Using Adobe Photoshop

2 – Basic Training

In this section we'll look at some essential things you need to know in order to use Photoshop effectively. First of all, we'll take a look at customising Photoshop's settings and layout to suit your needs. Then we'll get you familiar with the Photoshop environment. Last of all, we'll get acquainted with the many tools that Photoshop provides for viewing an image in different ways.
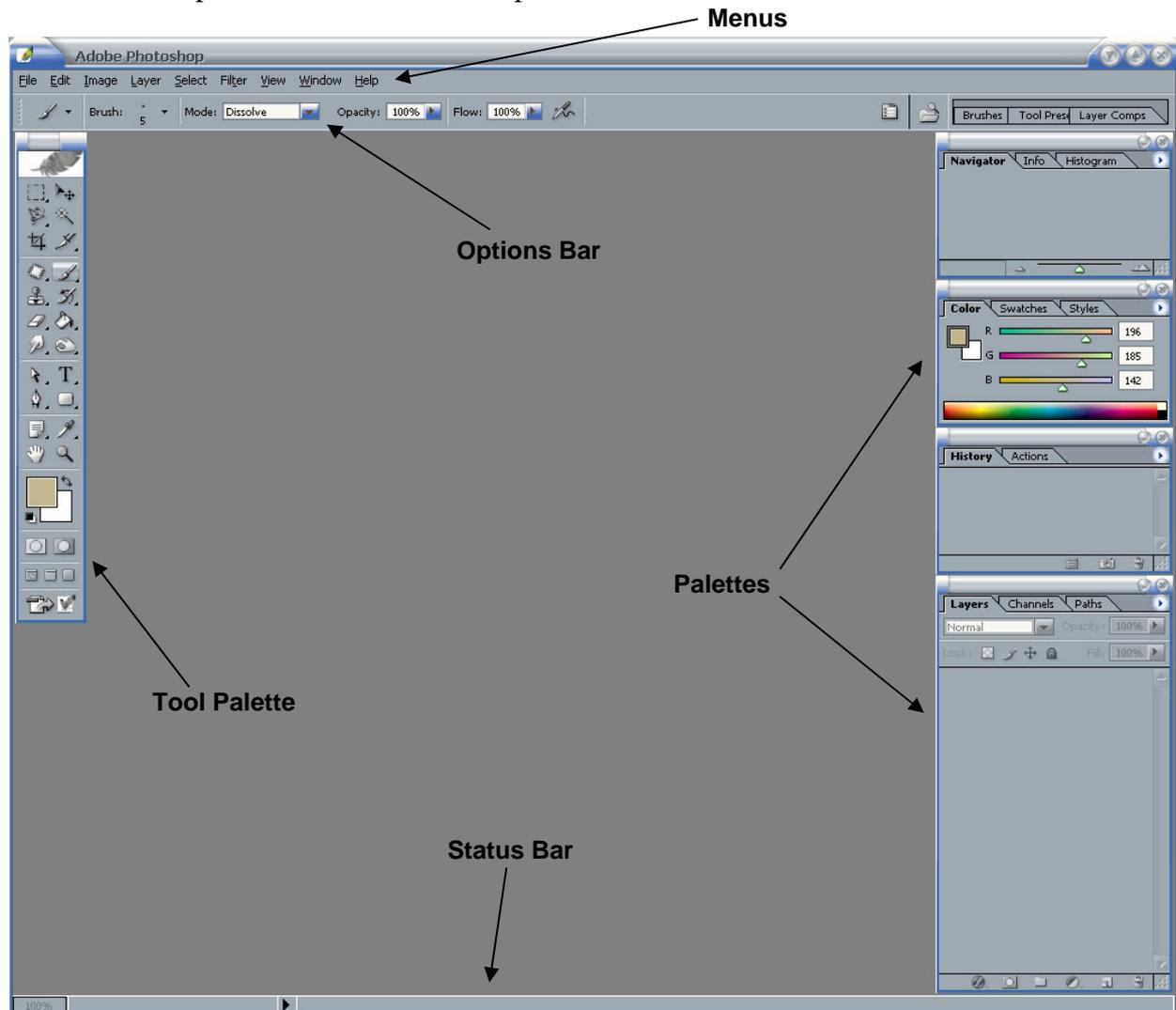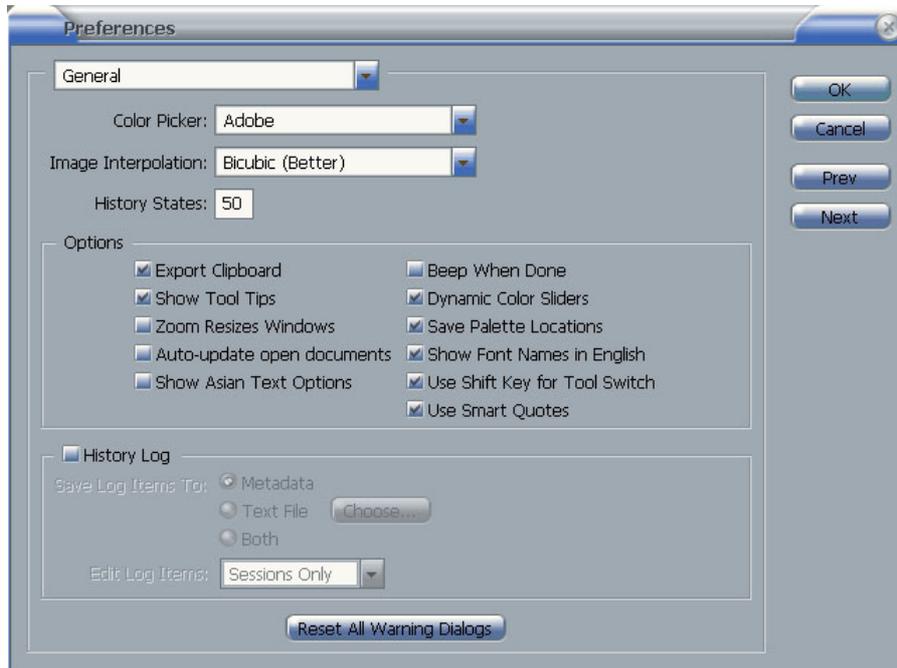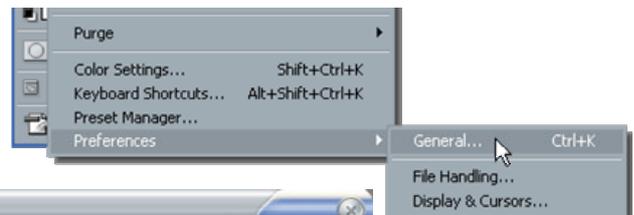
1 - Photoshop Settings

Before you begin using Photoshop, it can be worthwhile to customise the settings to suit your style of work and to suit the capabilities of your computer. If your computer's a fast one, you might want to increase the options available. On an older computer, you might increase performance by scaling back certain options. In the following exercise we'll change some of the options.

Exercise 1 – Adjusting Program Settings

1) Open Adobe Photoshop. Depending on your screen resolution, Photoshop will look similar to the example below. Some of the important areas are labelled.
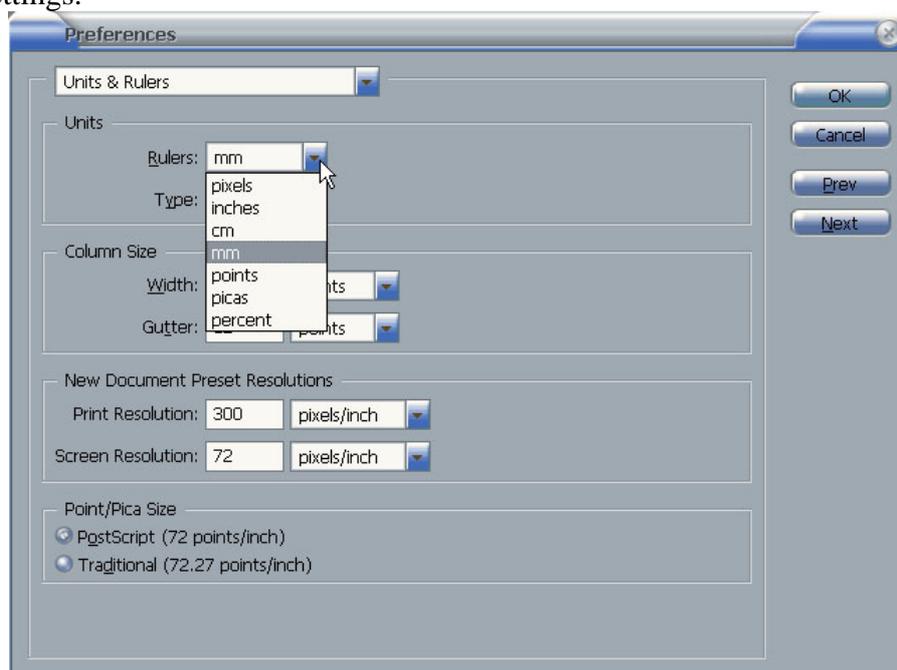
2) From the **Edit** menu select **Preferences** and then select **General** or press **[Ctrl] [K]**. Options like the ones below will appear.

3) The **History States** option (usually set to 20) specifies how much information will be kept in the History list. If you have a computer with a lot of memory to spare, increasing this number makes it possible to have more undo levels stored in the history list which can be useful. If you think your computer can handle it, change this setting to a higher number.
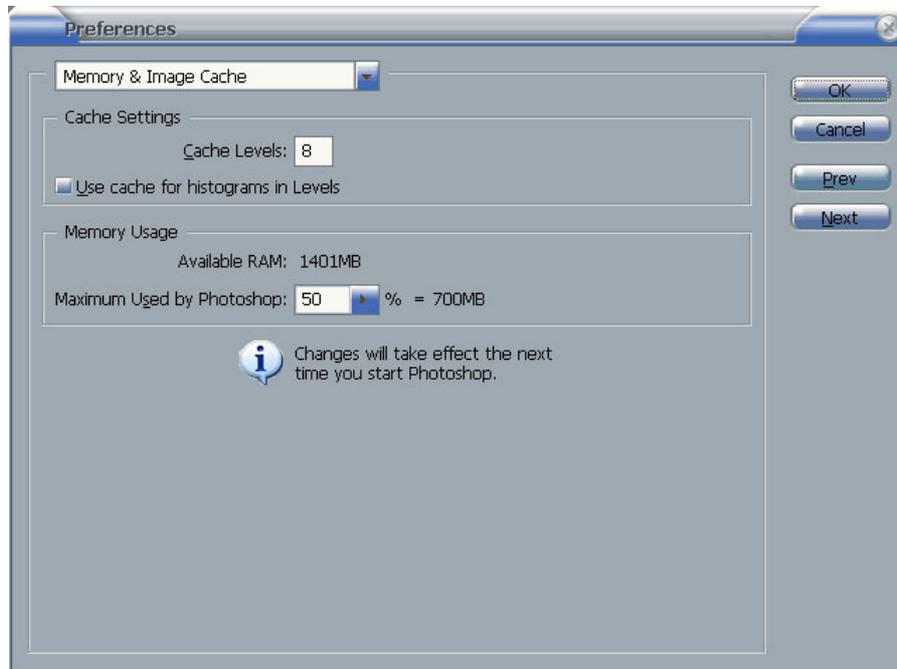
4) Click on the **General** list at the top of the options window. This allows you to change to other options categories without having to return to the **File** menu. You can also change to other options categories by clicking the **Prev** and **Next** buttons. Use the list at the top or the **Next** button to move to the **Units & Rulers** settings.

5) Your choices here will depend on whether you are using Photoshop more for print graphics or for online graphics. Click on the dropdown list next to Rulers to display a list of available measurement units.

When you are working mainly with graphics that will be displayed on screen it is best to change the ruler to pixel measurements. For the time being we'll leave it on millimetres which is well suited for print work.

6) Select the **Memory & Image** Cache options.

One of the options in here allows you to adjust how much of your computer's RAM will be used by Photoshop. If you use a lot of other programs at the same time as Photoshop, you can reduce the number to make sure Photoshop isn't using too much memory. Otherwise, you can increase the number to improve Photoshop's performance. As a general rule, it's best to make sure that Photoshop has enough memory available to cover the largest files you might be working on.

7) Change the **Maximum Used by Photoshop** to *70%* of the available memory.
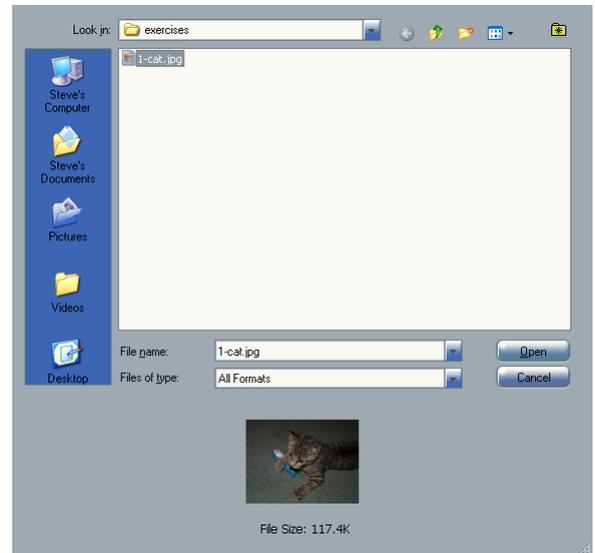8) Click **OK** when done to close the options.

Note   In the exercises which follow, you will frequently use several methods to do the same thing. Because everyone prefers different methods for working, Photoshop like many applications, provides several alternate methods for performing certain tasks. These exercises will show you different methods and shortcuts so that you can decide which methods suit you best.

2 - Opening a File

Make sure you have the exercise files from http://www.oneil.com.au/pc/photoshop.html before continuing.

Opening files in Photoshop is much the same as in other applications though some extra options are available that you may not be used to. The standard open option works as you would expect. You can open files in the following ways.

- From the **File** menu select **Open** or use the **[Ctrl] [O]** keyboard shortcut. This will display a fairly typical file open dialog like the one shown to the right.
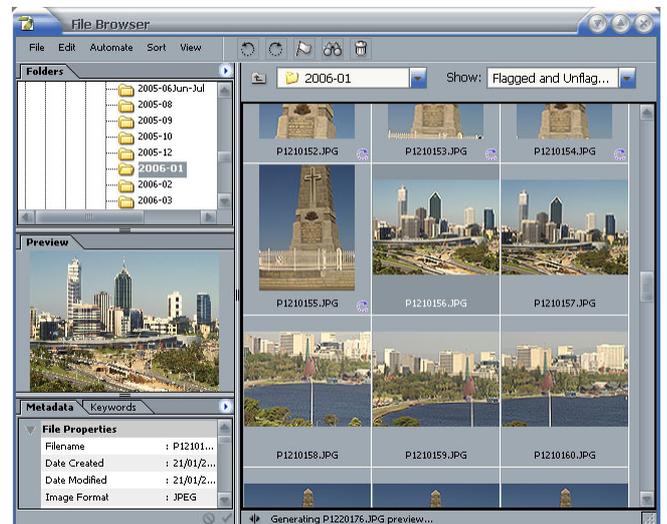
- From **Windows** explorer or **My Computer**, right-click on an image file you want to edit and select **Edit with Photoshop**. Files can also be dragged from **Windows Explorer** in to Photoshop.

- From within Photoshop, select the **Window** menu and then select **File Browser**. This is a comprehensive image organiser and browser that can be kept open while you are working in Photoshop. Double-clicking an image from within the browser will open the image, while leaving the file browser open in case you need to open additional images.

Note   In Photoshop CS2, the file browser has been replaced with the **Adobe Bridge** file browser which has more capabilities.

- From the **File** menu you can select **Open recent** to select from a list of the most recently opened files.

When one or more images have been opened, they can be viewed in several ways as the following exercise will demonstrate. We are going to open two of the images from the exercise files.

Tip   From your Photoshop preferences seen earlier, you can go to the **File Handling** settings to adjust how many files will appear in the **Open Recent** list.

Exercise 2 – Opening Image Files

1) Use any of the methods from the previous page to open the images called *1-cat.jpg* and *1-rose.jpg*

As the images open, they will be automatically zoomed out if necessary so that the whole picture will fit in the available space. In the example above, the images have been displayed at 66% of their normal size. The bar along the top of each image displays the file name, the zoom amount and the colour mode (which is explained in a later section).
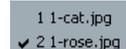
2) Drag the bar of the front image to move it so that you can see more of the back image.
3) Click on the back image to make it active.

If an image you want to edit is not visible because it is behind a larger image, there are other ways to select images. In fact clicking an image to select it may be a bad idea depending on what you're doing as you might end up accidentally drawing on the image or making other unwanted changes to it.

4) Select the **Window** menu and then select

A list of open files is at the bottom of the menu with a tick next to the active file.

5) Use the menu to swap between active files.
6) Hold down the **[Ctrl]** key and press **[F6]**. This is another way to switch between open files.

3 - Scrolling and Zooming

Changing the view for an image is essential in working with Photoshop. Sometimes you will need to see a whole image while other times you will want to zoom in close for detailed edits. Photoshop provides a wide range of methods for viewing an image.

Exercise 3 – Using the Zoom Tool

1) Click the **Zoom** icon 🔍 on the tool palette to the left of the screen. You can also select this tool by pressing the **[Z]** key. Your mouse pointer will now change to an hourglass shape with a + sign in it when it is over an image. 🔍

2) Click on an image to zoom in. The spot you clicked on will become centred as Photoshop zooms in on the image.

3) Click again on the image.

Each time you click, Photoshop will zoom in one more level. The zoom levels follow set amounts. I.e. 100%, 66%, 50%, 33% etc.

4) Keep on clicking until you reach 1600% magnification. The + sign will disappear from your mouse pointer to indicate that you can zoom no further. At this level of magnification, the individual pixels in the image appear as large squares.

5) Hold down the **[Alt]** key on your keyboard. A – sign will appear in your mouse pointer indicating that you can zoom out. 🔍

6) Click while the **[Alt]** key is still held down to zoom out one level.

7) Double-click on the **Zoom** icon. This will take you to 100% magnification.

8) With your zoom tool still selected, drag a rectangle shaped area on your image.

Magnification will be changed to fit the area you selected.

9) Click the marquee tool or any of the other icons on the tool palette so that the zoom tool is no longer selected. 📷

10) Hold down **[Ctrl]** and **[Spacebar]** to temporarily enable the Zoom tool. This can be very handy if you are using another tool and want to quickly change the magnification without having to deselect the tool you were using.

11) Hold down **[Alt]** and **[Spacebar]** to temporarily enable the Zoom out tool.

Tip   The current level of magnification is always displayed in a box at the bottom left corner of the window. In addition to seeing the magnification in this box, you can also enter an amount in the box to change to that level of magnification. In the example shown below, it is displaying *200%* magnification

Exercise 4 – Handy Scrolling Methods

1) Using one of the methods shown in the previous exercise, zoom in on the rose image so that you are at 200% magnification.

2) Like many programs, Photoshop provides scrollbars to enable you to move to different parts of the file (an image in this case). Use the scrollbars along the bottom and right edge of the image to move around the image.

In addition to using the scrollbars you can use the **hand tool** to move around the image.

3) Click on the hand icon on the tool palette or press the **[H]** hey to select the hand tool.

While your mouse is over the image, your mouse pointer will appear as a hand shape.
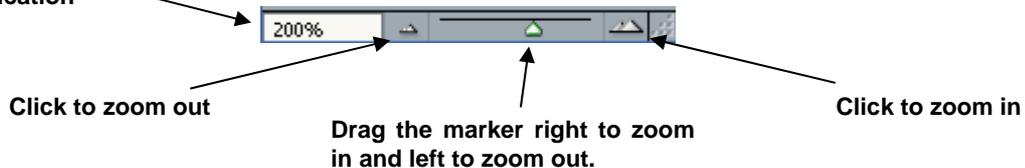
4) Move your mouse over the flower image. Hold your mouse down and drag to change the part of the image that is currently visible.

5) Click on one of the other icons on the tool palette so that the hand tool is no longer selected.

6) Hold down the space bar. As long as the space bar is held down, the hand tool will be active. This can be useful when you want to quickly move around the image without deselecting the tool you are currently using.

7) Double-click on the hand icon in the tool palette. The zoom level will change so that the whole image fits neatly in the available space. If your palettes are in standard locations around the edge of the screen it will fit around them as well.

Exercise 5 – The Navigation Palette

Photoshop's **Navigation Palette** provides several useful tools for zooming and moving around a document. The bottom section of the palette displays some tools for zooming in on an image and are labelled below.
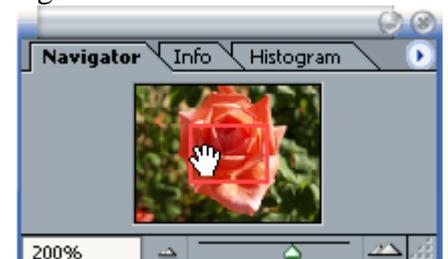
Enter a number in this box to zoom to that level of magnification

200%

Click to zoom out

Drag the marker right to zoom in and left to zoom out.

Click to zoom in

1) Try some of the navigator palette's zoom tools to zoom in on the image.

The main area of the navigator is taken up with a preview of your image. When you are zoomed in on an image, a red rectangle in the preview indicates which part of the image is visible. You can drag the red rectangle around the preview to move around the image the same as you would with the hand tool.

2) Try using the preview to move around the image.

Tip   If you hold down the **[Ctrl]** key while your mouse is over the preview, you can drag a rectangle shape on the preview to zoom in on that portion of the image, just like using the zoom tool.

Exercise 6 – Zooming with the Keyboard

Several keyboard shortcuts are also available for zooming. Photoshop has a lot of keyboard shortcuts but people who take the effort to remember some of them can work much quicker and more effectively.
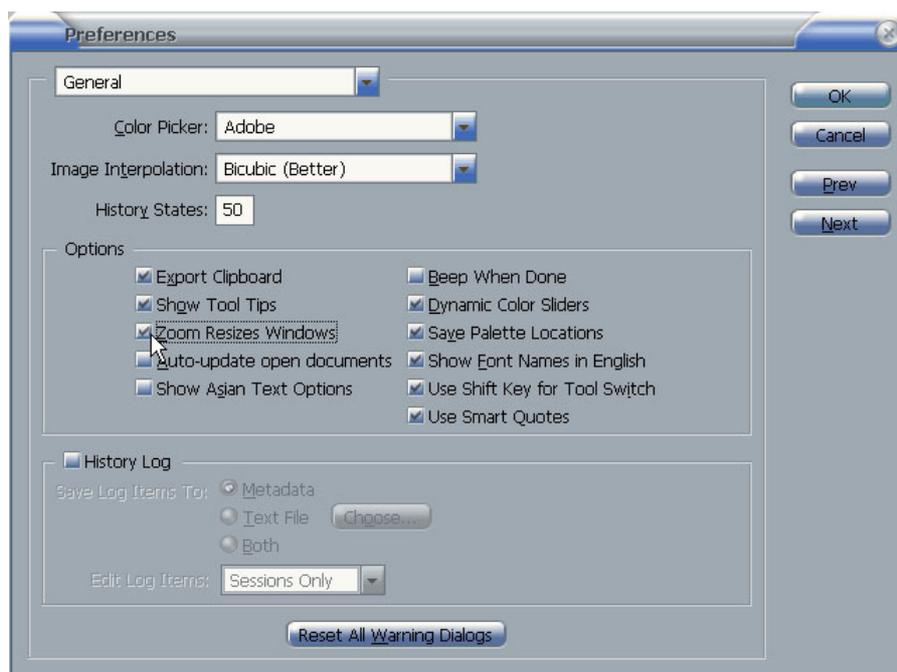
1) Make sure you are zoomed in on the rose image.
2) Press the **[Home]** key to move to the top left corner of the image.
3) Press the **[End]** key to move to the bottom right corner of the image.
4) Press **[Page Up]** and **[Page Down]** to scroll up and down the image.
5) Hold down the **[Ctrl]** key and press **[Page Up]** and **[Page Down]** to scroll left and right in the image.
6) Use the mouse wheel to scroll up and down (depending on your settings this may zoom instead).
7) Hold down the **[Ctrl]** key and use the mouse wheel to scroll left and right.
8) Hold down the **[Ctrl]** key and press **[+]** to zoom in one level.
9) Hold down the **[Ctrl]** key and press **[-]** to zoom out one level.
10) Hold down **[Ctrl]** and **[Alt]** while pressing the **[+]** and **[-]** to resize the window as you zoom in and out.
11) Hold down **[Ctrl]** and press **[0]** to zoom so that the image fits on the screen (same as when you double-clicked the hand tool earlier).
12) Hold down **[Ctrl] [Alt]** and press **[0]**. This will change to 100% magnification.

Most of these options are available on the View menu as well as with shortcuts, though some options are only available from the menu.

13) From the **View** menu select **Print Size**. This will zoom so that the image is displayed at a size that is approximately the same as its print size.
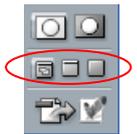
Note   If you always want the image window to resize when you zoom in or out, you can set Photoshop to do it by default from the general preferences. From the **General Preferences** window, select **Zoom Resizes Windows** as shown below.

Exercise 7 – Customising Palettes

Like a younger sibling, Photoshop's palettes can be useful sometimes, but other times they just get in the way. Fortunately, it is easy to customise the palettes to suit your work preferences. The following steps show just a few of the ways that this can be done.

1) Move your mouse over the icon in the top right corner of the **Color** palette as shown to the right.
2) Click the icon to collapse the palette so it takes up less screen space.
3) Click the same icon again to return the palette to its normal size.
4) Press the **[Tab]** key. All palettes will be hidden.
5) Press the **[Tab]** key again to unhide the palettes.
6) Hold down **[Shift]** and press **[Tab]** to hide all but the Tools and Options palettes (along the left and top).
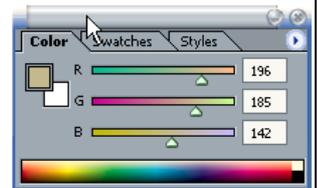7) Hold down **[Shift]** and press **[Tab]** again to unhide the other palettes.

At the bottom of the tool palette is a row of three icons with the first one selected.

8) Click the second icon to change to full screen view with menus still showing.
9) Click the third icon to change to full screen view with no menus showing.
10) Click the first icon to return to the standard view.
11) Press the **[F]** key to cycle through the views you have just seen.
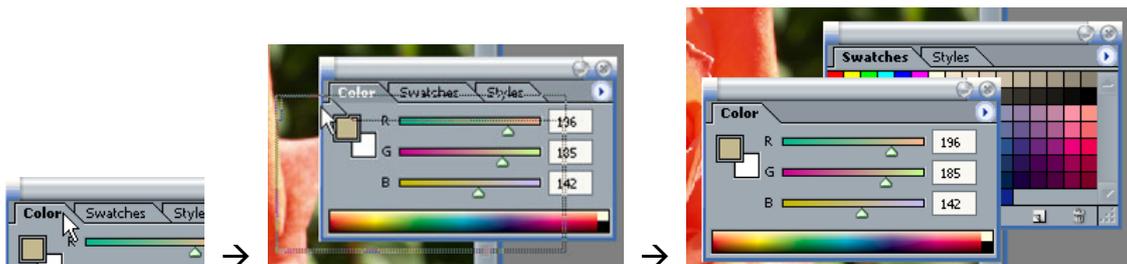
Tip   The full screen view is often more useful when the palettes have also been hidden with **[Tab]**.

12) Move your mouse over the bar along the top of the **Color** palette.
13) Drag to the left to move the whole palette in to the middle of the screen.

This is actually three palettes grouped together. Each of the palettes can be accessed by clicking on its tab along the top. Palettes can also be ungrouped and grouped with different palettes so you can arrange them however you want.

14) Move your mouse over the **Color** tab. Drag away to separate it from the other two palettes. An outline will show where it will be moved to.
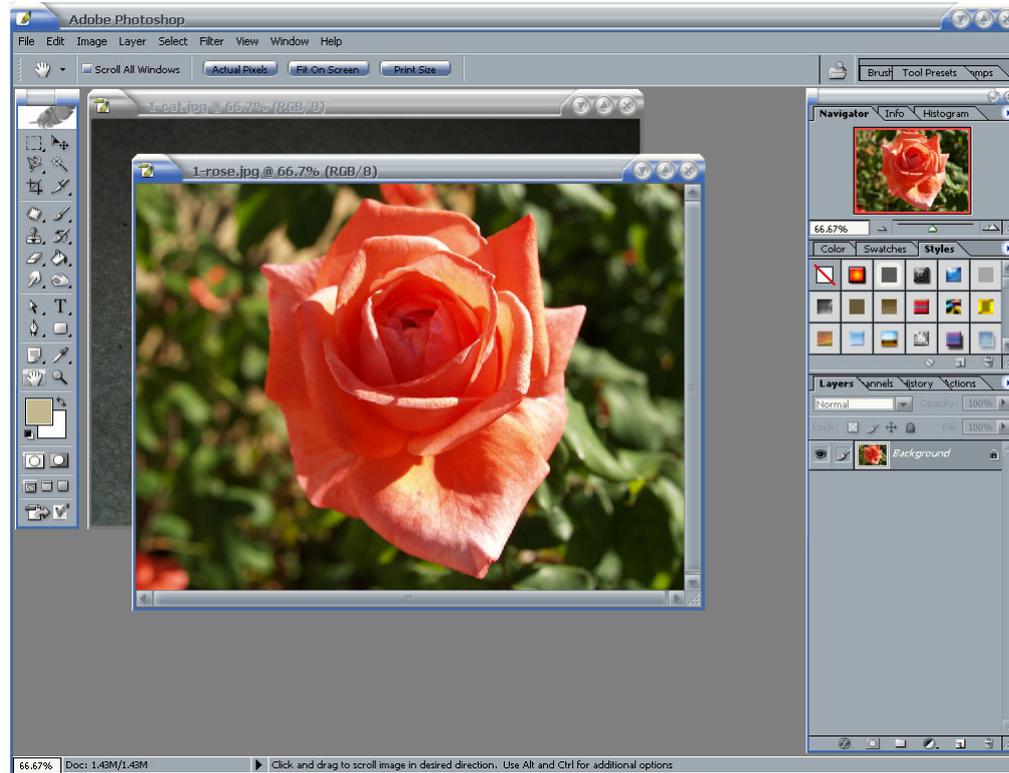15) Release the mouse button to place the palette away from the other two.

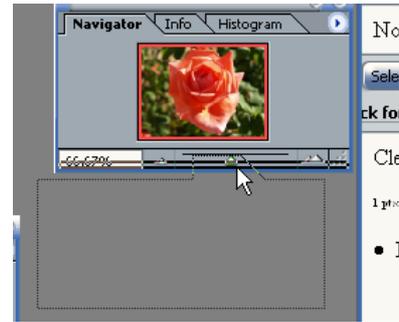16) Drag the **Color** tab (not the bar along the top of the palette).
17) Move it over the other two grouped palettes until a rectangle appears around them.
18) Release the mouse to join it to the other palette group again.

You can also attach a palette to the bottom of another palette.

19) Drag the **Color** palette tab to the bottom of the **Navigator** tab. When it is in the right spot, a thin dark rectangle will appear along the bottom of the **Navigator** palette as shown to the right.
20) Release the mouse button to join the palettes together.
21) Drag the **Swatches** tab on to the **Color** palette and then do the same with the **Styles** tab so that all three are grouped together under the **Navigator** palette group.
22) Try rearranging some of the other palettes until you have a layout you like. An example of a rearranged palette layout is shown below.

Each palette group is attached to the one above it.

Tip   When you are zooming in or out on an image some magnification levels will look clearer on the screen than others. A level that is either doubled or halved from 100% will appear sharper on screen. For example, 50% or 25% or 200% magnification will appear much clearer than 33%, 129% or 18%. It makes no difference to the final image but when you are editing it can help if the image on screen is clearer. Try it!

4 - Shortcuts Learned

Shortcut	Icon	Purpose
[Ctrl] [K]		Display Photoshop preferences
[Ctrl] [O]		Open a file
[Ctrl] [F6]		Swap between active files
[Z]		Select the zoom tool
[H]		Select the hand tool
[Ctrl] [Space]		Temporarily select the zoom tool
[Space]		Temporarily select the hand tool
[Ctrl] [+]		Zoom in
[Ctrl] [-]		Zoom out
[Ctrl] [0]		Fit the image on the screen
[Ctrl] [Alt] [0]		100% magnification
[Tab]		Hide / display palettes