

Sharing Your Photos

A Guide to Preparing Your Images for Print & the Internet

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Create an Image Directory on Your Hard Drive

It's always a good idea to create a separate directory for your images. Typically, I create a directory called "images" and place all of my scanned images in it.

Calibrate Your Monitor

Before you view or edit your images, you should make certain that your monitor is properly calibrated. Why? You want to make sure that "What You See Is What You Get". There a bare-bone monitor calibrator online, [AIM](#), which will help get you started. For more details on color management, read my article on [Digital Darkroom](#).

Scanning Your Images

If you plan to print any of your images, whether at home on your photo printer or at a lab, it is always best to scan the image in at the maximum resolution allowed by your scanner. If you only plan to display the image you're scanning on the Internet, then scan the image in at 300dpi. For more information on scanning your images, visit Scanning Tips - <http://www.scantips.com/>

Working With A Copy of Your Images

It's always a good idea to work from a backup copy of an image, just in case something goes wrong.

- Open the image you want to work with
- Click on "Save"
- Be sure to select/check "As A Copy" under "Save Options"
- Click "Save"
- Under Image Options Select "Maximum"
- Under Format Options Select "Baseline (Standard)"
- Click "OK"

Adjusting Levels

As a rule of thumb, it is normally best to make your Level, Contrast & Color Corrections (if any are needed) prior to resizing your image for Internet use. First, let's make sure you have the History tab selected on the right side of your screen (you'll see History & Actions in the same palette).

I typically use the "Auto Levels" adjustment. Most of the time, nothing else is required when editing the image color/brightness/contrast.

- Click on "Image" on the menu bar
- Click on "Adjust"Click on "Auto Levels"

If you don't like what you see, you can either click on "Edit"/"Undo" or go to the History palette and click above "Auto Levels" (which should be "Open"). You can go back and forth on the History palette to see before and after effects if you'd like. Save the Image file (File/Save or Ctrl+S).

You can also experiment with the "Curves", "Brightness/Contrast" and "Color Balance" options under Image/Adjust when you have some extra time. Try experimenting with the white and black droppers as well. Select the white dropper (in Curves or Levels) and point it to the area of the image that should be pure white. Do the same for the black dropper.

Remember, you can use the History palette to move backwards or forwards after making changes. However, when you save and close a file, the history is discarded.

Cropping Your Image

If your image needs to be cropped, now is the time to do it. Select the "dotted-square" in the top left of the editing tools located on the left side of your screen. Once selected, place your cursor at the top left of the area you want to save, press & hold the left mouse button and drag to the bottom right of the image. Release the mouse button. An area will now be selected. Clicking anywhere else on the image will unselect the area. If you want to Crop to the selection, click on "Image" and then click on "Crop". This can also be undone if you decide you don't like it.

I normally do not crop any of my images. However, if you do want or need to crop your images, you can resize the image so it is that same as the rest or somewhat close. The best way to do this is with the Crop Tool.

Save your image before proceeding with the next step.

Sizing Your Image

The standard image resolution that most web designers have settled on is 72dpi.

I would not recommend using an image any larger than 640x480 pixels. You can, of course, choose any size that you like..

- Click on "Image"
- Click on "Image Size"
- Make sure the box "Constrain Proportions" is checked.

- Change the Resolution to 72 Pixels/Inch
- Under Pixel Dimension, make sure Pixels are selected as the unit of measure for both Width & Height.
- Enter the Image Size you have selected... For example, under Width enter 600 (the proper Height will be automatically calculated for you.)
- Click "OK"

Your image will now be resized to the correct resolution and screen size. Save your image.

Using the Unsharp Mask

At this time, it is sometimes beneficial to use the Unsharp Mask filter. This tool is used to sharpen the edges and should be used with discretion.

- Select "Filter" from the top menu bar
- Click on "Sharpen"
- Click on "Unsharp Mask"
- Select "Preview"
- Suggested settings: Amount: 50-60%, Radius: 1 pixel, Threshold: 0 Levels
- Click "OK" once you see the desired sharpness in the preview box.
- Save Your Image

Saving Your Image for Your Web Site

Now that you have your image corrected and properly sized, you need to compress and save it for Internet use. Adobe's Image Ready does a great job in helping you select the degree of compression by allowing you to see what the image will look like before you save it. Try to keep the file size and load time as small as possible. As a rule of thumb, try not to go more than 8-10 seconds @ 28.8K bps (you'll see this in the bottom left of the screen in Image Ready) for these larger images. If the image is to appear on a "regular" page and not the showcased image (pulled up when you click on a thumbnail), the load time should be closer to 3 seconds or less. In order to achieve this, you'll need to either save at a high compression (low image quality) OR resize your image and make it a lot smaller.

- In PhotoShop, click on "File"
- Click on "Save for Web"
- Select "JPEG" - Under the JPEG selection, select either Medium or Low (High is not really necessary in most cases). You'll find that solid colors, like the sky, do better with medium quality.
- If you want your image to appear a little at a time, check "Progressive"
- Click "OK" and you'll be prompted for a file name. At this point you opt to rename the file or save it to another directory. Until you're more familiar

with the process, you might want to save to a directory named C:\WebImages (or whatever you'd like).

That's basically all there is to the quick and easy version. Drop shadows and other great Plug-ins can save you tons of time in the long run.

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