

Adobe Photoshop

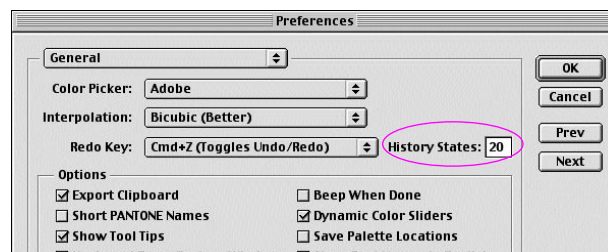
A Lesson in History in Photoshop with Julieanne Kost

Software needed Adobe Photoshop 5.0 or later.



When most people think of the history palette in Adobe Photoshop, they think of multiple undo. The history palette, however, in conjunction with the History Brush, Art History Brush and Snapshots, is far more powerful than simply traveling back through time in your document: they allow for unlimited creativity previously unknown in the digital realm! This lesson explains the History Options dialog box to help you set up your work environment, making the most out of the past, present, and future in Photoshop.

Setting up the Preferences for your travels through history. Selecting Edit > Preferences > General, gives you the ability to control the number of History States for Photoshop. This option determines how many history states Photoshop will keep track of until the oldest state is discarded (rolls off of the top of the History palette). Setting the number of states depends on the size of the file that you're working on, the amount of RAM that you have, and the amount of scratch disk that you have free. When you make a change to a file,

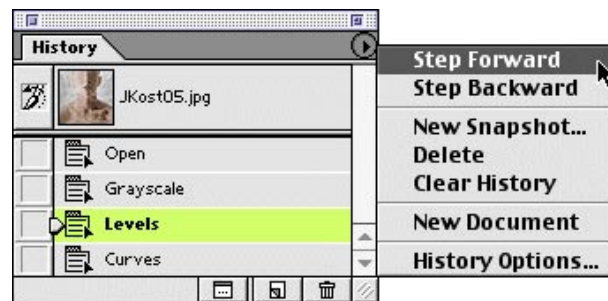


Photoshop writes that changed pixel data to RAM or, when the change is larger than the amount of available RAM, Photoshop writes it to the hard drive or the "scratch disk". Photoshop tiles images (invisibly to the user) and keeps track of only the tiles that change (similar to temporal compression in video). This makes Photoshop's history palette very efficient.

When working with large files or making changes that affect the entire image, (such as filters or free transform), while having a small amount of free space on your hard drive, a "could not complete the command because the scratch disk full" message might be displayed. If so, lower the number of History States in the General Preferences or delete states. Delete a state by dragging it to the trash can at the bottom of the history palette. (Holding down the Option/Alt key deletes the state without displaying the dialog box). If a command cannot be completed because the scratch disk is full, you can try clearing your history palette by selecting Edit > Purge > Histories or Edit > Purge > All.

History Palette Menu Items defined. Clicking on the black triangle on the History palette displays the available menu items.

Step Forward/Step Backward To navigate through history, you can choose Step Backward or Step Forward from the History palette menu or from the Edit menu. The advantage of selecting the Edit menu to navigate, is that it displays the keyboard shortcuts next to the option - Step Forward: Shift Cmd Z/Shift Control Z, Step Backward: Option Cmd Z/Alt Control Z.



New Snapshot Selecting this brings up the New Snapshot dialog box allowing you to name the snapshot and choose to create the snapshot from the Full Document, Merged Layers, or the Current Layer. You can also create a new snapshot by clicking the New Snapshot Icon at the bottom of the History Palette. To access the New Snapshot dialog box, hold the Opt/Alt key while selecting it, or check the Show New Snapshot Dialog by Default option in the History options.

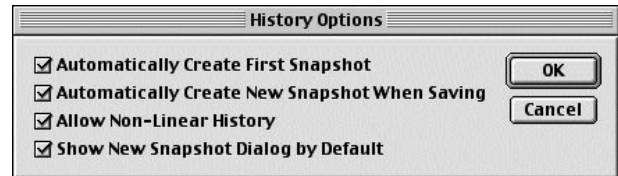
Delete Depending on what you have targeted in the History palette, this menu item deletes the currently targeted Snapshot or History State. You can also delete a state or a snapshot by simply dragging the state/snapshot to the Trash button at the bottom of the History palette or, by selecting the state/snapshot and clicking the Trash Button (Opt/Alt will bypass the dialog box).

Clear History Select this option to quickly delete all of the states in your History Palette. It will not clear snapshots. Interestingly, this option deletes the state(s), but does not effect the amount of memory/scratch disk space used by Photoshop since clearing history can be undone. If you get a message that Photoshop is out of scratch disk space, purging states is useful, since the command deletes the states from the Undo buffer and frees up memory. To do this, either hold the Option/Alt key while selecting Clear History, or select Edit > Purge > Histories.

New Document This option will create a new document from either a History State or a Snapshot. This allow you to save out states and snapshot for future use as separate documents. The new document will not have any history.

History Options There are four History Options that you should look at and check (or not) depending on your workflow.

Automatically Create First Snapshot Unless the size of the file or the speed of the system prohibits it, keep this option on at all times. First, when reverting to the original file, by clicking on the initial snapshot is faster than selecting File > Revert. Second, recovering from an “accidental” save is now possible. For example: you’ve been working on a file for the past hour. Your boss comes by to tell you you’re late for a client meeting. You jump up, do a quick cmd/control + S to save the file, and then panic. You’ve saved over the original scan and you really didn’t want to do that. However, since you didn’t close the file (remember that all history states and snapshots are deleted when you close the file) you click on that first snapshot, reverting to the original, and proceed to do a quick Save As. Whew!



Automatically Create New Snapshot When Saving This option automatically creates a new snapshot when you select File > Save or File > Save As. It will automatically name the snapshot with the time that it was taken. This allows you to quickly navigate through the successive saving points in your image. If you’re working with large files and have minimum hard drive space, and are from the old school where you learned “better saved than sorry”, you might end up with a lot of snapshots taking up memory and room on the hard drive that you might not want. In this case, it might be better to turn it off. Otherwise, if you have a bad habit of not saving, then you’ll probably want to turn it on!

Allow Non-Linear History By default, the history palette is set to perform Linear History. With Linear History, going back in time by selecting a previous state in the history palette (states higher on the list than the current state) and perform a command, all of the states after the currently targeted state (below it on the history palette) are deleted from the list. On the other hand, the Allow Non-Linear History option allows targeting of different states in the history palette and performing different commands without the states under (or more recent) than the targeted state from being deleted from the list. This option should have been named “Added Flexibility” because that’s exactly what it does: it offers additional flexibility when attempting different creative manipulations to an image without removing any of the steps taken to reach that point in time. Wherever non liner paths are created, a darker line between states is displayed. This can help keep track of time travel.

Show New Snapshot Dialog by Default This is a great option if you typically click on the New Snapshot icon at the bottom of the History palette and need to access the New Snapshot dialog box. Checking this option, always displays the New Snapshot dialog box allowing you to name the snapshot and choose to create the snapshot from the Full Document, Merged Layers, or the Current Layer.

A few other interesting facts to keep in mind when using the History palette:

Program-wide changes, such as changes to palettes, color settings, actions, and preferences, are not changes to a particular image and so are not added to the History palette.

Each state that is recorded, is listed with the name of the tool or command used to change the image.

States are added from the top down. That is, the oldest state is at the top of the list, the most recent one at the bottom.

By default, the History palette lists the previous 20 states. Older states are automatically deleted to free more memory for Photoshop.

To keep a particular state throughout your work session, make a snapshot of the state.

Once you close and reopen the document, all states and snapshots from the last working session are cleared from the palette.

- A History Brush Tool and Art History Brush
- B Options bar (displays tool options for Brushes, Modes and Opacity)
- C Well (sets the source snapshot or history state to sample from)
- D Snapshot (double click to access Snapshot Options)
- E Automatically created snapshot at save (named with time saved)
- F States of the image (Option-click a state duplicates the state)
- G Darker Line Defines Non Linear Edit points
- H Creates new document from current state or snapshot
- I Creates new snapshot
- J Deletes snapshot or state

