

How to work with layer masks

Layer masks are an important way to work nondestructively. Using layer masks you can make parts of your art invisible without erasing any of the pixels permanently. Practice using layer masks by following the outline below. By experimenting and practicing, using layer masks will become second nature for you.

- Black on the layer mask makes the layer invisible
- White on the layer mask makes the layer visible
- (White reveals and Black conceals).
- The keyboard shortcut to make the foreground color white and the background color black(default) is “D”. (You can also click on the little white and black icon to the lower left of the color swatches).
- The keyboard shortcut to reverse the foreground color and the background color is “X”. (You can also click on the curved arrow to the upper right of the color swatches)
- You can add layer masks to layers, adjustment layers and groups.
- Invert the mask by selecting it and clicking “option/alt I”
- To copy a mask from one layer to another hold down the option/alt, click on the mask you want to copy and drag it to the new layer you want to apply the mask
- If you want to move a mask to a different layer just click on the mask and drag it to the layer.
- Negative mask is a black mask. Everything on the layer will be hidden. Hold down option/alt when you click on the “add layer mask” icon. The new layer mask will be solid black, making everything on that layer invisible - OR - make your mask, then invert it by clicking command/control “I”.
- You can make a mask by painting with the paint brush, using the gradient tool, or using a marquee tool to create a selection and fill it with white or black on your mask.
- You can select something you want to be visible and then click the create layer mask icon. The mask will be created with the selection in white, and the rest in black.
- You can create a double mask by putting your layer in a group, and putting a mask on the group.