

How to use filters

Adobe Photoshop CS6 filters provide a range of options for changing your image's appearance. You can use filters to clean up or retouch your images, apply special art effects that give your image the appearance of a sketch or pastel painting, and apply distortions and lighting effects. These filters can create added interest or help you achieve design goals. As with many Photoshop features, though, you should take care not to overuse filters, as too many filters can make an image overly manipulated or unprofessional.

Each filter has a range of settings. The Filter Gallery provides a preview of many of the special effects filters (**Figure 1**). You can apply multiple filters, turn on the effect of a filter or turn it off, reset options for a filter, and change the order in which filters are applied. When you are satisfied with the preview, you can then apply it to your image.

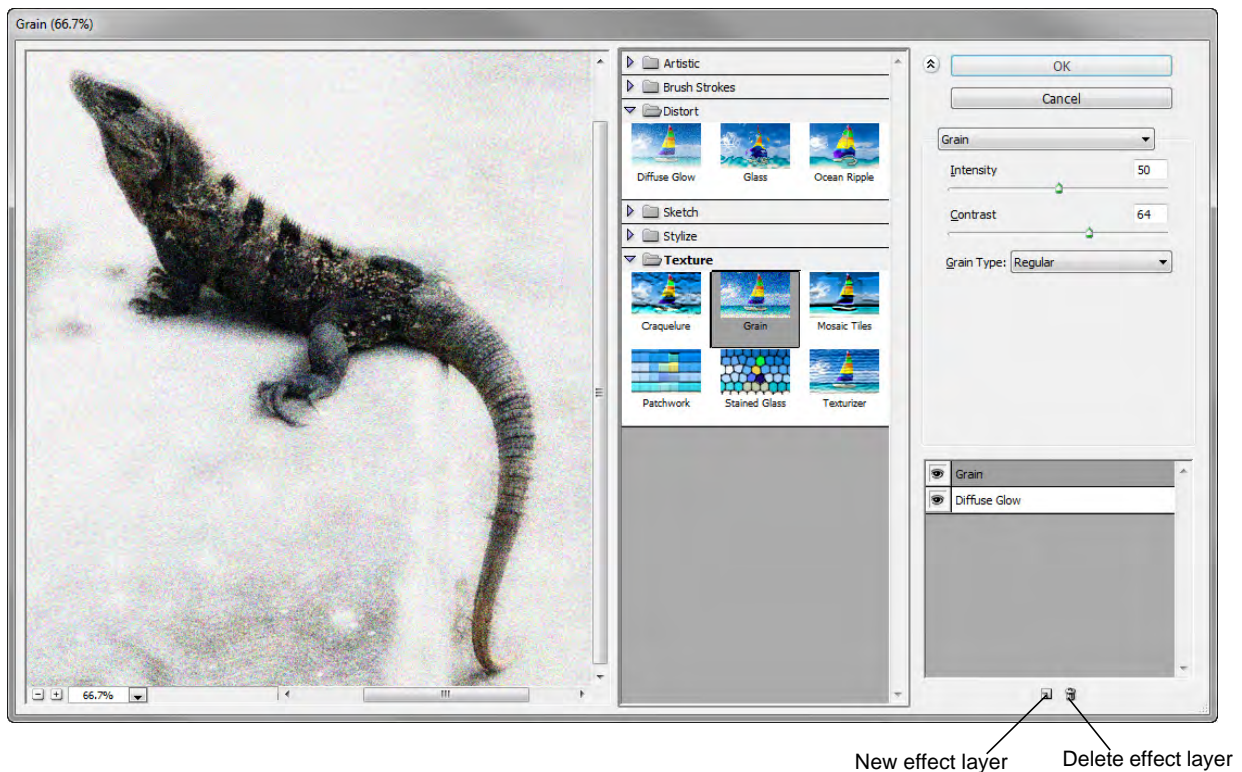


Figure 1 Image in Filter Gallery with Grain and Diffuse Glow filters preview

Filters are applied to the active, visible layer or a selection. Not all filters in the Filter menu are available in the Filter Gallery. Experiment with different settings to achieve your design goals.

Filters have the following limitations:

- Some filters work only on RGB images.
- All filters work with 8-bit images. If you are using 16-bit or 32-bit images, please see Photoshop Help for information on which filters work with each.
- When applying filters to shape layers, Photoshop first rasterizes the shape. *Rasterizing* means converting the shape from vector to bitmap format.

Creating a custom shape

In the following steps, you create a shape and then apply filters to it to give it an artistic appearance.

To create a custom shape:

1. Start Photoshop and create a new document.
2. Click and hold the Rectangle tool in the Tools panel, and then select the Custom Shape tool (**Figure 2**).
3. In the options bar, make sure Shape is selected as the tool mode (**Figure 3**).
4. Select a shape from the Custom Shape picker in the options bar, such as Blob 1 (**Figure 4**).
5. Drag the pointer across the image to draw the custom shape, just as you would if you were drawing a rectangle.

To make the shape uniform in size, hold down the Shift key while dragging.

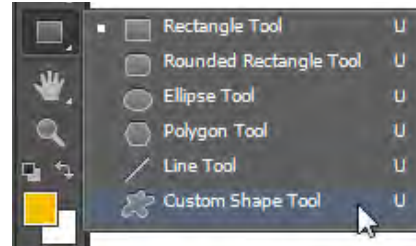


Figure 2 Custom Shape tool

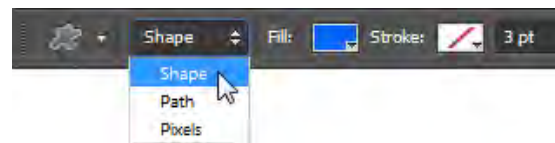


Figure 3 Custom Shape tool mode in the options bar



Figure 4 Custom Shape picker in the options bar

Applying a filter

You can apply a filter to the active layer.

To apply a filter:

1. Select the layer that contains the custom shape (**Figure 5**).
By default, it will be labeled "Shape 1."
2. Choose Filter > Filter Gallery.

Photoshop warns you it needs to rasterize the image before proceeding. This means the image will no longer be a vector mask.

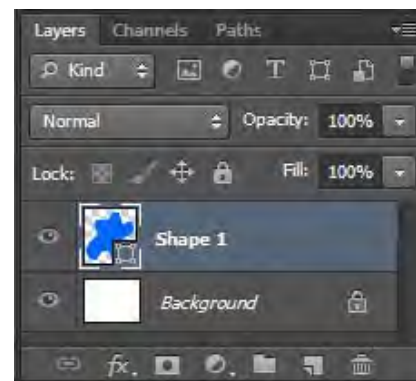


Figure 5 Layers panel

3. Click OK.

The Filter Gallery appears (**Figure 6**).

4. Click the Sketch filter in the center column to display thumbnails of available filter effects.
5. Click the Halftone Pattern thumbnail.

Halftone Pattern is just one of many filters with which you can achieve an artistic effect. The effect of the Halftone Pattern is similar to that of certain Pop Art techniques.

Settings for the selected pattern appear in the right column.

6. Set Size to 10, Contrast to 35, and Pattern Type to Dot.
7. Click OK.

The filter is applied to the custom shape (**Figure 7**).

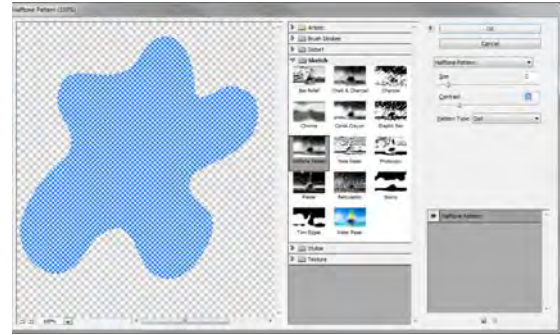


Figure 6 Filter Gallery



Figure 7 Halftone Pattern filter applied

Applying another filter

You can apply multiple filters to one image.

In these steps, you're applying filters to a custom shape. You can apply filters to almost any image, such as photographs or other artwork.

To apply another filter:

1. Click the layer with the custom shape.
2. Choose Filter > Pixelate > Crystallize.

As with the Halftone Pattern filter, a dialog box lets you preview and change settings for the Crystallize filter (**Figure 8**).

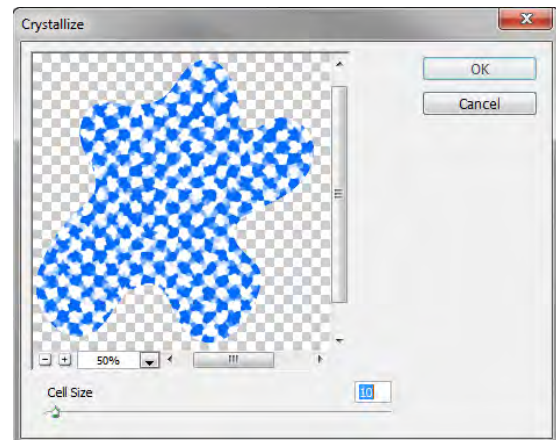


Figure 8 The Crystallize dialog box

3. Set Cell Size slider to 50.
4. Click OK.

The Crystalize filter is applied to the shape (**Figure 9**).

Observe how the Crystalize filter modifies the effects of the Halftone Pattern filter. You can create a wide range of effects by combining filters.



Figure 9 Crystalize filter applied

Using the Liquify filter

The Liquify filter is another interesting filter you can apply to images. It causes the image to appear melted, along the lines of a Salvador Dali painting.

Using the Liquify filter, you can push, pull, rotate, reflect, pucker, or bloat any area of an image.

To apply the Liquify filter:

1. Open an image in Photoshop.
2. Select the layer to which you wish to apply the Liquify filter.
3. Choose Filter > Liquify.

The Liquify dialog box appears (**Figure 10**).

4. In the right column, set a brush size to use.
The brush size needs to be big enough to modify your image.
5. On the left, choose the Forward Warp tool.

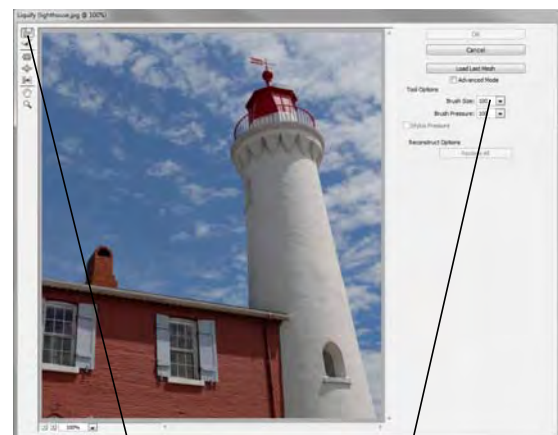


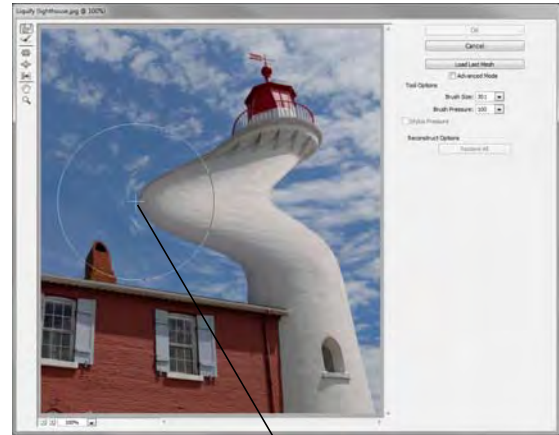
Figure 10 Liquify dialog box

6. Drag the pointer through a part of the image (**Figure 11**).

Note: The Reconstruct tool, positioned beneath the Forward Warp tool, will undo the effects of a liquify tool. To revert, choose the Reconstruct tool and then drag through the image.

Experiment with other liquify tools, such as the Pucker and Bloat tools.

7. When you are satisfied, click OK to apply your changes to the image.



Brush pointer

Figure 11 Forward warp tool applied

Using the Blur Gallery

The Blur filters soften a selection or an entire image, and are useful for retouching. They smooth transitions by averaging the pixels next to the hard edges of defined lines and shaded areas in an image.

Advanced blur effects can be accomplished by using the Blur Gallery. Three blur effects make up the Blur Gallery:

- *Field Blur* Click to place one or more focal point pins, and apply uniform or graduated blur between the points. Use this filter on images for maximum customization for focal points settings and blur levels.
- *Iris Blur* Applies blur to create an elliptical region of focus based on your settings. The Iris Blur filter works best in images with a central element around which to focus attention.
- *Tilt-Shift Blur* Soften select areas with this filter which lets you create a band of focus with a shallow depth of field to simulate a miniature scene. The Tilt-Shift Blur filter works best in images with elevated viewpoint, and well-defined foreground, midground, and background focal planes (**Figure 12**).



Figure 12 Image with Tilt-Shift Blur preview

To use the Blur Gallery:

1. Open an image in Photoshop.
2. Select the layer to which you wish to apply a Blur Gallery filter.
3. Choose Filter > Blur > Tilt-Shift.

The Blur Tools and Blur Effects panels open with the Tilt-Shift options available (**Figure 13**). The Blur Gallery options bar and on-image controls and are also available.

4. Use the on-image tools to customize the Tilt-Shift Blur filter settings:
 - Click to add a focal point pin.
 - Click-drag between the solid lines to reposition the focal plane.
 - Click-drag a solid or dashed line to change the perceived focal plane tilt and graduated blur areas.
 - Click-drag a handle on the solid line, or between the solid and the dashed lines to rotate the focal plane.
 - Click-rotate a dial that is around the focal pin to set blur level (**Figure 14**).
5. Compare the original image with the blur filter image by selecting and deselecting the Preview option in the Blur Gallery options bar. You can also clear focus points by clicking the Remove All Pins button.
6. You can preview other filters by clicking on the names in the Blur Tools panel. Experiment with the Field Blur and Iris Blur options and on-image controls to understand how they function.

Note: More than one Blur Gallery filter can be applied at one time. Click the check box beside the Blur Tool filter name to turn a filter on or off.

You can also experiment with the settings in the Blur Effects panel. *Bokeh* refers to the aesthetic quality of a blur, or more specifically, how out-of-focus points of light are rendered.

7. When you are satisfied with the image, click OK to apply the Blue Gallery settings.

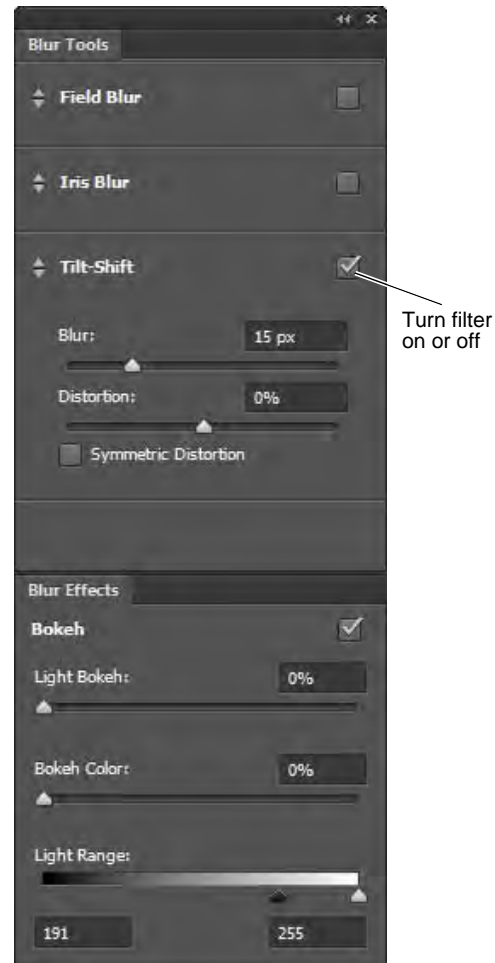


Figure 13 Blur Tools and Blur Effects panels



Figure 14 Setting the blur level