

FIX PHOTOS FAST



with
ACTIONS



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Actions: Fix Photos Fast! Pre-Class Videos

Layer Mask Details

In Layer Mask Basics you got an overview of how to use a layer mask. In this video, I'll share some helpful layer mask information.

Black and White Masks

- To hide part of a layer, add a layer mask.
- Click on the Add Layer Mask icon to get a white mask. Since the mask is white, everything on the layer remains visible, and you'll have to paint on the layer mask with black, using the Brush tool, to hide part of the layer.
- The key principle of layer masks is "White reveals, black conceals." White reveals what is on the layer, and black conceals what is on the layer, allowing you to see through to the layer or layers below.
- If you plan to conceal most of the layer, add a black layer mask instead. To add a black layer mask, press Alt (Mac: Opt) and click on the Add Layer Mask icon. A second thumbnail filled with black will appear on the layer, and the contents of the layer will disappear. Paint on the layer mask with white to reveal part of the layer.
- Use a white mask when you want to see most of the layer.
- Use a black mask when you want to hide most of the layer.
- You can change the color of the mask after you create it by using the Fill with Color shortcuts:
Foreground Color: Alt Backspace (Mac: Opt Delete)
Background Color: Ctrl Backspace (Mac: Cmd Delete)

Partial Opacity

If a black mask hides the entire layer and a white mask reveals the entire layer, what will gray do?

- Any shade of gray will make the layer partially visible. The easiest way to get a shade of gray is to reduce the opacity of your brush.
- The more you paint over an area with white using a partially opaque brush, the more of that layer is revealed.
- The opposite is true if you paint with a black brush at a reduced opacity. The more you paint, the less you see of the layer.

Layer Mask Thumbnail

- Make sure the correct thumbnail is active when you paint. The selected thumbnail will have a partial or complete outline, depending on your program and version.
- If you paint on your document when the layer thumbnail is active, the paint will become permanent if you save and close your document, but painting on the layer mask thumbnail is not permanent. It can be changed at any time, even after you close and reopen the document.

- Right click (Mac: Ctrl click) on the mask thumbnail to see options for the mask, including “Delete Layer Mask,” which will remove it, and “Apply Layer Mask,” which will make the mask effect permanent.

Viewing a Layer Mask

- To see what the mask looks like, press Alt (Mac: Opt) and click on the mask thumbnail.
- You can paint directly on the mask while in this view. (Sometimes this is helpful.)
- To return to the normal view, press Alt or Opt and click on the mask thumbnail again.
- To temporarily hide the effect of a layer mask, press the Shift key and click on the mask thumbnail, which puts a large red X on the mask.
- To reveal the layer mask effect, use the same shortcut. Shift click on the mask thumbnail.

Layer Mask Effect on Color Chips

- If you click on the layer thumbnail, the Color Chips can be colored or black and white.
- If you click on the layer mask thumbnail, the Color Chips turn black and white, or they can be a shade of gray, but they never have color.
- With the regular thumbnail selected, pressing the letter D, or clicking on the Default Colors icon, gives you black for the Foreground color.
- With the layer mask thumbnail selected, pressing the letter D, or clicking on the Default Colors icon, gives you white for the Foreground color.
- Click on the curved arrowhead icon or press the letter X to switch Foreground and Background colors. I like to use the shortcut letter X because it’s so handy, and I can keep my finger poised over it as I paint, so I can go back and forth between white and black to get the effect I want.

These are the basics of how to work with a layer mask, but there are infinite ways to apply this knowledge to create artistic effects. Once you’ve learned and practiced the basics, you’ll be ready to use masking in more advanced tutorials!