Photoshop Tutorial Part 2 – Interface and Intermediate Tools

This tutorial will assume you know the very basic of basics. Things, like how to work your way around Layers, Fills, Selection Marquee Tools, Undoing, working around the User Interface.

Basic Masks

One of the essential things to learn for any Photoshop user is masking. Masking allows you to cover up graphics or effects rather than erase them. The advantage is that you can always uncover if you need to tweak how much or little of the masked layer or effect you need to see. When you apply a layer mask Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All you will get a layer mask that is filled with white. To cover anything up, grab the Brush tool and set your foreground color to black and paint over what you want to be covered up, or masked away. Black hides, white shows. It's that simple. Use your Brush tool and paint with either color and try it out for yourself.

Alignment & Spacing
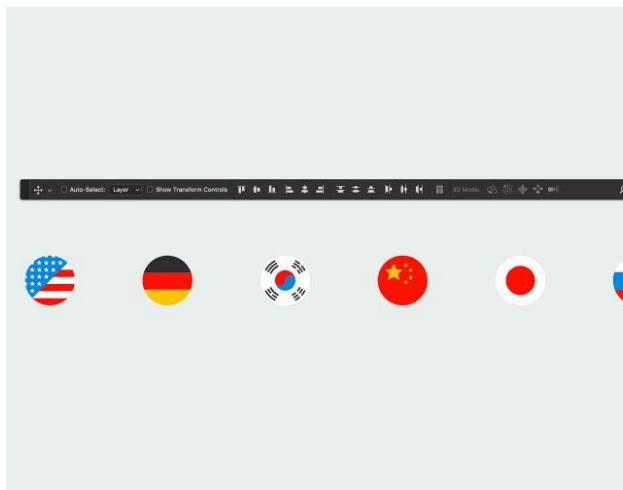
If you select multiple layers (by holding down Cmd/Ctrl while clicking on the name of different layers) and then choose the Move tool (V) you will have a bunch of alignment and spacing options in the top control bar. When you have multiple layers selected, the alignment will happen relative to the selected items, not the width or height of the PSD. If you want to align to the center of your document go Select>All and then select an item or items, and the alignment options will not align your item(s) based on your PSD. The spacing options work the same way. You can space between the edges of a selection, or with respect to each other.

Drawing Shapes and Vector Graphics

You do have the ability to create vector graphics in Photoshop using either the Pen tool or the Shape tools. The key is that when you select one of the Shape tools that you choose either "Shape" or "Path" from the drop-down menu in the top control bar. In the video, I show how to create shapes and build or subtract from those shapes to make truly custom shapes. We create a spinning progress bar with a radial gradient and even get the Pen tool involved. You'll learn a ton about how to work with these tools to quickly and effectively create vector shapes in Photoshop.

Smart Objects
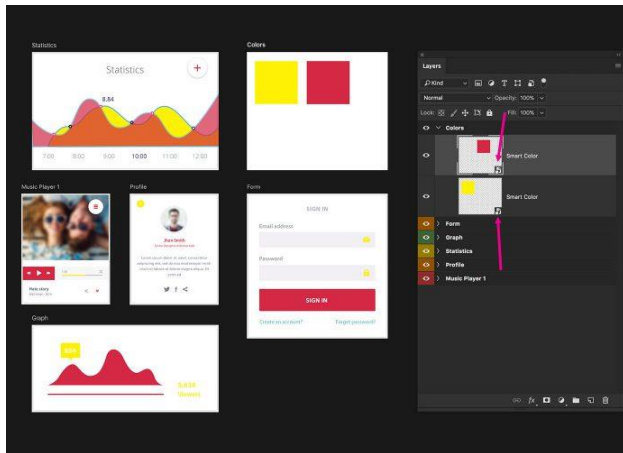
Smart Objects are a way to package up a layer or number of layers in your PSD to preserve the graphics in that package. This is helpful when you're working with graphics that you size down very small. Smart Objects will allow you to scale objects down tiny and then scale them back up and they will still retain sharp edges and not lose quality or detail. Smart objects also allow you to apply non-destructive filters directly to them, you can also link multiple Smart Objects across different files so when one instance of the Smart Object is changed, they all change, and much more! Smart Objects are incredibly powerful!

Export As and Exporting Graphics
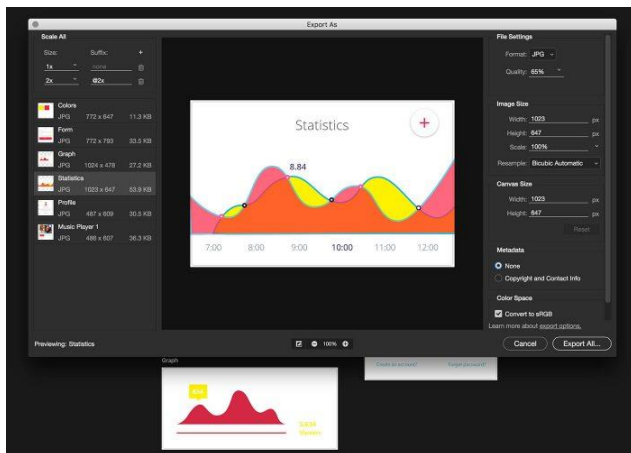
Export As will allow you to take your PSD and export it as an optimized JPEG, GIF, PNG, or SVG image, but the real power of Export As lays in its ability to export specific layers as individual images and even export multiple versions of the same image so you can export any and all retina graphics at half size, full size, 2x, and even 3x if needed.

Photoshop Tutorial Part 2 – Interface and Intermediate Tools