How to use filters

Adobe Photoshop CS5 filters provide a range of options for changing your image's appearance. You can use filters to clean up or retouch your images, apply special art effects that give your image the appearance of a sketch or pastel painting, and apply distortions and lighting effects. These filters can create added interest or help you achieve design goals. As with many Photoshop features, though, you should take care not to overuse filters, as too many filters can make an image look busy or unprofessional.

Each filter has a range of settings. You can preview these before you apply them. Experiment with different settings to achieve your design goals.

Filters have the following limitations:

- Some filters work only on RGB images.
- All filters work with 8-bit images. If you are using 16-bit or 32-bit images, please see Photoshop Help for information on which filters work with each.
- When applying filters to shape layers, Photoshop first rasterizes the shape. *Rasterizing* refers to converting the shape from vector to bitmap format.

Creating a custom shape

In the following steps, you create a shape and then apply filters to it to give it an artistic appearance.

To create a custom shape:

1. Start Photoshop and create a new document.
2. Click and hold the Rectangle tool in the Tools panel to select the Custom Shape tool (**Figure 1**).
3. In the options bar, make sure Shape Layers is selected (**Figure 2**).
4. Select a shape from the Custom Shape picker, such as the Blob 1 (**Figure 3**).
5. Drag the pointer across the image to draw the custom shape, just as you would if you were drawing a rectangle.

   To make the shape uniform in size, hold down the Shift key while dragging.

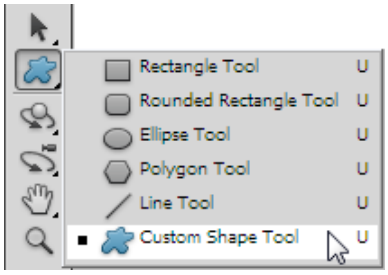

Figure 1 Custom Shape tool

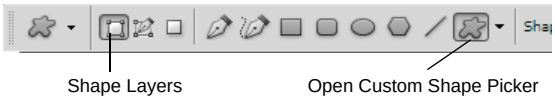

Figure 2 Custom Shape tool options bar

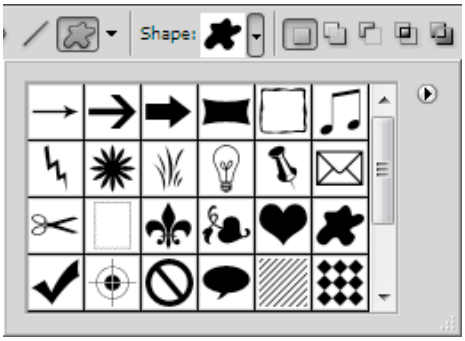

Figure 3 Custom Shape picker

Applying a filter

You can apply a filter to the active layer.

To apply a filter:

1. Select the layer that contains the custom shape (**Figure 4**).

   By default, it will be labeled “Shape 1.”

2. Choose Filter > Sketch > Halftone Pattern.

   Halftone Pattern is just one of many filters with which you can achieve an artistic effect. The effect of the Halftone Pattern is similar to that of certain Pop Art techniques.

   Photoshop warns you it needs to rasterize the image before proceeding. This means the image will no longer be a vector mask.

3. Click OK.

   The Halftone Pattern dialog box appears (**Figure 5**).

   Note: The Artistic, Brush Strokes, Distort, Sketch, Stylize, and Texture filters all open in the same dialog box.

   You can preview the effects of different filters by selecting them in the middle column.

4. In the right column, set Size to 2, Contrast to 20, and Pattern Type to Dot.

5. Click OK.

   The filter is applied to the custom shape (**Figure 6**).

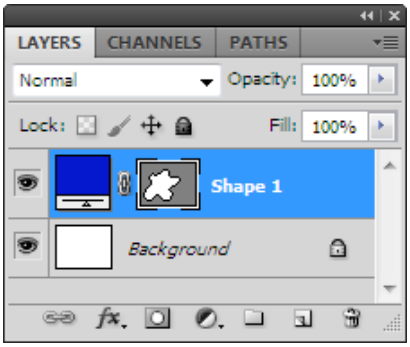

Figure 4 Layers panel

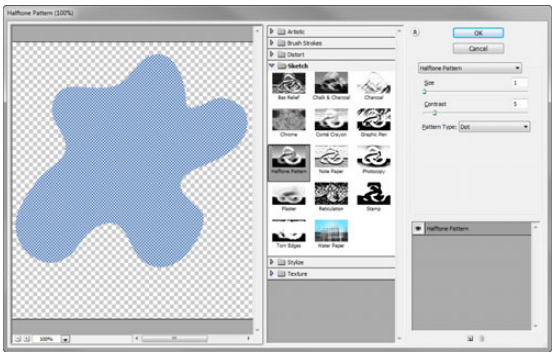

Figure 5 Halftone Pattern dialog box

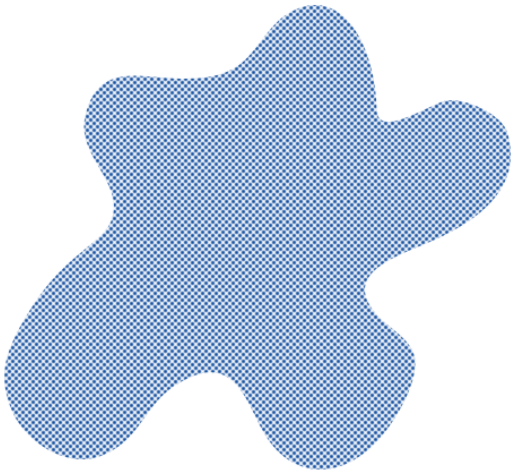

Figure 6 Halftone Pattern filter applied

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Applying another filter

You can apply multiple filters to one image.

In these steps, you're applying filters to a custom shape. You can apply filters to almost any image, such as photographs or other artwork.

To apply another filter:

1. Click the layer with the custom shape.
2. Choose Filter > Artistic > Sponge.

   As with the Halftone Pattern filter, a dialog box lets you preview and change settings for the Sponge filter (**Figure 7**).
3. Set Brush Size to 2, Definition to 16, and Smoothness to 6.
4. Click OK.

   The Sponge filter is applied to the shape (**Figure 8**).

   Observe how the Sponge filter modifies the effects of the Halftone Pattern filter. You can create a wide range of effects by combining filters.

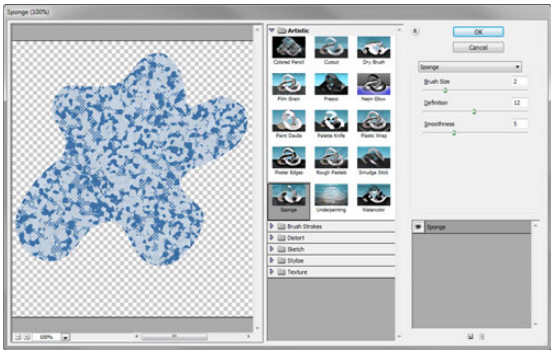

Figure 7 The Sponge dialog box

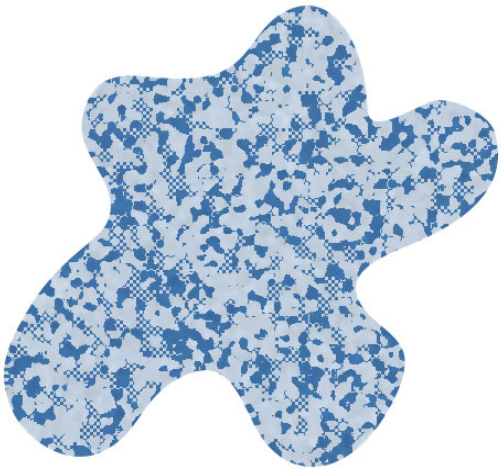

Figure 8 Sponge filter applied

Using the Liquify filter

The Liquify filter is another interesting filter you can apply to images. It causes the image to appear melted, along the lines of a Salvador Dali painting.

Using the Liquify filter, you can push, pull, rotate, reflect, pucker, or bloat any area of an image.

To apply the Liquify filter:

1. Open an image in Photoshop.
2. Select the layer to which you wish to apply the Liquify filter.
3. Choose Filter > Liquify.

   The Liquify dialog box appears (**Figure 9**).
4. In the right column, set a brush size to use.

   The brush size needs to be big enough to modify your image.
5. On the left, choose the Forward Warp tool.
6. Drag the pointer through a part of the image (**Figure 10**).

   Note: The Reconstruct tool, positioned beneath the Forward Warp tool, will undo the effects of a liquify tool. To revert, choose the Reconstruct tool and then drag through the image.

   Experiment with other liquify tools, such as the Pucker, Bloat, Twirl Clockwise, and Turbulence tools.
7. When you are satisfied, click OK to apply your changes to the image.

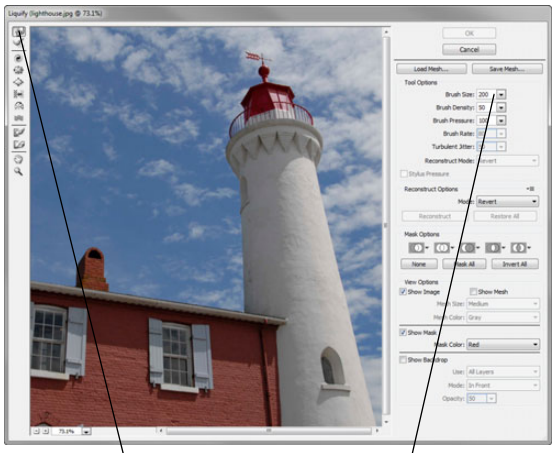

Figure 9 Liquify dialog box

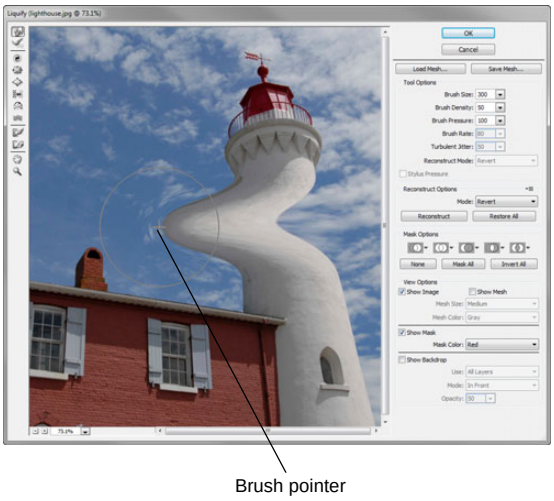

Figure 10 Forward warp tool applied

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