

Acorn 3

User Guide

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Acorn FAQ

Where can I find Acorn documentation?

Acorn's documentation and tutorials are updated online frequently. Click [here](#) to get started. Although a downloadable PDF is available as an off-line resource, it is impossible to include all the tutorials and updates that can be found online.

Why does Acorn have a button labeled "Purchase" in the window?

Acorn runs in two modes: "paid", and "trial". In trial and paid modes all the functions of Acorn are operational. If you see the "Trial" button in the upper right hand corner of the canvas window, that means Acorn is in trial mode. If you like Acorn, you can click where it says 'trial' in order to make the purchase. After the 14 day trial period has ended, a watermark will appear over your images. No worries- you can purchase Acorn (by clicking on purchase) to make the watermark go away!

Why is it cheaper to upgrade to Acorn 3 at the Flying Meat Store than the Mac App Store (MAS)?

The Flying Meat Store (<http://www.flyingmeat.com/store>) offers Acorn upgrades for \$19.99. The Mac App Store only allows one level of pricing for Acorn, so we cannot offer a discounted upgrade price. The price at the MAS will be the current full price of Acorn, and we cannot give credits or refunds for the difference. Some users feel the extra cost at the MAS is worth it for the convenience of the store and other benefits the store offers.

I bought Acorn on the Mac App Store. Why am I still running the trial version?

You will need to delete the trial version of Acorn from your computer. Perform a spotlight search for "acorn kind:app". Delete all copies of Acorn that are not located in your Applications folder.

I bought Acorn on the Mac App Store. Where's my registration number?

The Mac App Store does not provide a registration number for Acorn, since the store manages all the applications you purchase through it for you. You will notice in Acorn preferences that there is no registration tab if you bought Acorn on the App Store.

How do I upgrade to the latest version of Acorn?

If you bought Acorn from the Flying Meat Store: Open Acorn. If a dialog box doesn't pop up telling you about the latest version, you can select **Acorn** ▶ **Check for Updates**. You will be guided to download the latest version of Acorn if you don't already have it. For paid upgrades, you will be placed in 'trial' mode. If you wish to upgrade, click where it says 'trial'. Your previous registration number should self populate in the Flying Meat Store and you will be guided to provide payment.

If you decide you want to stick with the previous version and do not want to upgrade, delete the latest version of Acorn from your computer. You can download the previous version via the links shown below under 'where can I find old version of Acorn'.

If you bought Acorn from the Mac App Store: Updates are managed through the store under 'Updates'. At this time the Mac App Store does

not allow for decreased pricing for upgrading to a new major release.

Can I use the same registration on multiple computers?

Yes, you may use your Acorn registration on multiple computers as long as it is only you using the license. And if you have a single Mac with multiple people using it, you do not need to purchase an additional license. However, if you have multiple computers and multiple people wanting to use Acorn, you will need to buy an additional license for each computer.

Does Acorn support Photoshop files?

Acorn does its best to open PSD images, and if possible, preserve layers. Photoshop styles, and editable text are not supported however.

To save a layered PSD file, choose the File ▶ Export menu, and select PSD from the Format menu.

I'm a student, can I receive a discount on Acorn?

Yes, Flying Meat offers a \$15 discount on Acorn for students through our store only. We require that you send the request to support@flyingmeat.com using your student email address ending with .edu. We will then send the discount code to your student email address. The student discount cannot be used for upgrades, and is not available during promotions and sales.

Where can I find older versions of Acorn?

Here is a list of links to older versions of Acorn, just in case you need one for some reason. However, you should always be running the latest version of Acorn since it has important bug fixes that older versions do not contain.

*Acorn 1.5.5, for use with 10.4 and later:
<http://flyingmeat.com/download/Acorn-1.5.5.zip>*

*Acorn 2.6.4, for use with 10.6 and later:
<http://flyingmeat.com/download/Acorn-2.6.4.zip>*

Currently Acorn 3 is the only version for sale.

I'm not running 10.6+, can I still use Acorn?

Both Acorn 2 and 3 require 10.6+. Acorn 1.5.5 runs on 10.4+. If you wish to purchase Acorn 1.5.5, go ahead and buy Acorn 3. Email support@flyingmeat.com and let us know your registration name and number. We will create an Acorn 1.5.5 registration for you. The Acorn 3 registration will not work in 1.5.5.

What is the recommended resolution for printing?

This is a complicated topic. In general a PPI (pixels per inch) of around 200 - 300 gives good printing results. Read more [here](#) about the relationship between pixels display and printing. You can also check out our tutorial: "All about DPI, PPI, and Printing".

Is there an online forum for Acorn?

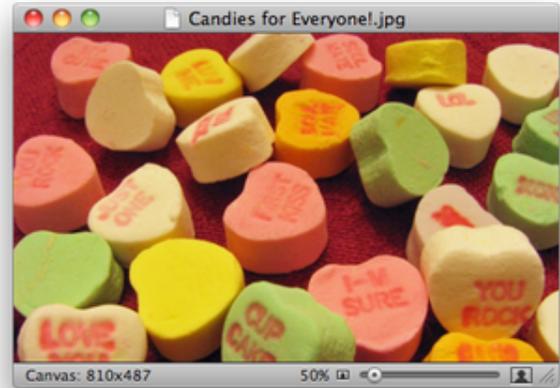
*Yes! Check out Acorn discussions and topics at Flying Meat's forum:
<http://forums.flyingmeat.com>*

Acorn Basics

- Acorn's Workspace
- Tools Palette
- Colors Palette
- Image Measurements
- Rulers and Guides
- Using Arrow Keys in the Palette
- Keyboard Shortcuts
- Preferences
- Using Acorn's Image Browser
- Creating Opening and Saving Images

Acorn's Workspace

The Canvas



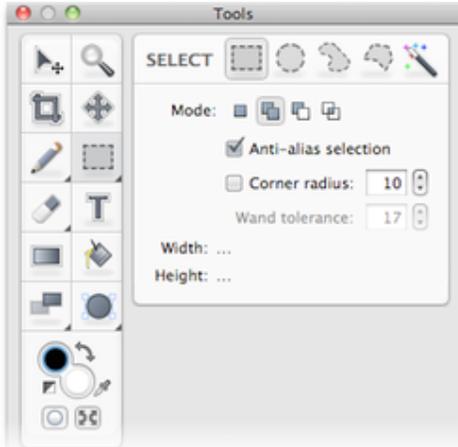
In the image above, you can see Acorn's canvas. This is where the composite of all your layers are viewed and where you draw, crop, or modify your image in other ways.

In the bottom of the window, from left to right, you can find the image size, the current zoom (or magnification) level, as well as the option to change the zoom using the slider.

Clicking on the image size label will toggle it between the image size, and the image PPI (Pixels Per Inch).

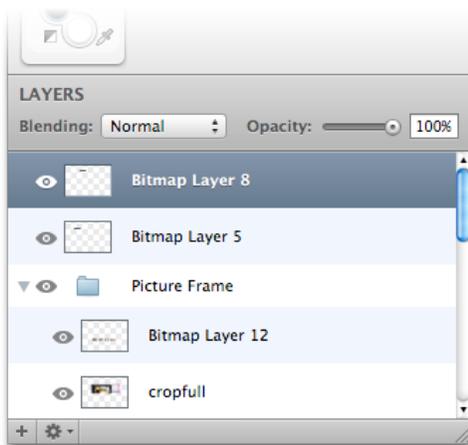
[Candy Photo - Copyright © terren](#)

Tools



The various tools of Acorn's main palette are shown above. When a tool is selected, its corresponding palette is loaded. In this case, the Select tool is chosen and its options are on display. For more on this topic, read up on the 'Tools Palette'.

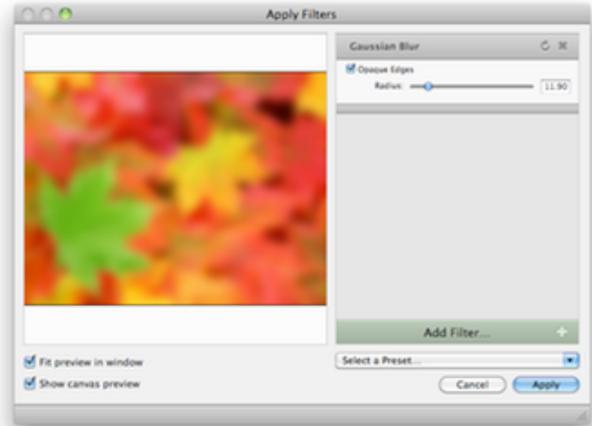
The Layers List



In this picture the layers list is highlighted. The layers list contains a list of all your layers. Layers composited together form a single image which shows up in your canvas. The window that the layers are in is called "The Tool Palette". Also, notice a pulldown for the Blending Modes, as well as a slider

for the opacity of the selected layer. For more information, read up on 'Layers'.

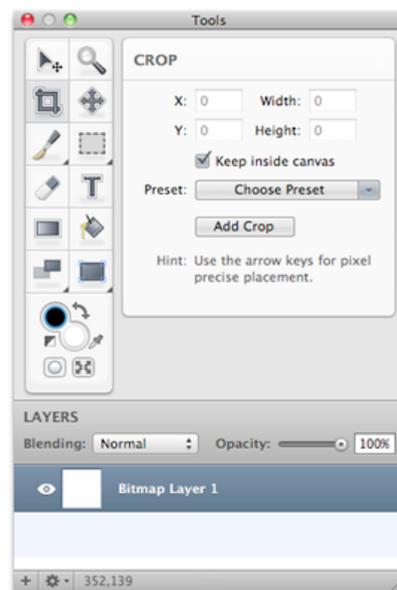
The Filter Window



This is Acorn's filter window. In it you can see a preview of what the result of your chosen filter will look like. In this example, you can see the results of a Gaussian Blur filter. For more information, read up on 'Filters'.

[Leaves Photo - Copyright © Kuttelvaserova](#)

Tools Palette



The Tools Palette has 3 sections. On the left are icons of the tools that you can use to manipulate your image. On the upper right are the settings for the tool that you are currently selecting. Towards the bottom of the palette is a list of the layers and options for manipulating them.

Tools for Moving Around



Move (Shortcut 'v')

You can use the move tool to click on a layer and rearrange the order of your layers. You can also use it to click on graphics in a shape layer, change the bounds of an image, or move the image. This is your go-to tool to start moving things around in Acorn.



Panning / Hand Tool (Shortcut 'h' or hold down 'space')

If you are zoomed in on your image or it is too big for you to see the entire thing on your monitor, use this tool to move your view around. Try out the shortcut of holding down the space bar. Once you get used to it, you will use this tool all the time.



Zoom (Shortcut 'z')

The Zoom tool is used for magnifying your image so you can see those pixels up close and personal. It can also be used for zooming out. To zoom in with the tool, simply click,

or to be more specific, drag a box around the area you want to end up on. To zoom out, hold down the option key and click. Once you start getting familiar with this action, you can also use the hot key (⌘ +) to zoom in and (⌘ -) to zoom out.



Crop (Shortcut 'c')

The Crop tool is for cropping your image down to a smaller size. Use it to define the area of your image you would like to keep. You will notice as you drag it around that there are lines dividing the new image up. These lines are helpful when choosing how to crop an image. Please read up on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_thirds for more information. If you make a mistake, place your mouse near one of the borders of the crop area and drag it out to change it.

When you are happy with the area you have selected press return to accept, or **esc** to cancel.



Rect, Oval, Free, and Polygon Select Tools (Shortcut 'm')

These tools will allow you to make various types of selections in your image. Use the rectangular selection tool to make a straight rectangular selection, the oval tool to make a round selection, or the freehand tools to make a selection that goes wherever you want. If you have a selection and would like to select another area as well, hold down the **shift key** while using one of the selection tools and the new area will be added to the existing area. Similarly if you selected something you don't want, you can hold

down the **option key** while using one of the tools and the new area will be subtracted from the existing selection. If that sounds confusing, give it a try and see what happens.



Magic Wand (Shortcut 'w')

The Magic Wand tool works by selecting a single pixel, and then expanding that selection out to neighboring pixels that are the same color. You can adjust the tolerance so that there is a little bit more freedom in determining if a neighboring pixel should be selected or not. This is helpful for selecting all the white in the background and deleting it quickly. Play around with tolerance and feathering to improve the result. The tolerance of the wand can be adjusted in the tools palette, or by clicking on the desired color in your image while simultaneously dragging outwards or inwards.



Brush and Pencil (Shortcut 'b')

This is your most basic tool for getting new pixels down on the canvas. You can adjust the size of the brush and opacity for different results. Holding down the shift key will let you draw in only straight lines.



Eraser and Instant Alpha (Shortcut 'e')

The eraser and instant alpha are good for removing pixels from a bitmap image. If

there is a layer underneath it, it will be exposed. For more on how layers work read the 'Layers' section. You can also hold down the shift key to erase in straight lines. Instant alpha is an erasing tool that has similar qualities to the magic wand selection tool. Click on the color you want erased and simultaneously drag outwards to increase the erasing tolerance, or inwards to decrease.



Flood Fill (Shortcut 'k')

The flood fill tool works similarly to the magic wand, but instead of selecting the area the flood tool replaces that color with the foreground color. The tolerance setting lets you adjust the thoroughness of the fill. Try experimenting!



Gradient (Shortcut 'g')

Use the Gradient tool to fill in your image, shape, or selected area with a gradual gradient. The linear gradient tool will produce an even color from the point you click to the place where you release your click, while the radial tool will produce a circular gradient expanding from where you initially clicked on the canvas to where you release your click.



Text (Shortcut 't')

The text tool allows you to put text onto an image. Selecting the tool and clicking once on your image will allow you to start typing.

Once you are done hit the enter key, or change to the move tool to solidify the text that you have written. Using the text tool will add the text on top of the image as a new layer. By using the move tool you can move the text around and align it however you want.

If you are looking for more options with the text, go to the menu **Window ▶ Fonts** to pull up the font palette.



Shapes (Shortcut 'p', 'r', 'o', ';')

Shapes include Bezier, rectangle, ellipse, and line. Simple shapes can be added to your image using the Shape tool. They can also be edited later on by using the Move tool to select, move, and adjust the bounds using the handles.



Colors

The two color wells represent what you have currently set as your primary color (top left) and secondary color (bottom right). Clicking on the arrows on the top right allow you to quickly switch the color positions. If your colors aren't currently set to black and white, you can re-set them by clicking the square box on the bottom left. The eye dropper on the bottom right allows you to click on any color in your image, and it will then show up as your primary color in the color well.



Quick Mask (Shortcut 'q')

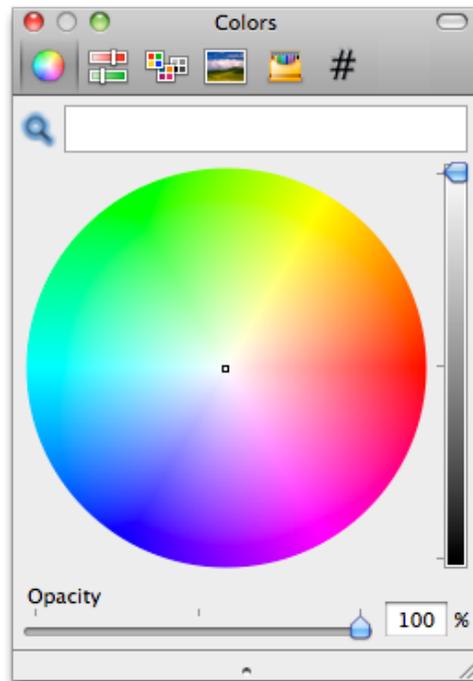
The quick mask mode button can be found on the bottom left hand side of the tools palette under the color wells. Quick mask mode is an additional way of making selections in Acorn, and can be combined with other selection tools such as the magic wand to refine a selection. You can use the brush, eraser, and even filters when quick mask mode is enabled.



Full Screen (Shortcut 'f')

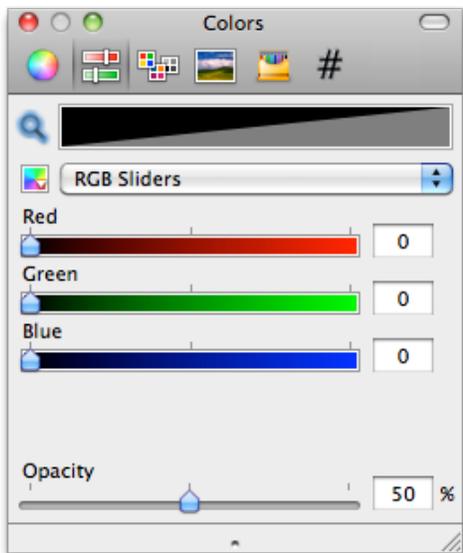
Going to full screen mode allows you to expand Acorn to the entire screen. Toggle between regular screen and full screen mode quickly by using keyboard shortcut 'f'.

Colors Palette



The **Colors Palette** lets you pick, sample and store colors in a variety of ways. If you are having trouble finding the **Colors Palette**, you can pull it up if you go to **Window** ▶ **Colors** or by typing ⌘⇧C.

Selecting Colors



Along the top of the window is a toolbar with various options to pick colors. There are wheels, sliders, spectrums, crayons, and hexadecimal color codes. Playing around with the sliders is one way to get results.

If you already have a picture with the color you want then click on the **magnifying glass**, put the crosshairs over the color you want, and click once. This will set the new color to the one you just sampled. An alternative way to bring up the magnifying glass is **View** ▶ **Select Color**.

When you have picked a color, it will show up in the color bar next to the magnifying glass.

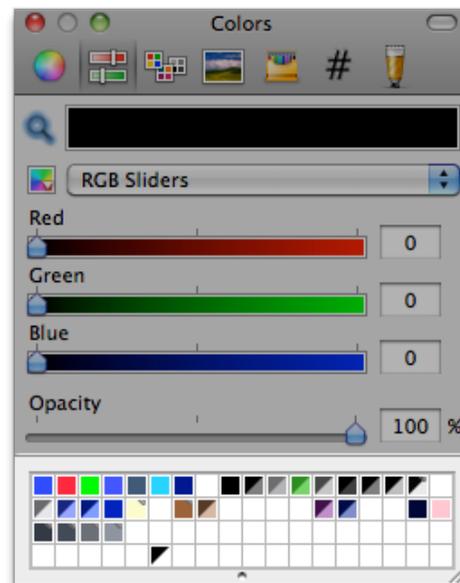
Adjusting the Opacity

You can adjust how opaque / transparent your color is by adjusting the opacity slider at the bottom of the color palette. A transparent color will have a vertical slash through it in the color bar. The top portion is what the original color looks like without opacity, and the bottom is with the opacity applied:



Pro Tip: If you want to see both the color and opacity level of an existing color in your image, select the brush tool then hold down the option key while clicking on the color. The color and its opacity will be displayed in the colors palette.

Swatches



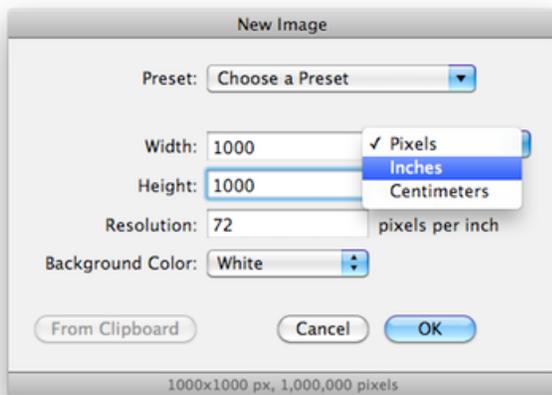
Colors can also be stored by dragging the color from the color bar down onto the grid at the bottom of the palette. If you don't see the grid, pull on the bottom part of the color window as if it was a drawer.

Keeping a swatch library can save you time later if you consistently use the same colors. Any color swatch that you drag down into this section can be accessed from most other applications on your computer. If you

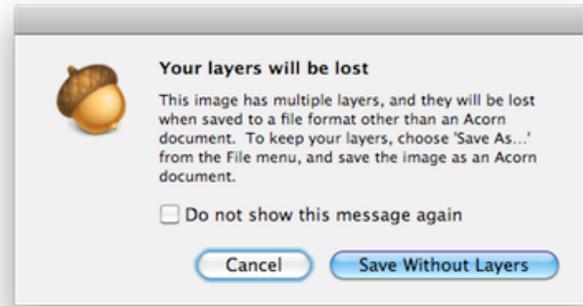
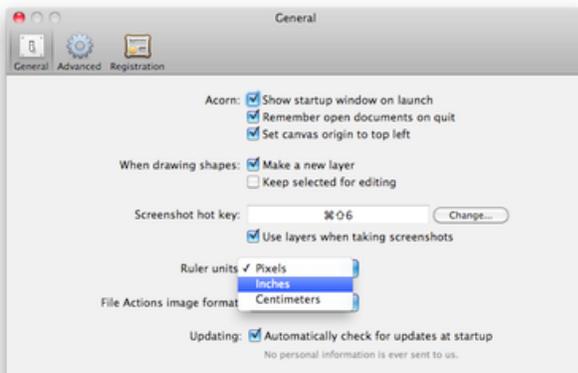
have a green you use on all of your stationary, you can store it and use it in Voodoo Pad, Keynote, Pages, Mail, iWeb, etc.

Image Measurements

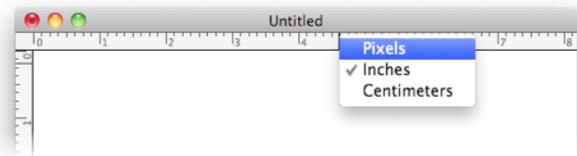
Images in Acorn can be in units of pixels, inches, or centimeters. When creating a new image in Acorn, you will be given the choice of which measurement unit you wish to apply.



If you wish to change the measurement unit in an existing image, you have a couple of options. You can go to **Acorn** \blacktriangleright **Preferences** \blacktriangleright **General** \blacktriangleright **Ruler Units** and make your selection.



You can also modify the base measurement unit if you have rulers present on your image (**View** \blacktriangleright **Show Rulers**). Right click on one of the rulers and make your selection.



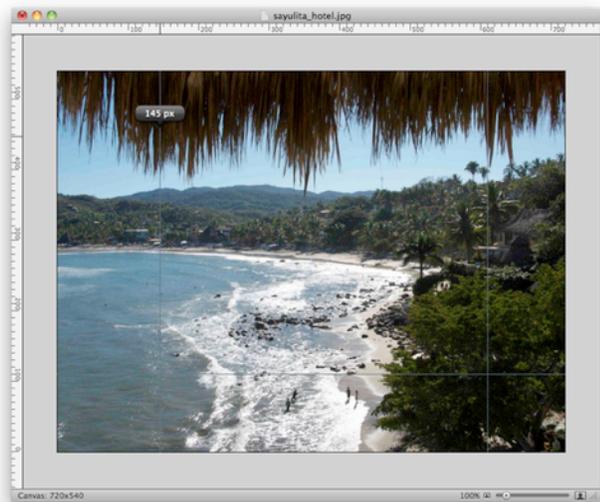
Rulers and Guides

Sometimes things need to be lined up perfectly and relying on human eyes isn't necessary with Acorn. Rulers can be found under **View** \blacktriangleright **Show Rulers** (⌘ R). Rulers will be displayed around the canvas on the top and left hand sides. The measurements the rulers can display are pixels, inches, and centimeters. To change the measurement unit, right click on one of the rulers. The bottom left hand corner of the canvas is the (0,0) point on the x,y axis. If you want to change the (0,0) point to the top left of the canvas, go to **Acorn** \blacktriangleright **Preferences** \blacktriangleright **General**.

Guide Basics

Guides can be created by clicking on either the horizontal or vertical ruler and dragging it out onto the canvas. To move a guide, click

and drag on the guide with the Move Tool. Notice that as the guide is moved around on the canvas, the measurement number changes based on where the guide is located. If you are placing a horizontal guide then the number reflects where you are on the vertical or "y" axis and if you are placing a vertical guide it is where you are on the horizontal or "x" axis.



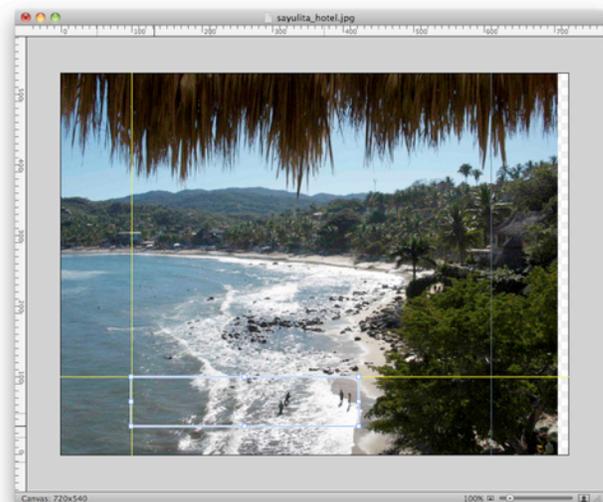
You can duplicate guides without going all the way back to the ruler by hovering over a guide you want to duplicate, then holding down the option key while clicking and dragging.

Guides can be hidden, cleared, locked, and created under **View ▶ Guides**. They can also be deleted by dragging them off the canvas. Guides can additionally be created under the canvas contextual menu (right click on the image to bring this menu up). Guides will not print on your image and are not visibly present when you "print preview".

Aligning with Guides

If you have created guides and want to align layers perfectly to them, go to **the Move tool**. Make sure "Snap To: Guides" is checked. This will take the guess work out

of getting your layers to align perfectly on the guides. The guides that can be "snapped to" will turn yellow to let you know which guides are being used. You can align your layer by its outer boundaries, by its horizontal or vertical center, or by a combination of those options. In the image below, a rectangle shape is aligned at its upper left hand corner with 2 guides.



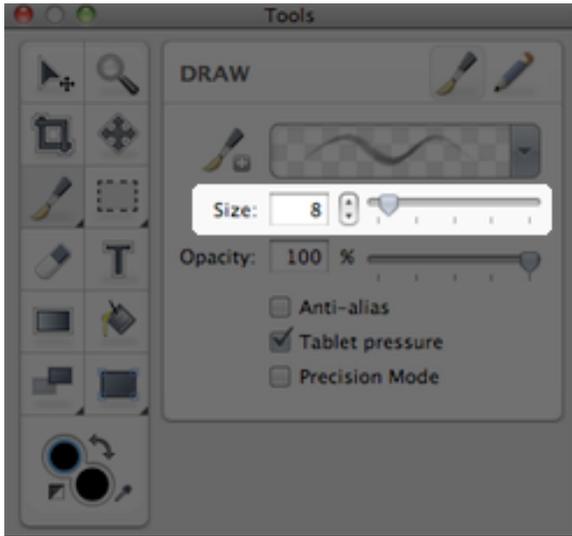
Mexico Photo: Courtesy of Kirstin and August Mueller

Using Arrow Keys in the Palette

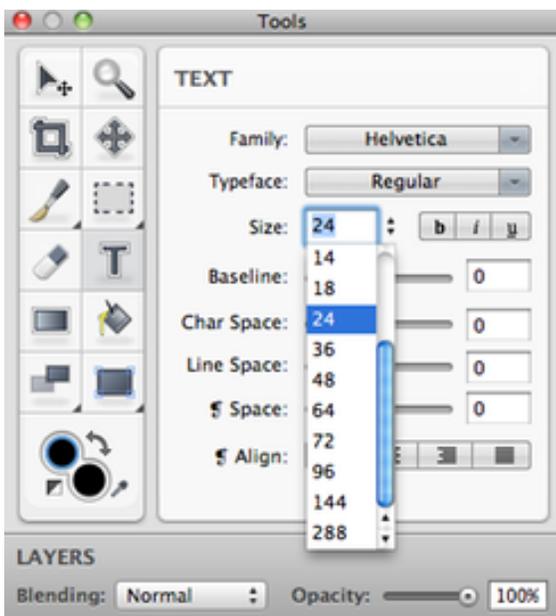
In several of the tools palette's there are fields to enter numbers. The number in the field will change the size of text, brush size, percentage of opacity, flood fill tolerance, etc.

This example will use brush size. Below is a shot of the Tools Palette showing the Brush Palette. There is a field for you to enter a number (now set at 8). Next to that are up (▲) and down (▼) arrows to adjust the size, and to the right of the arrows there is a slider. You may also wish to change the number in the field by clicking inside the field, and using the up and down arrow keys

on your keyboard. As you do this, notice the slider will move according to the number in the field.



This is different only in the field for text. When you click inside the box and use your keyboard arrow keys, the menu will drop down giving you a selection of sizes. You can manually enter any number you wish. The arrows to the right will also open the drop down menu.



Keyboard Shortcuts

If you often find yourself using the mouse to change the current tool you are using, you might be able to speed up the process by memorizing a few keyboard shortcuts. If you forget which key goes to which function, take a look at the menus.

If multiple tools are located under one icon (for example, there are 2 tools under the eraser icon), clicking on the keyboard shortcut for that tool will cycle through the various options.

Don't like a particular shortcut, or wish a menu item had one? You can change or add shortcuts via the Keyboard System Preferences, under the "Application Shortcuts" section.

Under **Acorn** ▶ **Preferences** ▶ **Advanced** there is the option to autoload a palette when using keyboard shortcuts for tools (such as 'b' for brush, or 'v' for the arrow tool). When a tool's shortcut is used, that tool's palette will then be displayed. With this option disabled whatever tool is clicked on will be displayed in the palette, but when keyboard shortcuts are used the corresponding palette will not be shown. This makes it easier to switch back and forth from the shape or text tools to another tool, without losing the original palette's focus.

Tool Palette

| | | | |
|-------|--|----------|--|
| <Tab> | Toggle Palette | C | Crop |
| V | Move | D | Reset front and back colors |
| B | Brush | H | Pan |
| K | Flood Fill | I | Eye dropper / color picker |
| E | Erase, Instant Alpha | Z | Magnify / Zoom |
| O | Oval Shape | R | Rectangle Shape |
| T | Text | L | Line |
| Q | Quick Mask | F | Full Screen |
| ⇧O | Smudge, Dodge, Burn, Clone | X | Swap the front and back colors |
| P | Bézier curve | N | Pencil |
|] | Increase brush size. Hold down the ⌘ key to increment in fractions. | Spacebar | Switch to the pan tool momentarily |
| [| Decrease brush size Hold down the ⌘ key to decrement in fractions | M, S | Marque / Selection Pressing m or s multiple times will cycle through the rect, oval, and lasso selection tools. |

Layers

| | |
|-------|--|
| 0,1-9 | Cycle the current layer through various levels of transparency |
| ⌘] | Select next layer |
| ⌘ [| Select previous layer |

Magnification / Zoom

| | |
|----|----------|
| ⌘+ | Zoom in |
| ⌘- | Zoom out |
| ⌘1 | 100%. |

| | |
|----|-------------------------------|
| ⌘2 | 200% |
| ⌘3 | 400% |
| ⌘4 | Toggle between 800% and 3500% |
| ⌘5 | Toggle between 50% and 25% |

Misc

| | | | |
|--------|---|----------|---|
| ⇧ Drag | Constrain the oval or rectangle selections and shapes to equal sides. | ⌘F | Perform the last filter again |
| ⌘⇧6 | Make a new image from a screenshot | ⌘A | Select All |
| ESC | Cancel current transform or crop operation | ⌘ Delete | Fill the current selection or canvas with foreground color. |
| ⌘^ | Anchors the Tool Palette to the top right | ⌘⇧Delete | Fill the current selection or canvas with background color |
| ⌘⇧C | Show / Hide the Color Palette | ⇧Delete | Brings up the Fill... panel. |
| ⌘T | Show / Hide the Font Palette | Delete | Deletes contents of currently selected layer |
| ⌘D | Remove Selection. | | |

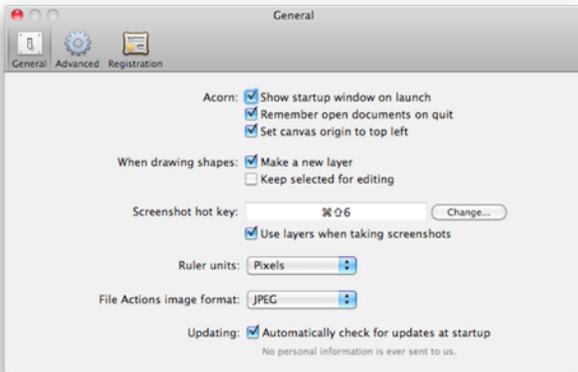
Legend

| | |
|---|-------------|
| ⌘ | Command Key |
| ^ | Control Key |
| ⌘ | Option Key |
| ⇧ | Shift Key |

Preferences

The Preference Panel for Acorn is located under **Acorn ▶ Preferences**. There are three tabs labeled General, Advanced, and Registration.

General



The General tab includes preferences for Acorn such as turning on and off the startup menu, auto-selecting layers, and remembering which documents were open last time you quit. You can choose to set your canvas origin to top left by checking the corresponding box, or bottom left by unchecking it. General preferences includes options for drawing shapes and automatically checking for updates when you open Acorn. There is also the option to change the hot key for taking a screenshot in Acorn, the option to turn screenshot layers on and off, and the choice of ruler units (pixels, centimeters, or inches).

Advanced



The Advanced tab gives you options to change the background color of full screen mode, set the speed of the Precision Brush, and to hide the warning for saving layers to flat files. You can choose to turn on or off snap to guides and document bounds which allows you to line up layers and shapes precisely. It also includes preferences on using the image size for paper size when printing, making new layers for text boxes, hiding cursor tooltips, and ignoring trackpad gestures (applies to Macbooks only).

Registration

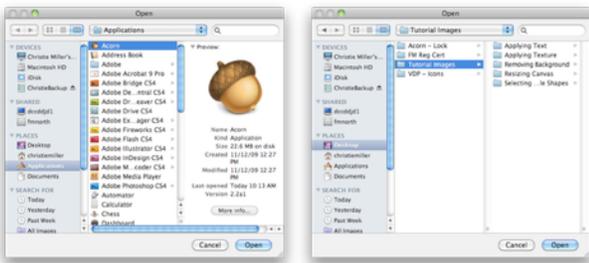


This is where you enter your name and registration number for Acorn (not applicable for Mac App Store version). Once your registration number is entered, it will be saved here for future reference. There is a link to the Flying Meat store where you can purchase upgrades and other software, and a link to the Support page where you can request lost registration numbers.

Using the Acorn Image Browser

There are 2 ways to browse images files through Acorn.

The first method is to go to **File ▶ Open Folder** (⇧⌘O). Choose either a folder that contains images, or an application.



The second method is to hold **⌘** (option, command) and drag your file or the icon of the application and drop it on top of the Acorn icon in your Dock.

Either way, the image browser will appear in Acorn with all the images contained within the folder or application.

Creating, Opening, and Saving Images

Opening Up Acorn

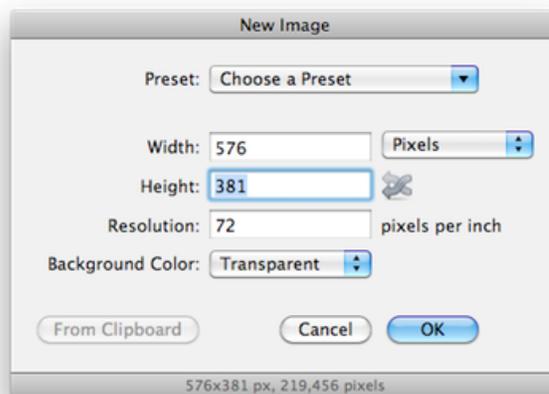
When you first open Acorn you will be greeted by an image similar to this one:



You can choose to create a new image, open an image, or choose from a list of images recently opened in Acorn. If you do not want this window to appear every time you launch Acorn, uncheck the box in the lower left hand corner.

Creating a New Image

To create a new image, choose **File ▶ New** (⌘N).



You can choose a preset image size, or you can enter your desired dimensions manually. If you are manually entering the dimensions, you have the option to use different measurement values including pixels, inches, and centimeters. You can also select your image resolution and background color. If you are planning on printing your image later, it is a good idea to choose a resolution of around

300 PPI. For more information on PPI, read 'All about DPI, PPI, and Printing'.

Opening Existing Images

To open an image, choose the **File ▶ Open** menu. You can also drag and drop images onto Acorn's icon in the dock. If you would like to combine two or more images together, use the **File ▶ Add Images** menu or drag and drop your images from the Finder into Acorn's canvas or layers list.

If Acorn is running and you have an image on your clipboard that you would like to open in Acorn, right-click on the Acorn icon in the dock and select "New Image from Clipboard".



Also make sure to read up on 'Inserting Images', which describes how to combine and resize images.

Saving Images

You can save images by selecting **File ▶ Save** or **File ▶ Save As**. When working with an image editor such as Acorn, it is a good idea to always work off a copy of an image rather than the original. When in doubt, select **File ▶ Save As** and re-name the file so

you don't accidentally make permanent changes to your original image! Also, be aware that saving certain file types will "flatten" your layers so that you cannot edit them easily later. Acorn will warn you if you are at risk of losing your layers when saving, unless you have checked the 'do not show this message again' box.

When in doubt, be sure to save a copy of your file as .acorn.

Image File Formats Acorn Supports

| | |
|-------|--|
| Acorn | Acorn files are the native file type of Acorn. This is the most robust file format that Acorn supports. When saving in this format all of your layers, grid settings, text and shapes are saved. You are able to edit them when you re-open the image. This is the recommended format for editing images with layers in Acorn. If in doubt, save your image in this format. The file extension for Acorn images is .acorn |
|-------|--|

| | |
|-----------|---|
| JPEG | <p>JPEG is a very popular image format used primarily for photographs. Since JPEG is a lossy format, it is not ideal for graphics with text.</p> <p>File extensions for JPEG are .jpeg and .jpg. If you prefer to save with the .jpg extension, manually enter it in the "save as" field as the file extension. Acorn will remember that you prefer .jpg over .jpeg next time you save.</p> <p>Acorn can read and write JPEG images. Read more about JPEG on Wikipedia.</p> |
| JPEG 2000 | <p>JPEG 2000 was designed to be the successor to JPEG.</p> <p>The file extension for JPEG 2000 is .jp2</p> <p>Acorn can read and write JPEG 2000 images. Read more about JPEG 2000 on Wikipedia.</p> |
| PNG | <p>PNG stands for Portable Network Graphics, and is a lossless 32 bit image format. If you need to have crisp text or transparency in your image, PNG is the way to go.</p> <p>The file extension for PNG is .png</p> <p>Acorn can read and write PNG images. Read more about PNG on Wikipedia.</p> |

| | |
|------|--|
| GIF | <p>GIF stands for Graphics Interchange Format, and is a lossless 8 bit image format. Since GIF files can only use up to 256 colors in an image, you will only want to use this format for specific web applications.</p> <p>The file extension for GIF is .gif</p> <p>Acorn can read and write GIF images. Read more about GIF on Wikipedia.</p> |
| BMP | <p>BMP is a popular image format on Microsoft Windows.</p> <p>The file extension for BMP is .bmp</p> <p>Acorn can read and write BMP images. Read more about BMP on Wikipedia.</p> |
| TIFF | <p>TIFF stands for Tagged Image File Format. TIFF is a lossless 32 bit image format and can preserve transparency.</p> <p>The file extensions for TIFF are .tiff and .tif</p> <p>Acorn can read and write TIFF images. Read more about TIFF on Wikipedia.</p> |
| FXG | <p>FXG (Flash XML Graphics) is an XML based graphics interchange format created by Adobe. FXG is still in development, but Acorn supports limited reading and writing of FXG files.</p> <p>The file extension for FXG is .fxg</p> <p>Read more about FXG on Wikipedia.</p> |

| | |
|------|---|
| PSD | <p>PSD is the native file type for Adobe Photoshop images. Acorn does its best to open PSD images, and if possible, preserve layers. Photoshop styles, and editable text are not supported. Acorn supports writing PSD files via File ▶ Export.</p> <p>The file extension for PSD is .psd</p> |
| WebP | <p>WebP (pronounced "weepy") is a lossy image format similar to JPEG. WebP is a highly compressed image format created by Google to help speed up the web. Acorn can read WebP images, and can save WebP images via the Web Export panel.</p> <p>The file extension for WebP is .webp</p> <p>Read more about WebP on Wikipedia.</p> |
| PDF | <p>PDF stands for Portable Document Format, and is an open standard developed by Adobe Systems. Acorn can read and save PDF files.</p> <p>The file extension for PDF is .pdf</p> <p>Read more about PDF on Wikipedia.</p> |

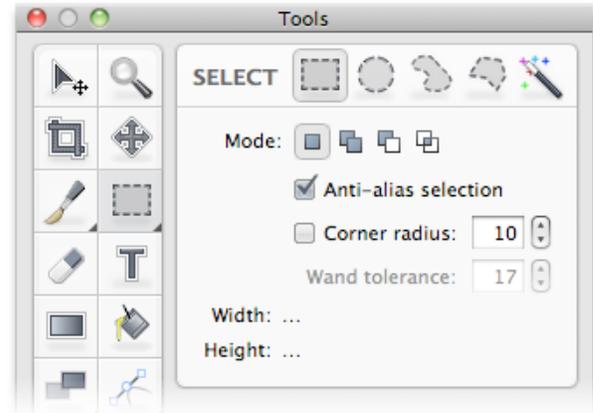
| | |
|-----|---|
| RAW | <p>Quoting Wikipedia, "A camera raw image file contains minimally processed data from the image sensor of either a digital camera, image scanner, or motion picture film scanner. Raw files are so named because they are not yet processed and therefore are not ready to be printed or edited with a bitmap graphics editor."</p> <p>Acorn can import any RAW image that Mac OS X can natively read. Occasionally, Apple will add support for new RAW formats via system updates.</p> <p>There are many file extensions for RAW files.</p> <p>See also: RAW Image Support</p> |
|-----|---|

Acorn Tools

- Selection Tools
- Drawing Tools
- Gradient Tool
- Clone Tool
- Dodge, Burn, and Smudge
- Flood Fill
- Shape Tools
- Type
- Crop

Selection Tools

Acorn's Selection Palette



Acorn gives you a handful of ways to make selections on your image.

| | |
|---|--|
|  | The Rectangle selection will allow you to make rectangular selections. |
|  | The Elliptical selection tool will allow you to make oval selections. |
|  | The Freehand selection tool allows you to make freehand selections. This is great if you have a selection that does not fit in a box or a square. |
|  | The Polygonal selection tool allows you make odd selections, but by making multiple clicks. Finish off your selection with a double click. |
|  | The Magic Wand selection tool will select areas of the same color that you clicked on. You can adjust the tolerance (how close a color has to be to the one you clicked on) in the selection palette. For a live adjustment of the magic wand tolerance, you can click on the color in your image and drag the magic wand on the canvas inwards (to decrease the tolerance) or outwards (to increase the tolerance). |

The shortcut key for switching to a selection tool is 'M'. Pressing **M** multiple times will then cycle through all the selection tools.

To remove a selection, choose the menu item **Select ▶ Clear Selection**, or use the shortcut **⌘D**.

Selection Tips

- To draw a perfect circle (or square), hold down the shift key after you have started your selection.
- To grow a selection from the middle of where you clicked, press the option key after you have started your selection.
- To add to a selection, hold down the shift key before you start your selection. The selection cursor will change to include a plus sign.
- To delete from a selection, hold down the option key before you start your selection. The selection cursor will change to include a minus sign.

Preset Selections and Making Selections Fit Exact Dimensions

Acorn offers preset selection dimensions under **Select ▶ Preset Selections**. If you want your selection a specific size that is not a preset, check out the online video tutorial [here](#).

Feathering a Selection

The Feather command will soften up the edges of your selection. You can bring up the feather sheet from the **Select ▶ Feather** menu item. The higher the feather radius, the softer your selection will become. The

following image was made by first creating a circular selection, feathering with a radius of 10, and then choosing the **Edit ▶ Fill** menu item.

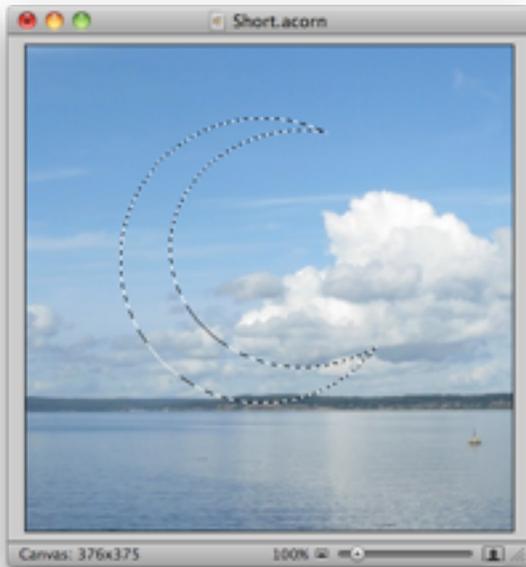


This image was made the same way, but by using the Inverse command under the Select menu before doing a fill:



View Selection Clipped Out vs. Marching Ants

There are two different ways to view your selection. The first is the traditional "Marching Ants":



You can also choose to view your selection as "clipped out":



Is there an advantage to using one or the other? Not really- but it turns out some folks really like the clipped out look, and others

like the marching ants. You can alternate between these two options via **Select ▶ View Selection As** or use shortcut **⌘**.

[Water/Sky Photo - Public Domain](#)

Moving Selections

Once you have made a selection, you can move it around with the arrow keys. In addition to this, you can hold down the **⌘** (command) key and Acorn will first cut out the selection and then move it around your image. Letting go of **⌘** will then place your floating selection.

You can hold down **⌘** and **⌥** (option) when using the arrow keys, and Acorn will continually copy + place your selection around as you move it. Hold down the shift key to make the selection move by 10 pixels each time you press an arrow key.

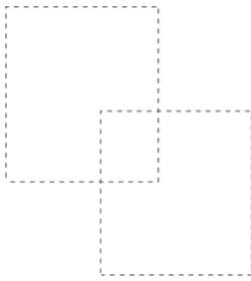
The same trick works with the mouse, just hold down **⌘** **⌥** **⬆** when moving your selection with the mouse.

Addition, Subtraction, and Intersection Modes

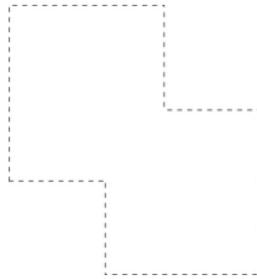


There are four selection modes available in Acorn. Listing them from left to right as they are displayed in the selection palette, they include: regular, addition, subtraction, and intersection.

Addition - When two or more selections overlap, they will be joined together to create a single selection encompassing all areas of the original selections.

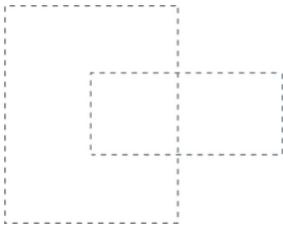


Original Selection

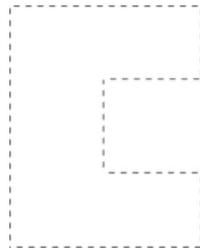


Addition Mode

Subtraction - When you draw a selection over an existing selection, it will remove that area of the original selection.

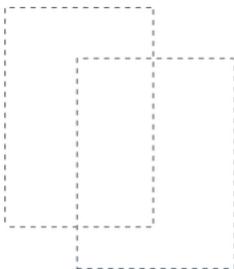


Original Selection



Subtraction Mode

Intersection - Where selections overlap, only the area of overlap will be retained as a selection.



Original Selection



Intersection Mode

Quick Mask



The quick mask mode button can be found on the bottom left hand side of the tools palette under the color wells. Quick mask mode is an additional way of making selections in Acorn, and can be combined with other selection tools such as the magic wand to refine a selection. You can use the brush, eraser, and even filters when quick mask mode is enabled.

When you enter quick mask mode, it helps to think of your selection as a virtual layer which happens to be either red tinted or clear. Painting with the color white in quick mask mode removes the tinted color overlay. Painting with black restores the color overlay. Anywhere you paint with white is where your selection will be, and when you exit quick mask mode the clear overlay (which you painted with white) will change into a standard selection. Toggle with keyboard shortcut 'q' to view your selections within and outside of quick mask.

For more detailed information on how quick mask mode works, read the tutorial 'Quick Mask Mode'.

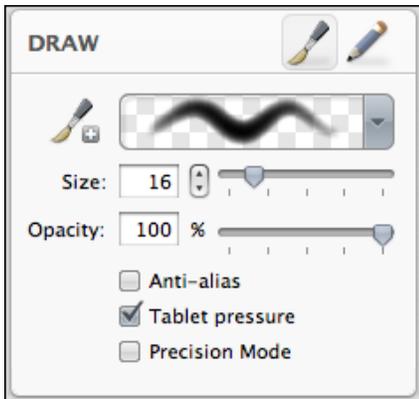
Drawing Tools

Using Acorn's brush and pencil

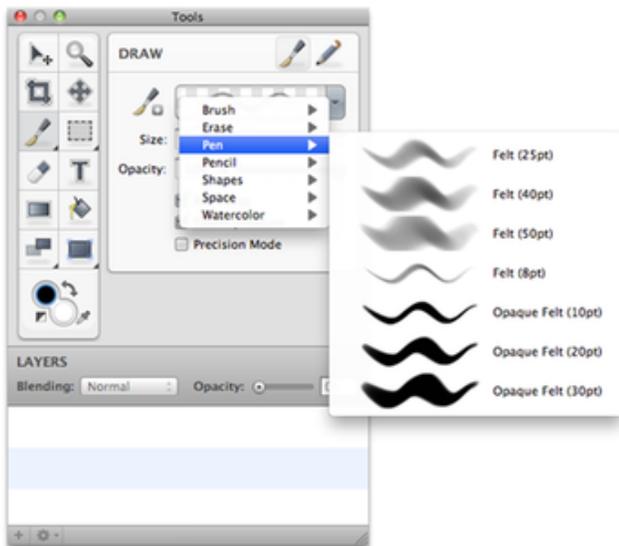
Acorn has two drawing tools: Brush (B) and Pencil (N). Brushes are used primarily for painting and drawing because they create soft, smooth lines. The pencil is most useful for when you are zoomed in and you need to edit single pixels. This is because the pencil has sharper edges than the brush tool.



Brush (B)



Settings for the brush tool are found in the Draw palette. Here you can adjust the size and opacity of your brush. You can also turn on and off the tablet pressure, anti-aliasing, and Precision Mode. The size of the brush can also be adjusted by holding down the control and option keys at the same time while clicking on the mouse and moving it left (to decrease size) or right (to increase size).



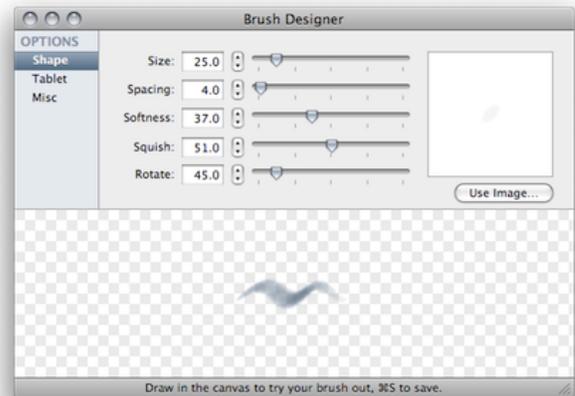
There is also a drop down for selecting different types of preset brushes. You can se-

lect from Brushes, Pens, Pencils, Shapes, and more.



Acorn's Brush Designer

Next to the drop down there is a little brush icon with a plus sign next to it. Clicking on this will open the Brush Designer which allows you to customize and save your own brushes. Alternatively, you can bring up the brush designer by clicking on **Window > Brush Designer**.



The Brush Designer is a powerful tool that allows you to make your very own brushes or modify existing ones. Simply draw in the canvas provided, change the settings for the brush, and watch your brush strokes update to the new settings. Here is a rundown of the various options:

Shape Options

Size

This is the width and height of your brush. To make your brush bigger or smaller, modify this setting.

Spacing

Acorn uses a dabbing (also known as stamping) method for its brushes. In essence, a brush stroke is a whole bunch of stamps of the same image over and over again. The spacing option decides how close together those stamps appear.

Softness

This option alters the brush stroke to have a softer or harder edge.

Squish

Do you want your brush to have a slight angle to it, like a felt tip pen might have? Use this option to decide how much of an angle.

Rotate

This will rotate your brush dab to your desired angle.

Use Image...

If you have a pre-existing image you would like to use as the brush, select Use Image. Alternatively, the stamp preview will allow you to drag and drop images into it. You can make a brush pattern in Acorn, and then drag and drop the image into the preview.

Tablet Options

Faster drawing / less accurate strokes

When this is turned on, Acorn will throw out some of the data it receives from your tablet in order to perform faster drawing. However, it also means that drawing will not be quite as accurate. Turn this option on if you have a slower computer, or you are not happy with the speed of Acorn's drawing.

Use tablet pressure for opacity

When this is turned on Acorn will make your brush strokes more or less opaque, depending on the pressure you use with your tablet stylus.

Use tablet pressure for stroke width

When this is turned on Acorn will alter your brush strokes to be thicker or thinner, depending on the pressure you apply with your stylus.

Tablet pressure range

This slider alters the minimum bound for the pressure sensitive options. If you find that there is too much range in the stroke width, you can change this setting to make your brush strokes less skinny.

Misc Options

Dab opacity

This is the amount of transparency that your brush will use when drawing. A lower value means it is more transparent.

Jitter

This option adds a range of randomness to your brush strokes.

Brush blending

Control how the brush strokes are applied to your image. Use Multiply for a felt tip pen feeling, or Darker if you want your brush strokes to add darkness to the image.

Rotate brush

This will rotate the brush depending on the direction you are drawing. Works great with shapes.

Color image

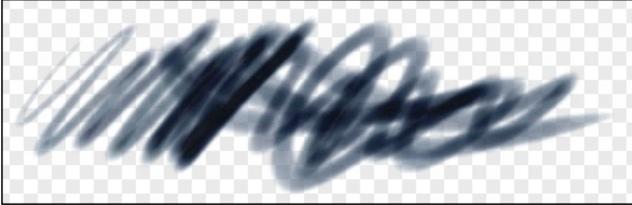
If you are using a custom image for the brush (as set up under the Shape Options), you can turn this on to make your image/brush change its color to whatever you have set in the foreground color well. If you turn this off, Acorn will use whatever colors are in the image for the brush (like with the "Pencil Handle" shape brush).

Smooth lines

With this option turned on, Acorn will try and smooth out any edges it finds when drawing. This is especially useful when drawing with the mouse.

Examples

A brush with blending set to multiply:



The same brush, with blending set to normal:



Saving a Brush

To save your brush, type **⌘S** and a sheet will appear asking you for a name and category for the brush. You can add your brush to an existing category, or create a new one. Custom brushes are saved to your **~/Library/Application Support/Acorn/Brushes/** folder. You can exchange your brushes with friends over email simply by sending them your saved brush from the Finder. You can also delete brushes you have created from the Finder.

Read the 'Shape Brushes' Tutorial for more step by step guidance.



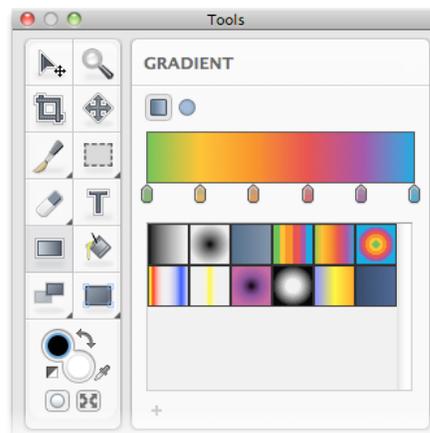
Pencil (N)

The Pencil tool also uses the Draw palette. There is no drop down for the pencil tool. The pencil tool can be changed in size and opacity, and also looks different depending on whether or not the Anti-Alias checkbox is selected.

Gradient Tool

Gradient Tool Basics

The Gradient tool is similar to the Flood Fill tool in that it fills an entire area with color. Unlike the Flood Fill tool, the Gradient Tool will fill an area with more than one color. The colors of your gradient depend on the colors you have selected with the tabs located just below the gradient display. A rainbow gradient is shown below. You can see in the Gradient Palette that it shows a sample of what these colors will look like as a gradient. You can choose a linear or radial gradient by clicking one of the buttons towards the top left of the gradient palette. Below a linear gradient is chosen.

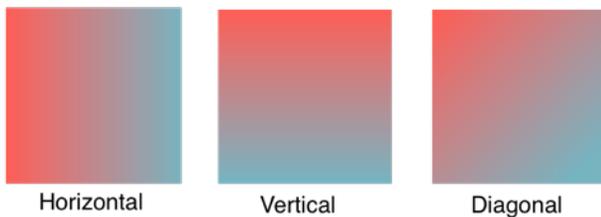


Linear Gradient



Select the Gradient Tool from your palette (keyboard shortcut "G"). When you move your cursor over your canvas, it will become a crosshair. Click and drag your cursor over your canvas and the gradient will grow as you drag. When you release the click, the gradient you have drawn can no longer be modified. The further you drag the cursor, the more mixed the colors will be in the gradient. To create a perfectly horizontal, 45 degree diagonal, or vertical gradient, hold the **Shift** key while dragging out your gradient.

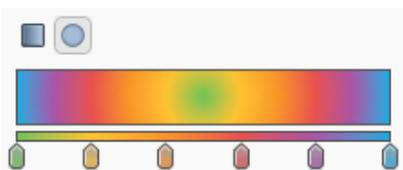
Here are examples of horizontal, vertical, and diagonal linear gradients:



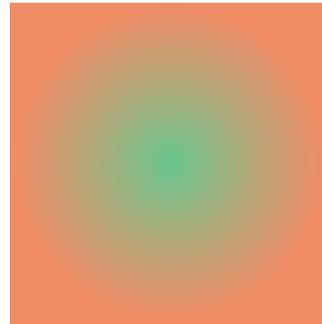
Radial Gradient



Select "Radial Gradient" by clicking on the circular button towards the top left in the Gradient Palette. Moving the tabs in the radial gradient has different effects than in a linear gradient, so there are two gradient displays showing how the gradient looks both radially and linearly.

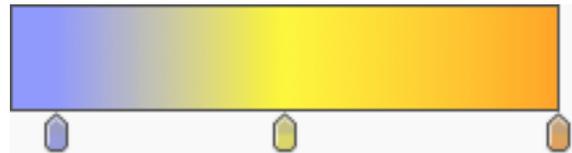


Creating a Radial Gradient works similar to Linear Gradient, but the point where you start your cursor will be the center of the gradient. The farther you drag your cursor, the more the colors will mix towards the center.

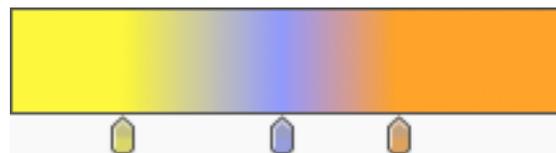


Gradient Colors

The gradient color positions are controlled by the tabs just below the gradient display.

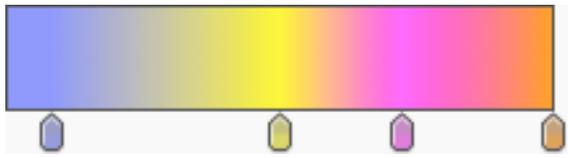
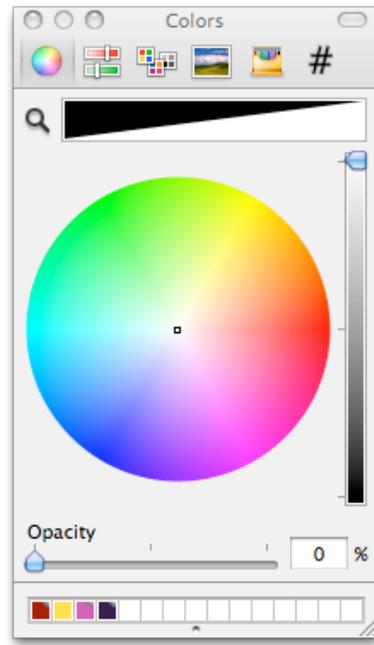
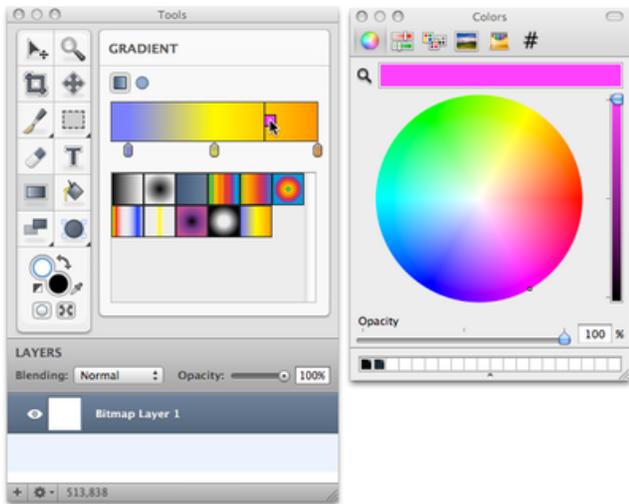


Moving the tabs left and right will change the position and ratio of the colors.



To **remove** a color, just click and hold on that color's tab then drag and drop it off of the gradient palette. Poof! It's gone!

To **add** a color to your gradient, open the colors palette. Select your desired color so that it shows up in the colors palette top display window (just to the right of the magnifying glass). Drag and drop the color from the colors palette top display window into the gradient display.



And the gradient in your toolbox will look similar to this:



To **change** a color in your gradient, double click on that color's tab. Its current color will show up in the colors palette. Now you can change the color by selecting a new color.

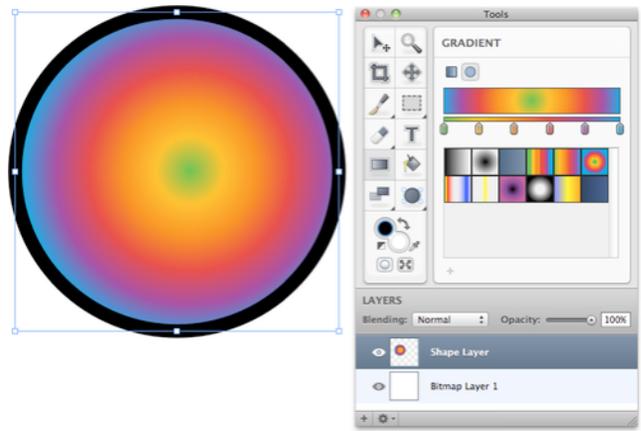
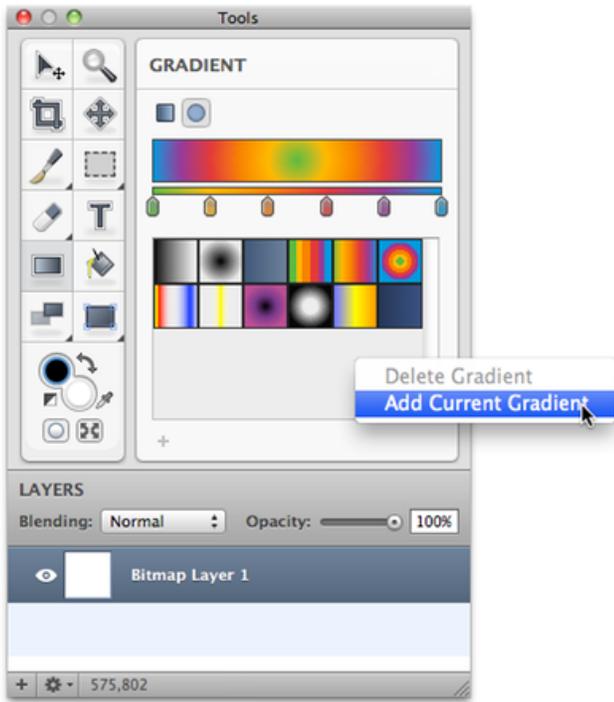
To **duplicate** a color in your gradient, hold down the option key while clicking and dragging on that color's tab.

Creating a Transparent Gradient

To create a transparent gradient, you must make one of your colors transparent. To do this, double click on the gradient tab of the color you wish to transition into transparency. Once you double click on the tab, the colors palette will open. Slide the opacity of the color down to zero. The box at the top next to the magnifying glass will become half black and half white. This means your color is transparent.

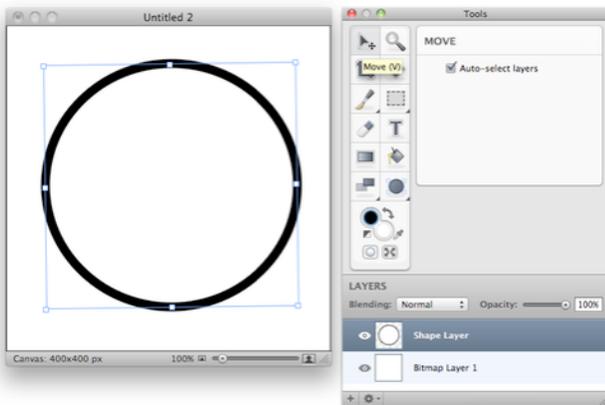
Saving and Deleting Gradients

You can store gradients you create for future use. Just create your gradient, then click on the "+" button towards the bottom left of the gradient palette. You can also click on the gradient display window and drag it down to the list of gradients. Or, right click in the gradient list area and choose "Add Current Gradient". Acorn comes with a handful of gradients pre-loaded. You can delete previously stored gradients by right clicking on the gradient in the list, then selecting "Delete Gradient".



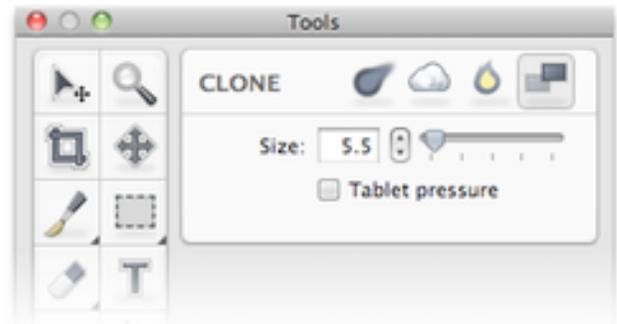
Applying a Gradient to a Shape

To apply a gradient to a shape, first draw out your desired shape (read 'Shapes' for more info). The shape must have a "fill" in order to be able to apply a gradient, so make sure the fill box is checked. A stroke is not necessary, but the gradient will not be applied to the stroke. Using the move tool, select your shape.



Next, click on the gradient tool. Set your gradient colors. Drag the gradient across your shape.

Clone Tool



The clone tool is useful for removing unwanted items in a photo. The clone tool is located at the bottom left hand corner of your toolbox. You can also select the clone tool by hitting $\uparrow \bigcirc$ on your keyboard. Holding Shift (\uparrow) and repeatedly hitting "O" will cycle through all the Touchup Tools (Clone, Burn, Dodge, and Smudge). In the palette, you are able to adjust the size of the tool and turn tablet pressure on and off.



Clone

With the clone tool you are able to copy a part of an image and apply that over an unwanted item to cover it. For this example,

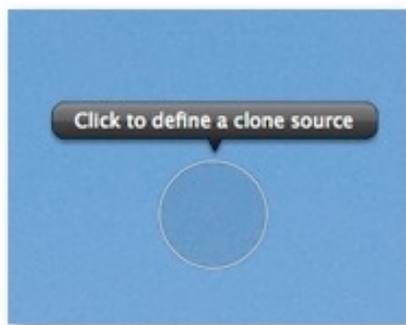
the chimneys and their shadows have been removed from the roof of the house.

It is recommended to do your work on a duplicate layer, so if you mess up you do not ruin your original image.

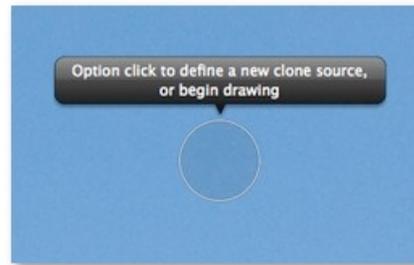
This is the original image.



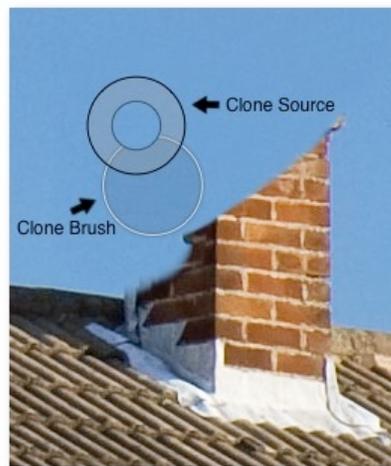
When you have your clone tool selected, you will have to define a clone source. The clone source is the area you will use to cover up the part of the image you want to remove. In this example, the clone source is selected from the sky. Make sure to select your clone source as close as possible to the object you want to cover.



To select a new clone source, hold **Option** and click with the white circle on the space you want to clone.



Now you may begin retouching the image. The white circle is your clone brush, and the black circle is your clone source.



The chimneys have been removed from the area with the sky. Now it is time to remove the remaining parts of the chimneys and their shadows.



For this part you will need a smaller brush. It is important to adjust the size of your brush to match the part you are trying to clone. Start with the top edge of the roof near the shadow. Notice how the clone source follows the line of the roof as the shadow is covered.

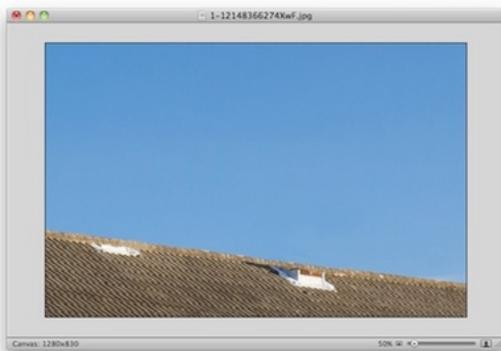


And this is what it looks like when you're done!



Now the top edge of the roof is chimney free! To do the tiles, use a slightly larger brush. When cloning a patterned surface, make sure to move your brush with the angle of the pattern.

Here is another example of using the clone tool, in this case to remove unwanted garnish:



[Chimney and Soup Photos - Public Domain](#)

Dodge, Burn, and Smudge

(Touchup Tools)

The Touchup Tools are located at the bottom left corner of your toolbox. If you click and hold the icon, you will see all four of the Touchup Tools listed. You can also hold the **Shift** key and press "**O**" repeatedly to toggle through the Touchup Tools.



Note: When working with the Touchup Tools it is best to work on a duplicate layer in order to preserve your original image.



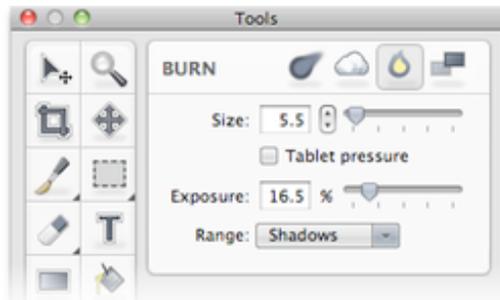
Smudge



The Smudge Tool takes a color from where you start and smears it into other colors of your image, like smearing wet paint. This is useful for removing flaws from photos.



Burn



The Burn Tool darkens the pixels you paint. This is great if you want to darken certain areas of your image.

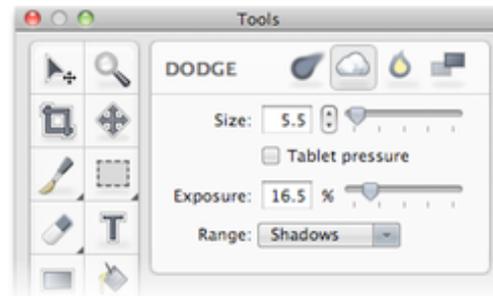
The menu to the right of the toolbar shows the size, exposure, and range of the Burn Tool. This is the same for the Dodge Tool.

The Exposure adjusts the amount of burning the tool will perform. To make subtle changes, change the exposure to a lower setting.

The range determines which tones are affected by the tool. Highlights will affect lighter tones, midtones will affect the middle tones, and shadows will affect the darker tones.



Dodge



The Dodge Tool works in the same way as the Burn Tool, only it lightens the pixels, rather than darkens them.

Flood Fill



The Flood Fill tool (also known as the paint bucket tool) is used to fill in areas of your image that are connected together by a common color.

The Flood Fill tool is the tool that looks like a bucket with paint spilling out of it. (Keyboard shortcut "K").

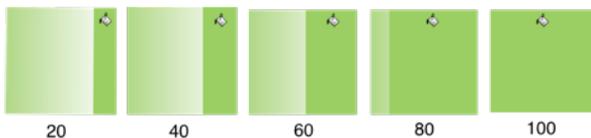
Your cursor will turn into a paint bucket while over the canvas. Click anywhere on your blank canvas, and it will fill it in with your selected color.

Below tolerance is the option to select "Anti-alias". If this box is not checked, then flood fill will have a sharp boundary at its edges. If checked, the flood fill tool will bleed a little on its edges, for a smoother transition.

Adjusting the Tolerance

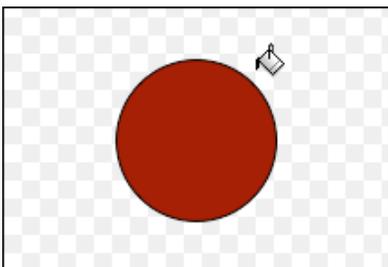
Flood Fill has a option called "Tolerance". When you are using Flood Fill on an image with a gradient or an area with more than one color, you can adjust the tolerance to fill in more than one color on the canvas. The higher the tolerance is set, the more colors it will fill in with your selected color.

Here is an example:



You can also use Flood Fill to fill in Shapes. With the Flood Fill tool selected, just click inside the shape to fill it with your color.

Note: The Anti-alias option has no effect on shapes.



Fill an Entire Layer with a Color

In Acorn, there is an easy way to fill an entire layer with a color without using the Flood Fill tool. Pick your desired color in the colors palette, then drag and drop the color swatch into the appropriate layer. The entire layer will then be filled with that color.

Edit ▶ Fill

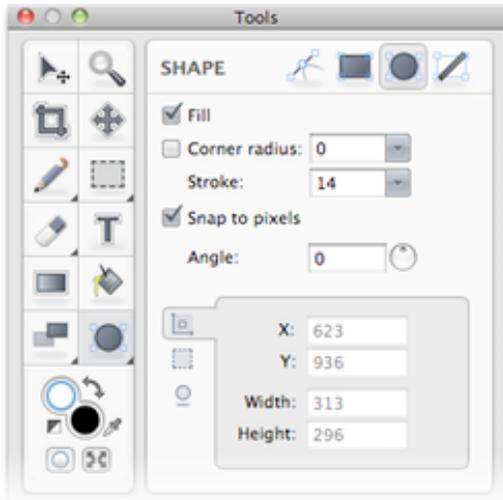
If you want additional control over filling a layer with color, try **Edit ▶ Fill**. This command will bring up the options of what color, opacity, and blending mode you want to apply to the fill.

Shapes

Besides altering bitmap images, Acorn also provides tools to add your own simple vector shapes. Please note that the only file format that can save your shapes for editing at a later time is the native Acorn file format (.acorn).

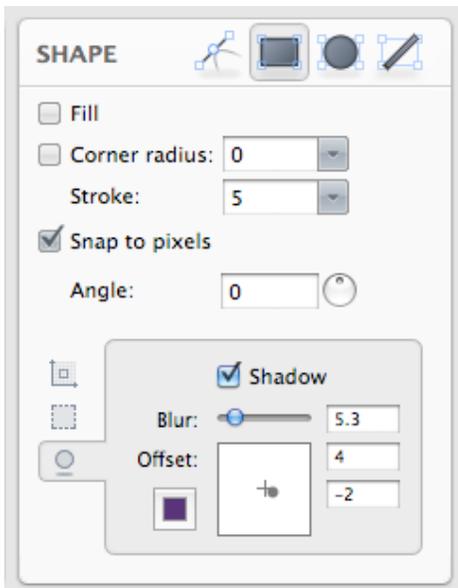
Vector layers (shapes and text) are different from bitmap (or raster) layers. Vectors revolve around lines and shapes, where as bitmaps are pixel oriented. For more information on this topic, read [here](#). You cannot apply filters, drawn on, or erase using the eraser tool to a vector layer unless you have rasterized the layer by selecting **Layer ▶ Rasterize Shape Layer**. Once you have rasterized a vector layer you cannot go back and modify the shapes or text without undoing subsequent work.

Shape Tools



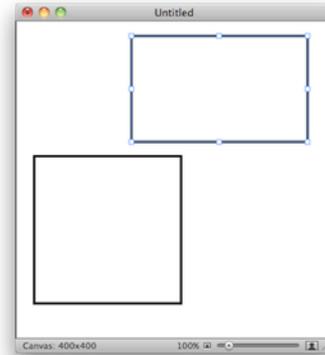
Acorn's shape tools consist of bezier (**P**), rectangle (**R**), ellipse (**O**), and line (**;**). Please read 'Bezier Curves' for more information on the Bezier tool.

Below is the Shape palette. Among other things, you can change the dimensions of your shapes, turn stroke and fill on and off, alter the angle of the shape, and select a dashed stroke.



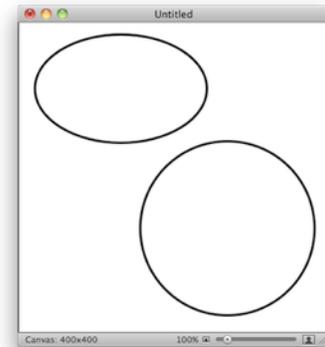
Rectangle (**R**)

The Rectangle shape tool (**R**) is how you create rectangles and squares. To create a perfect square, hold down Shift while you are creating the shape. You can move your shapes around using the Move tool (**V**).



Ellipse (**O**)

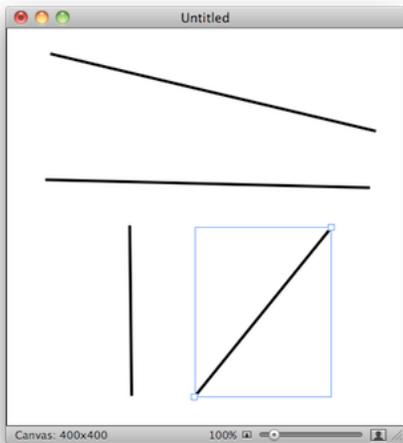
Creating an ellipse is similar to creating a rectangle. You can create oval shapes simply by dragging out the shape. You can create a perfect circle by holding down Shift while dragging.



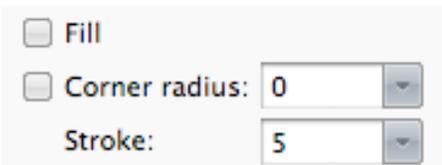


Line (;)

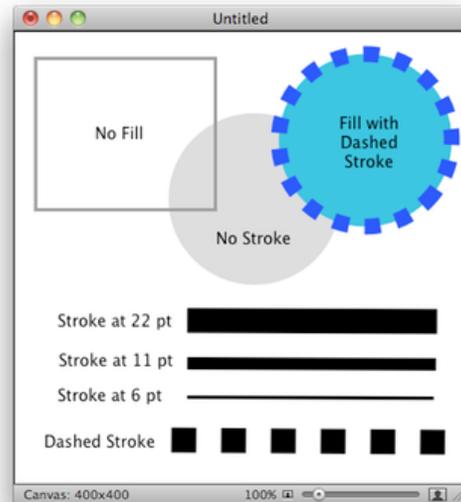
The line tool can be used to create lines at any angle of any length. You may also create a perfect horizontal, vertical, or diagonal 45° angle line by holding down shift and dragging the shape out in the direction you wish.



Stroke, Corner Radius, and Fill



You have the option to turn on/off fill, and adjust the stroke value. The stroke is the outline of the shape and the fill is the inner color. Line Shapes have no fill, only stroke. There is a dashed stroke option which you can customize. The dashed stroke can be applied to any shape. More information on dashed stroke can be found below under "Stroke Styles". Checking the corner radius box and adding a value in the drop down menu will give a rectangle shape rounded edges. Increasing values increases the amount of curve in the corners for a more "rounded rectangle".



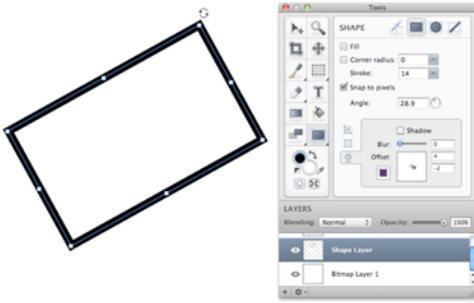
Color

Color can be applied to both the fill and stroke of a shape. For Line Shapes, color can only be applied for the stroke, as the line has no fill. The foreground color is the stroke color and the background color is the fill. Select your shape and change the colors using the color palette.

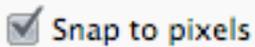
Angle



The angle of the shape can be modified by altering the angle value in the shape palette. Another option is to hover over a corner of the selected shape, and a circular arrow will appear. Click and drag once the circular arrow has appeared to achieve your desired rotation.



Snap to Pixels



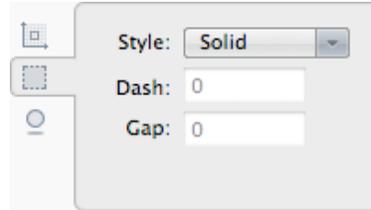
When creating, modifying, or moving vector shapes, you have the option for the shape to "snap to pixels". If this box is checked your shape will move within the x,y coordinates of whole numbers only. This prevents the bounds of the shape from appearing blurry should it be placed on coordinates that involve a fraction. To turn this option off, uncheck the box.

Coordinates and Dimensions



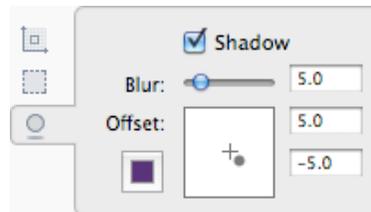
With the shape selected, you can modify its coordinates on the (x,y) axis and its width/height dimensions either by changing the values in the shape palette or by clicking on the selection points of the shape.

Stroke Style



With the shape selected, you can alter its stroke style from solid to dashed. With style set to "custom", you can enter your custom dash and gap values.

Shape Shadow



Give your shape a shadow and customize the shadow position, color, and blur values. Click on the shadow color well once to select it, then change the color in the colors palette.

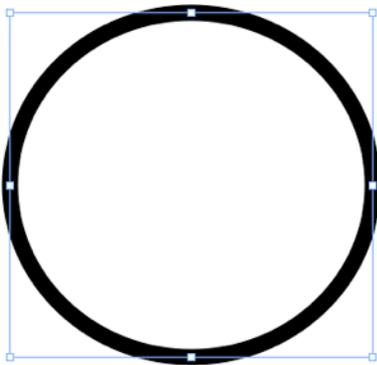


Shape Modification

In order to modify a shape after it has been drawn, the shape must be "selected". You can alter the shape size, color, fill, stroke, position, etc. without having to re-draw the shape. Make sure that you are currently on the shape layer in the layers list. There are a few different ways to select your shape:

- Using the move tool (keyboard shortcut 'v'), click on the shape. This works well if you only want one shape selected.
- **Select ▶ Select Next Shape** (^⌘]), or **Select ▶ Select Previous Shape** (^⌘[). This works well if you only want one shape selected.
- **Select ▶ Select All.** This works well if you have only one shape on the layer, or if you want all the shapes on the layer selected.

You will know that your shape is selected if it has a blue box boundary:



Shape Selection Preference

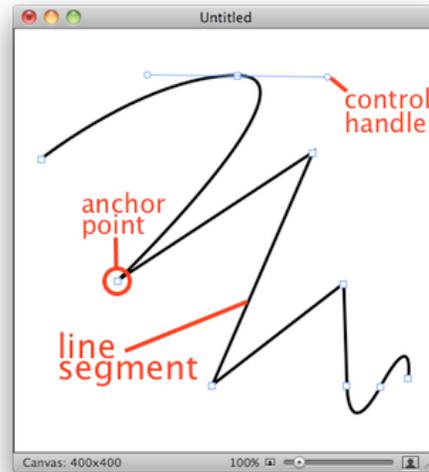
Under **Acorn ▶ Preferences ▶ General**, there is the option to keep the shape selected after you draw it: 'keep selected for editing'. This can be helpful if you find yourself needing to modify your shapes frequently immediately after you draw them.

Bezier Curves



The Bezier Curves tool is used to create custom vector shapes. The Bezier Curves Tool is located in the Shapes palette. You can also select it by hitting keyboard shortcut "P". When the Bezier tool is selected your cursor will look like the tip of an ink pen.

Bezier shapes have line segments, anchor points, and control handles.

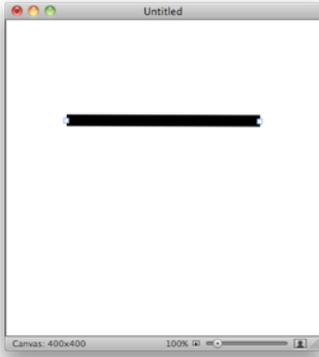


Line Segments: Line segments are what make up the form of your shape. They are connected by anchor points.

Anchor Points: The anchor points are the points where your line segments meet. They define the position of your line segments and give you the ability to control the curve of your line.

Control Handles: The control handles allow you to apply a curve to your line segments. Each handle corresponds to the line segment on its side of the anchor point. The right handle will adjust the line segment on the right of the anchor point and vice versa.

When you click on your canvas, an anchor point will appear. You can then click on another area of the canvas to create a straight line. Double-click to end the line/shape or continue placing anchor points (by clicking or clicking and dragging to make curved line segments) until you get the shape you want.



To make a single curved line, select the Move Tool (Keyboard shortcut "V") and select the line. The anchor points will show on both ends. With the Move tool still selected, hold down the Option key. The cursor will change to look like this:

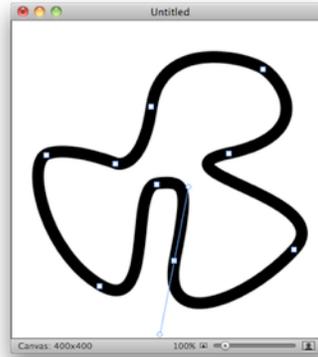


Now, click on an anchor point and drag it. As you drag it a handle will be pulled out of the anchor point. By using the Move tool to select the handle, you can adjust the curve of your line. Once you click out of the shape, the handle will disappear. To make it reappear, just select the anchor point again. To make the line straight again, hold down the option key and click once on the anchor point.

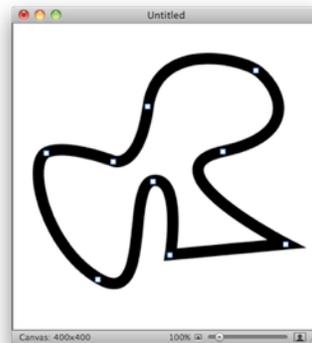


You can also make the lines curved as you draw them. This can be used to draw circles and other wonky shapes. Just click and

drag when placing a new anchor point to make the line segment curved.



When anchor points have line segments on each side, using the Move tool while holding down the option key and clicking on the anchor point will remove the curve from the line segments from each side of the anchor point as shown below on the two bottom right anchor points.



Adding and Subtracting Anchor Points from a Bezier Shape

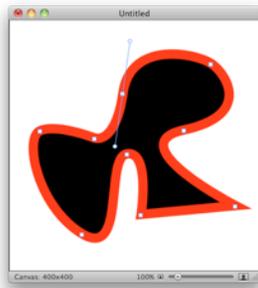
With the Bezier shape selected and the Bezier tool in use, you can add Bezier anchor points by holding down the shift key and then clicking on the area of the curve or line where you want the anchor point to appear.

To subtract anchor points, again have the Bezier shape selected and the Bezier tool in

use. Hold down the option and command keys simultaneously and click on the existing anchor point to remove it.

Applying Colors

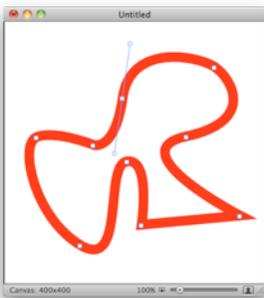
Using the Move tool (control V), select the shape. To change the color of the stroke, select a new primary (top) color from the color palette. To change the fill, select a secondary (bottom) color.



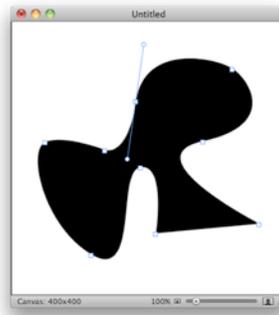
Changing Stroke

To remove the fill just uncheck the fill box in the palette. To remove stroke, set the value to 0 in the palette.

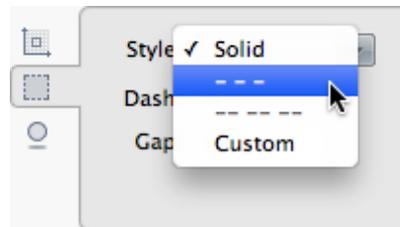
No Fill



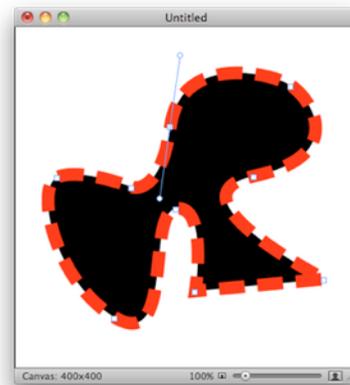
No Stroke



You can also change your stroke from solid to a dash in the palette.

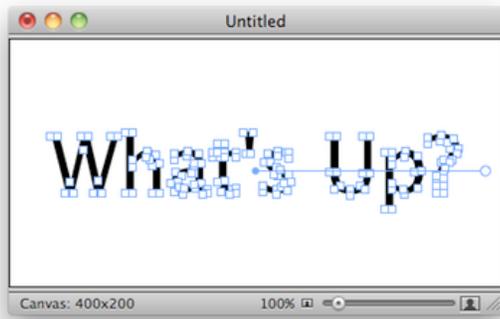


Which looks like this:

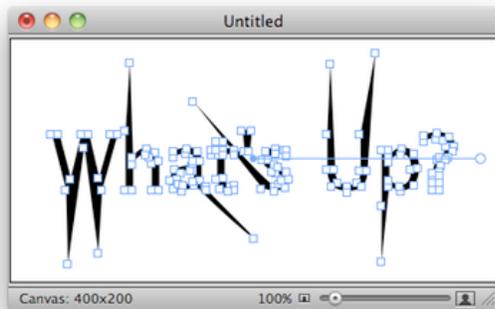


Converting Text into Bezier Shapes

To convert text into Bezier shapes, first type out some text. Then with the text selected, go to **Layer > Shape Align and Size > Convert to Bezier Shape**.



You can now modify the text with the anchor points and control handles:



Also experiment with stroke and fill to modify the text even further:



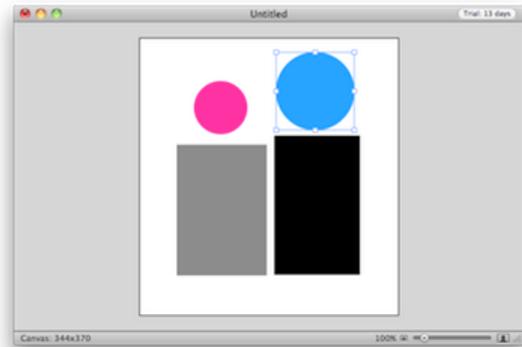
Other Bezier Shape Tricks

Bezier Shapes can be flipped both horizontally and vertically. Click on Layer ▶ Shape Align and Size ▶ Flip Bezier Shape Vertically or Flip Bezier Shape Horizontally.

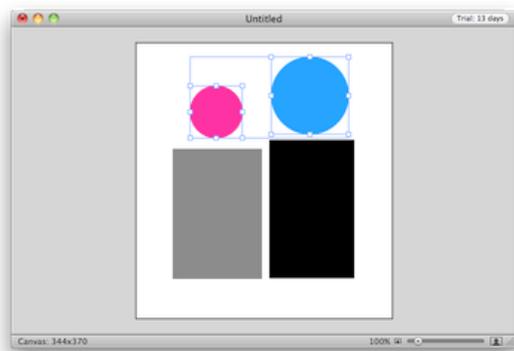
Selecting Multiple Items in a Shape Layer



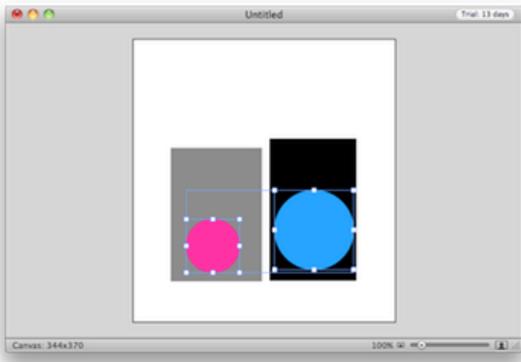
Select the **Move Tool** (Shortcut Key "V"). Now, using the **Move Tool**, select your desired shape. A blue bounding box will appear around your selected shape.



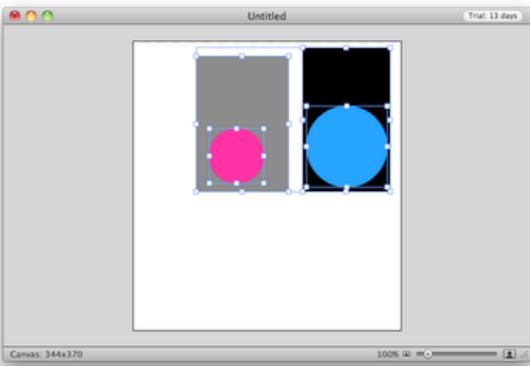
To select multiple shapes, press the **Command** key and using the **Move Tool** select your second shape. The blue bounding box will appear around the first selected shape, the second selected shape, and around both shapes.



You may now move these two shapes in unison.



You can use this to select and move all your shapes if you wish to move them around your canvas and still have them remain in the same position relative to each other. Notice how there are bounding boxes around all four shapes.



Changing Shape Selection

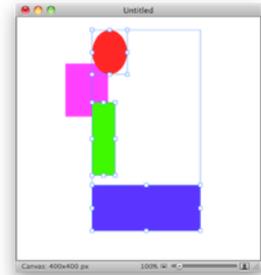
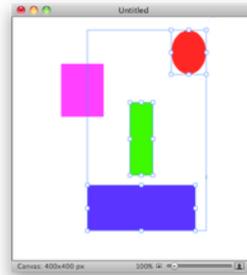
One way to change shape selections within a single shape layer is to choose **Select** ▶ **Select Next Shape** (^⌘]) or **Select** ▶ **Select Previous Shape** (^⌘[). This allows you to cycle through the shapes in that particular layer quickly.

Aligning Shapes

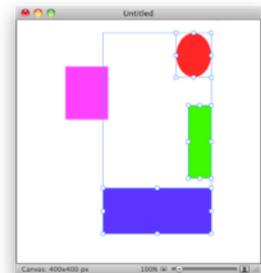
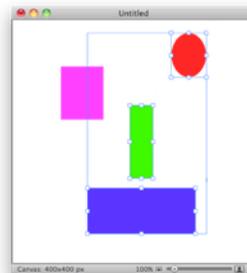
When you have two or more shapes, there are various options available under **Layer** ▶ **Shape Align and Size** for lining up and siz-

ing your shapes perfectly. To select multiple shapes, hold down the shift key while clicking on the shape with the move tool. Alternatively, if you wish to select all shapes in the layer you can use **Select** ▶ **Select All** (⌘A).

Horizontal Align Left - Aligns all shapes selected to the left side boundary of the selected shape that is furthest to the left on the horizontal axis. In the example below, all shapes except the pink one are selected. The blue rectangle is the furthest left of the selected shapes, so all selected shapes will align to its leftmost position on the 'x' axis.

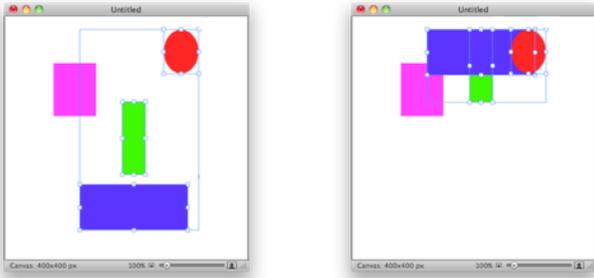


Horizontal Align Right - Aligns all shapes selected to the right side boundary of the selected shape that is furthest to the right on the horizontal axis. In the example below, all shapes except the pink one are selected. The red circle is the furthest right of the selected shapes, so all selected shapes will align to its rightmost position on the 'x' axis.

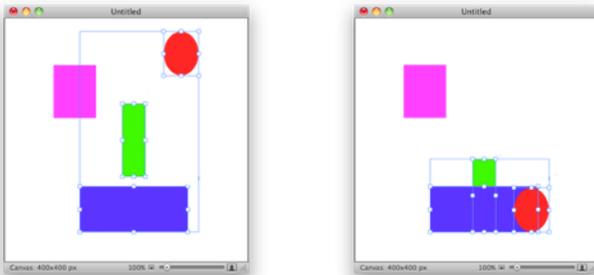


Vertical Align Top - Aligns all shapes selected to the top boundary of the selected shape that is furthest vertically. In the example below, all shapes except the pink

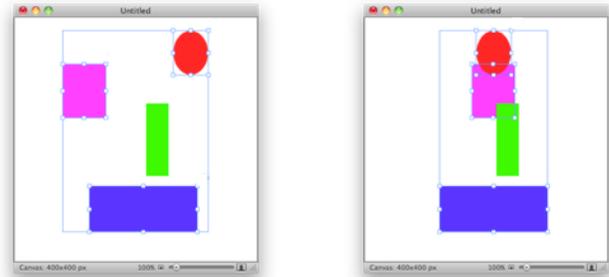
one are selected. The red circle is the furthest to the top vertically of the selected shapes, so all selected shapes will align to its top position on the 'y' axis.



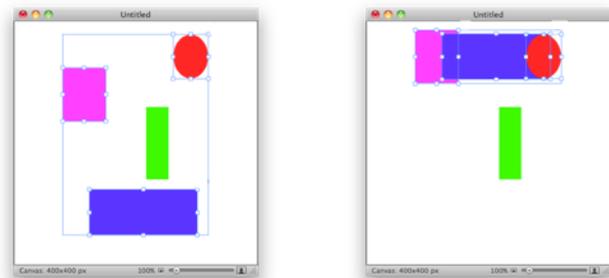
Vertical Align Bottom - Aligns all shapes selected to the bottom boundary of the selected shape that is the lowest vertically. In the example below, all shapes except the pink one are selected. The blue rectangle is the furthest to the bottom vertically of the selected shapes, so all selected shapes will align to its bottommost position on the 'y' axis.



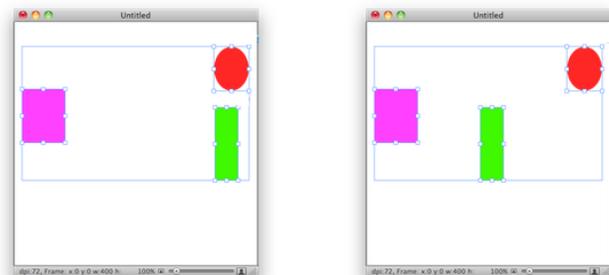
Horizontal Align Center - Aligns all shapes selected to the horizontal center of one another on the 'x' axis. In the example below, all shapes except the green one are selected. The shapes will align to the horizontal center of whichever shape was selected first if you selected the shapes individually. In this example, the blue rectangle was selected first.



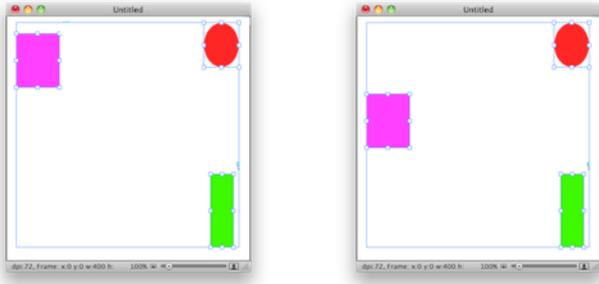
Vertical Align Center - Aligns all shapes selected to the vertical center of one another on the 'y' axis. In the example below, all shapes except the green one are selected. The shapes will align with the vertical center of whichever shape was selected first if you selected the shapes individually. In this example, the red circle was selected first.



Horizontal Distribute Center - Aligns all shapes selected so that they are equidistant from one another on the 'x' axis. The shapes that are the leftmost and rightmost on the 'x' axis will remain unchanged in their positions. At least 3 shapes must be selected to use this function. In this example, the green rectangle is now equidistant from the other shapes on the 'x' axis.



Vertical Distribute Center - Aligns all shapes selected so that they are equidistant from one another on the 'y' axis. The shapes that are the topmost and bottommost on the 'y' axis will remain unchanged in their positions. At least 3 shapes must be selected to use this function. In this example the pink rectangle is now equidistant from the other shapes on the 'y' axis.



Make Same Width - Changes all shapes selected to be the same width of whichever shape was selected first. In this example the red circle was selected first.

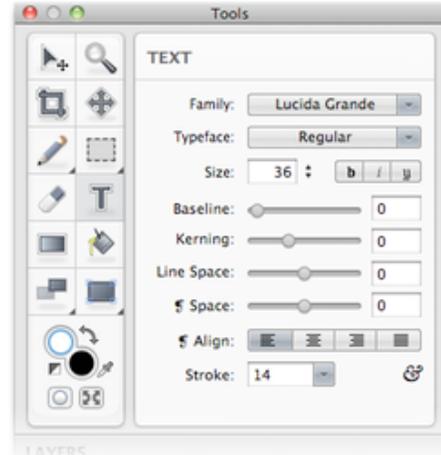


Make Same Height - Changes all shapes selected to be the same height of whichever shape was selected first. In this example the green rectangle was selected first.

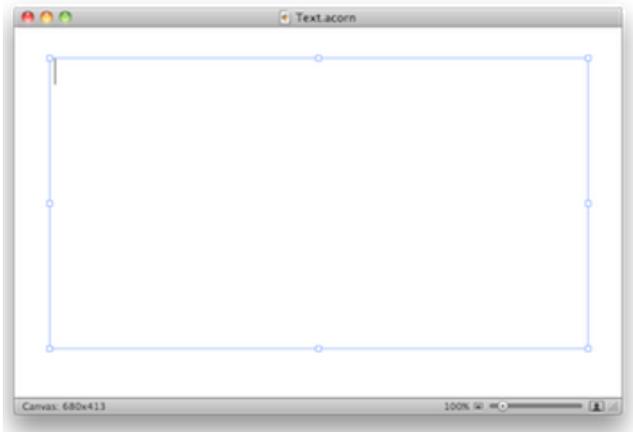


Fonts and Text

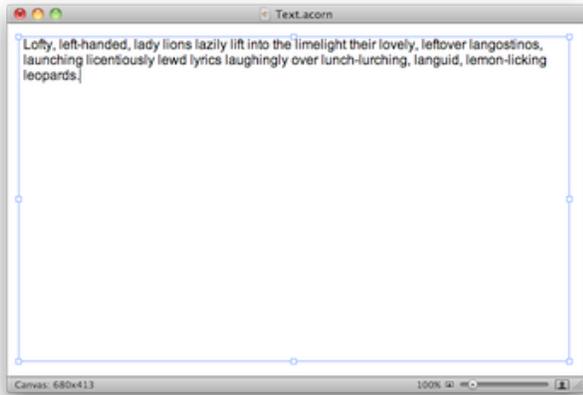
The Text Palette is where you can change the look of your selected text.



When you select the Text Tool (Keyboard Shortcut "T"), you will see your cursor change to the type cursor. You can create an area to type by clicking inside your image, or clicking and dragging a bounding box onto your image. When you click to start typing the bounding box will be small, but it will adjust to your type. Here a bounding box has been dragged out:



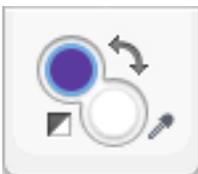
Now type some text. You may also paste copied text into this box.



You can play with the look of your text. Change the font and the font size. Here the font has been changed to Impact and the size to 48.



It is possible to change the color of your text. You can bring up the color palette by going to **Window** ▶ **Colors**, or typing **⌘C**.



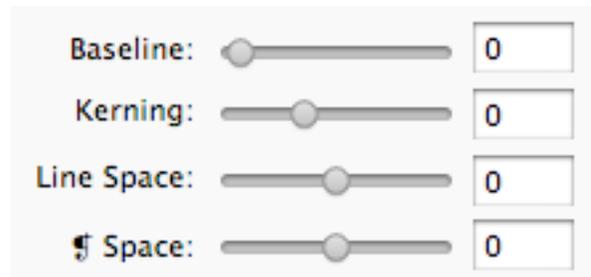
You can also use this icon to access the color palette. Either circle will change the color of your text. Use the eyedropper in the right bottom corner to pick up color from an image, or use the black and white box in the left bottom corner to switch

the colors to black and white. The arrow at the top right corner will switch the colors around. For more on the color palette see 'Colors Palette'.

The color of the text below has been changed to purple. Click anywhere in the color wheel to change the color. The sliding bar on the right will change the value (lightness or darkness) of your color. The bar on the bottom will change the opacity of your color. The closer to the center of the color wheel you pick your color, the less saturated it will be.



You will notice on the Type Palette there are sliding bars labeled Base Line, Kerning, Line Space, and Paragraph Space.



Baseline

The baseline is the line on which the letters sit, and which the descenders extend below. Here the baseline is set to 0. See how the lines sit closer together.



with the spacing between the letters in the rest of the word.



Kerning

Kerning is the space between the letters. Here the Kerning has been changed to 4.



Line Spacing

Line Spacing is the space between the baseline and the top of the next line of text, also called leading. The line spacing here has been changed to -18. Notice how the lines of text begin to touch. The lower the number the more the lines will come together. The higher the number the more they will separate.

Kerning can also adjust the space between two letters, especially between letters with slanted sides like V, W, and A. For example, in the word "varied" there is a larger space between V and A than between the rest of the letters. To kern, highlight the letter before the space you wish to adjust.



Paragraph Spacing

The Paragraph Space (¶ Space) is the space between your paragraphs. Below the paragraph spacing is set to 65.

Then adjust the character spacing until the spacing between the V and A looks even



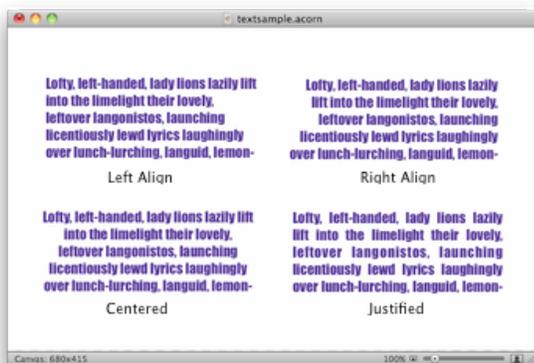
Paragraph Alignment

There are also selections for Paragraph Alignment. They are ordered as follows: Right Align, Centered, Left Align, and Justified.



Right Align will align your text to the right side of your bounding box. Left Align will align your text to the left side of the bounding box. Centered will place your text in the center of the bounding box. Justified will stretch your text so it reaches each side of the bounding box.

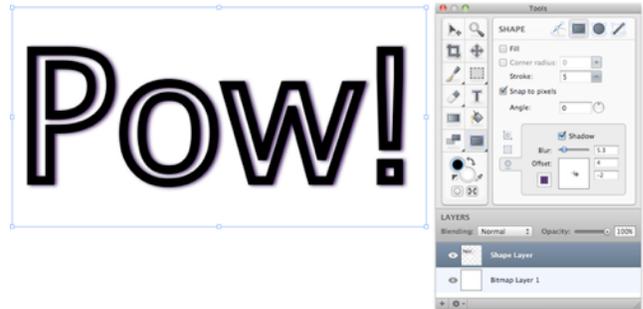
Here are examples of what these look like when applied to text:



Stroke, Fill, Shadow

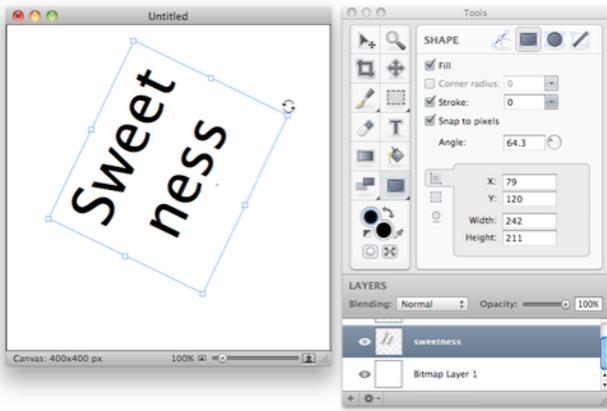
The text stroke can be modified in either the text palette or the shape palette. Stroke is the outline of the text. Increasing the stroke makes the outline of the text thicker. Fill is the color within the stroke or outline. With the text box selected, you can enter the shape tools palette in order to have access to fill and shadow settings. Stroke, fill, and shadow modifications cannot be seen when the text is being edited. Once you click outside the text box your changes will appear.

The example below shows lucida grande text with no fill, a stroke of 5, and a slightly offset purple shadow.



Rotating Text

The text box can be rotated by hovering the mouse over one of the text box corner boundaries. A circular arrow will appear. Click and drag in the direction you wish the text to rotate. Another method for rotating text is to have the text box selected, then choose the shapes tool. You can change the angle of rotation in the "angle" field. In the example below the angle is set to 64.3 degrees.



Fonts Palette



You can access the Fonts palette by using **Window** ▶ **Fonts** menu or using the keyboard shortcut **⌘T**.

The **Fonts Palette** packs a lot of punch for being so small. This little window controls everything that you could want to do with fonts. If you get confused about which button does what, hold your mouse over it for a second and it will display a tooltip about its function.

Selecting Fonts

There are **Collections** of fonts (like folders in the finder), inside which are font **Families**, inside which are **Typefaces**. An example of this in the real world would be **All Fonts** > **American Typewriter** > **Bold**. Collections

can be handy if you find yourself often using the same few fonts. You can create your own collections, or use the ones Apple has provided. The **Fun** collection includes some excellent fonts for parties and cards. If you would like to add a font to the collection, simply drag it in. Adding and deleting collections is controlled by the plus and minus buttons below the collections.

If you find yourself unable to find a font you know is on your computer, make sure the **All Fonts** collection is selected. Size is controlled by the slider, list, and box to the right of the window. You can enter in a value into the upper box, find a commonly used size in the list, or move the slider until you are happy.

There is also a search field at the bottom of the window. If you find that scrolling through all of your fonts takes longer than you want, simply type the name of the font into the search field and it will instantly pop up in the **Family** column.

Things like shadow, underline, color, and strikethrough are controlled by the buttons on the top of the window, as well as from the **Format** ▶ **Font** menu.

Adding Fonts

To add new fonts to Acorn, place the font file in your ~/Library/Fonts folder. You will need to re-start Acorn for it to appear in your font list.

Ligatures

Ligatures are two characters that form a single character. For example, if you type "ffi" with ligatures on, it will automatically connect the crossbar of the f to the top of the i.

Sometimes the dot on the i is removed depending on the font. You can turn ligatures on and off by clicking on the drop down with the little gear icon and selecting **Typography**. Select the text you wish to apply ligatures on. Ligatures are only available with certain fonts.

Symbols, Punctuation, and Other Scripts

The gear symbol on the lower left hand corner of the font palette is the gateway to adding special characters, varying typography, non-standard punctuation, and other language scripts.

Converting Text to Bezier Shapes

Please read 'Bezier Curves' for more information.

Rasterizing Text

Vector layers (i.e. shapes and text) are different from bitmap (or raster) layers. Vectors revolve around lines and shapes, where as bitmaps are pixel oriented. For more information on this topic, read [here](#). You cannot apply Filters to a vector layer unless you have rasterized the layer by selecting **Layer** ▶ **Rasterize Shape Layer**. Once you have rasterized a vector layer you cannot go back and modify the shapes or text without undoing subsequent work.

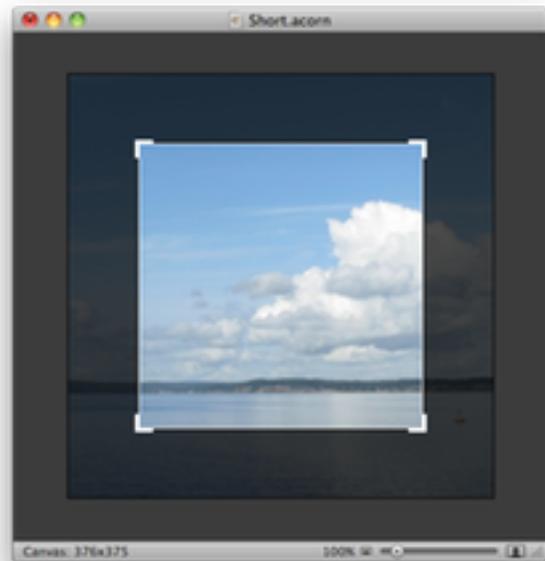
Crop



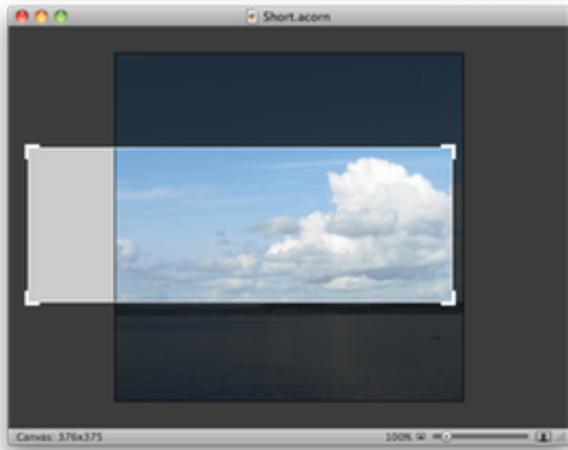
Select the **Crop Tool** (Shortcut key "C") and a crop will be placed on your image.

You can then click and drag in the middle of the crop to move it around. Use the arrow keys to move your crop selection, or make a new crop by clicking and dragging outside the crop area. You can resize the crop by moving the edges.

To finalize the crop, press the Return key, press ⌘\K, or click the "Crop Image" button in the crop palette.



The crop palette also gives you an option to keep the crop inside the canvas, or if you turn it off, to make a crop outside the canvas. Why would you want this? Well, consider the crop below.



When the crop is applied, transparent pixels will be present in the area of selection outside the canvas. This is handy if you would like to resize your canvas while doing your crop.



[Water/Sky Photo - Public Domain](#)

Cropping by Resizing the Window

This is the fastest way to crop ever invented. Simply hold down the **Control** key and resize the window. This will let you quickly enlarge or shrink an image you are working on.

Fancy Crop

Fancy Crop is a built in function that attempts to look at what is on the screen and

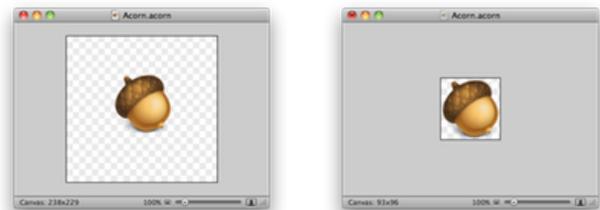
crop out the extraneous space. This is perfect for any picture with a solid color border you are trying to remove. To do this, choose Crop from the Image menu. If **Fancy Crop** can help you, it will.

Cropping a Selection

If you have a selection (using the various selection tools), you can use the **Image ▶ Crop** command to crop to the bounds of the selection.

Trim to Edges

Located under **Image ▶ Trim to Edges**, this little command will automatically crop out anything that is a constant color, or no color at all. Here is an image before and after the Trim to Edges command has been used:



Select All

When cropping, you can use Select All to set the crop to the entire canvas. First, select any part of your image with the Crop tool.



Then go to **Select ▶ Select All (⌘A)** to adjust the crop to the entire canvas.



[Sky and House Photos - Public Domain](#)

Cropping Presets

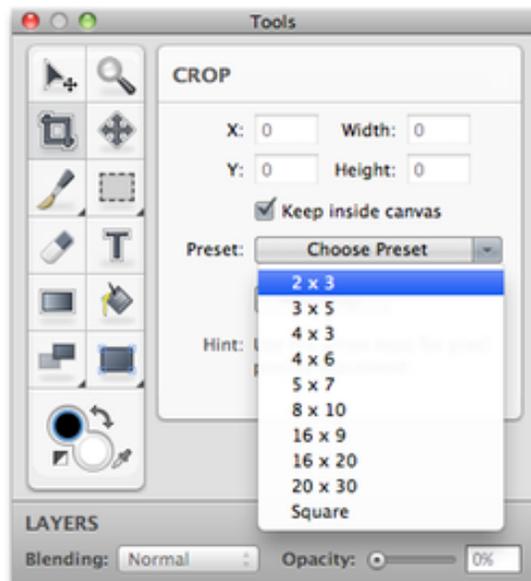
Acorn provides preset cropping choices which are useful if you want your image cropped to a standard width and height.

If you wish to swap the dimension of the crop preset (for example, you want 3x2 instead of 2x3), hold down the **option** key while clicking on the crop preset you want.

Be sure not to release the option key until after you have clicked and released your choice.

You can also create your own crop presets. This is especially useful if you frequently use crop dimensions not already present in the preset list. Enter a width and height into the crop fields, then click "save as preset" in the crop palette. You will be asked to name the preset. Your preset will show up towards the bottom of the "choose preset" list. To delete a custom preset, hold down the option key while clicking on that preset.

In order to maintain the aspect ratio of a cropping preset while resizing the crop, hold down the shift key while moving a corner of the crop edge in or out.



Panning While Cropping

If you are cropping a large image where scroll bars are present, you can pan the image while in crop by holding down the space bar then clicking on the image with your mouse to move it around. This makes getting to the area of the image you want to crop easier.

Acorn Canvas & Layers

- Layer Basics
- Layer Styles
- Layer Masks
- Rotating the Canvas or Layer
- Resizing the Canvas
- Resizing the Image or Layer
- Transforming Layers and Selections

Layers Basics



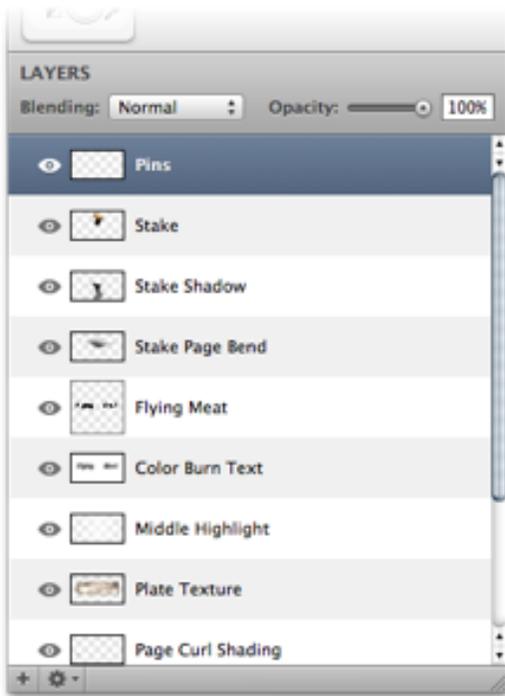
Overview

Layers are what make most image editors so powerful. Images are stacked on top of each other in the layers palette. You see a flattened version of the layers in the canvas. If you take the text tool and write something on your image, you will notice that a new layer called a Shape Layer has been created. By using the Move Tool, you can move around this layer without affecting the layer underneath. Similarly, if you apply a filter it will only apply to the layer you currently have selected in the layers palette. Using this properly will give you the best possible results, and will also allow you to be more flexible if you want to change something later. When in doubt, make a new layer.

Layer Visibility

Layers are shown in the layers palette with a visibility mark, picture of the layer, and the title of the layer. Clicking the little eye next to the thumbnail layer will hide it, leaving all the other layers visible. Titles can be changed at any time by double clicking on the existing text.

Pro Tip: To hide all other layers, select the layer you want to remain visible then hold down the option key while clicking the eye. To return all the layers to visibility hold down the option key while clicking the eye again.



Blending Modes and Opacity

Above the layers list there are **layer blending options** as well as the **opacity control**. **Opacity** is the transparency of a layer. If you pull the slider all the way to the left, you will not be able to see the layer. If you pull it all the way to the right, you can see the layer at its fullest. To make a quick watermark on your image, put some text on your image, make sure the new **Shape Layer** is selected, and decrease the opacity considerably. This will make the text barely visible, but still there. Check out Tutorials for additional help with watermarking.

Layer blending modes can be difficult to understand. They control the way the layer that you have selected interacts with the layers below it. **Multiply** for example will make

all the whites of the image transparent, but leave the blacks alone. **Screen** does the opposite of multiply by leaving the whites alone, but making all the blacks transparent. The best way to figure out what they do is to play with them.

Adding and Deleting Layers

Below the layers, there is a plus and minus button. The plus button will create a new Bitmap layer, while the minus button will delete the currently selected layer. Be careful not to delete layers you actually want to keep.

There are two different kinds of layers that can be created. One is a **Bitmap Layer** and the other is a **Shape Layer**. Bitmap Layers can be image files, pictures that you bring in from iPhoto, or things that you draw. In their simplest form they are a grid of pixels on the screen. Shape Layers are more like a set of instructions rather than pixels. You can go back at any time in a Shape Layer and change the font, the colors, or the size easily. However, if you resize a Bitmap Layer you'll start to see pixelation, or big blocks of color. You can not easily change text that is already present in a Bitmap Layer.



Shape Layers cannot be drawn on or erased using the eraser tool. You cannot use filters on Shape Layers. If you do try to use a filter on a Shape Layer, it will ask you if you would like to "**rasterize**" the layer, which is the process of turning a Shape Layer into a Bitmap Layer. If you would like to perform a filter on a Shape Layer, simply click 'OK' to this dialog box. Once a Shape Layer has been rasterized you will not be able to edit the layer as you could previously. If your layer name originally started with "Shape Layer", Acorn will replace it with "Bitmap Layer" when you rasterize.

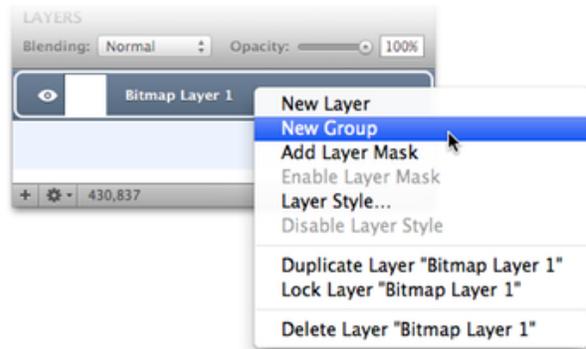
Grouping Layers

You can group layers together by creating a **Group Layer** in your layer palette. A Group Layer works just like a folder. You can create a Group by right-clicking inside your layers palette.

A folder icon will appear in your layers palette. You can now drag your layers into this Group Layer. Notice there is an disclosure triangle next to the eye icon. Clicking on this triangle will show or hide all the layers within this group.

You can rename the Group folder by double-clicking the name and entering your own. Grouping layers is also a good way to move multiple layers at once.

Handy tip: If you have a group layer selected and you use the **Edit ▶ Copy** menu item, you will get a composite of the entire Group Layer on the clipboard.

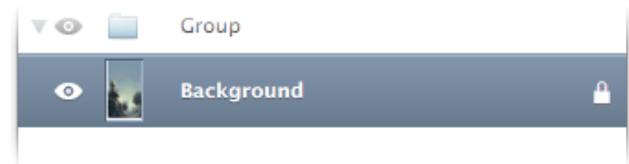


Locking Layers

Locking layers is useful if you have an object on a layer that you do not wish to move. Locking the layer it rests upon will prevent you from making unwanted changes.

To lock a layer, right click on the layer you wish to lock. Then select "Lock Layer" from the menu. This is also available under the Layer menu at the top of your screen. You will notice that a small lock icon appears in the right side of the layer.

Use the same process to unlock the layer.



Merging Layers

Layers can be merged in a few different ways. **Layer ▶ Merge Down** allows you to combine layers one at a time with the currently selected layer being merged with the one below it. **Layer ▶ Merge Visible** merges all layers that are not hidden into one single layer. **Layer ▶ Flatten Image** merges all layers regardless of visibility. Merging layers can be a good way of keeping your work clean and organized, but it also decreases your ability to change things

later on. Consider using **Edit ▶ Copy Merged** and making a new image from clipboard so that your layers can be preserved in the original file.

Important Word of Warning

JPEG, the format that most images are stored in, cannot have layers. Saving out to a JPEG will flatten all of the layers into one. If you would like to save your layers so you can come back later and do more edits, save as the file format .acorn.

If you are curious about the project file used in this example, you can download it here: <http://flyingmeat.com/fs/images/acorn/Layers Demo.zip>.

Layer Styles

Layer styles are effects that can be applied to a single layer in an image. They also work on group layers and shape layers. Select the layer you wish to apply a layer style on, then go to **Layer ▶ Layer Style**. Or, you can click on the 'fx' button towards the bottom left corner of the tools palette. There are a variety of options in the drop down menus to choose from. You can start by choosing a single filter, or a preset. You can click on the '+' button in the lower left hand corner to start adding more individual layer styles to the list.



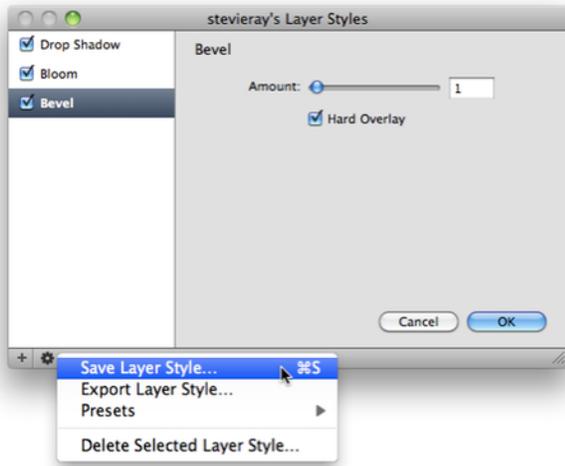
Adding and Removing Layer Styles

Once you have selected a layer style, you can add more styles to the same layer by clicking on the '+' button in the lower left hand corner of the layer styles palette. To remove any layer styles, highlight that style in the list of layer styles then click the cogwheel button and select 'delete selected layer style'. Or, you can right click on the layer style in the list in order to delete it. Layer styles are non-destructive to your image. You can add and subtract them easily without changing your image permanently.

To make a layer style permanent, select **Layer ▶ Commit Layer Style**.

Creating, Exporting, and Importing Layer Style Presets

In order to create a layer style preset, first add all the layer styles you want included in the preset to your layer styles list. Then click on the cogwheel and select 'save layer style'.



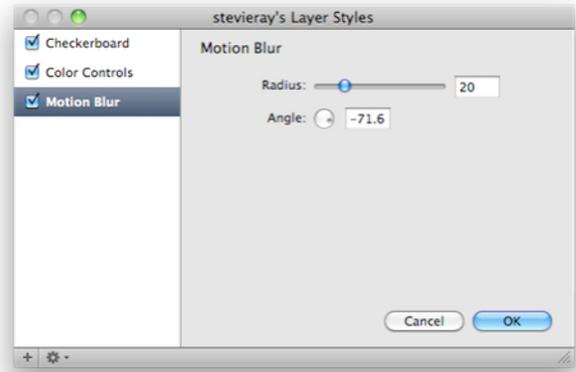
Name your new layer style preset and click 'save'. The layer style combination you created will now show up in the presets list for easy use in the future. To delete a preset, hold down the option key while clicking on the preset in the preset list.

To export a layer style, have the layer style currently pulled up in the layer styles list. Click on the cogwheel and select 'export layer style'. You will be asked to name it and save it to a directory. Share and trade your layer styles with friends!

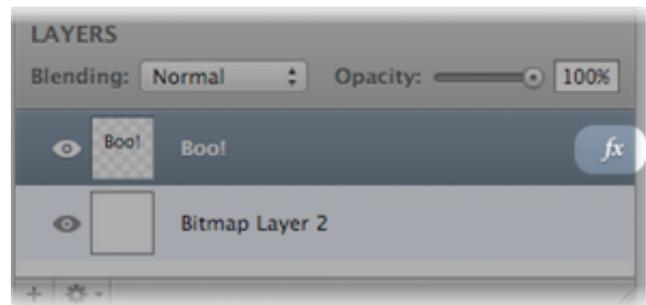
To import a layer style (must be .acstyle file format) just double click on the file. Acorn will install it automatically.

Modifying Layer Styles

Many layer styles have values you can adjust in the palette. Below you can see that Motion Blur allows for its radius and angle to be modified. When modifying the values, the changes can be seen on the layer in real time. You can play around with the values, then click 'ok' once things look right. If you need to change the values later, just return to the Layer Styles palette.



Once you have applied a layer style to a layer, you will see 'fx' appearing on the right-hand side of the layer in the layers list.

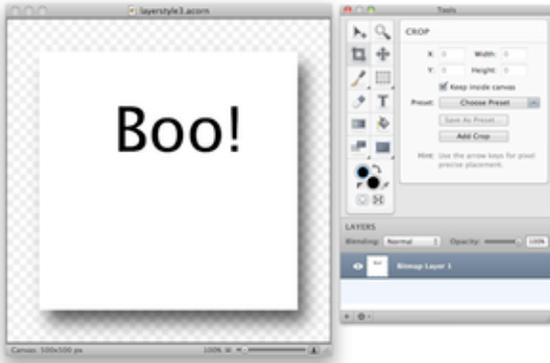


Double clicking on 'fx' will re-open the layers style palette. Right-clicking a layer with a layer style will allow you to enable or disable the layer style, or you can hold down the option key while clicking on the 'fx' to toggle its visibility.

Remember that layer styles apply to the entire layer. If you only want the layer style on a portion of the layer, you will need to move that portion to its own separate layer prior to applying the layer style.

Examples

Drop Shadow Layer Style applied to the single layer in this image. The white background and text are located in the same layer.



Drop Shadow Layer style applied to the text layer. The white background is a separate layer therefore it does not have the drop shadow.



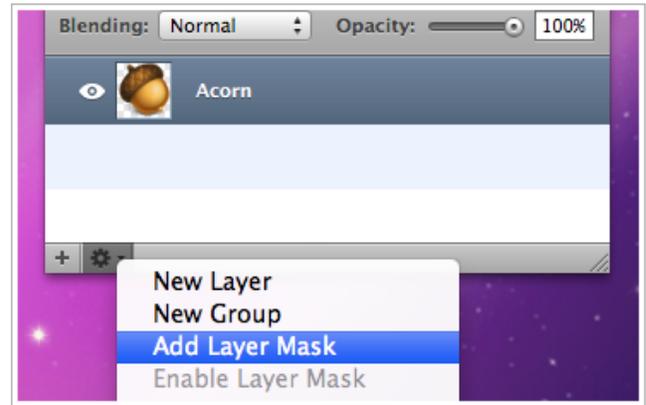
Layer Masks

Layer masks allow you to show or hide certain parts of a layer without actually having to modify the layer itself. This can be tremendously helpful when working with layers that you want to keep intact for easy alteration later without committing to permanent modification.

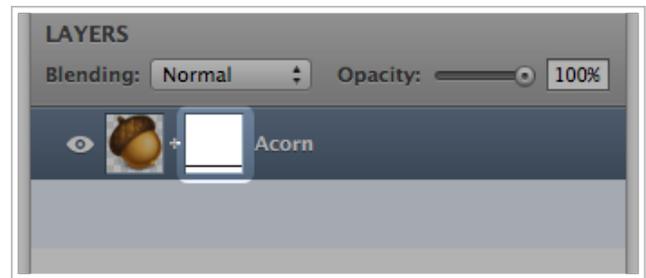
Creating a Layer Mask

Select the layer that you would like to add on a layer mask. At the bottom of the tools palette, click on the cogwheel and select "add

layer mask". Or, you can control-click on the layer to bring up the canvas contextual menu with the option to add layer mask.



The mask shows up to the right on the layer as you can see highlighted below.

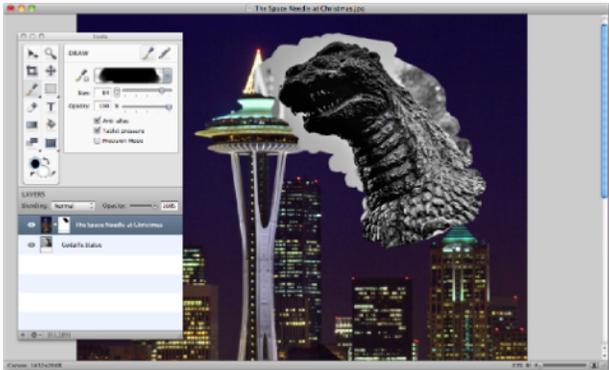


Important Tip: Be sure that the layer mask is selected if you want to work on it. Click on the mask in the layers section of the palette and a black bar will appear towards the bottom of the mask as shown on the highlighted layer mask above. If you want to work on the image rather than the mask, click on the image to select it and the black line will move from the mask to the selected image.

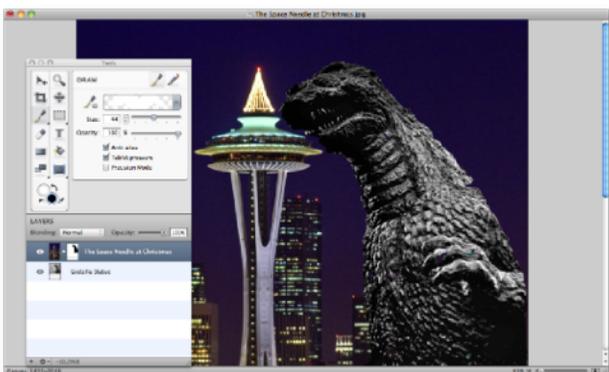
Working with Layer Masks

In layer masks, black that is drawn or painted on the mask hides pixels in the linked layer thus exposing the layer below in

those areas. In this example the Seattle skyline has the layer mask, and Godzilla is in the layer below. By selecting a brush and the color black, Godzilla can be exposed by drawing on the layer mask.



White does the opposite of black in layer masks. Anything drawn or painted in white on the layer mask will preserve that area of the linked layer. If you feel like you have exposed too much of the layer below, you can correct this by changing the color of your pen or brush to white, and draw on the layer mask until you have achieved your desired effect. Play around with the opacity and style of your pen or brush to maximize smoothness between your layers.



Moving, Disabling, and Deleting Layer Masks

To move a layer around on the canvas without also moving the layer mask, click on the "+" that is located between the layer and layer mask in the layers list. Re-clicking in this location will cause the "+" to appear again and allow the layer mask to move with its layer in the canvas.

Disabling a layer mask allows you to see what things look like in your project without the layer mask present. You can disable a layer mask by clicking on the cogwheel and selecting "disable layer mask". The layer mask will turn dark gray to show that it is disabled. The layer mask can be turned on again by selecting "enable layer mask" from the cogwheel.

To delete a layer mask, make sure you have the mask selected. Then you can click on the cogwheel and select "delete layer mask". Another way to accomplish this is to control-click on the layer mask to bring up the canvas contextual menu and the option to delete the layer mask will be presented.

Vector Shapes and Layer Masks

Currently layer masks are bitmap only, which means you cannot draw shapes in them. If you would like a shape in a layer mask, there is a work around you can perform as outlined in the '[Shapes in Layer Masks](#)' tutorial which can be found online.

[Godzilla Photo](#) - Copyright © Eugene Flores

[Seattle Skyline Photo](#) - Copyright © Andrew E. Larsen

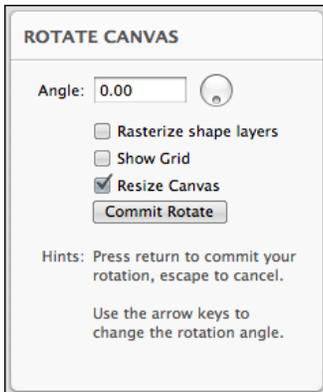
Rotating the Canvas or Layer

How to rotate your canvas.

Under **Image** ▶ **Rotate Canvas** there are three options for rotating the canvas: **90° Clockwise** (⌘+]), **90° Counter-Clockwise** (⌘+[), and **Free Rotate**.

The Rotate Canvas palette appears when you select **Free Rotate**. You can manually enter the angle, use the wheel, or change your angle using the up and down arrows on your keyboard.

Rotating the canvas rotates all the layers.



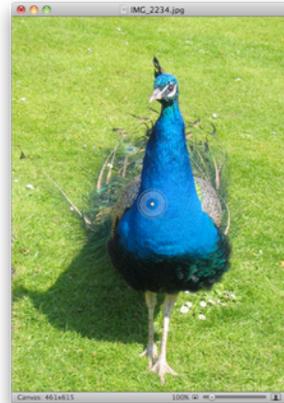
How to rotate a layer.

You can easily rotate a single layer in your image in **90°** increments by selecting **Layer** ▶ **Rotate and Transform** ▶ **Rotate Layer 90° Clockwise** (or Counter-Clockwise). If you want more control over the angle of rotation you may wish to rotate your layer using **Layer** ▶ **Rotate and Transform** ▶ **Scale and Rotate** (⌘⇧T).

Unlike the other rotate commands, Scale Transform and Rotate allows you to set the

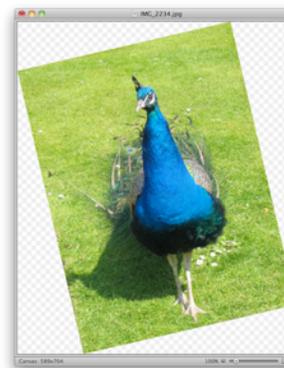
layer at any angle in the canvas. When you select Scale Transform and Rotate, a circle will appear in the center of your layer. This is the rotation point for your layer. Place your cursor outside the layer on the canvas and move it left and right until you achieve your desired rotation.

The layer will not rotate unless the cursor is on the canvas outside of the layer boundary.



Using the Scale Transform and Rotate Palette you can manually type in the values you want, click on the values box and use the up and down arrows to increase/decrease your angle or scale, or use the angle wheel.

The size of the canvas will adjust to the angle of your layer. Once you have it in place, double-click on the layer to release it.



Flipping a Layer

Layers can be flipped horizontally or vertically by selecting **Layer** ▶ **Rotate and Transform** ▶ **Flip Layer Horizontal** or **Flip Layer Vertical**. This will flip the individual layer on either the 'x' or the 'y' axis.



Original Image



Flipped Horizontally



Flipped Vertically



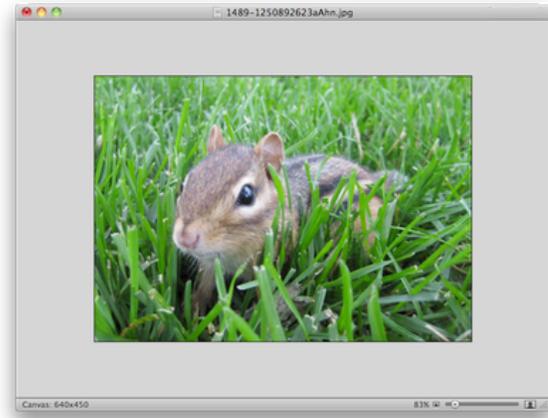
Horizontal then Vertical

[Peacock Photo - Courtesy of Public Domain](#)

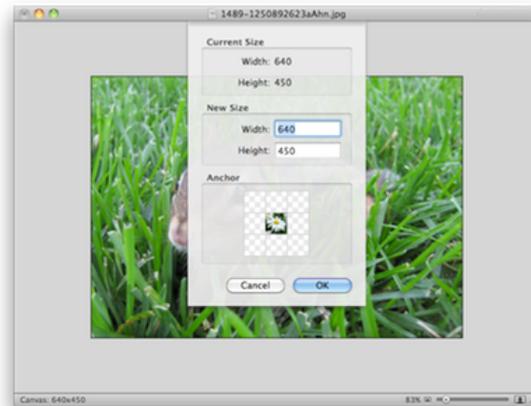
[Lego Photo - Copyright © kennymatic](#)

Resizing The Canvas

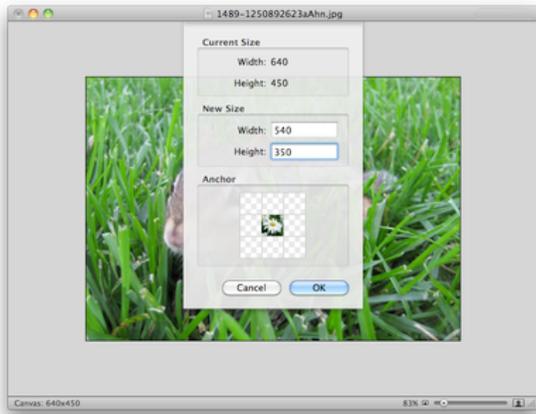
Here is an image on a canvas size of 640 x 450 pixels. Notice the canvas size is shown in the bottom left-hand corner of the window.



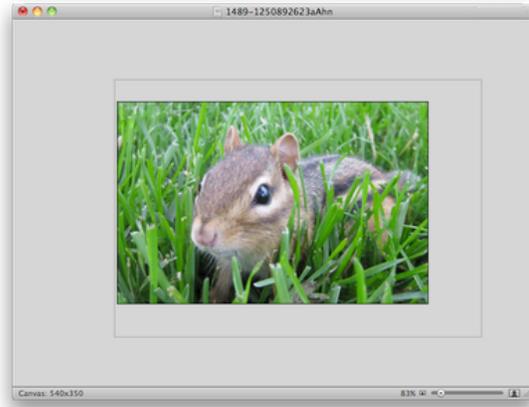
To resize the canvas, go to **Image** ▶ **Resize Canvas** on your top menu or hold down **⌘⌥C**. The Canvas Resize display will appear in your window. The top portion shows the current size of your canvas.



Under New Size insert the new dimensions. For example, enter 540 x 350. This will trim 50px off of each side of the canvas. For this example keep the image anchored to the center. Select OK.

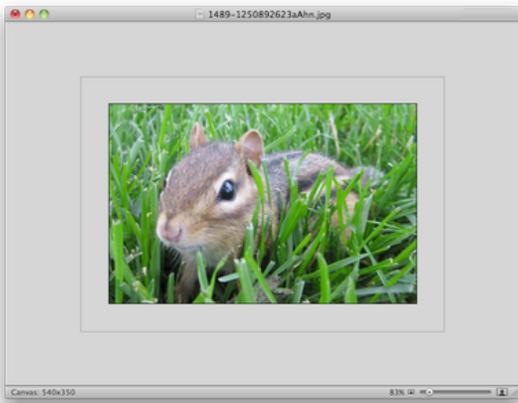


The gray area outside of the image is where your full image lies outside of the visible canvas area. You can see that it has been resized evenly around the image.



When resizing the canvas, you can choose to see your canvas dimensions in pixels, inches, or centimeters. Changing the canvas dimensions will not change the base unit of measurement for your image. To learn more about changing the base measurement unit read 'Image Measurements'.

[Squirrel Photo - Public Domain](#)



Use the **Move Tool** (V) to drag the image and place it wherever you like within the canvas. See how the image below has moved to the right. This is how Canvas Resize differs significantly from resizing your image or cropping. With canvas resizing you can adjust the placement of the image within the canvas multiple times without using Undo.

Resizing Your Image



The easiest way to scale your image in Acorn is to select **Image** ▶ **Resize Image**. Type in the dimensions of what you want the image to be, and press the OK button.

When resizing the image, you can choose to see your image dimensions in pixels, inches, or centimeters. Changing the image dimension measurement value will not change the

base unit of measurement for your image. To learn more about changing the base measurement unit read image measurements.

Acorn also gives you the option to use three different scaling operations. Most of the time you are going to want to use the "Lanczos" scaling since it is a higher quality scaling algorithm. However, if you would like something a little more low tech, you can choose "Simple Affine". The "Nearest Neighbor" scaling option replaces each pixel with 4 pixels of the same color. This results in a very pixelated looking image which is useful for some purposes.

When scaling with Lanczos, the original aspect ratio must be kept intact (the option will be grayed out in the window). If you wish to change the aspect ratio, you must choose either Simple Affine or Nearest Neighbor as the scaling option.

Be sure to read 'All about DPI, PPI, and Printing' for more information about PPI and resampling your image.

[Flower Photo - Copyright © Tibchris](#)

Quick Scaling by Changing the Window Size

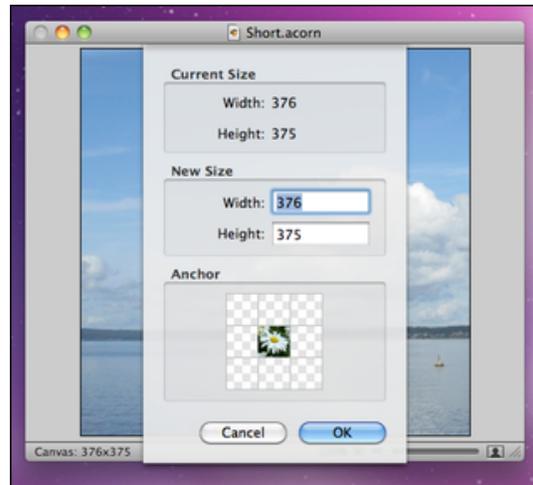
Here is a neat shortcut. If you would rather scale your image without precise measurements, just hold down the option key and resize your window using the resize widget in the bottom right. Acorn will then scale your image up or down, depending on which way you resize your window.

Holding down the control key while resizing the window changes the size of the canvas, without scaling the image.

Resizing Your Canvas, Without Scaling the Image

If you would like to change the size of your image without scaling the image, use **Image ▶ Resize Canvas**.

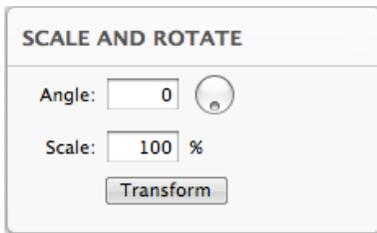
The Anchor option will keep your image anchored to a specific side or corner in cases where you make the canvas larger.



Resizing a Layer

If you wish to resize a layer but want to keep the proportions within the layer the same then **Layer ▶ Rotate and Transform ▶ Scale and Rotate (⌘⇧T)** is your best option. Once you bring up this option, the tools palette will display a scale percentage. You can change the percentage by manually typing in what you want, or you can use the up and down arrows within the field to make adjustments.

Under **Layer ▶ Rotate and Transform** you will also find Free Transform and Perspective Transform. Read 'Transforming Layers' for more information on these options.

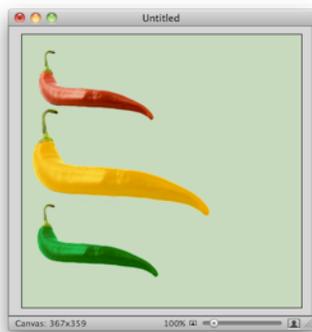


Fitting the Canvas to Layers

If you want the canvas to be large enough to encompass the largest layer in your project, select **Image > Expand Canvas to Fit Layers**. All layers will then be fully present within the canvas boundaries.

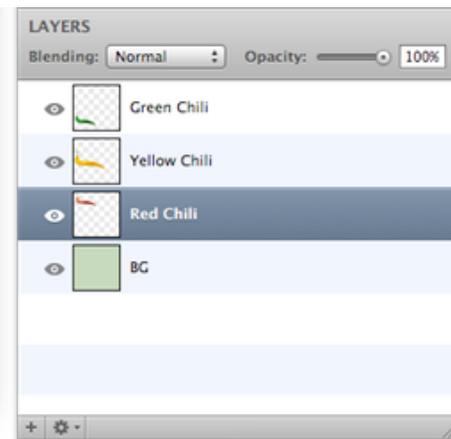
Transforming Layers

Below are three peppers. These pepper images will be the foundation of how to use Scale Transform, Free Transform, and Perspective Transform.

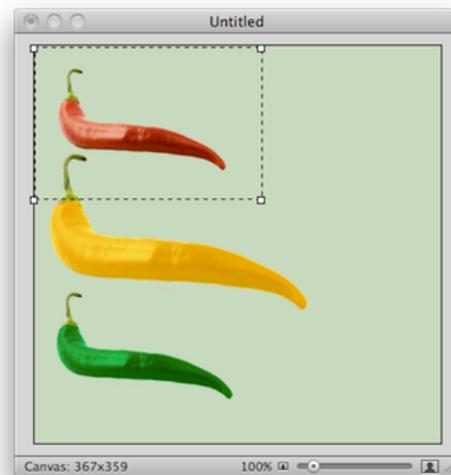


Scale Transform and Rotate

Select the layer you wish to work on. The red chili will be used first.



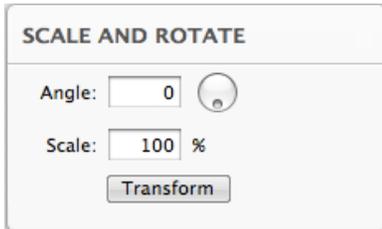
Now that the layer is selected, choose **Layer > Rotate and Transform > Scale and Rotate (⌘⇧T)**. A box will appear around the selected item. There are points at each corner of the box.



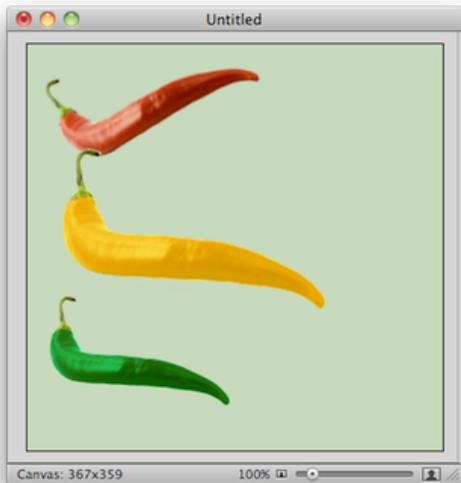
When you roll over any corner of the box, this will appear, meaning you can scale your item. Move the cursor towards the inside center of the item to make it smaller, and to the outside of the item to make it larger. This will scale your item, keeping the same original proportions. You may also move the item by clicking on the inside (a fist icon will appear) and dragging to move it around your canvas.

Rotating

By clicking outside of the selected area and dragging, you can rotate the item. You can also rotate and scale the item by using the Transform palette.



The red chili has been made a little larger and placed at an angle.



Free Transform

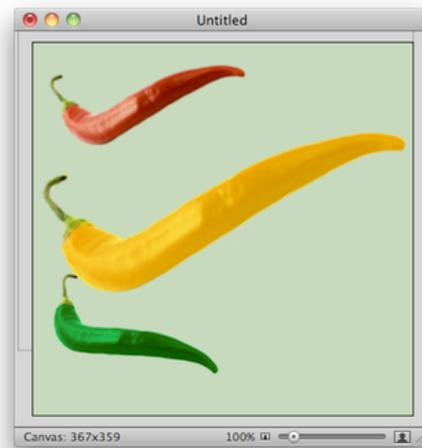
Once again, select the layer with the item you wish to transform. The yellow pepper has been selected here. To select Free Transform, choose **Layers > Rotate and Transform > Free Transform**. A box will appear around the selected item. When you roll your cursor over the corners of the box an icon like this will appear:



It will change depending on the point you select. By dragging any of the corners

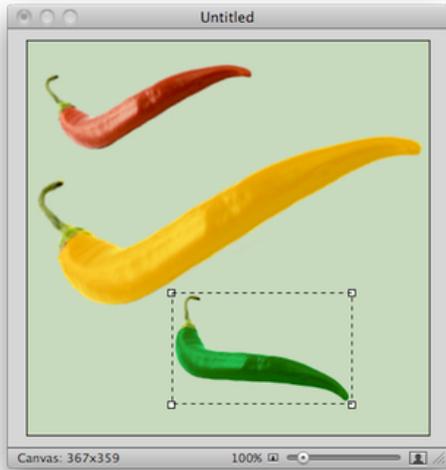
you can change the shape and size of the selected item. Unlike Scale Transform, this will not keep the proportions the same as the original. To preserve the proportions while using Free Transform, hold Shift while dragging out the corners of your object. You may also move and rotate the object, just as in Scale Transform.

The yellow chili has been made longer and also placed at an angle.



Perspective Transform

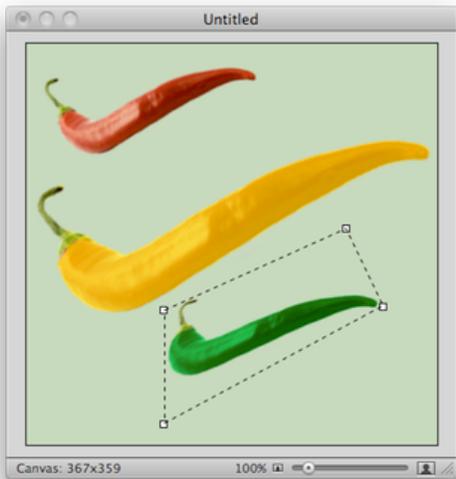
Again, select the layer with your object on it. Choose **Layers > Rotate and Transform > Perspective Transform**. The box will appear around your item. With Perspective Transform you will not be able to rotate your object, although you will still be able to move it around by clicking and dragging.



Instead of the points moving with each other, they will move independently creating the look of perspective.



[Chili Pepper and Wall Photos - Public Domain](#)



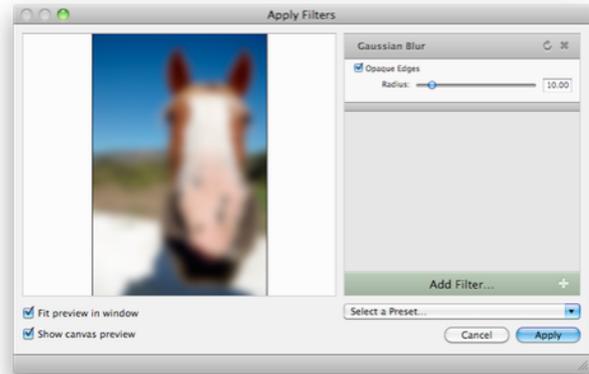
This is useful if you want your image to look like it is pasted onto an item in perspective.

Here is an example of what you could do with Perspective Transform:

Acorn General

- Filters
- Web Export
- Automation
- Taking Screen Shots
- Copy Merged
- File Actions
- Using Acorn with iPhoto
- Setting the Desktop Picture
- All About DPI, PPI, & Printing

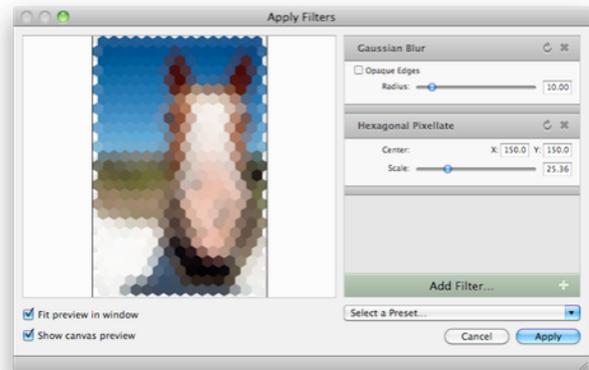
Using Filters in Acorn



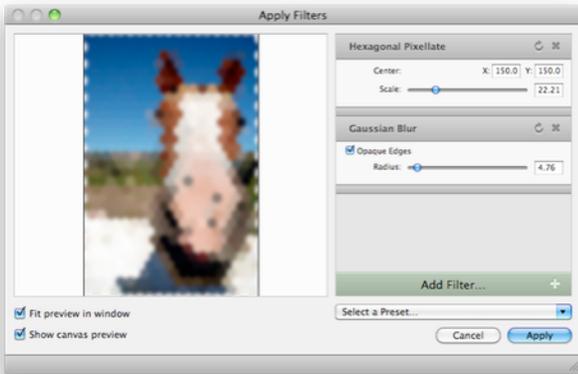
Acorn's filter panel

Filters are an amazingly easy way to change your image in original and unique ways. With a little bit of fiddling, these filters can create things you never even imagined. To bring up the filter window, simply pick a filter from the menu item **Filter** ▶ In the example above, **Gaussian Blur** was chosen. Immediately the image that was being worked on will change to reflect the filter that has been applied to it.

The power of the Filter Window comes in stacking filters together to make workflows. Clicking the plus button on the green bar at the bottom of the filter will bring up a prompt with a list of all the filters. At this point you may choose an additional filter to apply.

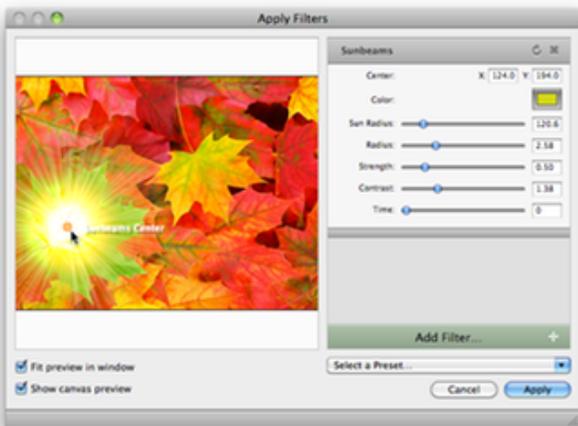


Now the image that you see is the result of a Gaussian Blur and then a Hexagonal Pixelate. You can also drag the filters around to change the order of operations. The image below is produced by doing a Hexagonal Pixelate followed by a Gaussian Blur. If you decide you do not like the filter that you have chosen, the 'X' in the upper right hand corner will delete it.



Adjusting Inputs Visually

Below you can see there are various options for the Sunbeams filter. Some of the options can be manipulated directly in the preview window, such as the "Center" option for the Sunbeams. On the left side of the image you will notice a highlighted area with a little orange widget which you can select and move about.

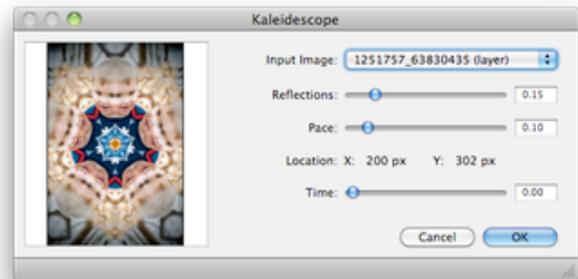


Quartz Compositions

Quartz Compositions are filters created using [Quartz Composer](#), which is a visual programming language and IDE provided by Apple. Anyone can create their own compositions, which can then be downloaded and installed.

Acorn will list your Quartz Composition filters under the **Filter ▶ Quartz Compositions** menu.

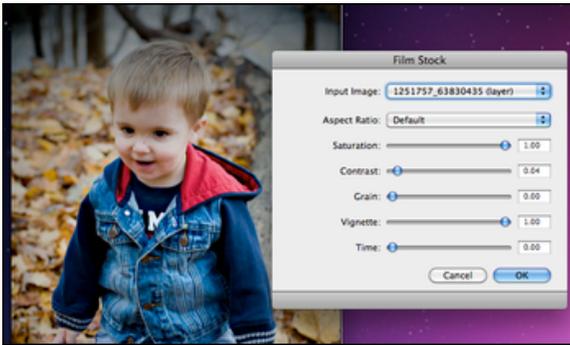
To install a Quartz Composition, you can either place the composition file (which will have a file extension of ".qtz") into your ~/Library/Compositions folder or you can drag and drop the file into Acorn. If Acorn is running, you will need to restart Acorn for your filter to show up.



Using the Compositions

Most compositions require some sort of input, such as the Film Stock composition shown below. Other compositions, such as "Color Pencil" do not require input.

When a composition requires a location for the filter, such as the Kaleidoscope filter shown above, Acorn will provide a thumbnail of the image on the left side of the composition parameter window. You can then click and drag to adjust the x/y coordinates of the filter location.

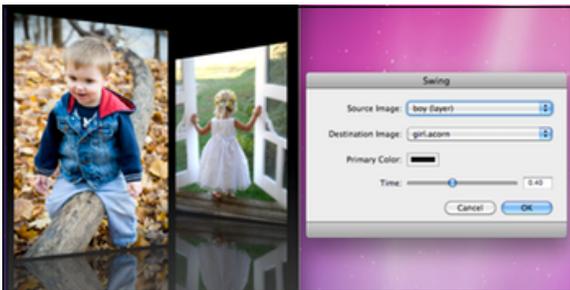


Web Export

The time may come when you want to share your images with the internet. Fortunately, Acorn comes with a Web Export panel that will help you choose which image format to use, along with an easy way to compare formats. You can bring up Acorn's Web Export panel via the **File ▶ Web Export** menu.

Adjusting the Time Parameter

Some compositions, such as "Swing", provide a Time parameter. Adjusting the time value will tell the composition where in its virtual timeline it should hold stationary. In the Swing example below, adjusting the time will place the two selected images at different locations from foreground to background. The time is currently set to .4, which places the selected source image at 60% along its "swing", and the selected destination image to 40%.



Try playing around with some of the filters and experiment, experiment, experiment. For more information, check out the [online tutorials](#) or send us an email to support@flyingmeat.com and request a tutorial.

[Horse Photo - Copyright Basilievich](#)

[Leaves Photo - Copyright © Kuttelvaserova](#)

[Boy Photo - Copyright Jason Nelson](#)



To toggle between a preview of your exported image and the original, click on either the "Preview" or "Original" labels in the top left of the window. You can also click on the image to toggle back and forth.

Choosing a format to export your image is as easy as selecting from the list of formats offered on the left of the window. Some options, such as JPEG and JPEG 2000, will allow you to set how much compression to use via the Quality slider. The higher the quality setting, the bigger the file size. Adjust the quality slider to find the best setting for you. The file size of the current preview is available in the bottom window bar.

If your image has transparent edges, click on the Trim option. This will allow your image to be as small as possible.

If your image has transparent pixels, and you would rather not have them changed to

white when exporting as JPEG, you can alter the matte color with the Matte option.

The script icon in the bottom left of the window contains the same entries found in the File Actions menu. Choosing one of these will send your web optimized image to the selected application in the list.

[Mountaineer Photo © jfdervin](#)

Batch Processing using Automator

What is Automator?

"Automator is an application developed by Apple for Mac OS X that implements point-and-click (or drag-and-drop) creation of workflows for automating repetitive tasks into batches for quicker alteration, thus saving time and effort over human intervention to manually change each file separately." - [Wikipedia](#)

Automator can be used with Acorn to process one or more images, and to change the file format of the images. You can crop, trim, and combine multiple images. You may even give Acorn custom commands with JavaScript. Learn more about Automator from [Automator World](#).

Workflows

Current Acorn Workflows available in Automator:

- Change the file type of images
- Close images
- Crop images
- Run JavaScript
- Add a layer on images

- Open images
- Trim images

Additional workflows you can download:

Change DPI:

<http://flyingmeat.com/stuff/BatchChangeDPI.workflow.zip>

Examples

Not sure where to start? Read the tutorial on how to use Acorn to perform 'Batch Watermarking' to get your feet wet.

Taking Screen Shots



Acorn has the ability to take screen shots, even if Acorn is not the active application. The shortcut key to take screen shots is $\text{⌘} \text{⇧} 6$. You can change the shortcut key in the general section of the Preferences window.

When you press $\text{⌘} \text{⇧} 6$, Acorn will make a new image with the contents of your screen. From here you can crop and modify your image.

You also have the option to turn every window into its own layer. To do this, open up

the Preferences window and click the option "Use layers when taking screenshots".

Copy Merged

Copy merged is a way of flattening your layers or selection into a copy which can then be pasted or made into a new image.

The image below has 3 different layers: a shape layer, the primary image layer, and a background layer.



To quickly flatten and copy the entire layer list, click on **Edit ▶ Copy Merged**. The copy will be placed on your clipboard. You can then create a new Acorn file by choosing **File ▶ New from Clipboard (⌘⌘N)**. As you can see below there is now only one layer, 'image from clipboard'.

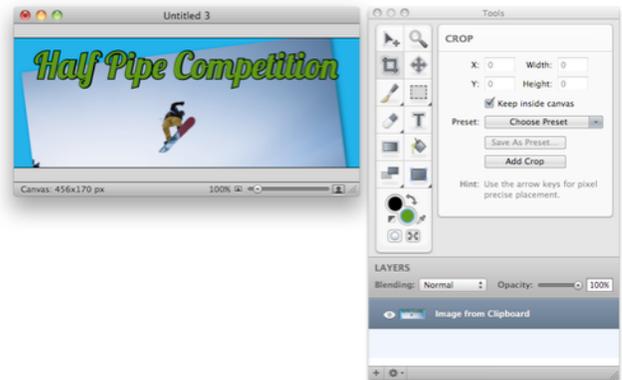


Alternatively, you can paste the copy into an already existing file.

Copy merged works with selections as well. Make a selection of the area of your image you wish to copy.



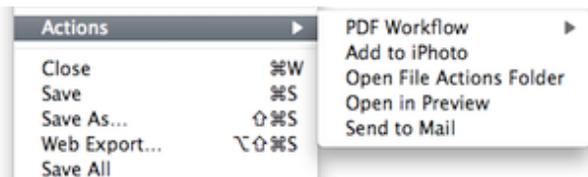
Select **Edit ▶ Copy Merged**, and **File ▶ New from Clipboard (⌘⌘N)** or paste the copy into your desired location.



Layer ▶ Flatten Image is another method of flattening your layers, but make sure you rename your file immediately after performing this action otherwise you may lose your original work!

[Snowboarder Photo - Copyright © BC Living](#)

File Actions



You can set up File Actions for images that you are working on in Acorn. File Actions will perform tasks with the image, taking it out of Acorn and to do whatever you want with it.

The File Actions that come pre-installed will take the image that you are currently working on and email it, add it to iPhoto, or open it in Preview.

If you are curious about making or installing new ones, follow these steps:

1. Choose the menu **File ▶ Actions** in Acorn
2. Select "Open File Actions Folder"
3. Start Messing around!

From here you can duplicate the actions that are in there and edit them, or move in pre-made actions from around the net.

If you are curious as to how to make your own, the easiest way is to open up one of the pre-installed ones in TextEdit and fiddle with it.

```
#!/bin/bash
```

```
/usr/bin/open -a iPhoto "$@"
```

This tells Acorn to open the image in iPhoto.

You may have noticed that you can drag images into the Dock and applications that have the ability to open them will highlight. Any of those applications can be named in

this script instead of iPhoto. Simply changing it to say "Safari" will open the image in Safari instead of iPhoto.

Acorn and iPhoto

iPhoto lets you choose an external editor for photos. While a lot of image correction can be done inside of iPhoto itself, Acorn is here to help with the more advanced things.

1. Open up iPhoto.
2. Select from the menu **iPhoto ▶ Preferences**.
3. Make sure the **Advanced** tab is selected (in older versions of iPhoto this was located in the General tab).
4. Locate the pull down that says **Edit Photos**.
5. Select the pull down and choose **In...**
6. A dialog box will open up, navigate to **Applications** and select **Acorn**.

Now when you hit the edit button with a photo selected in iPhoto, it will open the photo up in Acorn.

Quickly edit a photo from iPhoto

This will allow you to quickly edit a photo from iPhoto, and keep it in iPhoto. Letting iPhoto take control of managing where the files are on your computer can be a great way to keep your computer clean and organized. With this method you will not be able to go back and undo, correct, or modify the changes you have made. For example, if

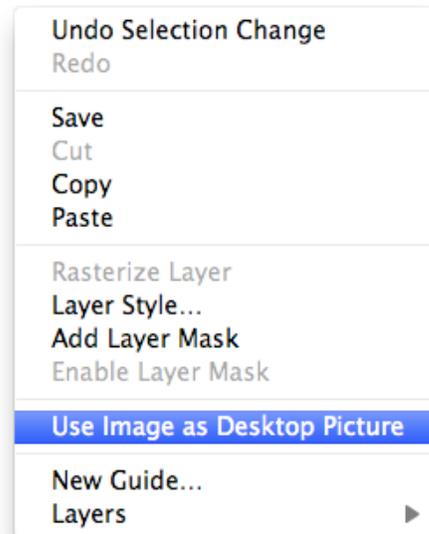
you put text on your photo, once you hit save you will not be able to edit the text again.

1. Select the photo you would like to edit. You might want to take this opportunity to duplicate it by choosing from the menu **Photos ▶ Duplicate**. Now you have a copy of the photo in case something goes awry. You can always delete the original one later.
2. Now it is in Acorn. Add text, edit, and play.
3. Choose File ▶ Save.
4. Say **"Save Anyways"** if Acorn pops up with a **"File Format Warning"**.
5. Close the picture in Acorn.
6. Now go back to iPhoto. If you double click the image to enlarge it, you will see your changes.

Note: Sometimes the thumbnail in iPhoto will not update right away to reflect the changes you have just made. However, if you open the photo up in iPhoto or add it into a book or calendar the changes that you have made will be present.

Setting the Desktop Picture

Acorn can be used to set or change your desktop picture. Play around and modify your images then immediately use them as your background! Simply right click on your image to bring up the canvas contextual menu. Click on "Use Image as Desktop Picture". Wait a few seconds, and voilà!



All about DPI, PPI, and Printing



There are a few different factors that go in to determining image print quality, and it can be difficult to understand their relationship to one another. To start, here are a few general definitions of terms:

Pixel Count: The amount of pixels an image contains is the pixel count (for instance, a "10MP / 10 mega-pixel" image has 10 million pixels in it). How the image is displayed on your monitor is determined by this value. In general, the more pixels you have in your image the better it will look since the more pixels there are, the greater the detail. Pixel count is usually displayed in dimensions: "1200 x 900 pixels" or "1200 x 900 px". If you have a digital camera or scanner, you can usually create higher pixel counts by

changing the settings of your device prior to taking a picture or scan.

One thing to remember- scaling up an image to increase the pixel count will not make your image higher quality or sharper. Adding pixels to your image this way will only increase the file size, since your computer isn't good at guessing what the extra details should be. It'll just double the existing pixels, not add new and better ones. Scaling down your image however (where pixels are thrown out) does not have this problem. Scaling down will usually result in a loss of quality however.

Physical Size Dimensions: This is usually displayed in centimeters or inches, such as "5 x 7" or "4 x 6". When printing to typical photo sizes, you will need to accordingly resize your image to fit standard photo printing dimensions if they aren't already the appropriate size. Displaying the ruler (⌘-R) will show you your image dimensions. You can also control-click on the ruler to change the units that it uses (pixels, inches, or centimeters).

Pixels Per Inch (PPI): Refers to printing resolution quality and is measured in "pixels per inch" or PPI. In general you do not want to go lower than 180 PPI for acceptable printing results. 360 PPI is a typical standard for high quality printing results. Many web images and computer images are at 72 or 96 PPI. DPI (dots per inch) is another term that is occasionally used interchangeably with PPI when discussing resolution. DPI is a measurement of printers, not a measurement of a digital image. Typically a printing DPI value of 300 produces good quality photos.

Resample Image: This is an option available under **Image ▶ Resize Image**. If you are changing the PPI of your image in order to improve printing results, you want this box unchecked. If you have "resample image" checked when increasing the PPI of your

image, you are increasing the number of pixels without increasing their density. This will result in poor printing appearance.



The Math!

Example 1: Pretend you have an image that is 1600 x 2400 pixels with a ppi of 240. You want to know if your image will have good printing results at a size of 4 x 6.

To figure this out, multiply the ppi by the size dimensions you desire: (240 x 4) and (240 x 6). The results are 960 x 1440 pixels. Since your image is larger than these dimensions, and your ppi is greater than 180, you should have good printing results.

Example 2: Your image has a ppi of 72. The print shop wants your image to have a minimum ppi of 300. Your original image size is 1200 x 1800 pixels. You want your image to print out as a 4 x 6 photo. You want to make sure that by increasing the ppi of your image (and unchecking the "resample image" option), you are still going to have a good quality print outcome.

Divide the pixel count by the ppi you have set: (1200/300) and (1800/300). The results are 4 x 6. You should have a good quality print outcome since your ppi is greater than 180, and the boundaries of the image exactly match the print size you desire (if the

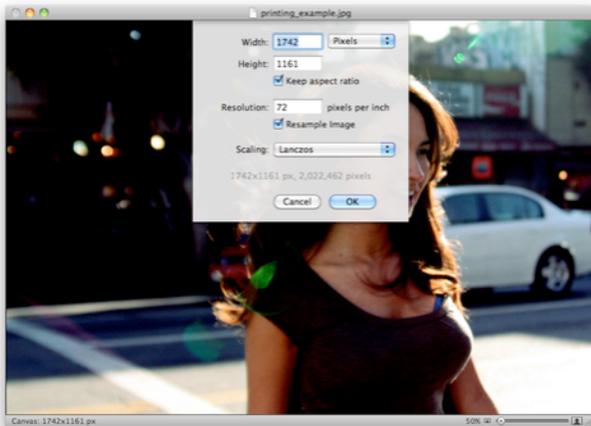
boundaries turned out to be larger than you would still be okay).

Example 3: You want the highest ppi possible for your image to be able to print at 5 x 7. The image pixel count is 1500 x 2100 and its current ppi is 72.

Divide the pixel count by the image dimensions you want: (1500/5) and (2100/7). The result is 300. You can set the ppi to 300 (with "resample image" unchecked) for the best printing results.

Learning by Example

You want to print the image below as a 4 x 6 photo. Its original pixel count is 1742 x 1161 with a resolution of 72 ppi.

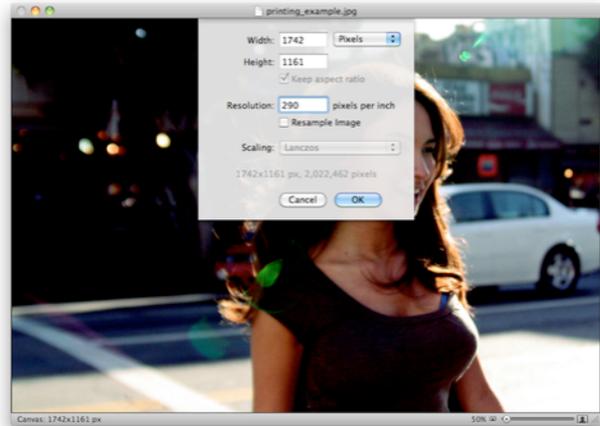


You aren't sure by how much you can increase the ppi to improve your printing results, so you get out your calculator. Divide the pixel count by the dimensions you want your image to print:

$$(1742 \text{ pixels}/6 \text{ inches}) = 290.33 \quad (1161 \text{ pixels}/4 \text{ inches}) = 290.25$$

It looks like you can increase your ppi to a maximum of 290 and your image will still be large enough to fit in the 4 x 6 dimensions.

Enter 290 in the resolution box and uncheck "resample image".



Now you need to make sure your image is sized appropriately for a 4 x 6 print. Select the crop tool. It is easiest to use the preset crop values. For this example we want to hold down the option key while selecting 4 x 6 in order to swap the width/height.



Click "crop image" once you have your crop lined up the way you want. Be sure to "save as" a different file name so that you don't lose your original image file. Your image is now ready to be print at a 4 x 6 size with the highest quality resolution possible with the original pixel count.

Key Points

You will lose image quality if you try to increase the pixel count of an image beyond its original dimensions. It is better to change the settings on your digital camera or scanner to create a higher pixel count in your images in the first place.

Uncheck "resample image" if you are changing the PPI of your image to improve printing appearance.

It is helpful to use the crop tool presets to resize your image to standard photo dimensions. Be sure to hold down the option key when selecting a crop preset if you want to swap the width/height values.

Helpful Links

- [Image Resolution - The Key to Excellent Prints](#)
- [The Arithmetic of DPI/PPI](#)
- [Display, Printing, DPI and PPI](#)

[Calculator Photo - Copyright © Boaz Arad](#)

[Pretty Lady Photo - Copyright © Mark Sebastian](#)

Acorn Tutorials

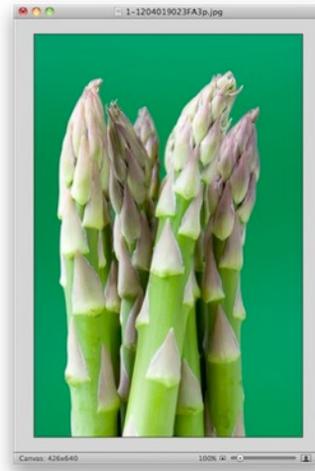
- How to Remove a Background
- Applying Texture
- Fun with Layer Masks
- Automating Watermarking
- Watermarking a Single Image
- Inserting Images
- Quick Mask
- Shape Brushes
- How to Fade Out Your Image

Please visit Acorn's [online tutorial documentation](#) to view many more tutorials.

How to Remove a Background

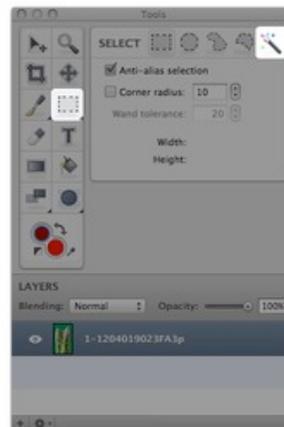
Below are different ways to remove a background using the Magic Wand, Instant Alpha Eraser, Blending Modes, and Filters.

The original image in this example is asparagus with a green background. The goal is to remove the green background.



The Magic Wand Method

The Magic Wand is located under the Select Tools menu (Keyboard shortcut "M"). You will see it on the far right as shown below.



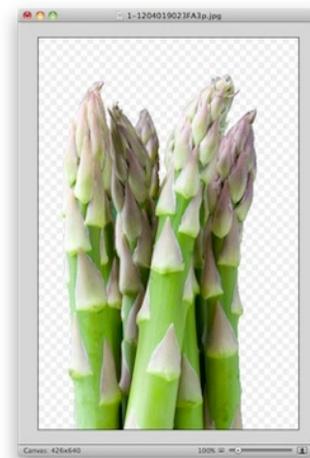
In the Select Tools menu there is a value box labeled Wand Tolerance. This number adjusts the range of colors that the Magic Wand will select. To remove all of the green background and not just sections of it, the tolerance needs to be set fairly high. A value of 60 should be enough for this image. Using the Magic Wand, select the green background. You can tell the background has been selected by all of the little ants marching around it.



Another option for fully selecting the background is to use the magic wand tool and place your cursor over the background. Then click and drag with the mouse to increase or decrease the tolerance of the selection. You will see a circle near your cursor increase or decrease in size in response to the change in tolerance. You can see in real time how your selection grows or shrinks. The first image below shows an appropriate selection of the green background. The second image shows the wand has selected too much and is overflowing into the asparagus.



Now hit the Delete key and deselect by going to Select > Clear Selection or hitting ⌘D on your keyboard. This has removed the original background completely, leaving a transparent background.

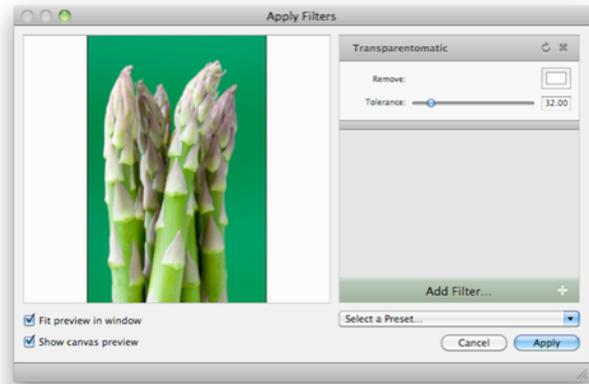


The Instant Alpha Erase Tool Method

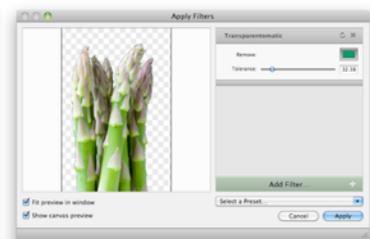
Instant alpha is located under the eraser tool as shown below.



Instant alpha is an erasing tool that has similar qualities to the magic wand selection tool. Click on the color you want erased and simultaneously click and drag outwards to increase the erasing tolerance, or inwards to decrease. The results will be seen in real time as you drag inwards and outwards.



Click once on the color well to the right of where it says 'remove'. This will bring up the colors palette. Click on the magnifying glass to the left of the colors display in the colors palette. Using the magnifying glass click on the green background in the image. The green background will be removed. Play around with the tolerance level while in the filter until things look right. Click 'apply' once you are done.



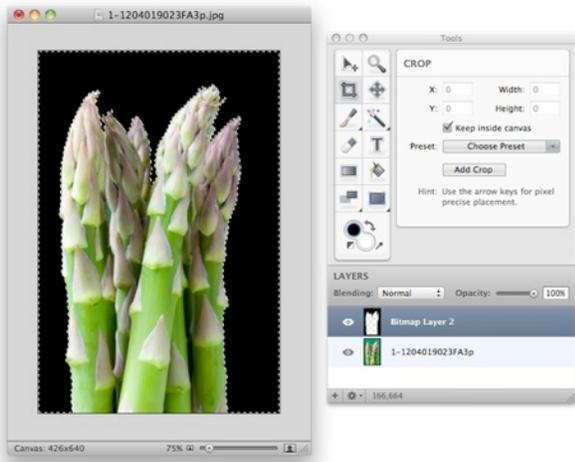
The green background is removed, leaving transparency. This is because there is no layer below the asparagus to show through the erased green area.

The Transparentomatic Filter Method

Go to Filter ▶ Color Adjustment ▶ Transparentomatic.

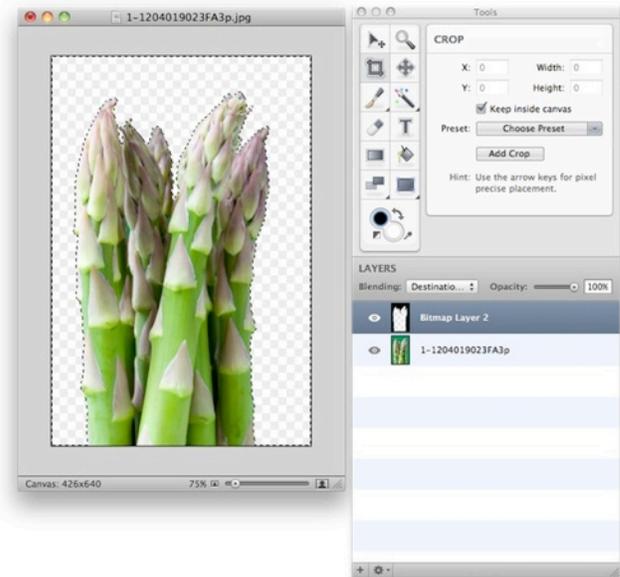
The Blending Modes Method

Select your background using the Magic Wand tool. Go to Layer ▶ New Layer with Selection. The selection should transfer to this new layer. Fill in the selection with black or white, or any color, it doesn't really matter.



layer it is on, or turning the visibility on and off.

Now change the Blending mode of the layer. Right now it is set to Normal. To erase the background, set the Blending mode to Destination Out.



The Color Controls Filter Method

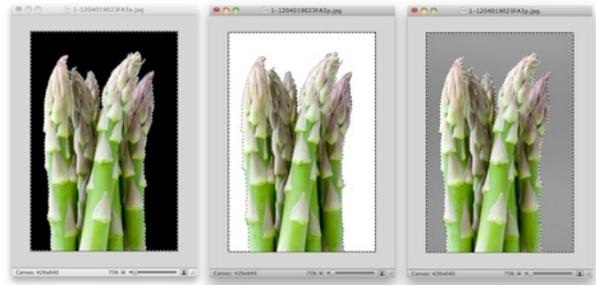
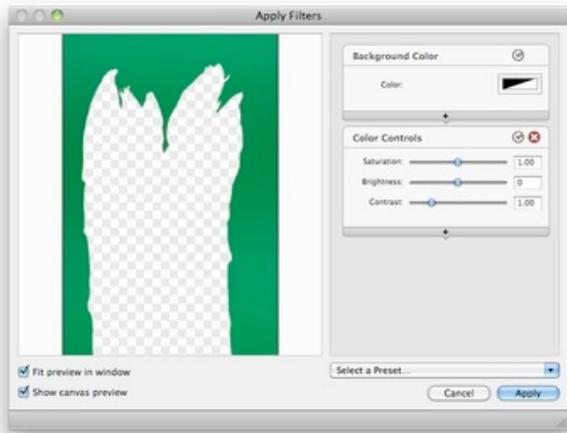
Now use the color controls filter to remove or change the color of the background. This method will not make the background transparent. Once again, use the Magic Wand to select the background.



This will leave a transparent background that is easily removed or altered by deleting the

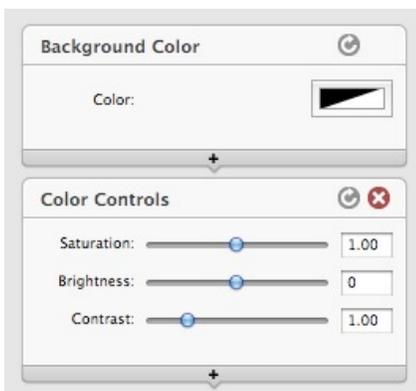
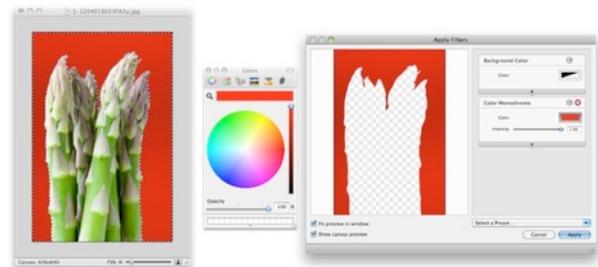
Go to Filter ▶ Color Adjustment ▶ Color Controls. The Color Control menu will appear.

You see it only shows the background color because it has been selected with the Magic Wand, leaving out the asparagus.



With the Color Controls, by adjusting the sliders around, you can change the value and saturation of the color of your background. But you are limited to the colors of your original background. To change the color of the background to something completely different, use Filter > Color Effect > Color Monochrome.

These are the color controls. You can adjust the Brightness, Contrast, and Saturation of your selected background. In this case, the background color is what is unselected (the asparagus), so changing the background color will not change the color of your actual background.



In the Color Monochrome window, there are two places to select color. Again, the background color will not change your actual background color. Select a color under Color Monochrome. When you click on the color box, the color palette will appear. Choose your color! How about red? You can adjust the intensity of the color by using the Intensity slider. This will shift your color from the original background color to your new chosen background color.

To make the background white, adjust the Brightness all the way to the right, and to make the background black move the slider all the way to the left. To make the background any shade of gray, slide the saturation all the way to the left, then slide the brightness from left to right to adjust the value of gray.

[Asparagus Photo - Public Domain](#)

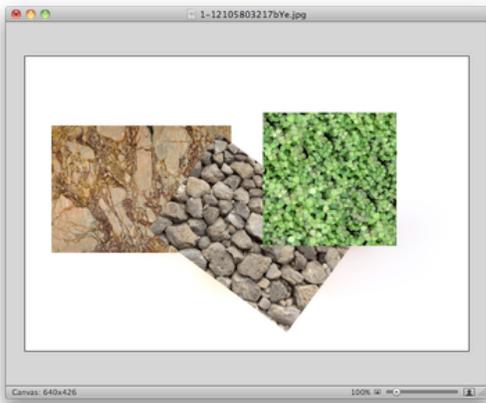
How To Apply Textures

This tutorial will show you how to apply textures to your image. Each of these peppers

will have a different texture applied using blending modes.



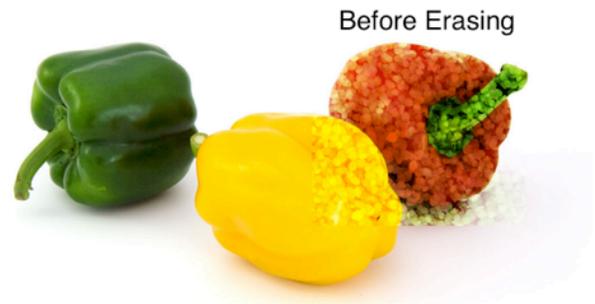
All the textures on this tutorial are from <http://www.cgtextures.com>. Marble, rocks, and clover textures were chosen for this example. Paste your texture images onto your image. Use the Layer ▶ Rotate and Transform ▶ Scale and Rotate (⌘⇧T) menu to move them around and change their size and angle. The textures here have each been placed on their own layer so they can be edited independently.



Change the blending mode of each texture layer to Overlay.



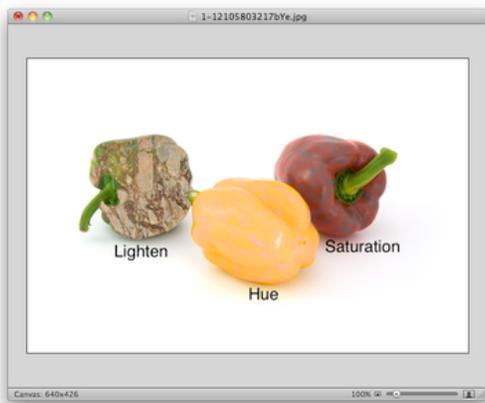
The texture should be noticeable on the flesh of the peppers, not the stems or shadows. To do this you need to erase the texture on the areas where it is not wanted. To make this easier, turn off the visibility on the other texture layers, leaving only the original image and the texture you wish to edit. Select the layer of the texture you wish to edit. Start with the red pepper.



Repeat this with the remaining textures. Now all the peppers have their own texture.



The blending mode of the textures on the image above are all set to Overlay. You can adjust how the textures look by changing the blending mode and opacity on the layer of each texture.



You can also use this technique to apply a single texture to an entire image.

[Peppers Photo - Public Domain](#)

Fun with Layer Masks

Layer Mask Example Using Magic Wand

To start, add an image of a starfish and an image with some boats to Acorn in separate

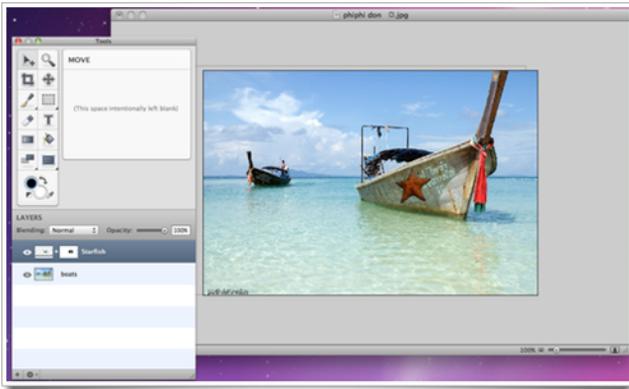
layers. The layer with the starfish needs to be above the layer with the boats (see credits below for links to the images).



Next, select the layer that includes the starfish and add a layer mask by clicking on the cogwheel and selecting "add layer mask". The layers palette should now look like this:



Click on the layer mask to begin working on it. You will know the layer mask is selected when a black line appears towards the bottom of the mask. Now "mask" everything in the starfish image except the starfish. To do this, select the magic wand tool and set the wand tolerance to around 90. Click on the water around the starfish to select it, then choose Edit ▶ Clear to allow the boat layer below to show through. Don't forget to deselect after doing this by clicking ⌘D.



Right now the layer mask is doing its job of exposing exactly the part of the layer below that is situated under the starfish. The starfish can be blended into the boat exterior by decreasing the opacity of the starfish layer to about 70%. Notice how the starfish and the boat layers were not actually altered ?

[Starfish Photo - Copyright © Clinton & Charles Robertson](#)

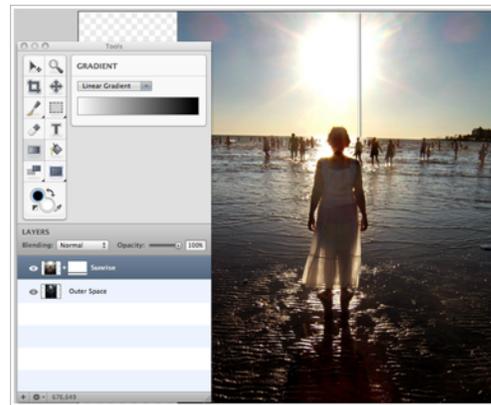
[Boats Photo - Copyright © Paulo Brandao](#)

Layer Mask Example Using Gradients

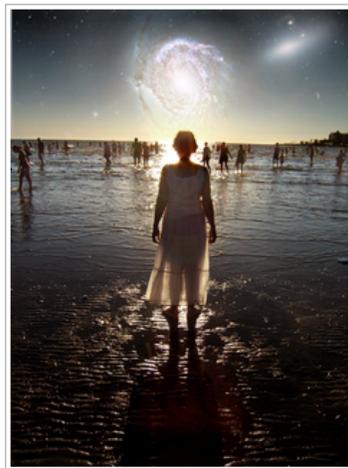
You can have a lot of fun combining images seamlessly with layer masks using gradients. Similar to the previous example, open the images you want to combine in Acorn. Place the image that you wish to mask areas from in the top most layer. In this example a sunrise skyline will be replaced with outer space.



Following steps outlined previously, add a layer mask to the layer you wish to conceal areas on. Here a layer mask will be added to the sunrise skyline. Select the layer mask by clicking on it. Now add a gradient to the layer mask. Click on the gradient tool in the tools palette and choose "linear gradient". Make sure the colors present on your tools palette are black and white. The goal is to have outer space show through on the sunrise image from the horizon to the top of the image, so add a gradient spanning this section of the image. The white line below is showing the span of the gradient.



Once the gradient is applied, the layer below will be exposed! Have some fun adjusting the opacity and blending settings to get things looking just right.



[Sunrise Photo - Copyright © Vince Alongi](#)

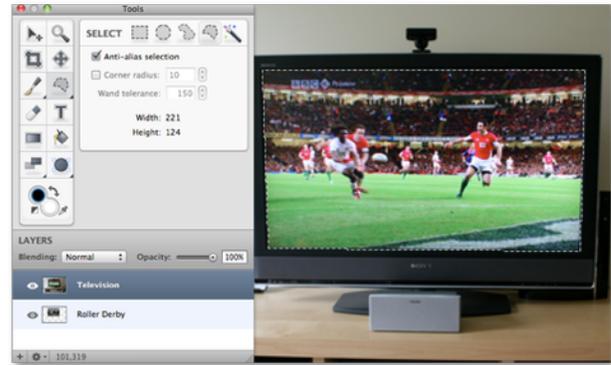
[Outer Space Photo - Copyright © NASA Goddard Space Flight Center](#)

Layer Mask Example Using 'Paste Into'

Another layer mask technique is using "Paste Into". With Paste Into you select all or part of one image, then select the area(s) on another image that you would like the initial image to appear on. Since this uses layer masks neither image is being altered, so it is easy to go back and change things later. As an example, take a television that is showing a soccer game. The goal is to change the television screen to show an image of a roller derby game.



Open both images in Acorn with the television image in the top layer, and the roller derby image in the layer below it. In this example the entire roller derby image will show up on the television. Click on the roller derby image layer. Choose Select ▶ Select All (⌘A), then make a copy Edit ▶ Copy (⌘C). Now go ahead and clear your selection (⌘D). Next, click on the layer with the television image. Make a layer mask with the part of the image with the soccer game. To do this, go to the tools palette and pick one of the selection tools. With this particular example it will be easiest to use the polygon selection tool (for more information on selection tools read 'Selection Tools'. Using the polygon tool, outline the screen of the television.



Now for the fun part! Go to Edit ▶ Paste Into (⇧⌘V) and the selected part of the roller derby image will show through the layer mask making it appear to be on tv. Using the move tool, move the roller derby image around until you get it lining up where you want it. If the roller derby image is too large or small, click on that layer and use Layer ▶ Rotate and Transform ▶ Scale and Rotate (⌘⇧T) to fix things.



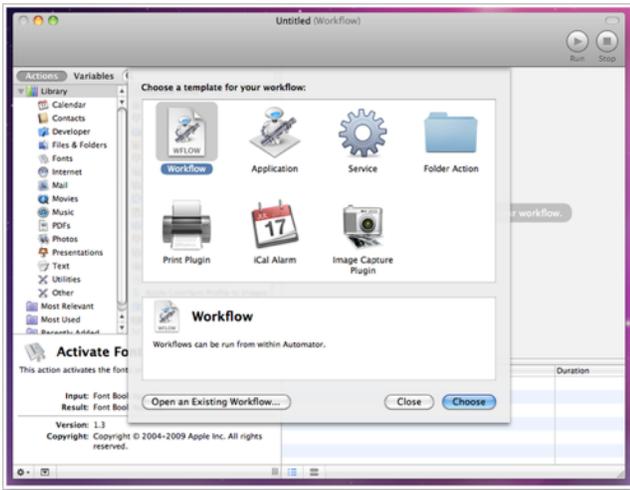
[Television Photo - Copyright © William Hook](#)

[Roller Derby - Copyright © Narra99 Chris Jones](#)

Batch Watermarking Images with Automator

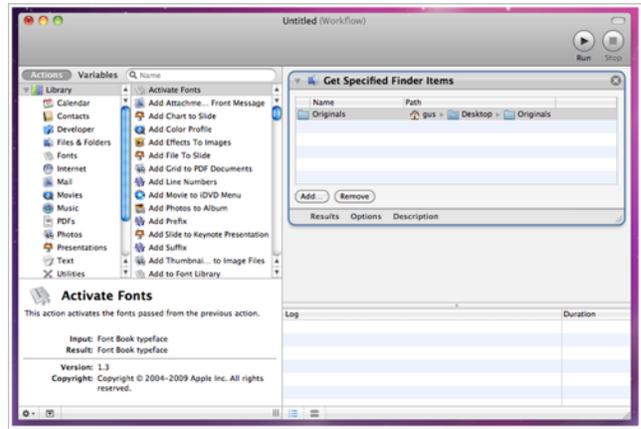
Let's say you have a folder of images on your desktop, named "Originals". You then want to open up these images and put on top a custom image you've made, which will act as a watermark.

Launch Automator (located in your Applications) and make a new workflow:



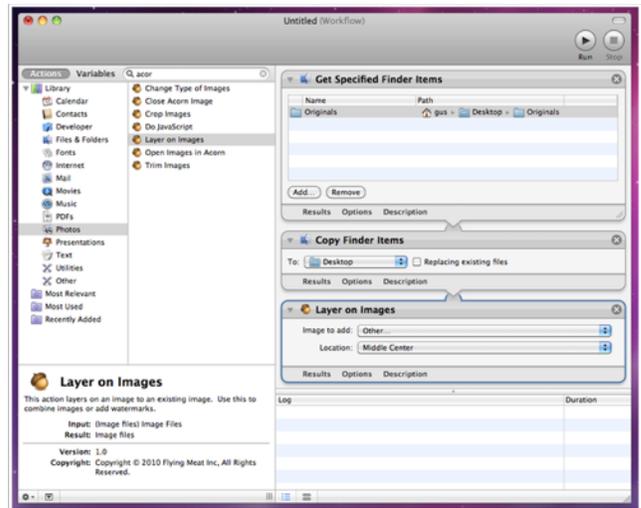
Choose the "Workflow" option.

Next, drag and drop your Originals folder to the area in your Automator window that says "Drag actions or files here to build your workflow". Your action should look similar to this now:

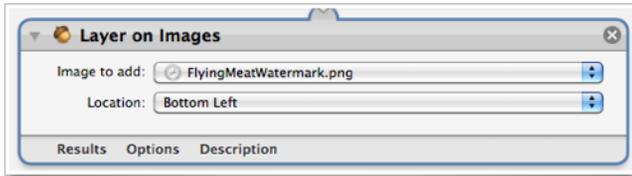


The next step is to add our Acorn action "Layer on Images". You can do this by searching for "Acorn" in the search field, or choosing "Photos" from the Library column and finding it in the next column to the right. Double click on the "Layer on Images" entry.

Before adding your action, Automator will ask you if you want to add a "Copy Finder Items" action. Since you likely want to keep your original images as they are, press the "Add" button. Your workflow should look like this now:



Now tell Automator what to use as a watermark. Click on the "Image to add" pulldown, and find the watermark image you'd like to use. For this example, choose "Bottom Left" for the "Location" pulldown to place the watermarks in the bottom left hand corner of the images. The configured action should now look like this:



Finally, save your Action, and then run it! A copy of the Originals folder will be made (most likely named "Originals 2"). Acorn will then open up each image in that folder, add the watermark to it, save the image, and close it. Success! And completed in a fraction of the time compared to doing this all by hand.

Watermarking a Single Image

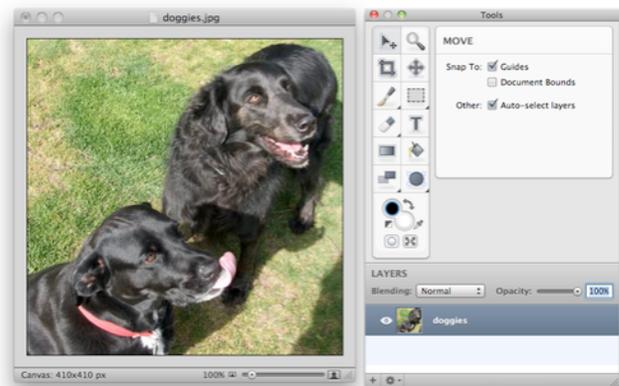
If you are interested in watermarking a single image or just a few images, you are in the right spot. If you want to watermark a large batch of images, then check out 'Batch Watermarking'. First things first, choose a watermark. Watermarks are typically company logos, or a copyright with an individual's name. Both will be explored in the examples below.

Logo Watermark

In this example an image of doggies will be watermarked with the Flying Meat logo.



Open the image you want to watermark in Acorn.



Choose File > Add Images. Find the file you want to be your watermark and click 'open'. Below you can see that the Flying Meat logo has been added as a layer above the doggie image.



Adjust the watermark layer size to your personal preference using Layer > Rotate and Transform > Scale and Rotate (⌘⇧T) (see resizing your image or layer). Once the size

looks right, click 'transform' in the palette, or double click with your mouse to commit. The watermark will be fairly small in this example.



Important Tip: Remember to always make a copy of the original image you are working with, otherwise you may find you've saved your changes and lost the original!

Using the move tool, place your watermark where you want it.

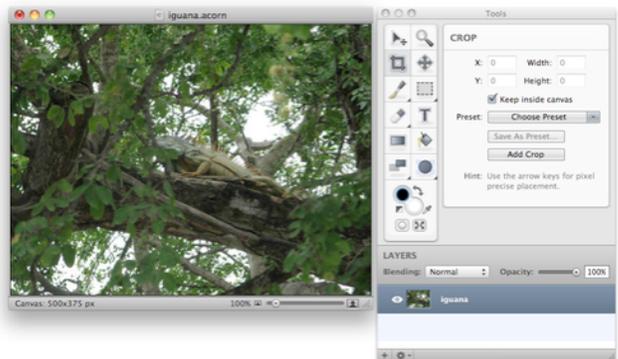


If you think you'll re-use the watermark you created in the future then select the layer with your watermark, copy that layer (⌘C), then File ▶ New from Clipboard (⌘N). Adjust the opacity to where you want it, then save!

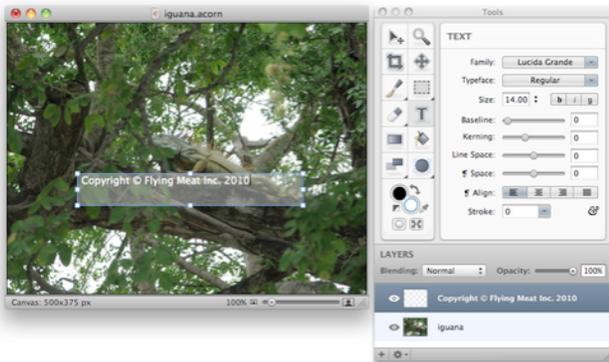
Text Watermark

Text watermarking is just as easy as using an image. Open up the image you want to place a watermark on in Acorn.

Once you have your watermark layer sized and placed the way you want it, turn the opacity of the layer down. The watermark here looks best around 30% opacity. Also play around with the blending modes to create your desired look -- you can use "darken" to take out some of the white of the logo. Voila! You have a watermark.



Select the text tool from your tools palette and write out what you want your watermark to say in the appropriate font, size, and color. Make sure you get your text characteristics the way you want it, because after the next step you will not be able to go back and make easy changes without starting over again.



Once your text looks right, go to Layer ▶ Rasterize Shape Layer. This converts the text into a layer where you can apply opacity, blending, and all that other cool stuff. In the example below the opacity was reduced to around 50%. Using the move tool, place your watermark wherever you wish.

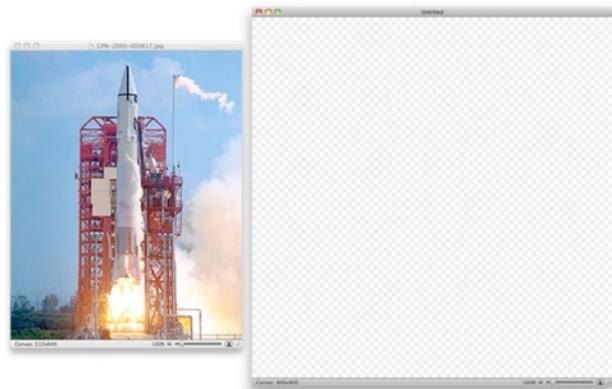


If you think you'll want to re-use your text watermark in the future, copy that layer (⌘C), then File ▶ New from Clipboard (⌘N). Adjust the opacity to where you want it, then save!

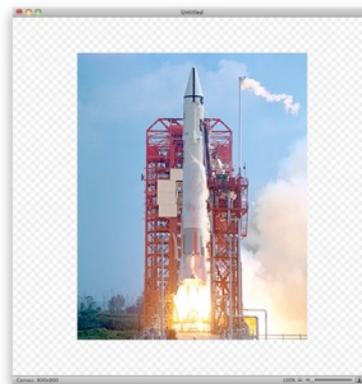
Dogs and Iguana Photos - Kirstin and August Mueller

Inserting and Resizing Images

Create a new image. Then, open the image you wish to place on your canvas. This example will use a space shuttle lifting off. Select the window with your image (the space shuttle), go to Edit ▶ Copy (⌘C). You can also drag the file directly into your canvas from your desktop or other folder.



Select the window with your empty canvas, and go to Edit ▶ Paste (⌘V). This will paste your image onto a new layer.



To resize the image, use Layer ▶ Rotate and Transform ▶ Scale and Rotate (⌘⇧T). Handles and crawling ants will appear around your image. With the Move Tool selected, drag the handles to change the size. You can hold down Shift to preserve the propor-

tions of your image. You can also move the image around the canvas by clicking in the middle and dragging it around.



Repeat this process with other images you wish to add to your canvas. Copying and pasting images is useful for placing many images into a single image, compositing, or creating storyboards.



Photos - Provided by NASA

Quick Mask

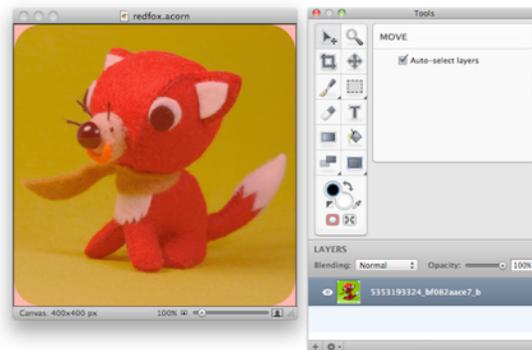
The quick mask mode button can be found on the bottom left hand side of the tools palette under the color wells: 

Quick mask mode is an additional way of making selections in Acorn, and can be combined with other selection tools such as the magic wand to refine a selection. You can use the brush, eraser, and even filters when quick mask mode is enabled.

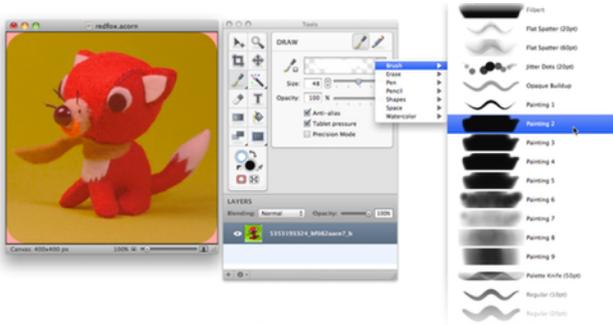
When you enter quick mask mode, it helps to think of your selection as a virtual layer which happens to be either red tinted or clear. Painting with the color white in quick mask mode removes the tinted color overlay. Painting with black restores the color overlay. Anywhere you paint with white is where your selection will be, and when you exit quick mask mode the clear overlay (which you painted with white) will change into a standard selection. Toggle with keyboard shortcut 'q' to view your selections within and outside of quick mask.



In this example, quick mask mode will be used to select the head of a toy red fox. Open the image in Acorn. Click on the quick mask button in the tools palette to apply the quick mask.



Select the brush tool and set the color to white. Make sure the opacity of the brush is 100% and set the brush size smaller than the area you want to select. Use a heavy solid brush such as "brushy" or "painting 2".



Now brush over the area of the image you want to select. The quick mask color overlay will appear to be removed from the areas you brush with the color white. It's okay if you make mistakes, you can always Edit > Undo (⌘Z), or switch your brush color to black and brush over the mistake to remove it.

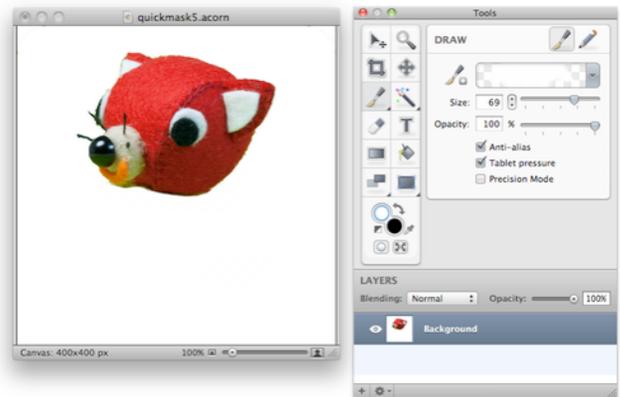


Click on the quick mask button in the tools palette, or keyboard shortcut "q" to see your selection border with quick mask toggled off.



Go back into quick mask mode to tidy up your selection as needed. You will probably need to zoom in and use smaller brush sizes to get the edges of your selection tight. You can also do some of your work with quick mask, then turn quick mask off and go into other selection tools such as magic wand to get things perfect. Or vice versa, start your work with the magic wand tool then switch to quick mask.

Here the red fox head was removed from its original image and made into a new image by using File > New from Selection. (Important: quick mask mode must be toggled off in order for 'New from Selection' to be enabled).

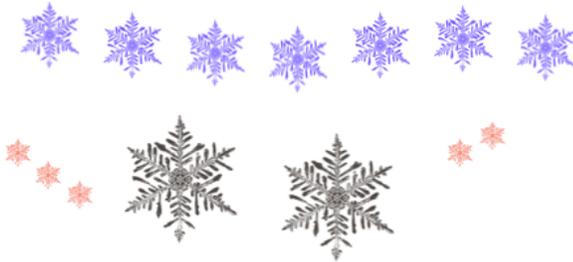


Have fun making selections!

[Red Fox Photo - Copyright © TinyApartmentfCrafts](#)

Shape Brushes

How to create your own shape brush.

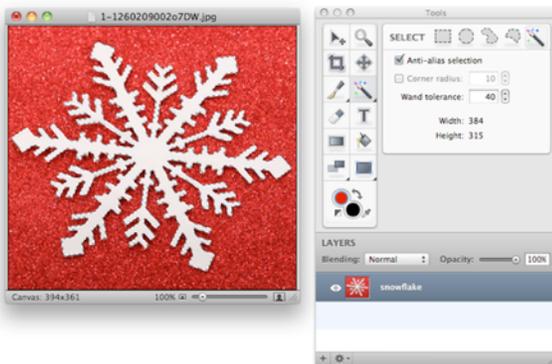


Making a brush can be a time saver if you find yourself using a simple image repeatedly in your projects. Ideally a brush should start out with the image being black and on a transparent background. For more detailed information on removing a background read 'How to Remove a Background'.

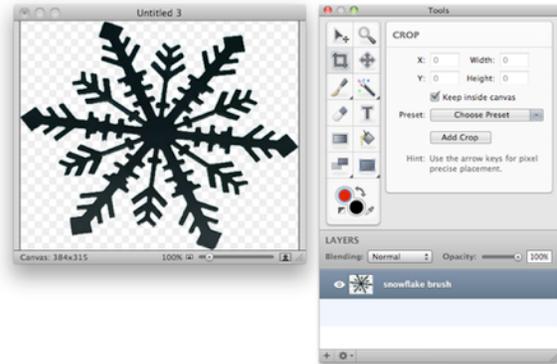
First, open the image you want to create a brush from in Acorn. This tutorial will use a snowflake image.



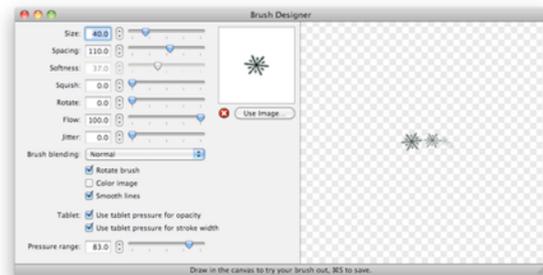
Using a selection tool such as the magic wand, select the snowflake. A wand tolerance of 40 was used here.



Choose File ▶ New from Clipboard. The snowflake will now be on a transparent background. In order to change the snowflake's color from white to black, go to Image ▶ Invert. Now is a good time to save your new image.



The image is ready to be brought into the brush designer. To open the brush designer choose Window ▶ Brush Designer. Click on "use image" and select your saved file. Your image will show up in the window.



Here is a rundown of the various options for modifying your brush:

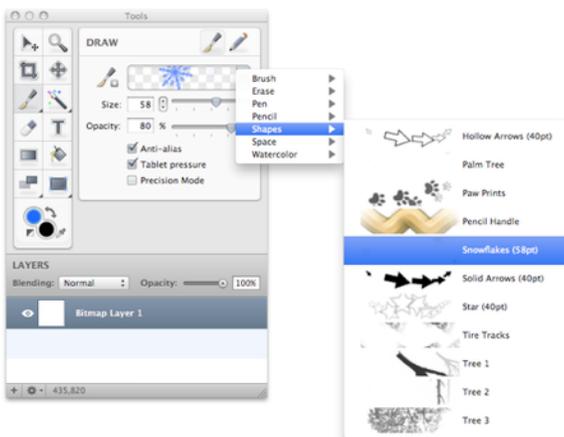
- **Size:** This is the width and height of your brush. To make your brush bigger or smaller, modify this setting.
- **Spacing:** Acorn uses a dabbing (also known as stamping) method for its brushes. In essence, a brush stroke is a whole bunch of stamps of the same image over and over again. The spacing option

decides how close together those stamps appear.

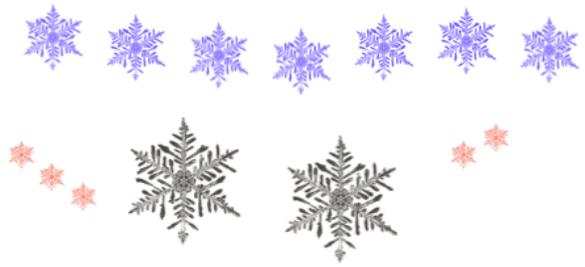
- Softness: This option alters the brush stroke to have a softer or harder edge.
- Squish: Do you want your brush to have a slight angle to it, like a felt tip pen might have? Use this option to decide how much of an angle.
- Rotate: This will rotate your brush dab to your desired angle.

If you click on a color from the color palette while you are in the brush designer, it will apply the color to your brush. Notice at the bottom of the window it states, "Draw in the canvas to try your brush out, ⌘S to save". Once you click ⌘S you will be asked to name your brush and which brush folder to place it in. It makes the most sense to place it under "shapes".

Click on the brush tool in your tools palette. The brush you just saved can be found under "shapes":



Congratulations! You have now created your own shape brush! Play around with the size, color, and opacity:



[Snowflake Photo - Copyright © Petr Kratochvil](#)

How to Fade Out Your Image

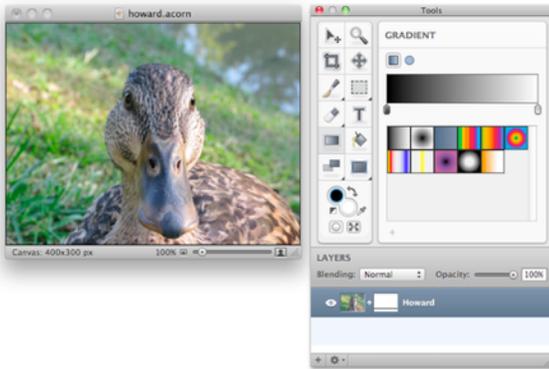
Meet Howard:



Howard is a duck, and this tutorial will show you a couple of tricks on how to transition her to a transparent background.

Technique 1: Using a Gradient in a Layer Mask

Creating a gradient in a layer mask by far the easiest technique for fading out an image. Click on the cogwheel on the lower left hand corner of the layers list in the tools palette. Select 'Add Layer Mask'.



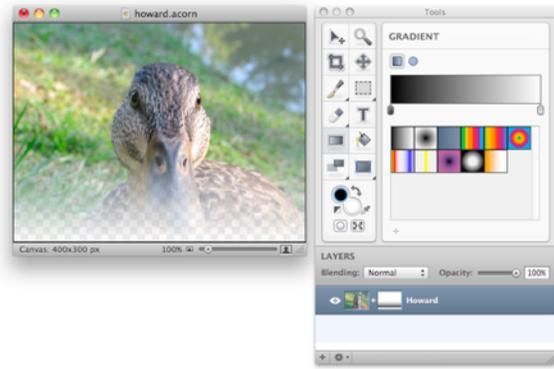
Be sure the layer mask is selected. You know it is if it has a black line across the bottom as you can see in the image above. Choose the gradient tool. It's the one that



looks like this: , and its shortcut key is 'G'.



If it's not already selected, choose the black to white linear gradient. Draw out the gradient on Howard. Black areas of the gradient will expose the layer below (in this instance it's transparent since there is no layer underneath), white areas will preserve the layer with Howard. Hold down the shift key when you draw your gradient if you want it straight.



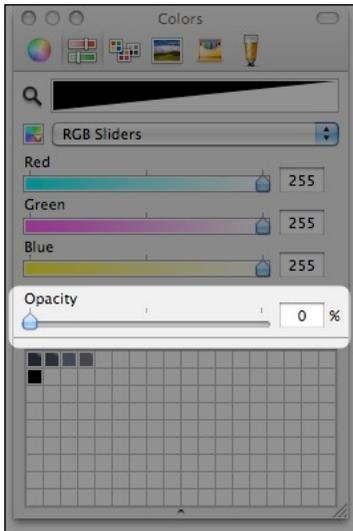
Voila! That's all it takes to fade out an image. When you save this file, you'll want to save it as either a PNG, TIFF, or an Acorn file. Whatever you do, don't save it as JPEG since JPEG files don't support transparency, and it'll turn the background white.

Technique 2: Using a Gradient without a Layer Mask

If you've still got Howard up, hit undo (⌘Z) a bunch of times so that he's back to the original starting point.

To start, first add a new layer to the image. Do this by choosing the Layer ▶ New Layer menu, or using its shortcut key ⌘N. You can also get away with pressing the little + button at the bottom left corner of the palette.

Next, select the gradient tool. Choose the black to white gradient. It should be in the upper left hand corner of the gradient presets. Make sure it is set to linear (for more on this read 'Gradient Tool'). Double click on the white gradient widget. The colors palette should appear. Decrease the opacity slider all the way to the left like so:

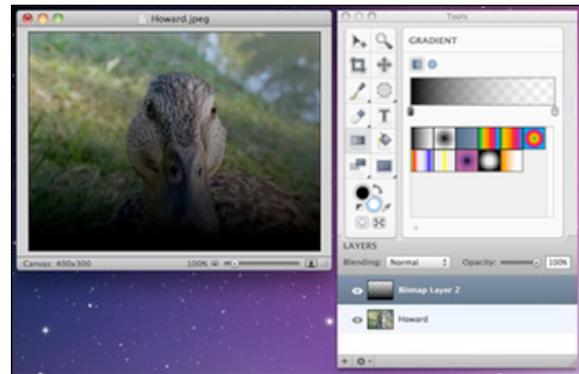


Technique 3: Using Gradients and Blending Modes

With the gradient tool selected, and the new layer selected and highlighted in the palette, draw a gradient. Click a little bit below Howard's head, and then drag the mouse up near the top of the image. If you need help drawing a gradient in a perfectly vertical line, just hold down the shift key as you move your mouse.

The last technique is going to use layer blending to achieve the fade out effect. To start, undo everything again, make a new bitmap layer and draw a gradient on it. Everything should look like this again:

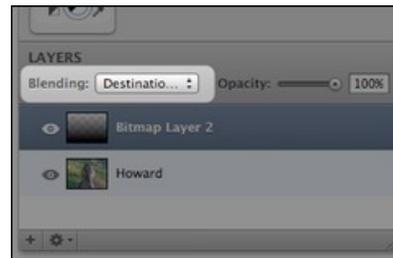
Howard (and the palette) should now look like this:



Instead of command-clicking on our layer thumbnail like before, change the blending of the gradient layer to "Destination Out", like so:

These next couple of steps can be tricky.

First, hold down the command key, and click the thumbnail of the gradient layer in the palette. This turns the layer into a selection. Next, hide the gradient layer by clicking the visibility icon (the little eye) next to the thumbnail in the layers list. Select the bottom layer, and press the delete button.



The final image will look like this:

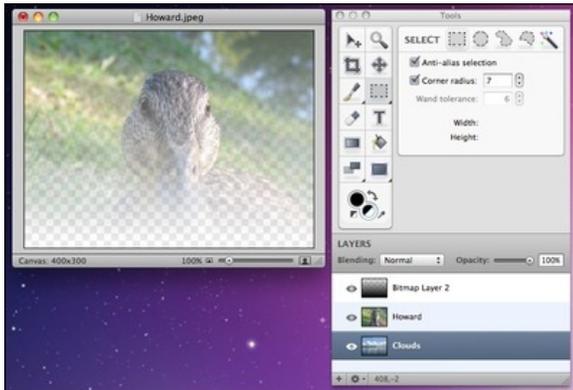
And you'll notice that instantly Howard will look like this:



To take this a step further, blend Howard between two images. First open up a second image and copy it to a bottom layer (or just drag and drop it into the layers list below Howard). In this example an image with clouds is used.

Quick Tip: you can hold down the control and command keys, and then click the + button in the layers list to make a new group layer.

The canvas looks exactly the same, but the organization of the layers has changed a little bit. Here is a little magic trick, thanks to the wonders of local compositing. Select the group layer in the list, and change the blending from "Pass Through" to "Normal". This tells the group layer to combine its sublayers first, and then draw on top of whatever layers are below it. So the result looks like this:



So what's wrong with the picture? Don't see any clouds, right? This is because Acorn draws the layers from bottom up. The clouds layer first, then Howard, and then the gradient- so the clouds are covered. There are techniques to allow the Clouds layer to show through.



Choose the Layer ▶ New Group Layer menu item, and then arrange the layers in the list so it looks like this:

We can see Howard at the top, with the Clouds image (even though you can't really see them because of Howard's big head) coming through on the bottom. This technique not only works with images, but with text as well, so an effect like this can be created:



And you can see the clouds poking through the lettering this time around.

Technique 4: Using the Feather Tool

First, select the elliptical selection tool, which



looks like this: Then, hold down the option key, and then click right in the middle of Howard's face. Keep the mouse down, and move it out, so you get a selection that looks like this:



Tip: Holding down the option key lets you grow your selection from the middle. Holding down the shift key allows you to make a perfect circle.

Next, choose the **Select ▶ Feather...** menu option. A little window will come up. Change the field for "Feather radius" to 15. Click the OK button.

Notice anything different? Probably not. But what has happened is that the selection has changed slightly so that it's softer on the edges. To see a better representation of this, choose the **Select ▶ View Selection Clipped Out** menu item. You'll see something like this:



The lighter areas are what is selected. The darker areas are what is not selected, and the semi-transparent areas are where our selection has been feathered. Choose the **Select ▶ View Selection as Marching Ants** menu to toggle back to the previous selection marque.

Choose the **Select ▶ Inverse** menu item. This will take the selection and turn it inside out, selecting the areas that weren't selected before, and unselecting the areas that were previously selected. Hit the Delete key. This will then delete the selection with the result looking like this:



[Duck Photo - Public Domain](#)

