

Making selections is a fundamental tool in any image manipulation program.

If you do not wish, as is usually the case, to work on the whole of the image, you must select the area you wish to work on.

The Magic Wand, although not quite magic, is by far the most intelligent tool for making selections and in Adobe Photoshop is found in the Tools Palette near the top on the right (see illustration) and looks just like its name - a Magic Wand.



Clicking the Magic Wand icon activates the tool and changes the cursor to a Magic Wand shape.

Double clicking the icon also activates the tool but also displays the Magic Wand Options Palette where changes to the tools attributes can be made.

Click the Magic Wand cursor on your image where you want to make a selection and an area will be selected marked by an outline of a moving dotted line. The tool makes this selection by looking



for coloured areas based upon the tolerance specified in the Magic Wand Options Palette, (see illustration). Values can be from 0 to 255.

The higher the number specified in the Options Palette Tolerance box the broader the range of colours selected will be and the larger the selected area.

Other options shown in the Options palette are 'Use All Layers' and 'Anti-aliased'.

The Anti-Aliased option is probably best left on (ticked) all the time as this option attempts to soften the saw tooth edge effect noticeable at the selection boundary by filling in with lower tones.

The Use All Layers option however is more likely to be switched off as this allows the tool to work on all visible layers and it is more usual to only work on one layer at a time.

Once you have made your selection you can modify it or cancel it by clicking outside the selection.

Using the Shift Key while clicking on the image allows you to add to your existing selection, which could be with a different Tolerance specified in the Options Palette. Note that advice is given at the bottom of the main window such that when pushing the Shift Key this says 'Add to existing

selection’.

Holding down the Ctrl Key has the opposite effect and subtracts selections while holding Ctrl + Alt allows a copy to be moved.

The selection (not the image) can be moved by holding down the left mouse button and dragging.

An alternative way of making Selections is to right click on your image when a small dialogue box pops up allowing you to ‘Select All’ or by ‘Colour Range’.

Select All does just that but the Colour Range option brings up another dialogue box where Fuzziness can be chosen (which is similar to Tolerance) and a colour added or subtracted from the selection.

This tool, as others, is extremely powerful and it is best to experiment and explore its potential to learn about it.