

Apogee Photo Magazine



# Working with Palettes/Panels in Photoshop

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***Please Note:*** Since Photoshop CS4, ***Palettes*** are called ***Panels*** by Adobe.  
**In this column, the words are interchangeable.**

## ***What are Palettes or Panels?***

Think of Palettes as miniature workspaces, each accomplishing a different function. There are almost two dozen different palettes available to you. If you are new to Photoshop, then I would suggest, in the spirit of [K.I.S.S. \(Keep It Super Simple\)](#), that you start with just seven (nine in CS4), and add those you deem necessary as you gain more experience.

Below are representations of the palettes/panels that I would suggest you set up on your Photoshop desktop to create a proper workspace:

Photoshop gives you a set of predefined workspaces: You can access these by going to the "*Window*" menu--"*Workspace*". I would start with the "*Default Workspace*", then I'd suggest that you add or subtract palettes until you end up with just the following in your workspace:

1. Tools palette
2. Layers palette

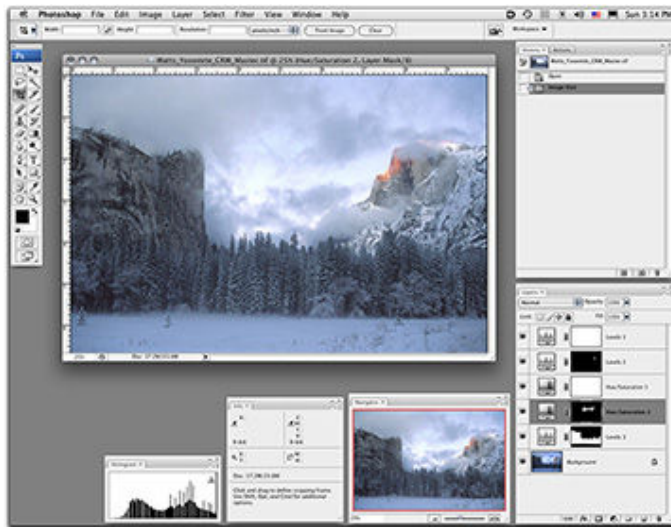
*By the way, click on the links below to download a larger JPG of these screenshots:*

[CS4](#)  
[CS3](#)



### CS4 Panels Setup

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### CS3 Palettes Setup

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3. History palette
4. Actions palette
5. Navigator palette
6. Info palette
7. Histogram palette
8. Adjustment Panel (CS4 only)
9. Masks Panel (CS4 only)

### ***Why these Palettes?***

These seven (nine in CS4) palettes/panels are the ones that you will use most. As it is important to keep things simple (Remember K.I.S.S.!), stick with these to start – you cannot go wrong. I will eventually cover most of these palettes in detail in later articles – - If you need to know more about the function of each palette/panel, see the “Help” section in Photoshop.

**To temporarily hide all of your palettes:** Simply press/toggle the “Tab” key on your keyboard to hide and reveal all of the palettes/panels

simultaneously.

**To add or subtract palettes:** You will notice in the default workspace that certain palettes are “docked” to each other: this is to save valuable “screen real estate” (By the way, “screen real estate” is not as critical if you use more than one monitor). You can easily ungroup these and move them around the workspace by dragging them with their tab.

**To Relocate:** To relocate a palette, place your mouse pointer over the name of the palette ( on the “tab” of the palette), hold you left mouse button down, and drag it to the desired location in your workspace.

**To Resize:** To resize, place your cursor over the bottom right corner of the palette, and your pointer will turn into a double sided arrow. Hold your left mouse button down, and drag the palette to the desired size.

**To Delete:** To delete, simply click on the “x” to the right of the name in the tab. Don’t worry if you accidentally delete a palette you need: you can access the “*Window*” menu to retrieve it.

**The “Window” Menu:** In the “*Window*” menu, you will see the names of the available palettes. You will notice that be palettes you have chosen will have a checkmark beside them. This is another way to add palettes — simply place a checkmark beside the palette you wish to add.

**To Save your Workspace:** Once you have set up your workspace, you can save it. Go to “*Window*”--“*Workspace*”--“*Save Workspace*”, and when prompted, give it an appropriate name. You can easily access it again by following the exact same menu sequence: You will see the name of your saved workspace at the bottom.

**Palette Options:** In each palette, you will notice a downward facing triangle with three parallel lines next to it in the upper right-hand portion of the palette. This gives you access to the Palette Options. Each palette will have a different set of options such as the size of the icons in the palette, the view available to you, and so on. You should explore these — I personally like larger icons in my layers palette.

**Other options for Palettes:** There are a multitude of ways to work with palettes beyond the scope of this column, such as hiding, resizing, collapsing, minimizing, stacking, and grouping your palettes. I must confess — I have lots of “screen real estate” (I have two big monitors) so I don’t take advantage of most of these functions. To see more of what is available, go to Adobe Photoshop Help, and spend some time with the chapter on Workspace.

Until the next column, have fun and stay safe!

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Visit John's website at <http://www.wattsdigital.com>.

If you'd like to know more about this subject, contact me at [john@wattsdigital.com](mailto:john@wattsdigital.com).

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