

Gradients

Photoshop Tutorial, March 2006, Rob Dublin

Gradients are a useful way to provide smooth shading to masks and layers that provide effects, e.g., image darkening and lightening, tinting, and contrast. First we need to learn how to apply and edit gradients.

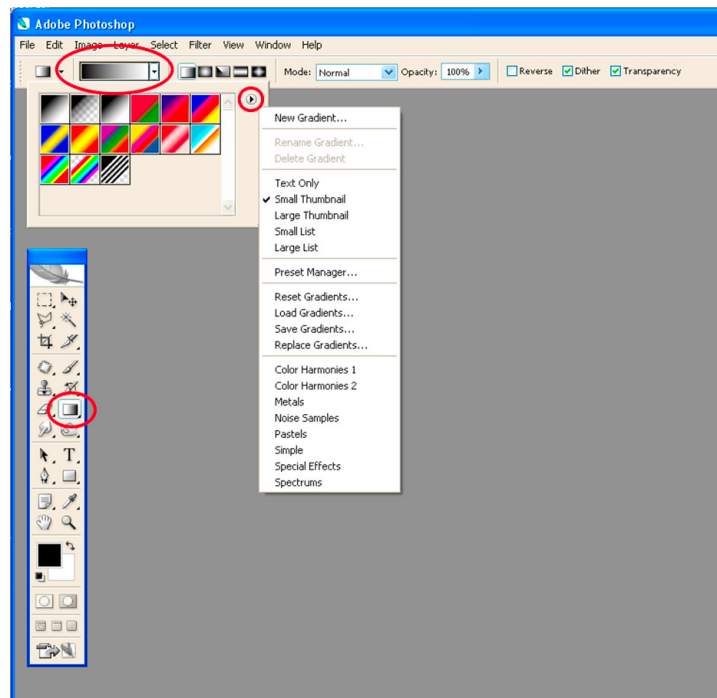


Figure 1. Gradient tools.

Applying gradients:

- Click on Gradient tool, located next to eraser tool. See diagram above.
- To apply simply click and drag across the image. What you get depends on gradient style you choose. The styles are located on the options bar and are indicated by the five closely spaced icons depicting the shape of gradient you select
 - o Linear
 - o Radial
 - o Angle
 - o Reflected
 - o Diamond
- Gradient colors. The currently selected gradient color is shown in the options bar as a sample gradient on the left next to the Preset button (circled in red in

the diagram above). You can other preset combinations by clicking the down arrow next to the sample color. The diagram above shows the default colors.

- The reverse check box reverses the colors in the gradient.
- Some of the gradients contain transparent areas. To disable transparency turn off the Transparency check box.
- When the sample colors dialog box is open, an arrow on the top right provides access to a submenu. You can access other color presets here and load and save gradients you or others have developed. We will discuss editing your own gradients later.
- If you see banding across a gradient when you print an image, then you can check the Dither box on the Options bar. This will add noise to the gradient when printing to make it look better.

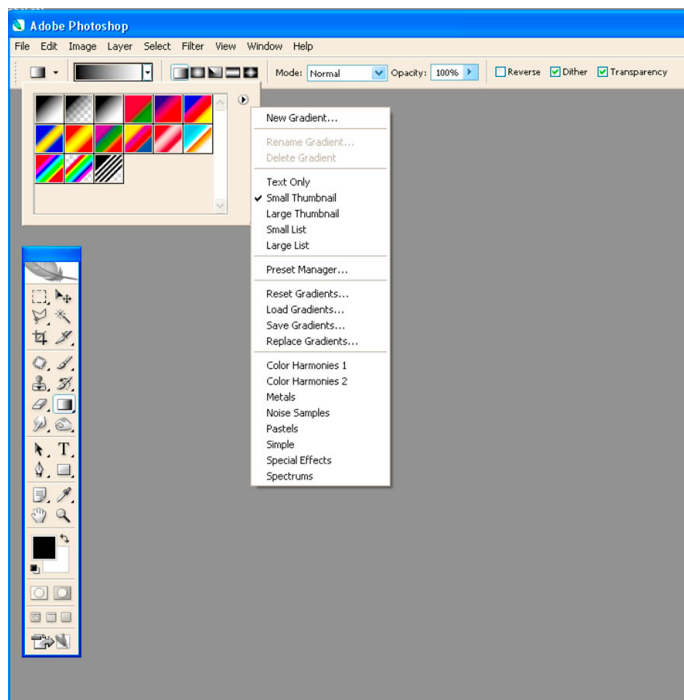


Figure 2. Gradient Editor.

Editing gradients when the supplied gradients won't suffice:

- Click directly on the gradient preview in the options bar to activate the Gradient Editor.
- The presets show the same ones that you access by clicking the down arrow next to the gradient preview. The arrow at the top right of this Presets preview activates the same submenu as before when you were using the down arrow to access this feature. See Fig. 1 above.
- Click on anyone that looks like a good place to start editing your custom gradient and it preview in the gradient bar below. This bar is where you edit your gradient.
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- To add another color click just below the gradient bar to add another color swatch, indicated by the little house symbol. Inside the body of the house is the color of your swatch and the roof is black when it is the active swatch.
- There are three types of color choices: foreground, background, and user color. When you choose either foreground or background the color for that area is your current foreground or background color at the time you make your gradient. This is the default gradient you see in the presets. User color lets you choose any color from the color picker that is activated when you click the color sample.
- You can reposition a color swatch by dragging the little house left or right or typing a percent in the position box below (0% is on the left, 100% the far right).
- When you click a color swatch house two diamonds appear to the left and right. This indicates the point where the active swatch and its immediate neighbor on the left or right blend in equal amounts. You can click and move these to taste as well.
- You can also make areas of your gradient transparent by clicking just above the sample gradient. A new upside down house appears and the opacity setting below indicates the percent opacity at that point. The two diamonds that appear when you click an opacity marker indicates where the opacity is half way between the opacity of the two adjacent markers.
- Type the name of your new gradient and click the new button to create a new preset. It will show above.
- If you want to save your gradient permanently, click the Save... option on the submenu (right arrow at top of presets). Note that you can only save whole sets.

Using Gradients:

- Controlling tonal and color effects with gradients on masks
 - o Burning in edges.
 - Create new adjustment layer
 - Set to Multiply.
 - Fill layer mask with black
 - Set the foreground color to white
 - Drag the foreground to transparency gradient at the edges.
 - o Darkening skies
 - Do the same as above but drag from the horizon..
 - o Blending images together, like adding a new sky.
 - May need to use the brush tool to get fine adjustments.
 - o Toning an image using the Gradient Map... adjustment layer.
 - This maps the grayscale values in an image to equivalent positions on a gradient. Use for toning an image, e.g., sepia.

References:

Adobe photoshop 7.0 Studio Techniques, Ben Willmore.

Photoshop CS2 Bible, Deke McClelland and Laurie Ulrich Fuller

Photoshop Masking & Compositing, Katrin Eisman