece of string. The problems we face when making a selection are numerous. The main one is that every image is unique, different subjects, colours, tones, contrasts, sharpness, highlights and shadows.



There are also a dozen or more ways to make a selection and that should tell us something about the difficulties, but then we have dozens of screw drivers to screw in a screw. The reasons we need different tools with our selections is much the same as with a screwdriver and only experience tells us which one to pick up for any given task.

Here we demonstrate a few of the ways we can make selections, from the automatic, semi automatic and manual. The facts are that anyone can make a selection, even a relative newcomer to Photoshop. That part is easy, the difficulties lie in doing so in a way that allows a large print to be made without any hint that a cutout was involved. That is the difficult part that requires practice.

Here we demonstrate a few techniques to put you on the right track.

Using Photoshop Filters and Textures - Video Running time 26:42



At first glance it would appear easy to apply the artistic filters that come as a part of Photoshop, but you would be wrong. Resolution plays a part in that success as well as choosing the right image and applying the filters in a delicate and measured way. Also, when we add Photoshop's filters, we are creating the same effect as 1000's before us and it doesn't take long for them to lose their charm.

The trick to using filters is to try and find something a little more unique and perhaps our video demonstration will set you off on the right course with a couple of ideas.

One thing we can't do is to add filters to a large image and then reduce that image, the charm of the filter is lost. That is why we show a smaller crop from our original on our right. Its important to evaluate the filtered image at the size it will be displayed or printed.



Creating a Soft Focus - Video Running time 12:52



Using the tools of Photoshop CS-5 we have the equivalent of dozens of soft focus effects and the beauty is we don't have to place our filters on the lens of our camera.

We can shoot our images as normal and create the soft focus digitally. Not only can we do this quickly and easily, but also with far greater latitude and variety we ever could with a traditional soft focus filter.

We need to use Photoshop's layers for this technique to work, but that is what gives us the ability to apply almost any effect and depth of softness we want.



In addition to that we can decide not to add the softness to strategic parts of the image and that really allows us a lot of creativity.

Here we demonstrate how to apply the technique using a number of images.





As we reach the end of this DVD, you may notice how layers are featuring more in our videos.

Layers are the key to open up the power of Photoshop. Practically all the best work we do involves the use of layers in some form.

In this video we look at a popular technique sometimes called "Colour Popping", but we prefer Selective Colour.



By using an Adjustment Layer the work we do is fool proof and can be varied and adjusted easily for created effect. This tutorial also introduces Layer Masks, which along with layers is a must know part of this software.

While not entirely essential in a DVD aimed at the newer user of Photoshop, Layer Masks will become essential as your skill level improves and you spread your creative wings. Layers and Layer Masks are the key, so watch out for our Layers Special DVD coming shortly

In Summary

So, there we have it, 24 separate videos that will run in total approximately 5 hours. As we said in our introduction, we have endeavoured to cover only the essential stuff we need to get started in Photoshop. To level that steep learning curve a bit.

Once we get these techniques and tools under our belt, then we can push the boundaries a little further and then the only restraint is your own creativity. One thing to remember with Photoshop is that because it is so powerful we can achieve almost anything we can dream up. The limitation to what we can achieve is only really limited by time. What we tend to do, consciously or not, is to decide if the image we are working on is worth the time we expect to spend on it. It's a Cost Benefit Analysis really and only the individual can be the best judge of that.

We have included many of the images we used in the recording of this DVD, but the copyright remains with Beckham Digital. The images are included because we know some people like to follow the tutorials with our images. They are intended for that use only and for evaluation in your version of Photoshop.

In addition to this DVD, downloadable videos will be created for CS-5 and in fact we already have a few created already and they can be found at www.beckhamdigital.com.au in our menus.

As usual we will include at least one Slide Show on this DVD and if you have not yet discovered PicturesToExe Slide Show software, then it is something you should take note of. Not just because we say so, but because Camera Clubs and enthusiasts are taking to this form of presentation to their hearts. It makes a perfect partner to our Digital Photography. In addition to what we include on this DVD, we have many more on line that you can download. Look at some of the demos that cover the great techniques PicturesToExe offers.

If you are a Digital Audio Visual enthusiast, you will know that finding the right music Copyright Free can be difficult. Look on the menus of this DVD and you will find samples of around 36 Copyright Free albums that are available from our web site, even for your commercial projects. This will make finding the right music much quicker, because downloading samples from the internet is a little dull to say the least. Remember, that the samples we have placed on this DVD are low quality web samples and do not accurately reflect the high quality music you will receive.

Music is available on CD already created as Mp3 files, or you can download the entire album or even just one track. At current prices a copyright track will set you back \$5 Australian and an album \$22. Great savings can be made with multiple purchases.

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