



# 1) When trying to do something, see if there's a plug-in that does it for you

There are a lot of things you might want to do with Photoshop, but it would mean tinkering with values and brushes for hours. But sometimes other people wanted to do the exact same thing – in fact several people did, and they created plug-ins and brushes, which they offer for free.

## 2) Use images in the public property

Most of the known public property images are very old ones, that are in poor quality and in are part of some governmental database. But there are other websites in which amateur photographers, or just plain good people, release good quality photos for people to use – even commercially, without breaking the law.

## 3) Search for cheap photos

When trying to find a photo that would suit a certain website, it is sometimes hard to find something for free – especially if you're trying to be original and to not repeat other websites' chosen images. To fix that, there are websites of photographers and cartoonists who sell the use of their creations for a small one-time nominal fee.

# 4) When given a badly photographed image, turn it into black and white

Sometimes a client gives you images you can't use – either because they are so poorly photographed or lit, that they are barely visible, or because their quality doesn,Äôt fit the rest of the photos you have, and any modifications would be visible. In that case turn the photo into a gray one, or purely black and white in the worst cases.

5) When trying to make something pop, blur everything else Sometimes you need to make an ordinary every day object attractive and visible. One way to do that – which could have been done while photographing the object, but can also be done in Photoshop – is to make everything else around it blurry, and to turn the brightness of the object up a bit.

## 6) Use depth of field to make people prominent

Sometimes you are given pictures shot on a simple digital camera by an amateur, at some event. They provide as much detail of the dirt in the background as they do of the person being photographed. To fix that you need to add a depth of field, which will make the person more prominent in the photo.

#### 7) Only have negatives? Scan them as is

A lot of people make the mistake of spending lots of money to get their negatives developed, which leaves them with a lot of photos they don't need. Instead you can scan the negatives using a process you can easily repeat. It will give you quality images, which you will be able to easily edit.

## 8) Always keep the raw layers

It might seem stupid, since often times the effect you wanted to achieve has been achieved, but saving the detailed layer files as well as the output is smart, even though it will take up more space. In different projects you might want to do what you succeeded to do in one of the layers – so you won't have to do it again.

## 9) Control the elements when photographing

If you are able to take the photos yourself – either because you can't find suitable ones to use, it is important that you take care to control how much focus and how much light the subject gets. A flash might seem wise, but it'll flood the subject with light, and it'll add more work for you in post.

#### 10) Do it yourself

Sometimes you see a brush that creates an effect you would like to get, but sometimes that brush isn't quite right. Instead of spending all that time searching and trying hundreds of brushes, try to edit it or to create a brush on your own – it will allow you much more freedom.

#### 11) When fixing a photo, use the zoom feature

It might seem trivial, but with digital pictures that can be increased to a giant size without having to compromise the quality of the photo, you need to use zoom, because sometimes people would choose to print the photo in a large format. Zoom in on things, remove blemishes and smoothen skin.

#### 12) Use a frame for images

When placing them as is, images sometimes lose their power. One way of making them shine and pop, and be attractive to a visitor of a website, is to use a custom frame in which you place the photo. It adds formality to an image, and familiarity and draws viewers in.

## 13) Buy font packages

Sometimes your project will call for using text. But just because it's text doesn't mean it can't fit the photo or have a style and flow to it. You can purchase various font packages – a lot of them from comics letterers, who deal with letter designs all the time.

## 14) Use patterns for backgrounds

Sometimes when you don't have a suitable background, use a pattern background instead. The lack of a background – the big white hole, will draw people's eyes to it, but a patterned background with a simple design will keep the eyes on the subject. You can download patterns from all over the internet, or make your own.

#### 15) Look out for devil eyes

When dealing with photos taken by amateurs you need to pay close attention and avoid what is known as devil eyes. Devil eyes – or red eyes, ruin a photo, so no matter what you do to enhance it, if you don't get rid of red eyes, it won't look professional.

#### 16) Add a dramatic tone to your photos

When trying to add a dramatic tone to your photos, you might want to consider the motion blur tool. If it isn't used too much, it's a great tool. You can get blur from the camera, but you won't be able to control it. By using a good camera that manages to photograph things in motion, you have free reign to blur whatever you like.

17) Make a photo look professional by adding a mirror image Sometimes you are called for to make an object – usually a product, more appealing. Objects are usually uninteresting, but you can add an appealing factor to it by giving it a mirror image on the surface it sits on. The mirror image will be the object duplicated but a bit blurry and a bit transparent.

#### 18) When trying to make the perfect group photo, crop

Sometimes a client wants you to take photos from an event and enhance the poorly shot group shots. Instead of doing that, you can just crop from various images, and create something that better suits the client, and better represents him or her. You will have more room to move when cropping things together.

#### 19) Photograph objects at an angle

When you need to take pictures of objects, the best and most professional to do it is to take it at an angle. It will add volume to the object, and it will allow you to avoid blur due to light reflecting from the object. Plus it will allow you to use a mirror reflection for a slicker look.

#### 20) Avoid regular photos of human subjects

When trying to find a suitable photo, you need to avoid the ones that seem standard and fake – as if someone is posing for a yearbook photo. People will often gloss over those photos and won't pay attention to them. Try to find a photo of the person in a natural position.

21) If you can't find a good photo of a human subject, create it Sometimes the photos you find aren't good – usually because they were taken by amateurs with lots of light and no movement – which was done to make sure the photos won't get ruined. You can photograph people yourself – use natural light or soft light, place them at a natural setting, and avoid making them look as if they're posing for a photo.

## 22) Add shadows to photos of objects

Sometimes you don't have a lot you can do with a photo, because it isn't a good enough photo, but there are some things you can do – use shadows. Shadows are a quick way to illuminate one area, and a quick way to add volume to a photo. Just duplicate a part of the object, blur and darken it.

## 23) Add artificial lighting

When dealing with a photo that is poorly lit – either due to the surroundings, or because of something creating a shadow on a person's body, or even due to poor studio lighting, you might want to add a digital source of light. It brightens the photo and it doesn't look fake.

#### 24) Add grain for a movie-style look

Sometimes you want to make photos have more of an oomph to them – such as movie posters or movie stills. To do that you actually have to degrade the photo and make it grainy. You can also make a bad photo grainy, to enhance it, and that way you won't waste a photo.

## 25) When changing colors, use color separation

Sometimes you want a certain object to change colors, but you want to do something subtle. Also changing colors as is will create a lot of problems – colors leaking to other places, some parts aren't colored, etc. To avoid that you can duplicate the layer and color big parts of it in uniform, and place it behind the photo.

#### 26) Sometimes you have to crop

Sometimes, because of being interrupted or due to being an amateur, a photographer doesn't get a photo with a good composition. It has good subjects and lighting, etc, but together it looks mediocre and boring. You can improve the composition by cutting the unneeded excess off the picture.

#### 27) Make objects 3D

Sometimes in order to make things "pop" more, you need to make them seem 3D – as if they leap off the page. To do that, you cut around part of the object, stop, and continue to cut upwards – so as to cut a square portion out of the background, but leaving the object – so it will move out of the visible borders.

#### 28) Sometimes you need to get rid of the minute

Sometimes, when trying to crop a person or an animal, some of the detail doesn't transfer well – like rogue hairs. Sometimes you need to just give up and forget about the minute, and focus on the overall. You can cut those rogue hairs and not include them in the new photo.

#### 29) What the stylist didn't fix, fix yourself

Sometimes, due to natural occurrences – things like winds, a subject's hair or clothes move and it looks bad. Things like a hair that stands, or a hair that sticks out, which ruins the hair style. You can cut and crop to fix that, or cut and paste that portion from previous images.

30) When creating wooden signs, avoid too much light reflection Sometimes people want to have words or photos digitally etched into pictures of wood. You need to remember that people need to be able to discern what's written on it and what it contains. Sometimes a deeper digital etching with less light is better, for making things much clearer.

#### 31) Save money and time by changing a photo's colors

Sometimes an object needs to be presented in an attractive way, but in a way that also showcases all of the different colors it comes in – such as cars, so that the customer will be able to see how it looks in real life. You can easily change colors in Photoshop.

## 32) Zoom in on text using the clipping path tool

When you're trying to enhance an article for a client, you can use several layers and the clipping path tool, which will allow you to create a round area that resembles a magnifying glass. Then use a second layer in which you place the zoomed in version of the text.

## 33) Fix damaged photos by cloning the background

Due to how they were kept or how they were used, some photos have dents in them, holes and other things that make them seem unattractive. You can fix some of those photos, at least, by copying parts of the background and placing them on the holes – places like the sky, etc.

## 34) Save the shadows when removing backgrounds

When you're removing backgrounds in photos, the subjects seem weird without their shadow. You can try to cut around the shadow, or you can use a tool to manually select the subject, and copy it. You get rid of the background, paste the copy on a different layer, and change its location.

## 35) Use transparent watermarks to protect yourself from theft

When you're dealing with a client who asks for samples, or when you're setting up a portfolio or similar projects, you need to make sure your work isn't stolen. You can add a transparent watermark to it. As long as it isn't too visible, the photo won't be ruined by it.

36) When trying to shoot a human, move backwards and zoom in It is a common mistake by people who want to get good photos to use in Photoshop to get as close as they can get to the subject, so every detail is visible. But you should instead go back, and zoom in with the camera – that way the background will be blurred.

#### 37) Design your text

A lot of people just place a text on a photo or next to it, which makes a good photo ugly and unattractive. Instead think of turning the text into part of the photo – like making it in a nice color – like white, and on a background – like black, as if it's printed on a poster.

## 38) Use layers to have a deeper effect

It is a common mistake that layers are used to cover up or change mistake easily and without much hassle. But layers are also used to add volume and depth to photos – it is a technique used by famous painters, who painted over and over again, to get a richness of colors.

## 39) Avoid too much reflecting light

Sometimes, in order to make a photo look professional, people make the light reflect from the subjects, but when it comes to human subjects it makes them look fake and plastic-like. Especially if you took care of their skin blemishes and of their hair problems beforehand.

#### 40) Use crop & layers to get a better ratio

Sometimes when you are asked to enhance a photo that shows differences in height and/or size, you can't just mess around with the photo. Sometimes you need to crop the figures and scale them down, to make the differences in size and height more obvious.

#### 41) Use light sources to cast a light on an entire picture

Sometimes you want to make a photo look more professional and realistic, but you can't fix the objects themselves and re-shoot them, so you need to fix each one individually. You can avoid that much work by setting a place in which a light source will stand – invisible to the people watching the photo.

#### 42) Use the alpha channels to crop more easily

A lot of the times in Photoshop you end up having to crop a lot of images, so that you may use parts of them without having to change the entire photo. In that case you can use the alpha channels to help you separate the subject from the background, which makes cropping faster and easier.

## 43) Fix old photos by messing with the hues, saturation and color balance

A lot of the times old photos get damaged – either due to handling, or the material used to produce the photos. The ones that stay complete often turn yellow, and it requires fixing. To do that just add a layer, mess around with the color balance and the levels of hue and saturation, as well as the brightness and contrast.

#### 44) Add a signature to your photos

Sometimes you don't want to use a watermark, and you don't mind risking your photo being cropped and stolen. In those cases you can use a signature, which adds finesse and professionalism to your photo portfolio. You just need to add a layer on which you place the signature.

#### 45) Edit photos after you take them, in your camera

By editing the photos you took for a project, you will save time on editing them later, and you will be able to avoid using a giant program like Photoshop for small things – like cropping, zooming in, etc. It will also help you mainline your process and make it move quicker.

#### 46) Manage your layers

In big and even moderately sized projects a lot of layers are called for – either for actually changing something, or just for tweaking and seeing what happens. But a lot of layers can be cumbersome. That's why you need to name them accordingly, with numbers, and group them accordingly.

## 47) Use Photoshop for pre-design

Sometimes you want to see what a house, a wall or a website will look like, before you actually design it entirely. You can scan images and paste them on a photo of the wall, house, or on a template for a website. It will allow you to move things around easily, and to see what works.

## 48) Use the opacity tool

Sometimes due to the lighting conditions you get a very yellow or dark picture, which is annoying to look at and is unattractive. You can easily fix the problem by changing the opacity, and the hues – if just changing the opacity doesn't work. That way you won't have to re-shoot the object.

#### 49) Make things livelier with a gradient mask

Sometimes when you take pictures of ordinary people doing ordinary things, the picture comes out ordinary. The same goes for pictures clients gave you. Instead of meddling with it and spending a lot of hours on it, you can just add a layer and add a gradient mask to that layer, which brightens things up.

## 50) Improve depth of field using blur

When you get a picture that has a lot of things in it, the viewers,Äô eye doesn't know where to focus its attention, and you get an undesired effect. To avoid that, add a layer and add a Gaussian blur to the image, which will change the depth of field automatically.

## 51) Avoid using too much blur in the background

A novice mistake is to totally eliminate the background by manually tracing a figure and blurring everything else. It does make the figure more prominent and makes it appear more distanced from the background, but it creates white noise which draws the viewers' attention as soon as they see the picture.

## 52) Isolate subjects by using blur

Blurring of far away items is common in photography, so it is expected – both in pictures and in video (TV). You can fake that distance between objects by blurring everything but one object. Even though they are very close, they will look many feet apart.

## 53) Avoid using mundane photos

Oftentimes people opt to use mundane photos that achieve an undesired effect. In those photos people look at the ground, their eyes are hidden or they look stone-faced. It looks like a behind-of-the-scenes shot, and it achieves the wrong effect, even after improving it in Photoshop.

#### 54) Join criticism websites

In order to know if you have improved, and in order to know how far you are from improving in Photoshop, you need to post some of your "Photoshopped" pictures online at websites designed for criticizing works. You can also use those websites to learn what you can do with Photoshop.

## 55) Sell photos in websites for a nominal fee

Publish your photos in websites that allow you to get a nominal fee for your pictures. When you're a novice it allows you to support yourself, and to get exposure to your "Photoshopping" skills. It will also be a taste test of the general public, which will help you improve.

#### 56) Use Photoshop as a coloring tool

You can use Photoshop as a coloring tool – both for drawings and for photos, which helps you get the desired effect, and gives you more control over the results – you don't have to compromise the original to modify it.

#### 57) Fix problematic photos using the blur tool

Whenever you are facing problematic photos – photos that have holes in them, blemishes or other problems, you don't have to crop them or throw them away. You can blur the part in which the blemishes and problems are in, and merge the now blurred part with another photo.

#### 58) Create custom brushes

Sometimes you need to do a certain action over and over again. To do that you can use brushes, but finding the right one amongst the thousands is tough. It's sometimes much easier to just create a brush, and reuse it whenever it's needed.

#### 59) Build 3D models

Sometimes you want to have more than a photo – you want a 3D frame of an object, which you can make and animate using Photoshop. It will allow you to offer your Photoshop services for 3D projects as well – things like concept cars and buildings.

#### 60) Use Photoshop to paint from the source

It is now known that some high-end artists used lenses to copy what they saw to the canvas. You can do the same. When trying to create a painted-looking version of a certain photograph, you can use the original photograph as a direct source, with layers, which will save you time and hassle.

#### 61) Create a fake 3D feeling

You can create a 3D look in 2D photos by using trickery, but without having to crop the images. You can just make the thing in the foreground bigger and more prominent, and make the thing in the background look smaller and far from the foreground, which will trick the eye.

## 62) Create websites in Photoshop

Instead of having to deal with CSS early on, you can design websites in Photoshop, by using layers. You can create a template which will enable you to change settings and locations of things like in a WYSIWYG editor, and it will help you decide on a color scheme as well.

#### 63) Take smaller jobs to increase experience

When starting to bid for jobs as a professional, it is best to take smaller jobs that will allow you to obtain skills, so when larger projects arrive they will be less menacing. Also you will be able to better estimate the time-for-completion that way. Plus you'll get a longer resume.

#### 64) Use shadows to enhance text

When text is used as is next to a photo, it makes it seem very amateurish – as if the person didn't design it himself or herself, or that no thought was given to the design. You can easily fix that by copying the text to another layer, changing its color and making its edges blurry.

## 65) Make buttons look realistic

When making buttons for websites it is better to make them actually look like buttons, so that people will know they are click-able. A quick way to do that is to add shadows and reflecting light to it, which will give the illusion of a 3D object.

#### 66) Brighten and darken the background

You can cause attention and focus on a certain part of a photo or website, by making the background it is on more and more bright as the eye progresses – usually from left to right, because of the reading direction. It will assist people in finding the beginning of a page.

#### 67) Use shadows to make things seem indented

You can add reality to a website or photo by making things seem indented into the page. You choose the border, make it visible, and cast a shadow inwards, in two connecting sides of the border, which fools the viewers' eyes, and creates a nice stamping effect.

## 68) Use Photoshop to create moving images and text

Moving images and text – or GIFs as they became known, got a bad reputation due to the level they were created in – which resembled a child's drawing. But with Photoshop there is a lot of freedom and possibilities, and making animations that repeat will help create an attractive and interactive website.

## 69) Use Photoshop to create backgrounds

You can use Photoshop to create backgrounds, which will enhance the photos and text that is placed on it, and make them easier to see and read. You can do that by using a photo or just using tools, to create a background that resembles a certain material – like wood or paper.

## 70) Resize text to make it eye catching

Sometimes you want to make a line or a word in Photoshop eye catching, which the regular tools don't allow you to do. A way to overcome those limitations is to resize the text – the text will start small or big and will slowly increase or reduce in size.

#### 71) Make text easier to read by feathering

Sometimes you want to add text to a website, but you don't want to take the attention away from other parts of the website. One way to do that is to use a white text with a feathered background, which makes the text much more pleasant on the eyes.

#### 72) Darken or lighten photos to change mood

Sometimes the effect you want to get from someone who's viewing the image can't be achieved by using the image as is. A good example is a house or a small church with a cloudy sky in the background. To make it ominous you need to darken the image.

#### 73) Make post easier, by using makeup

When you're trying to change someone's face, you can make it easier to change by placing makeup on the person's face before taking a picture, or if it's a well known figure, using a picture of him wearing makeup for a costume. It will make color separation easier.

#### 74) Add interest to photo by layering it

Sometimes when you want to make a photo interesting, the best thing to do is to add things to it, using various layers, and making them look distanced form each other – as if in a pop-up book. Add people to the background, shooting stars to the sky, etc.

#### 75) Use photos to create black & white icons

You can easily create icons with Photoshop, but instead of going the regular route where you create a button-like square, you can use photos, crop parts from them, turn them completely black, and put them on a white background. This will create an iconic and memorable icon for a software product and for other uses.

#### 76) Turn any image into a psychedelic and artistic one

You can easily make any photo change colors, and look artistic and psychedelic. It is a nice ability to have when trying to create posters for bands and other types of products. You can simply change the RGB values – either uniformly, or one color at a time, and get various results.

## 77) Make text more attractive by placing it on photos

It might sound like a bad idea – to ruin a good photo with a regular font and text, but you can make both the photo and the text more appealing by warping the text to fit the contours of the photo – like a wall, a ripple in the waves, etc.

## 78) Create a 3D look

You can create a 3D look for both photos and text by duplicating the photo or part of it, and coloring it in a red and green color, and placing it on top of each other, but a little off, so it will receive that old printed 3D look.

#### 79) Change the texture of objects by using Dodge & Burn

By using the tools Dodge & Burn you can easily change textures of either people or objects, and make them look more CGI-like – more plastic-like. You can also use the Dodge & Burn tools to refurbish old photos or badly lit photos, which look grainy and dirty.

#### 80) Easily exchange backgrounds in photos

When you have a photo – either of an object or a person, and you want to change its background to several different things, you can simply turn the background into either green or blue, get rid of loose hairs, and now you can place a photo in a certain background easily, and it'll be much more believable.

#### 81) Create interesting photos by merging them

You can create interesting photos by taking two different photos and merging them partially – like turning a part of someone's head into a skull, but with features from the head. You can easily do that with a manual tool, which lets you "erase" parts of the photo and show the layer below it.

## 82) Turn texts into a neon sign

You can easily turn any text into a neon sign, to make it more interesting. You just need to write using a big enough font, copy the text to a different layer and get its margins, increase the border size, and place it on the photo, but not entirely overlapping.

## 83) Mix black and white with color

You can turn new photos into very old looking photos, by copying a photo into a new layer, turning it into black and white using the built-in tool or do it manually, and placing the original photo in a layer above it, and choose the parts you want colored. It will look like you colored a black photo – the old way to create colorful pictures.

# 84) Make things pop by making them colorful on black and white backgrounds

If you want to create an artistic vibe, or to create an advert for something, you can use an old technique that people use, to make a photo interesting. You can turn the photo into a mellow black and white photo, and brightly color something in it – a person, their lips, etc.

## 85) Use several photos to show an object's movement

If you want to show an object's movement and simply copying it, stretching it and blurring it isn't enough, you can take several photos showing it at different locations, choose the object in them, and in the original photo turn the area of the photo they are in into a transparent area.

## 86) Turn photos into cartoons

You can easily turn photos into cartoons by manually tracing their borders, copying them and coloring them in a uniform color, which you will later on add highlights and shadows to. Do that with each portion of the photo, and you'll get an interesting cartoon version of the photo.

#### 87) Creating interesting GIFs by layering images

You can create interesting small animations – instead of moving an entire photo, you will take several photos, trace the section you want to be move, and layer the photos on top of each other. You'll get a regular photo that blinks or moves its eyes, etc.

## 88) Fix really damaged photos by using light sources

When you are presented with badly damaged photos of people, you can use light sources to make them interesting. You can cast a big blinding white light at the background of the photo, which will essentially "erase" the faults with the photo and will make the subject visible.

#### 89) Turn photos into caricatures

You can easily turn photos into comical photos that resemble what caricaturists draw, by extenuating the facial features of a person's photo. It can be easily done by distorting parts of the image, and adding lights and shadows, which will make the photo much more expressive. The changes can be subtle or extreme.

#### 90) Enhance your portfolio, and save space

You can easily enhance your portfolio and save space at the same time, by taking each photo you have – or a select few, and turning half of it into black and white, so clients will be able to see the difference between the different techniques.

#### 91) Eliminate distracting portions of a photo

Sometimes when you want a person to focus his attention on something, that effect gets ruined by a certain portion of the photo. You can easily fix that by deleting everything above the subject, and turning it white. Such as a shadow, the sky, etc.

#### 92) Change the effect of shadows and lights on the photo

Sometimes you have a photo you took, that you're not entirely happy with. An easy way to fix that is to play with the shadows and the lights. For example, if you have a footprint in the ground, you can add shadows to make it look deeper, or add light to make it seem shallow.

#### 93) Match text to the contours of someone's face

You can make text much more interesting by matching it to the border of an object in the photo – such as someone's face, or a light-bulb, etc. You just need to select and copy the object, leave just the border and make the border bigger. Now make the letters stand on the bigger border.

## 94) Turn 3D photos into 2D

You can make some photos more interesting by eliminating unneeded noise – such as the sky, the grass etc. You just need to select the object you want, copy it to a new layer with a white background, and get rid of some of the shadows, and you'll have a flatter looking picture.

#### 95) Darken parts of a photo to make it pop

It might sound weird, but you might want to darken parts of a photo, to make it pop more. Especially in mild black & white photos with lots of gray. You can do that by creating a darkened border around the object, and the contrast will make it leap off the page.

#### 96) Enhance a photo with a photo

It might seem obvious or weird, but you can enhance photos of boring buildings and walls, by taking photos, decreasing their size, adding some sort of frame to them and pasting them on the photo of a building or wall. You don't have to add a frame, but it looks more realistic with one.

## 97) Turn several photos into a comics strip

When you have mundane photos of people, you can create cartoony versions of the photos by messing around with the hues and the saturation, and you can add word balloons or thought balloons, and turn it into a sequential strip. That way you'll turn boring photos into interesting and entertaining ones.

#### 98) Create backgrounds that contain features

Sometimes clients ask you to change certain features in a person's photo – such as his or her hair, facial hair, etc. You can avoid having to do this again and again by creating a background that contains those facial features. You'll just need to use a brush to make certain parts of the background layer visible in the "Photoshopped" photo.

#### 99) Create an ominous feeling by selective resizing

You can create an ominous feeling in a photo by taking a standard photograph – of a staircase or of a wooden house, and you can stretch it a bit, and make the front bigger – and make it reduce in size as it moves backwards. As if the object is looming over the viewer.

## 100) Use specific brushes

Some brushes are created in order to create a certain effect on a photo or a piece of text, but there are also brushes for very specific uses – such as creating blood splatter, coffee stains, etc. When you want a good effect, they can make life easier.

## 101) Use Reset instead of Cancel, when applicable

Instead of canceling something you did entirely, due to over tinkering with things, you can just reset it and start over. All you have to do is press Alt and the Cancel button will turn into a Reset button. It saves a lot of time and hassle, when you add that time up.

