

Using Adjustment Layers

ADDING ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

Layer masks are indispensable to using Photoshop effectively because they allow you to edit your layers non-destructively. They also function as any other layer and can be hidden, deleted, or semi-transparent via layer opacity. There are three ways to add a Layer Mask, through the Layer Palette, through the Layer Menu and in the Adjustments Palette.

Via the Layers or Adjustments Palette

Click the Add an Adjustment button at the bottom of the Layers Palette, or at the top of the Adjustments Palette. Once you add it, the Adjustments Palette will convert to show the options for that particular adjustment layer.

Via the Layer Menu

Go to the Layer > New Adjustment Layer. Adding a Layer Mask through the Layer Menu leads to you all the adjustment layer options: Brightness/Contrast, Levels, Curves, Exposure, Vibrance, Hue/Saturation, Color Balance, Black & White, Photo Filters, Channel Mixer, Invert, Posterize, Threshold, Gradient Map, and Selective Color.

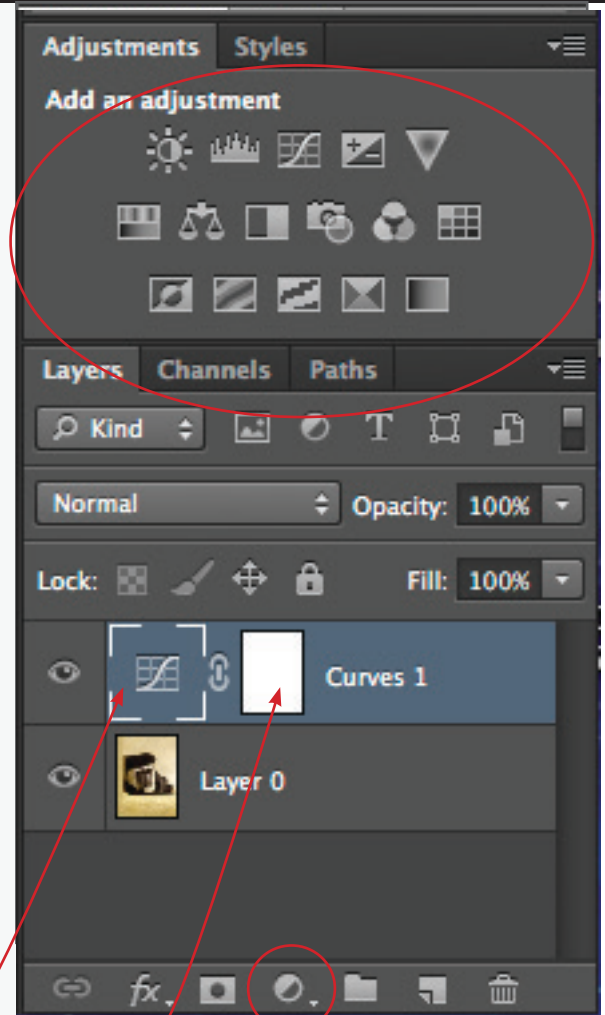
ADJUSTMENTS PALETTE

Dedicated to adding and editing adjustment layers. To use it to edit an adjustment layer, you must first select the adjustment layer in the Layers Palette.

Add an Adjustment Buttons & Presets

The buttons (circled) add an adjustment layer to the Layer Palette. The menu at the bottom of the palette lists presets for adjustment layer settings.

The Adjustment Layer Buttons are: Brightness/Contrast, Levels, Curves, Exposure, Vibrance, Hue/Saturation, Color Balance, Black & White, Photo Filters, Channel Mixer, Color Lookup, Invert, Posterize, Threshold, Selective Color and Gradient Map.



ADJUSTMENT LAYER MASK EDITING TOOLS

Painting Tools

Use tools such as the Brush Tool (B), Paint Bucket Tool (G), or Gradient Tool (G) to edit a Layer Mask

Painting with White Reveals the changes of the adjustment layer

Toggle Click to toggle between the Foreground and Background colors, or use the shortcut X on your keyboard.

Painting with Black Conceals the changes of the adjustment layer.

A Selected Adjustment Layer

An adjustment layer must be selected in order to edit it in the Adjustments Palette. Once selected, its layer mask is also selected and can be edited with the paint tools.

The Layer Mask

Each Adjustment Layer comes with a layer mask, which allows you to control how much of the adjustment is visible. An all white masks indicates that

all of the adjustment is visible. You can use the paint tools to paint with black to reduce the visibility of the adjustment layer.

EDITING ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

To edit an adjustment layer

- Select the adjustment layer you want to edit. Once selected, all the options for that adjustment layer will become visible in the Properties Palette. Edit the settings for that particular adjustment there.
- (Optional) Edit the mask with any of the paint tools to reveal or hide the adjustment. This includes the Brush

Tool, Gradient Tool, and Paint Bucket Tool. Paint with white to reveal the layer contents; paint with black to hide the layer contents.

- Select the Layer Mask and use the Mask Edge command in the Properties Palette to refine the edge of your mask to improve the blending.

Editing Adjustment Layers in the Properties Palette

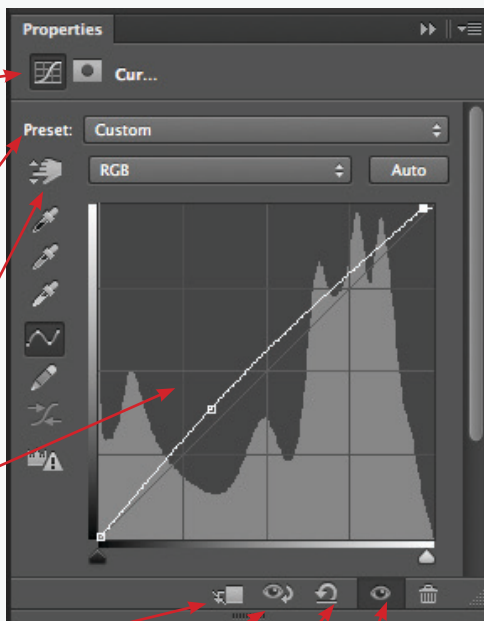
Adjustment / Mask Icons Indicates whether you are adjusting the Adjustment Layer or Layer Mask

Adjustment Presets Lists Presets for the Current Adjustment

Targeted Adjustment Click & Drag in the Image to modify the Adjustment

Adjustment Settings This area will vary, depending on the current adjustment

Clips the Adjustment to the Layer Below. This toggles whether the adjustment will affect all the layers below it, or just the layer immediately below.



Press to View Previous State

Resets to Adjustment Default Settings

Toggles Adjustment Visibility

Delete

ADJUSTMENT LAYER PRESETS

The presets for each adjustment layer are more plentiful than ever. Trying a preset is a great starting point to then modify it to get the exact result you are looking for. Some cool presets in Curves and Channel Mixer include: Color Negative, Cross Process, Black and White Infrared, and Black and White with a Red Filter.

Levels

Specify values for the highlights, shadows, and midtones. Drag the black and white sliders toward the center to add contrast. Move the gray (gamma) slider right or left to darken or lighten the image.

Curves

Adjust the intensity values of pixels along a 0-255 scale while keeping up to 15 other values constant. A good place to start is by adding a point in the center of the graph. Drag the slider up diagonally left or down diagonally right to lighten or darken the image.

Exposure

Brighten or darken the exposure for an image.

Color Balance

Drag a slider toward a color you want to increase in the image; drag a slider away from a color you want to decrease in the image.

Brightness/Contrast

Specify values for Brightness, Contrast.

Hue/Saturation

Choose which colors to edit, and specify values for Hue, Saturation, and Lightness.

Selective Color

Choose the color you want to adjust, and drag the sliders to increase or decrease the components in the selected color.

Channel Mixer

Modify a color channel or mix all three to create a custom grayscale channel, or make other color adjustments.

Color Lookup

Originally created for the Film/Video industry, this remaps every color in an image to a different one using preset "looks."

Gradient Map

Choose a gradient and set gradient options for remapping the image's tonal range. CS6 has many new presets to emulate traditional photographic tonings.

Photo Filter

Make color adjustments by simulating the effect of a filter in front of a camera lens.

Invert

Inverted adjustment layers don't have options, they simply invert the image's colors.

Threshold

Specify a threshold level, it only reveals absolute black or white.

Posterize

Specify the number of tonal levels for each color channel.

Vibrance

Adjust the saturation of an image selectively. Only the least saturated colors are affected most intensely.

Adjustment Layers in the Layer Palette

Selected Adjustment Layer

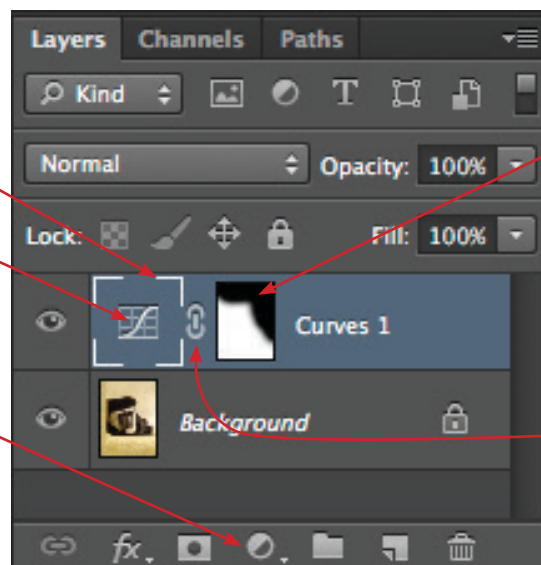
The outline indicates that you may edit the adjustment or mask.

Adjustment Layer Thumbnail

A thumbnail of the adjustment layer. If this is selected, you the options for the adjustment will be visible in the Adjustments Palette.

Add an Adjustment Button

Clicking this button adds an Adjustment Layer above whichever Layer is active. Click on the button and hold to select the adjustment you would like to add.



Layer Mask Thumbnail

A thumbnail of the contents of your Layer Mask. White indicates the areas that are visible. Black indicates the areas that are hidden.

TIP: Command+Click on the Layer Mask thumbnail to load it as a selection (PC: Ctrl+Click).

Link

Indicates that they movement of the Layer Contents and the Layer Mask are linked. If this is not visible, the Layer Contents or Layer Mask may be moved independently.