PHOTOSHOP ⌄

Select, group, and link layers

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Select layers

You can select one or more layers to work on them. For some activities, such as painting or making color and tonal adjustments, you can work on only one layer at a time. A single selected layer is called the *active layer*. The name of the active layer appears in the title bar of the document window.

For other activities, such as moving, aligning, transforming, or applying styles from the Styles panel, you can select and work on multiple layers at a time. You can select layers in the Layers panel or with the Move tool.

You can also link layers. Unlike multiple layers selected at the same time, linked layers stay linked when you change the selection in the Layers panel. See Link and unlink layers.

> **Note:**
>
> If you don't see the desired results when using a tool or applying a command, you may not have the correct layer selected. Check the Layers panel to make sure that you're working on the correct layer.

Select layers in the Layers panel

1. Do one of the following:
    - Click a layer in the Layers panel.
    - To select multiple contiguous layers, click the first layer and then Shift-click the last layer.
    - To select multiple noncontiguous layers, Ctrl-click (Windows) or Command-click (Mac OS) them in the Layers panel.

    > **Note:**

> When selecting, Ctrl-click (Windows) or Command-click (Mac OS) the area outside the layer thumbnail. Ctrl-clicking or Command-clicking the layer thumbnail selects the nontransparent areas of the layer.

- To select all layers, choose Select > All Layers.

- To select all layers of a similar type (for example all type layers), select one of the layers, and choose Select > Similar Layers.

- To deselect a layer, Ctrl-click (Windows) or Command-click (Mac OS) the layer.

- To have no layer selected, click in the Layers panel below the background or bottom layer, or choose Select > Deselect Layers.

Select layers in the document window

You can also select a layer or layers directly from the document window.

1   Select the Move tool ⬚.

2   Do one of the following:

- In the options bar, select Auto Select, then choose Layer from the drop-down menu, and click in the document on the layer you want to select. The top layer containing pixels under the cursor is selected.

- In the options bar, select Auto Select, then choose Group from the drop-down menu, and click in the document on the content you want to select. The top group containing pixels under the cursor is selected. If you click an ungrouped

layer, it becomes selected.

- Right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Mac OS) in the image, and choose a layer from the context menu. The context menu lists all the layers that contain pixels under the current pointer location.

Select a layer in a group

You can open a group and then select an individual layer within that group.

1   Click the group in the Layers panel.

2   Click the triangle to the left of the folder icon 📁.

3   Click the individual layer in the group.

Group and link layers

Grouping layers helps organize your projects and keeps your Layers panel uncluttered. By linking layers, you establish a relationship between them, even if they aren't next to each other in your layer order.

Group and ungroup layers

1   Select multiple layers in the Layers panel.

2   Do one of the following:

- Choose Layer > Group Layers.
- Alt-drag (Windows) or Option-drag (Mac OS)

layers to the folder icon 🖿 at the bottom of the
Layers panel to group the layers.

3   To Ungroup the layers, select the group and choose
Layer > Ungroup Layers.

Add layers to a group

1   Do one of the following:

- Select the group in the Layers panel and click
  the Create a New Layer button 🖿.

- Drag a layer to the group folder.

- Drag a group folder into another group folder.
  The group and all of its layers move.

- Drag an existing group to the New Group button
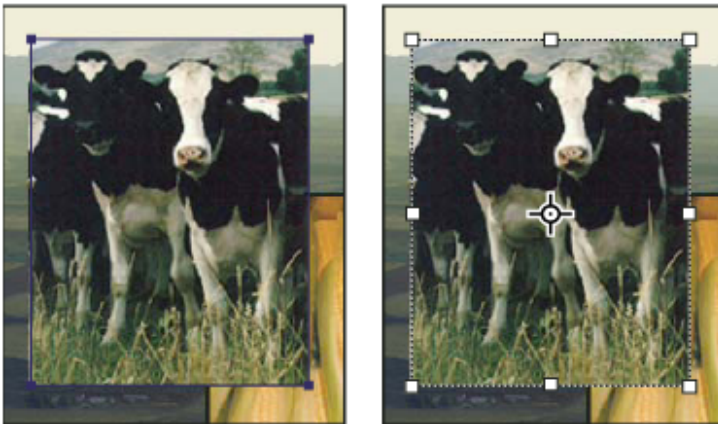 🖿.

Link and unlink layers

You can link two or more layers or groups. Unlike multiple
layers selected at the same time, linked layers retain their
relationship until you unlink them. You can move or apply
transformations to linked layers.

1   Select the layers or groups in the Layers panel.

2   Click the link icon 🔗 at the bottom of the Layers
panel.

3   To unlink layers do one of the following:

- Select a linked layer, and click the link icon.

- To temporarily disable the linked layer, Shift-click the Link icon for the linked layer. A red X appears. Shift-click the link icon to enable the link again.

- Select the linked layers and click the Link icon. To select all linked layers, select one of the layers and then choose Layer > Select Linked Layers.

Show layer edges and handles

Showing the boundary or edges of the content in a layer can help you move and align the content. You can also display the transform handles for selected layers and groups so that you can resize or rotate them.

Layer content with edges showing (left), and with transform mode selected (right)

Display the edges of content in a selected layer

1   Choose View > Show > Layer Edges.
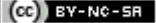
Display transform handles in a selected layer

1   Select the Move tool ⬚.

2   From the options bar, select Show Transform Controls.

You can resize and rotate layer content using the transform handles. See Transform freely.

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