Photoshop Actions

What are Actions
- In the Simplest terms, actions are shortcuts, a ***One - Click Editing Process***
- Technically - Actions are a series of recorded steps that are created to help you edit your image without having to do each step manually

Common Uses for Actions

Although actions can be used to automate all sorts of tasks, some common uses include:

- Creating a Dodge and Burn Layer
- Sepia toning
- Printing brightness compensation
- Sharpening
- Saving jpgs of various resolutions (for competition, for web site, etc.)

Demonstrate a couple of actions – Montage twice; Photo Corners; Brushed Alum. Frame

Using Actions - The Action Panel

The Actions panel allows you to create (record), edit, load, save, delete and play actions. To show or hide the Actions panel, use the Window » Show Actions command.

STOP PLAYING/RECORDING
The Stop button stops action playback and recording. You can also stop recording by choosing Stop Recording from the Actions panel menu.
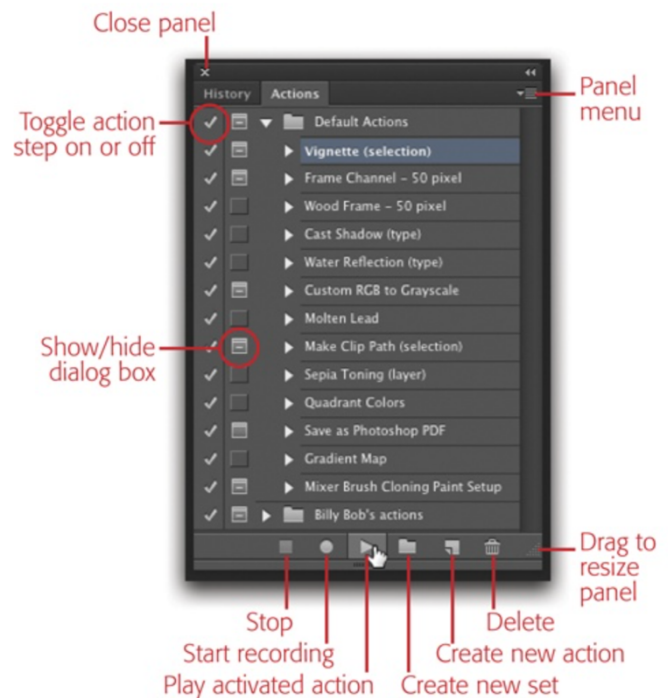
BEGIN RECORDING
Click the RECORD Button to begin Recording a new action or add additional commands to an existing action

PLAY SELECTION
If ACTION is selected, clicking PLAY button executes the entire action. If a specific step within an Action is selected, double clicking on that step will just execute that step.

CREATE NEW ACTION
Will create a new Action to the selection Set of Actions.

DELETE
Will Delete Actions, steps or Action Steps - cannot be undone and not added to the History

ACTION SETS
Behaves like Folders (of Actions), you can organize your Actions using Action Sets.

ACTION PANEL MENU (right)
Contains several commands useful for viewing Actions, Saving/Loading Actions, Inserting stops within an action, etc

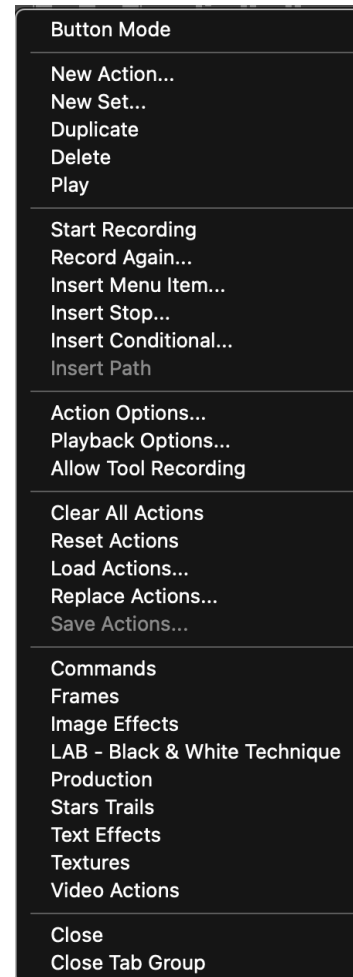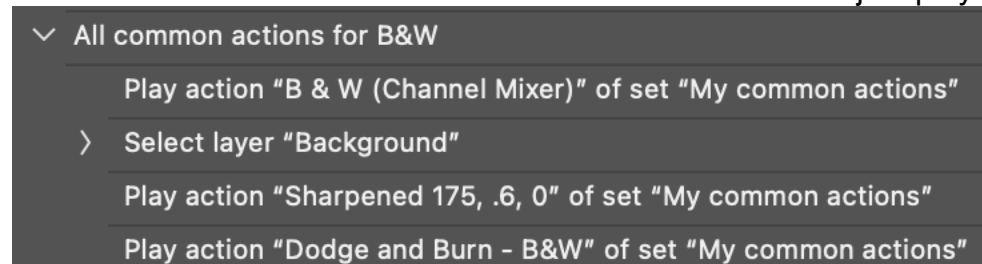**Creating Actions**
Let's Look at Action Limitations:
    Photoshop doesn't let you record everything you might want. While Photoshop can record blend modes, opacity, shapes, brush selections, and even pixel selections, you still cannot record paint strokes (like those made with the Brush, Airbrush, and Clone tools), zooms, switching windows, and scrolls. Also, not all plug-ins can be used within an action.

Keep in mind: Don't try something that is very difficult -   Keep your actions simple.

Creating an action:
1. Make sure the Actions palette is displayed. If not, select Window/Actions from the menu.
2. Click on the "Create New Action" icon at the bottom of the palette.
3. In the New Action dialog box, type in a descriptive name in the first field and press the Record button.
4. From now until you click on the Stop Recording icon, everything you do in Photoshop will be recorded as part of the new action.
5. Do all the steps you want to do in your action and then click on the Stop Recording icon at the bottom of the Actions palette.
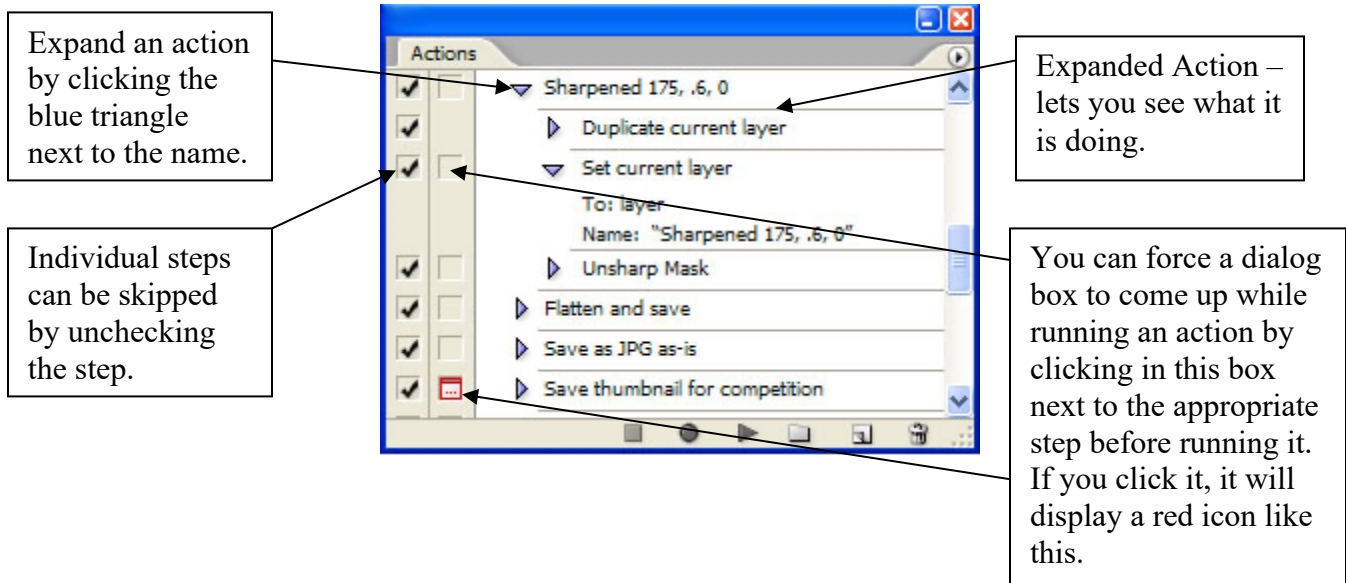
Actions can call other actions – Create a new action and just play other actions

Button Mode
New Action...
New Set...
Duplicate
Delete
Play
Start Recording
Record Again...
Insert Menu Item...
Insert Stop...
Insert Conditional...
Insert Path
Action Options...
Playback Options...
Allow Tool Recording
Clear All Actions
Reset Actions
Load Actions...
Replace Actions...
Save Actions...
Commands
Frames
Image Effects
LAB - Black & White Technique
Production
Stars Trails
Text Effects
Textures
Video Actions
Close
Close Tab Group

∨ All common actions for B&W
    Play action "B & W (Channel Mixer)" of set "My common actions"
    ⟩ Select layer "Background"
    Play action "Sharpened 175, .6, 0" of set "My common actions"
    Play action "Dodge and Burn - B&W" of set "My common actions"

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Action breakdown
If you haven't used an action for a while, you may not remember everything it does. To review what an action is doing, you can see the details by clicking on the blue triangle to the left of the action name. (See below) You may see indented steps with more blue triangles. You can click on each triangle to see further details of the action.

Expand an action by clicking the blue triangle next to the name.

Individual steps can be skipped by unchecking the step.

Expanded Action – lets you see what it is doing.

You can force a dialog box to come up while running an action by clicking in this box next to the appropriate step before running it. If you click it, it will display a red icon like this.

It is possible to perform just one step in an action. Expand the action so you can see the steps. Then hold the CTRL key and double click on the step you want to perform.

To change one step in an existing action, double click on the step (without the CTRL key).

Actions Options:
- You can assign a shortcut key to an action after the action has been created by selecting Action Options from the Action Palette Pull Down Menu (this can also be done when creating a new action)
- The name of an action or an action set can be changed by double-clicking on it
- Button mode
  - Button Mode can be used to display the actions by selecting Button Mode from the Actions pull down menu. Button mode does not let you collapse a list of actions in an action set. They are all listed, all the time.
  - Assigning a Color to an action is useful for quickly finding frequently used actions but the color only shows in Button Mode
- Adding a Stop to a recorded action
  - Stops can be added to Actions after they have been created and are useful when you need to enhance or modify photos prior to continuation of the action
  - Highlight the step in the action after which you would like to stop
  - Use Actions pull down menu and select the Stop Command

- Actions may need to be modified from one version of Photoshop to the next if they move a menu item. In that case, delete that step in the action and then re-record it.

Note – Resizing tip (if not using Lightroom for this)
When creating an action that needs to resize an image to a specific size, as in competition images, you often only want to change either the width or the height and let the other dimension change proportionally on its own. Rather than have one action to change the width for a horizontal photo and one to change the height for a vertical photo, use this:
- When recording the action, use Image Size to <u>**only**</u> change the resolution, **only if necessary**
- Then in choose File > Automate > Fit Image from the menu.
- Type in the maximum dimension desired into both Width and Height
- Photoshop then changes each image you process so it is no larger than the pixels you input, keeping the original proportions, regardless of whether it is a vertical or horizontal image.

Show details of:
- Creating a Dodge and Burn Layer
- Sepia toning
- Printing brightness compensation
- Sharpening
- Saving jpgs of various resolutions (for competition, for web site, etc.)

<u>Action Sets</u>
- You can create and organize sets of task-related actions to make them easier to find. These sets can then also be saved and transferred to another computer
- To create an action in a set, when you click the "Create New Action" icon, enter the name and then select the set in which you want the action to reside
- If you want to move the action to another set, select and drag the action to the appropriate set
- Saving a set of actions for transfer:
  - Select a set by highlighting it
  - Using the Action Palette Pull Down Menu (upper right corner of Actions palette) choose <u>Save Actions</u>
  - Name the set, choose a location and then click Save.
  - Copy the saved set to another computer.
  - In Photoshop, select <u>Load Actions</u> from the Action Palette Pull Down Menu
  - Find and select your saved actions file

Save Actions
Although the contents of the Actions panel are remembered from one session to the next, they're not actually saved until you physically save them using the Save Actions command.

Photoshop Actions

Individual actions cannot be saved, only sets. If you want to save a single action, it must be placed into its own set. The best place to save your actions is in the Adobe Photoshop\Presets\Actions\ folder (or subfolder).

Load Actions
Load Actions allows you to load an existing action set. You can also load actions by choosing them (by name) from the bottom of the panel menu, by double-clicking on them in Explorer/Finder, or by dragging and dropping them onto the Photoshop application window.