

Making Selections

Q. Why do we need to make selections?

The answer to this is "for varied reasons", i.e. Copying and cloning, picture enhancement, montage work etc. The list is endless.

Using the image 'Selections', I will attempt to teach you some basic ways to make selections. Each way has its own merits; the only thing in common is that all selections should be 'Feathered' to a certain extent.

Q. What is 'Feathering'?

This is the method of softening the edge of a selection to give a smooth join and to give the selection or composition a more natural look.

Methods of Selection.

First download and save the [Selections.jpg](#) to use with this tutorial

Magic Wand

This method is great for making selections of a similar tonal range. By using the Tolerance scale we can vary the amount of selection e.g. Set a Tolerance of 10 and touch anywhere in the Orange Ellipse 'A'.

'Marching Ants' should now appear around the ellipse, this is now selected.

Press Ctrl D on the keyboard and the 'marching ants' will disappear. This is now de-selected.

Remember the above short cut as I will refer to it often.

Now repeat the exercise but set the Tolerance to 100, this time the second orange ellipse, the bright red rectangle and the two yellow objects are all selected.

Sometimes we wish to restrict the amount of selection without tightening the tonal range. To do this, tick the box marked 'Contiguous' and repeat the exercise with Tolerances of 10 and 100. This time only the objects touching are affected.

Select by Colour Range

Go to Select > Colour Range and a dialogue box will appear.

Set the following setting on the dialogue box, Sampled Colours, Fuzziness slider to 0 and Selection.

Now move the eye-dropper over the image and click on the Blue Rectangle 'B'.

Click OK and all the objects of the same colour should have 'marching ants' around them.

Ctrl D and repeat the process but this time on 'C'.

Now move the fuzziness slider to the right, the other red object should now be shown.

You can also Add or Subtract colours to your selection using the '+' or '-' eyedroppers.

The Lasso tool

This is primarily a 'Free-Hand' selection tool best used at high magnification and where a great deal of accuracy is not required.

The selection, once started, must be completed or the Lasso tool will find the quickest way to close the selection.

The selection can be added to or subtracted from by using the options available on the top tool bar, next to the selected tool.

Tip: If you are making a selection and need to move the page down or relax your grip, then press the Space Bar, this puts the 'Hand Tool' on the screen and as long as the Space Bar is pressed you can move the work area around.

Polygonal Lasso Tool

This is found by clicking the small triangle at the bottom right hand corner of the Lasso Tool.

Alternately hold the Shift Key down and press 'L' to scroll through the three options.

This tool is great for objects with regular sides, try it on the rectangles, and then try it on the ellipses.

Magnetic Lasso Tool

Again found under the Lasso Tool. This tool is useful for areas of high contrast.

Click on the edge of object 'D', as you move around the object click at regular intervals to set the anchor points. When you are a straight line from your starting point try double clicking the mouse button, the selection should now close.

These are just some of the methods used for making selections.

There are some others, the Pen Tool for example, but they will be the subject of another lesson.

Tips to remember:

- *Ctrl A will select all*
- *Ctrl D will de-select all*
- *Holding down the Shift Key and pressing L will scroll through the Lasso tool options.*
- *Press and hold the Space Bar will allow you to move the image around or re-locate the stylus/mouse.*
- *When using the Lasso tool or the Magic wand ensure that you have the right option set (to the right of the selected tool in the top tool bar) and that the Contiguous button is set correctly.*
- *Finally Feather your selection accordingly and practise, practise, practise.*