

Selections and merging etc.

There are many ways to create and use selections. The details below are an outline of the most commonly used in PS and the some of the often-used ways to utilise the selection.

1. Identify what it is you want to select and what you plan to do with the selection. This will impact on your choice of tools to use to select that object.

Options – Marquee tool; Lasso tools; Quick selection, Magic wand; External tools.

NOTE – when you make a selection PS shows the selection within ‘dancing ants’ (subject to personal settings). You can turn off/discard the selection (and ants) by pressing CTRL-D (Control and D .. for MS Windows)

Whilst making the selection you can ADD(shift)/SUBTRACT(Alt)/MOVE(Ctrl) to the selection by holding down the relevant ‘control’ key e.g. Shift/Alt/Ctrl.

Once you have made your selection, you can adjust its size etc. in a number of ways but good way is via the SELECTION menu and REFINE EDGE option. This gives you various ways to adjust the selection e.g. feathering, expanding etc.

2. If you need to ‘adjust’ the selection in some way it is probably best to create the selection as a new layer to enable you to ‘adjust’ just the selection without affecting the rest of the image –

Make the selection however you choose and whilst the ‘dancing ants’ are showing – LAYER menu/NEW/LAYER VIA COPY.

This will create a new layer with only the selection in it.

3. To ‘adjust’ just the selection layer ... say you want to alter contrast/shade/light in the selection –

Create a curves layer above the selection layer and in the LAYERS PANEL, position your cursor between the two layers and hold ALT key down (a box and arrow appear) and LEFT CLICK to apply the ‘LINK’ between the two layers. Now when you alter the CURVE, it will only impact the layer it is linked to – the Selection layer.

NOTE – you can do above with any adjustment layer to apply adjustments to just the linked layer.

4. To COPY a SELECTION to another image (both images open in PS) -

a) Make selection on ‘SOURCE image’

b) Pick the MOVE tool from the tools palette

c) Hold SHIFT (to copy the selection) and LEFT click in the selection. Holding down both keys, drag the selection to the ‘TARGET IMAGE TAB’ (the target image). The Target image window will open and you simply drag the selection to wherever you want it in the image. Don’t worry about being exact you can fine adjust at any time as it is on it’s own layer.

- d) This will have created a new layer in your Target image with the selection on it.
- e) now you can do whatever you want to that selection in the TARGET image e.g. move it and/or as for (3 above).

BLENDING – You can also ‘blend’ the selection layer to the rest of the image using different blending options to assist in seamlessly merging the two images –

With the Section layer highlighted/active, click on the blending dropdown and select the one to use – try various ones (it is a bit of trial and see).

Simplistically speaking -

- A) The ‘Darken’ options will darken the shadows (and highlights to some degree), Multiply probably being most used;
- B) ‘Lighten’ options will lighten the lighter areas and the dark areas to some degree, SCREEN often used to create a ‘pastel’ appearance;
- C) ‘Overlay block’ options, will ‘enhance/exaggerate’ the dark/light areas to one degree or another – Overlay and Soft Light are often used;
- D) ‘Difference’ options do various comparisons between images to create a result based on differences – try them;
- E) ‘Hue block’ options will use the Selection layer colour/luminosity etc. attributes to determine how to merge the two – try them!