

## How to use Layer Styles in Photoshop Elements

Using Layer Styles is a good way separate elements on your page. The use of strokes around photos, graphic elements and type helps separate these elements from the background. Using drop shadows helps create depth in your art, to give it a more 3-dimensional effect.

Layer Styles cannot be applied to the background layer, or a layer that is locked. You can apply layer styles to selections, shapes type, photographs etc.

Select the layer you want to apply the style to

Go to Layer-Layer Styles-Style Settings. This will open the Style Settings dialog box.

It is a good idea to check the “Preview” box at the top so that you can see the styles you are applying to the layer. All the settings have sliders that you can use to set the settings. You can also type in numbers in the boxes next to the sliders to set the effect that way. You can change the colors of the effect by clicking on the colored box within each section. The color picker will open and you can change the colors.

### **Lighting Angle**

The Lighting Angle dial allows you to choose the direction the light is coming from. Just click and hold on the line in the dial and drag it to the right or left to change the direction of the light. This is a global setting that affects the entire canvas and all layers. If you change this in the layer styles for one layer, the change will affect the other layers and their styles as well.

### **Drop Shadow**

When you click on the Drop Shadow box, the arrow to the left of the box turns down to show three sliders.

**Size:** This controls the softness or hardness of the shadow. If you drag this slider all the way to the left the shadow will have a hard edge. If you drag the slider all the way to the right the shadow will have a soft feathered edge.

**Distance:** This slider sets the distance between the shadow and the object. If the distance is set at 0, you will not be able to see the shadow at all. If the slider is moved too far to the right the shadow may be so far from the object that it will not even show up on the canvas.

**Opacity:** This slider sets the opacity of the shadow. Drop shadows make things darker. If the shadow is going over a patterned background you will be able to see the pattern under the shadow. If you pull the slider all the way to the right, the opacity of the shadow will be 100%,

and you will not be able to see the pattern of the background through the shadow. If the opacity slider is moved all the way to the left the opacity will be 0%, and the shadow will be completely transparent and will not show up.

**Color:** Click on the color box at the right side (near the Size slider) to open the color picker.

Here you can choose a color for your drop shadow. The drop shadow makes everything darker. It will overprint whatever is in the background. Since it makes things darker, if you are going over a black background the shadow will not show up even if it is a color other than black.

## **Glow**

There are two options, inner glow which creates a glow on the inside of the object and outer glow which create a glow around the outside of the object. Like the drop shadow, the glow is transparent. You can see the background through the glow depending on the opacity setting you select.

**Size:** This controls the distance around the object where the glow will be visible (inside or outside depending on if it is the inner glow or the outer glow is selected).

**Opacity:** This determines the visibility of the glow. The farther the slider is pulled to the right the lighter the glow will become.

**Color:** Click on the color square to open the color picker, Here you can choose a different color for the glow. Since the glow makes things lighter, the glow will not show up on a white background, even if you choose a different color for the glow.

## **Bevel**

The Bevel setting creates a 3D effect, or an embossed effect. In the early days of the internet many links were created using this method, creating “buttons” that could be clicked to take you to the different pages of a web site. The size slider increases the “depth” of the bevel making the button appear higher or thicker. When the check box for Up is checked, the effect shows as the light coming from the top. This is also controlled using the Lighting Angle dial at the top. If you click on the “Down” box, the lighting angle is reversed. This only affects the bevel, unlike the lighting angle dial which affects everything.

## **Stroke**

Stroke adds a line or border around the object.

**Size:** This controls how thick the line is in pixels. All the way to the left is 0 which is no stroke at all. All the way to the right is 250 pixels. You can set the stroke to anywhere in between.

**Position:** This drop down menu allows you to choose the position of the stroke. You can choose outside, which will begin at the outside of your image, text or shape and go out the set number of pixels you have chosen. Inside will begin at the outside edge of your image, text or shape and go in the set

number of pixels you have chosen. Center will split the stroke, half on the inside and half on the outside of the element. It should be noted that when you use the center or outside position for the stroke the corners will be rounded. If you want sharp square corners you should use the inside option.

**Opacity:** This allows you to choose the opacity of the stroke from 0 to 100%

**Color:** You can choose the color for the stroke by clicking on the color square next to the size slider. This will open the color picker and allow you to choose any color you would like to use for the stroke.