



## Guide to Photoshop Brushes

This guide is a beginners guide to Photoshop brushes and will demonstrate how brushes can enhance an image, how to install a downloaded brush and give you a simple tutorial which will cover the basics of using Photoshop brushes to produce a completed graphic.

### Part 1: What Are Brushes and how can they enhance my graphics?

Photoshop brushes are add-ons to your Photoshop program that work in a similar way to a stamp. The size of the brush is adjustable, as is the colour, making them a perfect way to enhance an image.

This is an example of a graphic that does not use brushes:



As you can see there is not much within the image other than the photograph and the text but if you combine it with some brushes then you can come up with something that looks a lot more interesting:



There are brushes that cover almost every kind of topic and you can find them on communities such as [LiveJournal](#) and [deviantArt](#) as well as the artist's own websites.

## **Part 2: I've downloaded some brushes. How do I get them into Photoshop?**

- Most Photoshop brushes come as a zip file so the first thing you'll need to do is extract the contents of the zip file. Most newer computers come with Winzip which does this for you. If your computer doesn't have this then you should be able to download it online. We find that it's best to keep your unzipped brushes in one file all together and then you can find them again easily.

- Once you've unzipped your files, you should see a file that has an .abr extension. This is the extension for Photoshop brushes. Copy this file and place it in the correct directory. On Windows XP you'll find it by going to My Computer > Local Disk (C:) > Program Files > Adobe > Adobe Photoshop X > Presets > Brushes. (The X will be the version of Photoshop you have installed)

- Your brushes have now been installed and you should see them in your brushes list next time you load up Photoshop.

*Note: Brushes created in Photoshop 7 or later will not work in earlier versions of Photoshop.*

## **Part 3: I've got my brushes installed how do I use them?**

This part of the guide will teach you how to make a graphic with the brushes you have installed and this is the graphic we are making:



- The first thing we need to do is load Photoshop and create a new document measuring 350x150 pixels. As the most commonly used image resolution on the internet is 72 pixels per inch that is what we're going to use here.

- Open the image you wish to use on your graphic. We've removed all the original colours on ours and added a sepia filter on to it but you don't have to do this on your image.

- On the picture that you're going to use select the area of the picture you want by using the selection tool.

- Once you have got the marching ants around your picture you can move it into your blank image using the move tool. Drag your selection over to the blank image.

- If your picture is too big, you can to resize it using the squares at the outside of the image.

- When your picture is the right size click the 'Commit Transform' button which is easily recognised by the tick.

- We've always found that it's easier to put our brush layers on a separate layer to our images. That way you can change the transparency of them without affecting your main image. Layer > New > Layer.

- Select the brush tool (this looks like a paintbrush), and then choose the brush you wish to use from the list. If necessary you can change the size of your brush on this list too.

- Choose the colour of your brush and then place it on your new layer. Somewhere on your Photoshop workspace you'll see a layers panel and on this is an opacity option. You can slide the slider along to change the opacity to one you're happy with.

- If you wish to add another brush to your image then create a new layer and repeat the above step.

- Once you've completed your graphic save it and you're done.

If you have any questions about this guide please do not hesitate to email us at [designers@coldwatermorninggraphics.com](mailto:designers@coldwatermorninggraphics.com).