

Pressing the **Shift** key while drawing an additional overlapping marquee will combine the two selections.

Pressing **Option** while drawing an additional overlapping marquee will subtract the overlapping area from the first selection.

To feather a selection beforehand, double click the tool and set the amount of feather in pixels in the dialog box.



*Circle or Oval marquee*



*Square or Rectangle marquee*



*Single Pixel Row marquee*



*Single Pixel Column marquee*

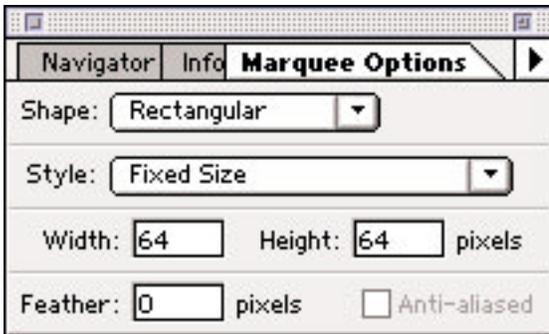
## Marquee

The most basic selection tools we have available are the square (or rectangular) and circle (or ellipse) marquees, bundled with the single column and single row marquee tools. Just activate the tool of your choice, hold down the mouse button and drag to lasso the area you want. Voilà, a selection we can work with. If you need a perfectly square or round selection, simply hold down the Shift key as you lasso.

These tools can also be ‘feathered’ so that the areas they define have soft edges. (Although your selection can be feathered after it is activated, not every selection tool can be feathered. To feather an *active* selection, before you alter it: Select>Feather and set the feather radius.)

But what if your eye/hand coordination isn’t what it used to be, or it’s late, you’ve had one too many cups of java and now your selection is a wee bit off to the left, right, above or below where you need it? No problem.

Once your selection is active, you can move all of the “marching ants” without moving the underlying image, just by using the marquee move tool.



You can set precise marquee options of Fixed Size, or Constrained Aspect Ratio from the pull-down arrow in the palette.

Another not-so-obvious feature of the marquee tools, is the option to begin drawing your selection from the center outwards. Simply hold the Option key as you drag.



*The Marquee Move tool is not available from the toolbar, but only appears when the cursor is inside an active selection.*



*The Move tool is used to move the pixels defined by the selection.*

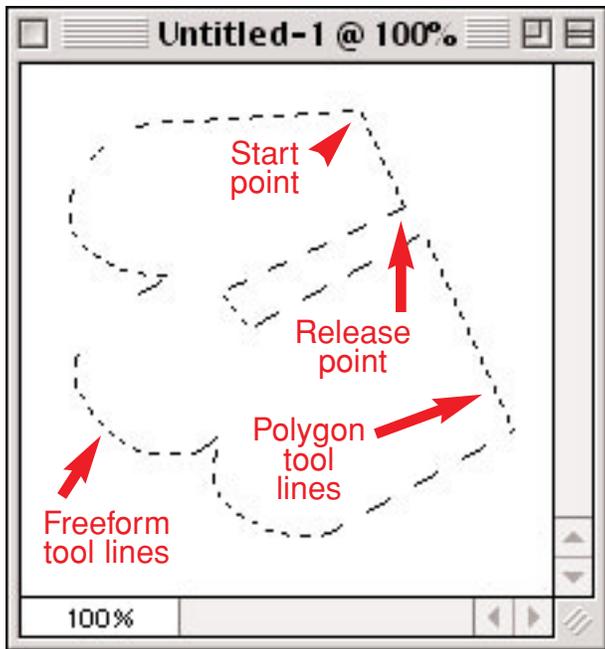
## Marquee (continued)

With the marquee tool selected, place the cursor inside the “marching ants” and it will change to an open arrowhead above a dotted box. Then just hold down the mouse key and move the active selection to your heart’s content, or, use the arrow keys to nudge it into place, one pixel at a time.

What if you need to make a selection based on inches instead of pixels? The Marquee Options palette only allows pixels as a measurement. Again, no problem.

First make sure that your preferences show rulers in inches and that your image window is showing rulers. Then just drag guidelines into place, choose View>Snap To Guides and draw your selection from guide corner to guide corner.

But these basic selection tools alone are insufficient for most complicated, or odd-shaped areas. While holding down the Shift key and drawing overlapping circles or rectangles (or holding Option to subtract from a selection) can combine to create some complex selection shapes, they are just not versatile enough for bumpy things like Dad, or the outline of your dog. For that type of object, we’ll need to have a bit more precise control.



Press **Option** to use both the freeform and polygon lasso within a single selection.



*Freeform lasso marquee*



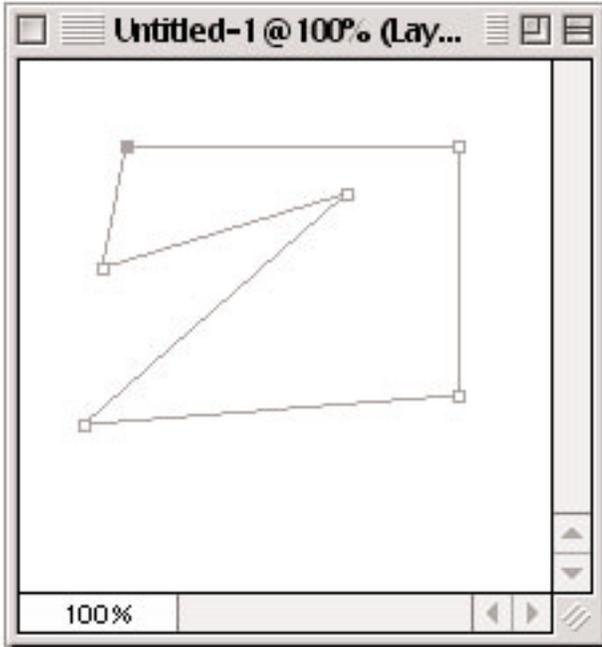
*Polygon lasso marquee*

## Lasso

The Lasso tool is one of the ways we can make more intricate selections. There are actually 2 lasso tools: the freeform version and the polygon version. The flyout (hold down the mouse key over the tool) will show the version not currently in use.

The freeform lasso traces your selection as you hold the mouse button and drag around the outline of your selection. When the mouse button is released, the selection closes itself using a direct line from the release point to the start point.

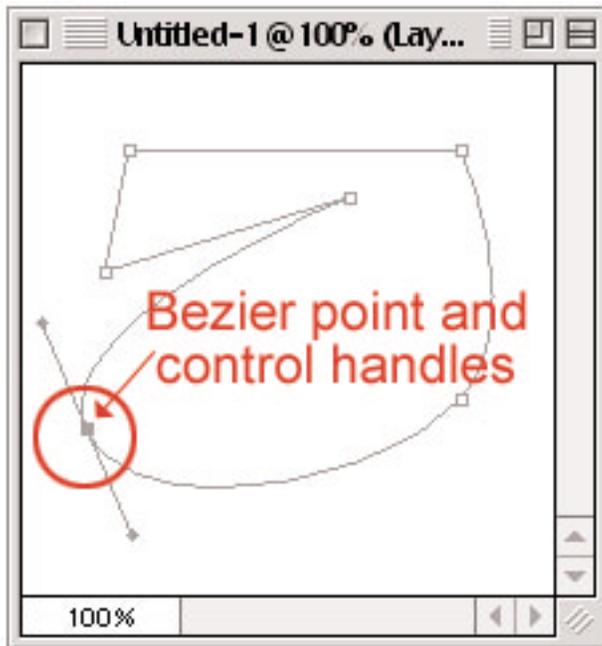
With the polygon lasso, best results are usually achieved with a series of mouse clicks, drawing the overall shape with a clicks and short lines.



## Pen

The Pen tool comes with 5 options in the flyout: the basic pen, the selection arrow, add point pen, delete point pen and the convert point tool.

Vaguely similar to the lasso tools, the pen differs by drawing with points or nodes that have handles, creating Bezier curves which can be fine-tuned to create intricate curves later with the other pen tools or move tool as needed.



To draw a Bezier curve with the pen tool, click and drag the resulting handles to position the curve.

Reposition the node or control handles to modify the curve as needed using the Direct Selection tool, or change the curve node to a corner node with the Convert Node tool, by clicking the node once.

Add nodes to a path or subtract them by clicking with the plus or minus versions of the pen.



*Pen*



*Subtract Node Pen*



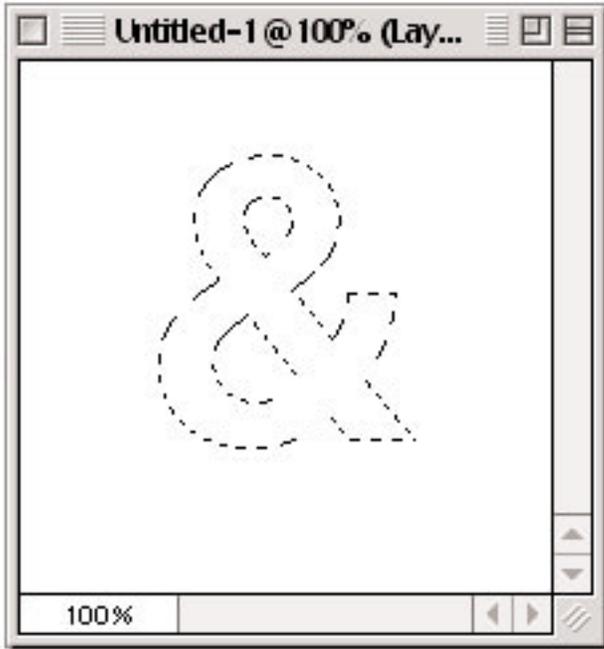
*Add Node Pen*



*Convert Node tool*



*Direct Selection tool*

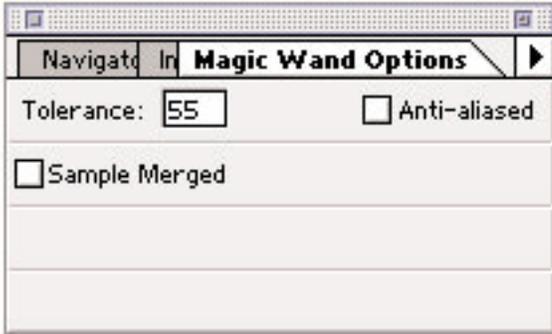


## Type

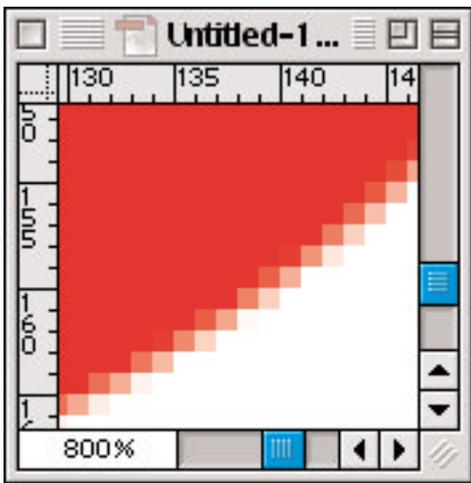
The Type tool contains a flyout showing a dotted 'T'. With this tool active, when you type text in the dialog box and hit OK, instead of foreground colored text appearing on your image, the text appears as “marching ants”, or as an active selection ready for your command.



*Text Selection tool*



Sample Merged is unchecked in this figure, so the Magic Wand will only use the values of the *active layer* to create a selection.



A close-up view of the anti-aliased edge of a circle.

By checking Anti-aliasing and setting a high enough Tolerance level, every pixel with a shade of red will be selected with the Magic Wand.



*Magic Wand*

## Magic Wand

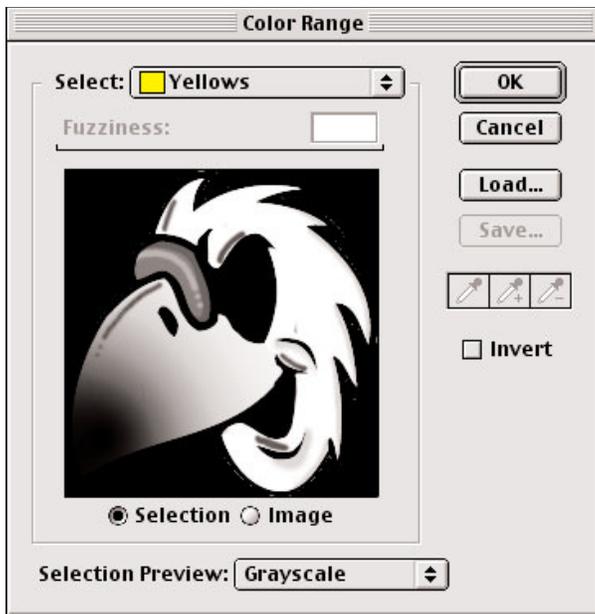
The Magic Wand sees an image as composed of shades of gray (0-255), even though what you see on the screen may be in color. When we specify a number in the dialog box, we are really telling the magic wand how many values of grays to select. The higher the Tolerance number, the wider the range of values that will be selected.

To use the wand, just input a number into the Tolerance dialog box and click in the area to be selected. A contiguous area of color with all of the pixels within the Tolerance limit will be selected. If your selection isn't quite right, you may have to adjust the Tolerance number up or down then reselect, or choose **Select>Grow** or **Select>Similar**.

Add non-contiguous areas to the selection by Shift-clicking.

The Anti-aliased checkbox is used to select Anti-aliased images (blurred edges when viewed close up, a technique to smooth edges).

The Sample Merged checkbox tells Photoshop to use either all visible layers when making a selection (as if they were merged into one layer), or only the active layer.



Here the color range is used to select the yellows in the cartoon.

The invert checkbox is used if the background is more “selectable” or plain than the image. Select the background and then invert to alternate the selection.

## Color Range

Color Range is very close to the magic wand in effect, but learning to use it is a little more tricky. Select>Color Range will bring up the preview window showing a grayscale version of your image. The Fuzziness slider can be thought of like the Tolerance number of the magic wand: it limits the range of colors selected.

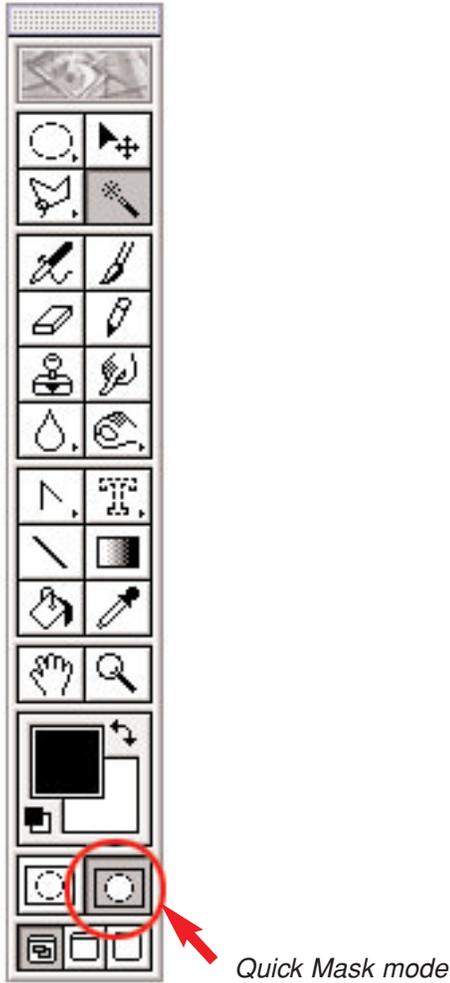
But it will also select the color range sampled with the eyedropper, *over the entire image*, not just contiguous areas, very much like Select>Similar.

Selections created from this dialog box are based on all visible layers, so unwanted layers need to be made temporarily invisible by turning off their “eye” in the layers palette.

White areas in the preview window are selected and gray areas are partially selected.

To add or subtract a range of color in the selection, use either the + or - eyedroppers, or you can click and drag the plain eyedropper using Shift to add, or Option to subtract.

Expanding your options even more, you can use the Fuzziness slider to fine-tune your selection, and you also have the choice of making your selection based on specific colors, or by value: Highlights, Midtones or Shadows.



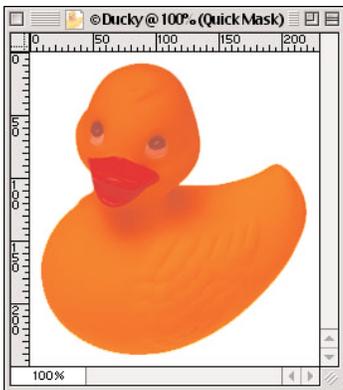
## Quick Mask

One of my favorite methods of creating a selection is the Quick Mask. Near the bottom of the tool bar are 2 rectangles with dotted circles in them. Choosing the rectangle on the left (with the open dotted circle) puts you in the (default) standard editing mode, and choosing the rectangle on the right (with the solid dotted circle) will activate the Quick Mask mode.

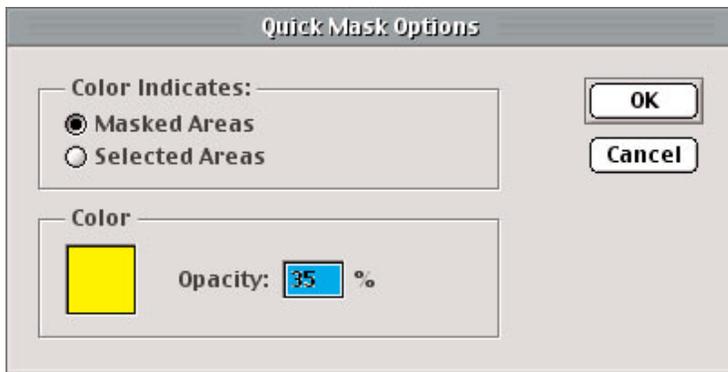
The first thing you'll notice when the Quick Mask mode is active, is that you only have shades of gray available to you in the swatches palette. Most often, you will just use black or white in this mode, but the shades of gray have their uses too.

A selection using Quick Mask is created by first painting with the brush tools. Painting with black will overlay a semi-opaque color (a mask) on your image. The color is there only to show you the areas that have been masked, not to actually color the image.

Painting with white will delete the color, or remove portions of the mask. When you return to the standard mode, the uncolored portions will transform automatically into a selection.

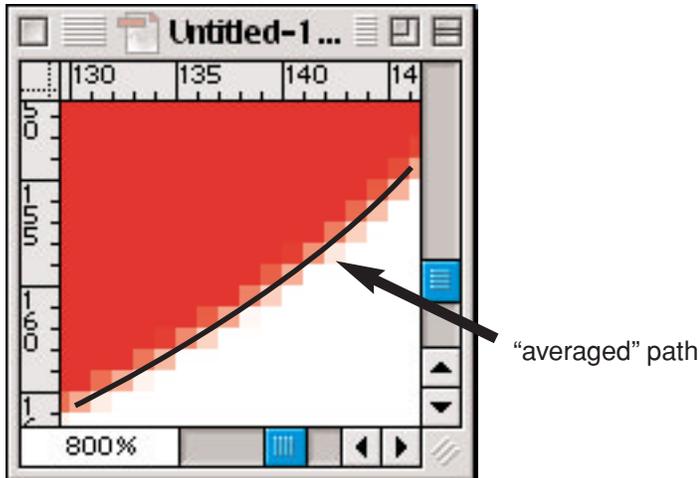


The duck was masked by first selecting the background with the magic wand and then inverting the selection. The mask color in this example is red.



Important! Quick Masks must be saved in order to be reused. Once you return to Standard Editing mode and deactivate the “marching ants”, you will only have one chance to reactivate the selection: by immediately using Command-Z.

***If you think there is any reason you might need the Quick Mask selection later in the project, save it as an Alpha Channel or as a Path.***



If you create a path from a Quick Mask, the square pixels defined by the mask will have to be “averaged” by the computer to generate the pathline. This averaging can result in a path that may require additional tweaking to bring it into line with your image if your mask isn’t quite right.

The Tolerance you specify when creating the path will determine just how closely the pixel edges will be followed. The smaller the number, the closer (more ‘jagged’) the path.

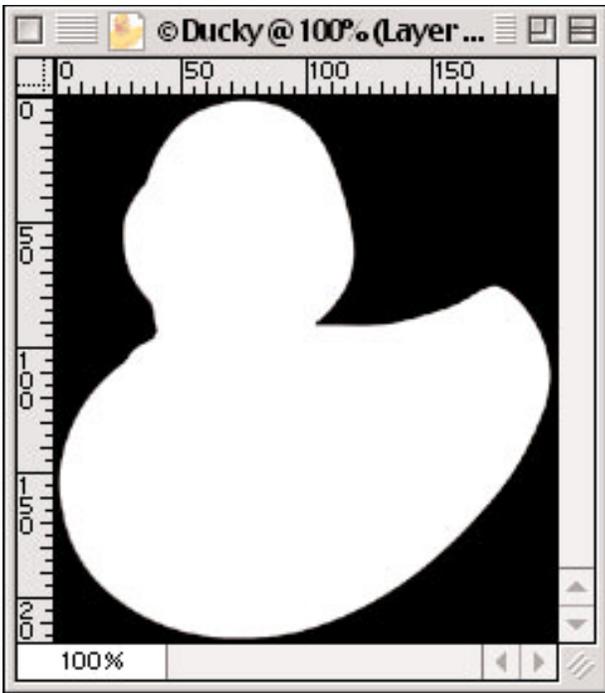
## Quick Mask (continued)

Double click the Quick Mask icon and you will be able to reverse the selecting action of the masked areas. You will also be given the option of changing the mask color to provide a greater contrast with your image. For example, if you are trying to mask a red toolbox, it helps to change the masking color to yellow. Double click in the color box to activate the color picker.

Painting with grays from the Quick Mask palette will mask a percentage of the area painted. For example, using a 50% gray will mask an area only 50%. Thus, when you return to standard mode and paint your selection, the areas painted with the 50% mask will only be affected half as much as the unpainted areas.

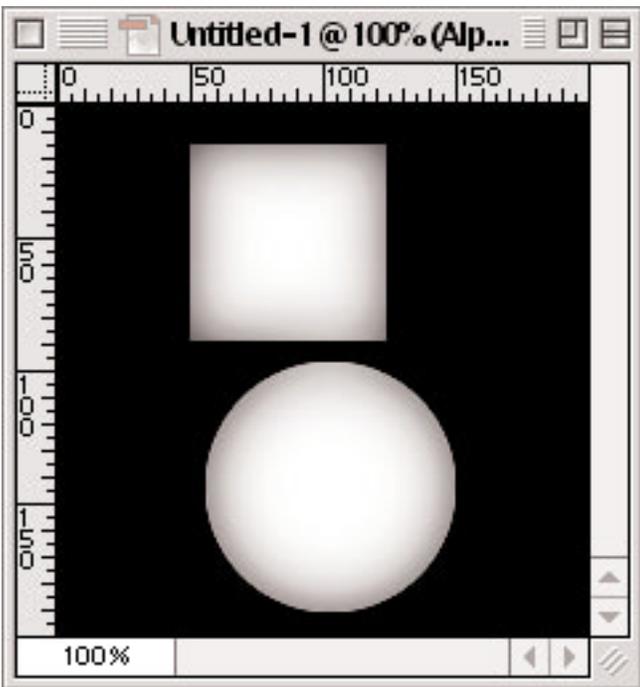
Often, you can do yourself a time saving favor and use the Magic Wand to create an initial rough selection and then clean-up or add to that selection by switching to the Quick Mask mode.

Remember that in addition to using any of the drawing/erasing tools, you can use any brush shape/mode or size that you have available to create masks. For example, you can create a splatter border around the edges of a photo by using the airbrush tool and feathered brush, set to Dissolve at 50%.



*An outline of the duck photo stored as an Alpha Channel.*

*Feathered selections can be stored in Alpha Channels and manipulated just as an ordinary print layer, but the Alpha Channels will always be shown in grayscale.*

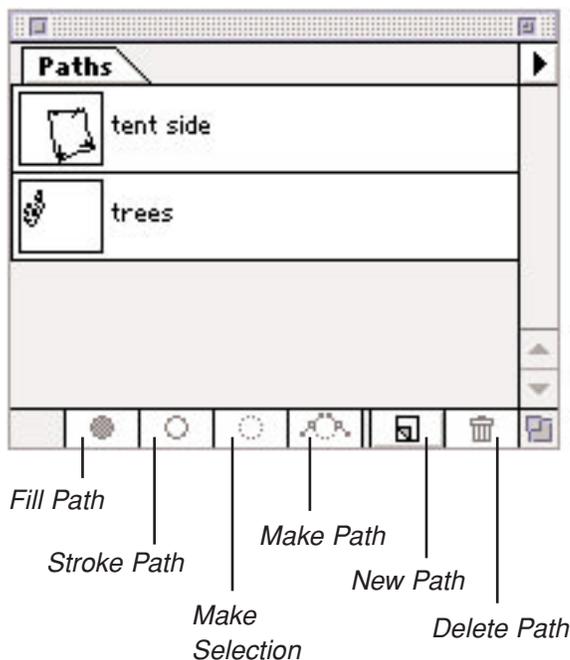


## Channels

Making a selection with channels has its greatest utility when you are trying to isolate very detailed selections like hair, which can be prohibitively time-consuming using any of the other methods described so far.

Among other things, channels correspond to the color mode that makes up your image. In an RGB image, there will be 4 channels: (R)ed, (G)reen, (B)lue and a composite of those three. If you look closely, you will see value differences in each of the single color channels. Again using our Magic Wand to make our selection, use the channel with the greatest contrast in the area we want to select, then return to the layers to effect your changes to the image.

In a CMYK image, there will be 5 channels: (C)yan, (M)agenta, (Y)ellow, blac(K) and a composite of those 4. Sometimes it's useful to change the color mode to CMYK from RGB in order to see if that mode change will create a channel with better contrast for easier selection. Then when your selection has been made, change back to RGB mode. Since many filters don't work in CMYK mode, changing back to RGB can be crucial to your end result. Don't forget to return to the layers to effect your changes!



Multiple Paths are stored in a palette similar to layers.

## Saving Selections

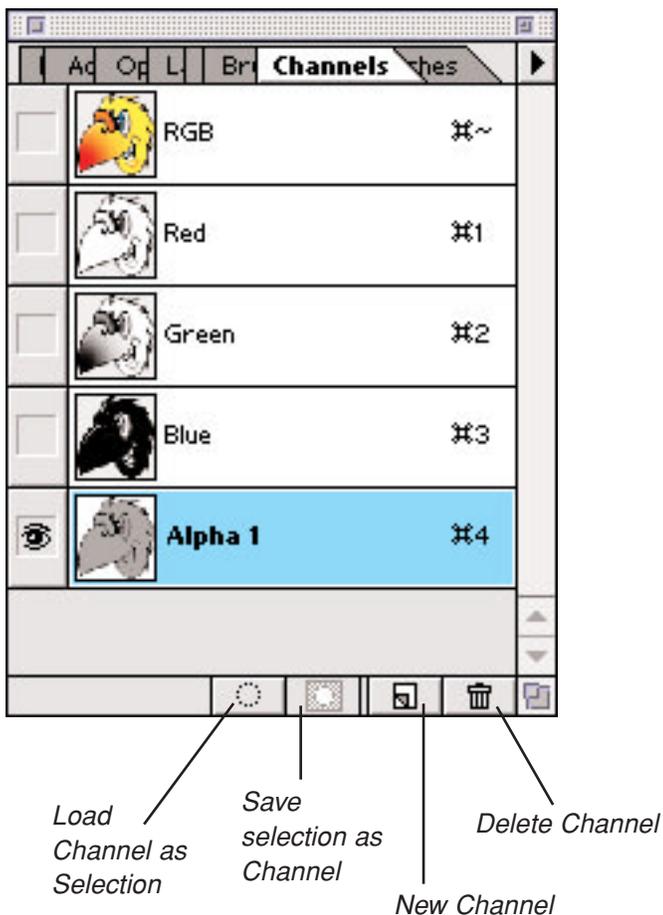
To save our selections for future use, Adobe has provided us with multiple choices, and the one we choose will depend upon the type of selection we've opted for.

Selections that have a hard, definite edge, like those created with the pen or lasso tools, can be saved as a Path, or as a Alpha Channel. To save as a path, with the selection active, open the Path palette and choose Save Path and give it a name.

Selections with soft, feathery edges or any gradient need to be saved as an Alpha Channel. To save a selection as a Alpha Channel, with the selection active choose the channel tab and create a new channel with the new channel icon at the bottom of the palette. You will now see your selection as the 'marching ants' on a black background. Fill the selection with white.

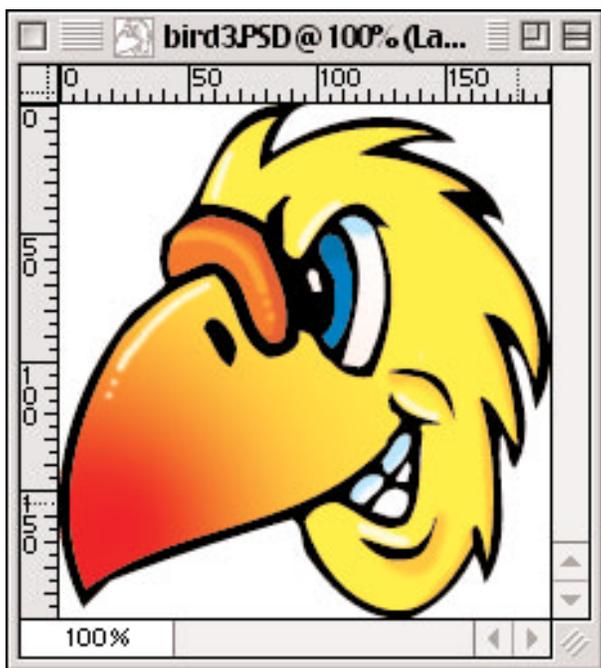
To recall a selection from a channel when you are working on the layers, from the menu bar choose Select>Load Selection and pick the appropriate channel from the pull-down button.

Layer Masks work similar to Channels. In fact, Layer Masks are stored as Alpha Channels and I only mention them for that reason. But if you have a basic understanding of how Alpha Channels are used, you have a good start on understanding Layer Masks.





*Clicking with the Magic Wand in any of the flat grey areas of this Alpha Channel, will activate that entire area. By switching to the layers with the selection still active, I can color that area with gradients or patterns and still retain a fast, easy way to reselect that area if I decide to rework it later.*



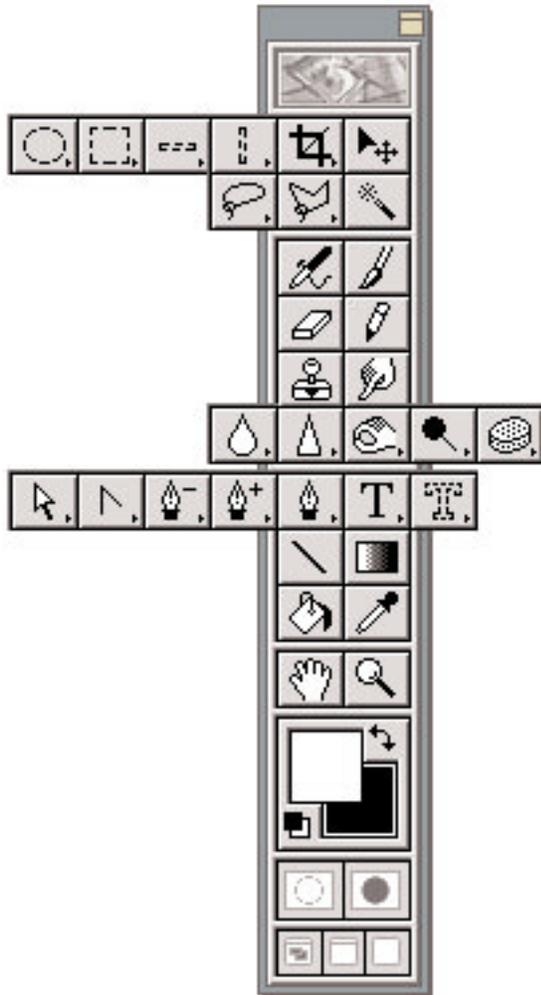
## Saving Selections (continued)

When you save your file, this the Alpha Channels will be saved also. But remember: Alpha Channels are preserved only when you save a file in Adobe Photoshop, PDF, PICT, TIFF, or Raw formats.

A similar method to Channels that I sometimes use when coloring cartoons intended for print, is the ‘flats’ method. We create “flat” areas of color that we can select later with the magic wand, and transfer that active selection to the layer we intend to color.

(Because the resolution for web is lower, a single brush stroke can often color a relatively large area of an image intended for the web, so the flats method described here isn’t always a practical way to save time.)

With a line art version of the cartoon duplicated in a channel, each area of the cartoon that is intended to contain a color of its own is first selected with the magic wand, and then that selection is expanded into the lines by 2 or 3 pixels. The expanded area is then filled with a flat gray. Now it’s easy to activate that entire flat section with the magic wand later, even though that area in the printing layer may be filled with a gradient or pattern, making it difficult to reselect. A selection will remain active from layer to layer or channel to layers, making it easy to utilize a selection from one layer on another.



by  
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## Etc.

This wasn't intended to be a complete tutorial on everything there is to know about making Photoshop selections, but rather, just a basic overview of our options.

Because Photoshop is so complex, there are many ways to accomplish a task and now it's up to you to decide on the fastest, the easiest, or just the best way that works for you. All of these methods can be combined to make your selecting much easier. I frequently use more than one to "sneak up" on a selection. I go from Magic Wand to Quick Mask to Standard mode and back again, to Color Range, etc.

I hope I've helped you learn a few things.  
Now go play, experiment, and have fun.

Regards,  
The Wizard of Draws