# Using Brushes in Photoshop CS+

In this tutorial we will learn how to load brushes into Photoshop as well as some of the basics in regards to using them and making them work for your layouts. This tutorial is suitable for both Photoshop CS-CS3.

First we need to load our set of brushes. Photoshop comes with several sets or you may have purchased a set. For the purpose of this tutorial I will be using grungy Photoshop brushes.

First copy your .abr file into your C:/Program Files/Adobe/Adobe Photoshop CS/Presets/Brushes folder before loading your brushes. Brushes saved to this folder will load each time you start Photoshop. (If you do not wish to have them load every time you start Photoshop, you can save them to a different folder and load them as you need them.) Please note that your drive letter may vary from this and your Photoshop folder may have a slightly different name depending on the version of Photoshop you use.

We now need to ensure our brushes tool is selected by clicking on the brush/pencil tool and holding your mouse button down to get the pop out menu. Click on the first item, Brush tool to select brushes.
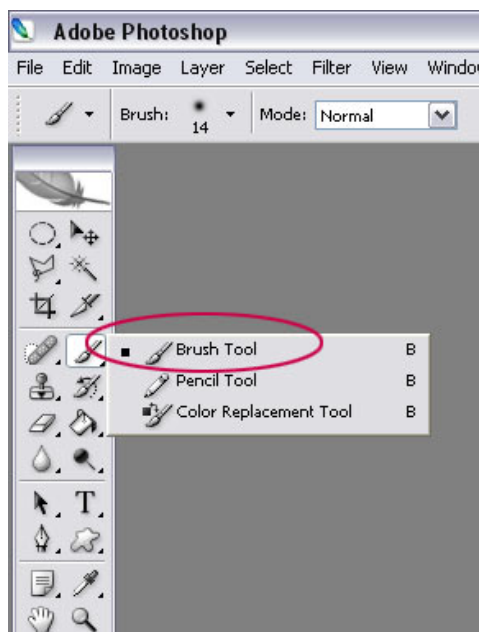
Now click on the brushes tab at the top right of your screen.
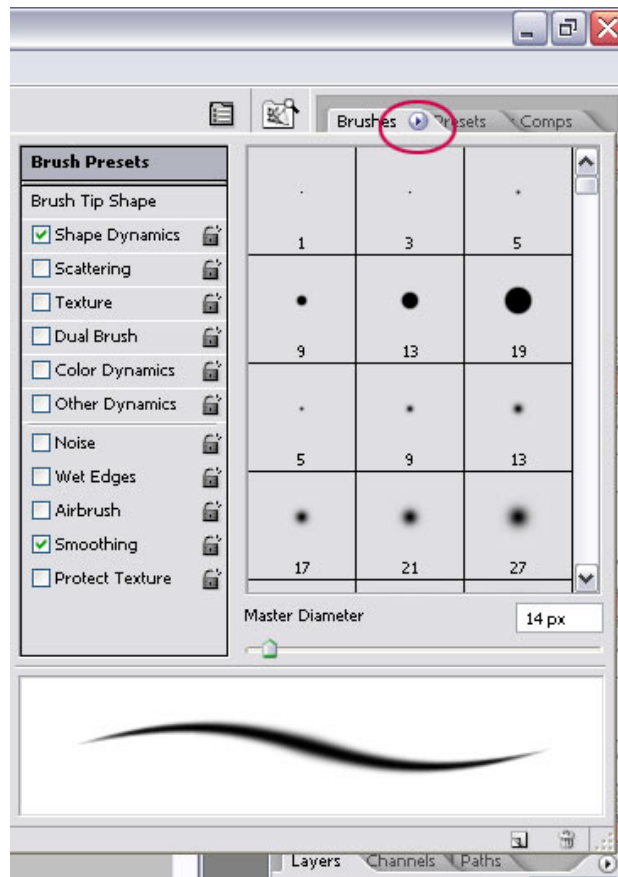
If you are unable to view this tab, you can show it by going to the Windows menu and clicking on brushes. You should then be able to drag it to the box containing the other tabs so that it appears each time you open Photoshop.

We then need to load your brushes. To do so click on the small arrow next to the word brushes on the brushes tab and a menu will appear.

Select Load Brushes from the list of options.
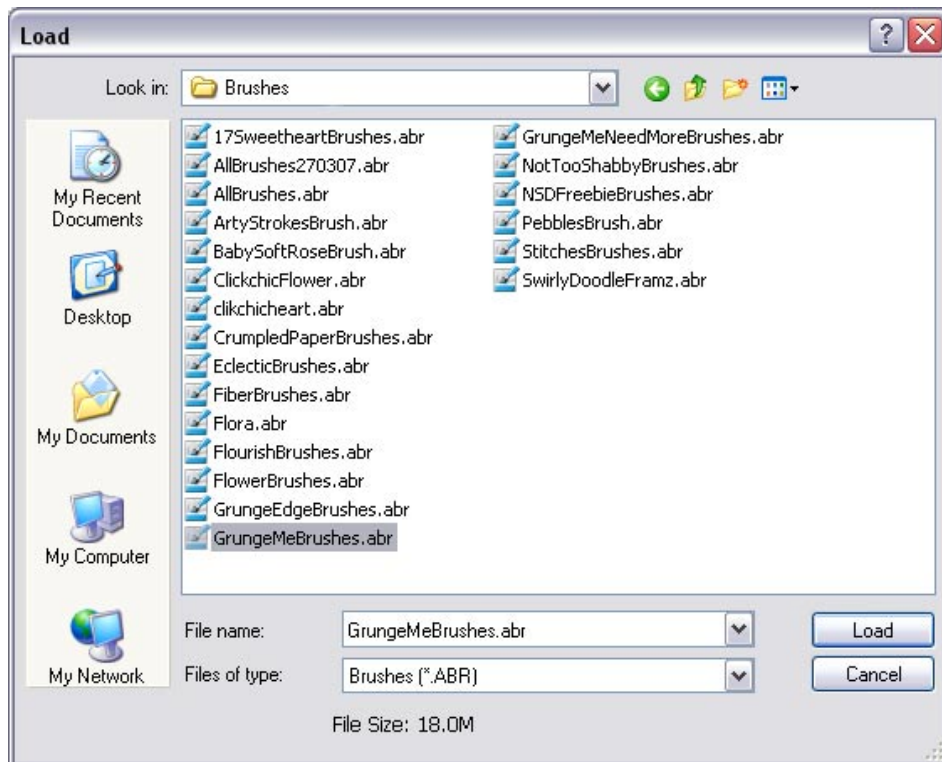
Brushes for Photoshop come in .abr files. So in your download, look for the .abr file you copied to your presets folder.

Browse for your brushes file in your Adobe/Photoshop CS/Presets/Brushes folder. Once you have found the file click on it to select it and click on the Load button. This will load your brushes into the Photoshop brushes collection.

You should now be able to view your loaded brushes in the brush selection menu.
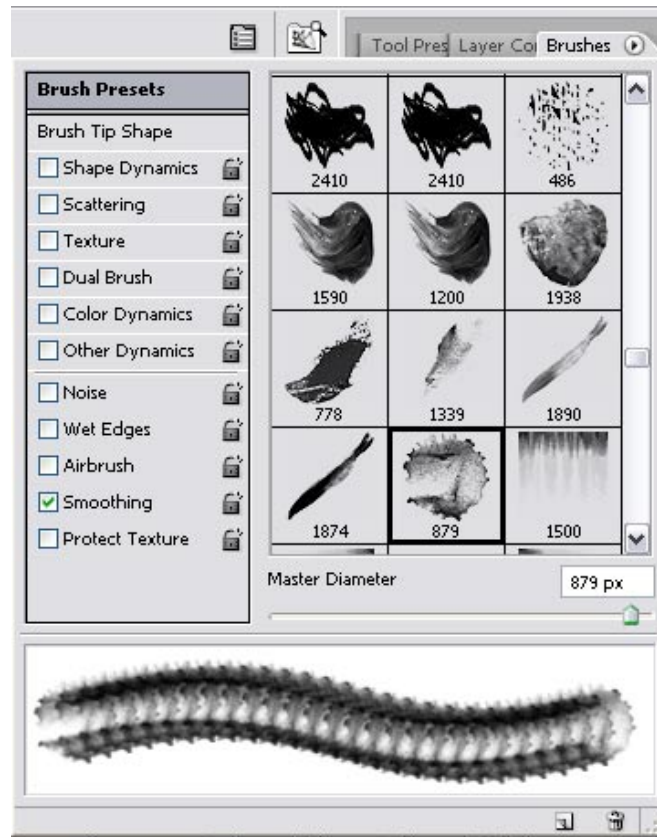
Tip:- In the above preview I have my brushes set to show as large thumbnails.
There are several viewing options. To choose your favourite, click on the arrow on your brushes tab again and select your viewing option from the menu that appears.
You may prefer small thumbnails or one of the other options, try them and see!
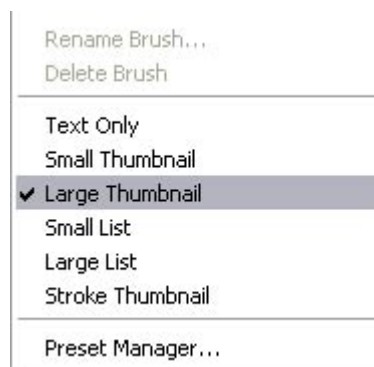
The next step is to choose a brush to use. For the purposes of this tutorial I am going to put white inked edges around the edges of a photo. Brushes are very versatile and have a HUGE number of uses, from painting, grunging or decorating papers, to inking edges on photos and papers or even editing photos. You can use

brushes with your eraser tool and dodging and burning tools to name a few. Then you have the option of experimenting with blend modes to enhance the effect of your brushwork. Once you start to experiment with brushes, they become very addictive!

I have several inked edge brushes to choose from, and in the sample below I have used a few of them, but you can just use one and change the rotation of the brush to suit each side of the image. I have also used some other grung brushes to achieve the effect I am after.

Now to choose the brush!
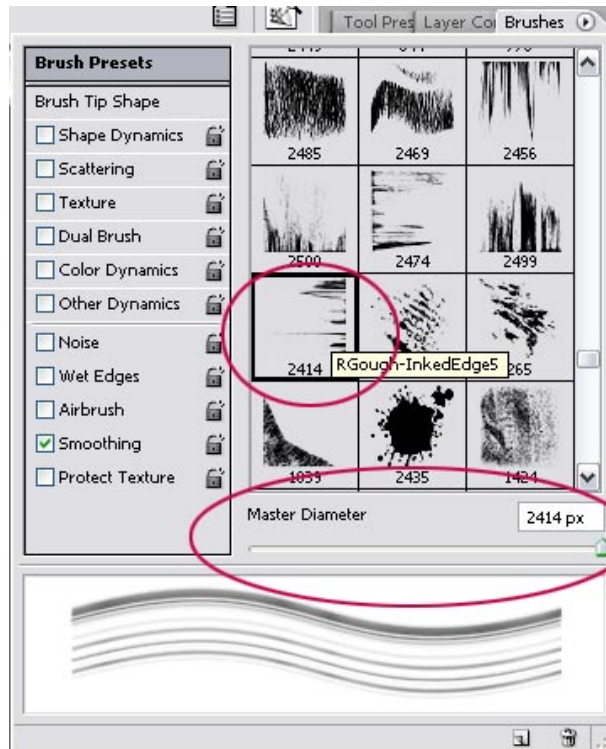
To choose a brush, find the brush you wish to use and click on it. This selects your brush choice. You can then change the size of the brush to suit your purpose using the Master Diameter. Alternatively you may wish to use the menu that appears when you click on the dropdown arrow next to your chosen brush at the top left of your options toolbar.
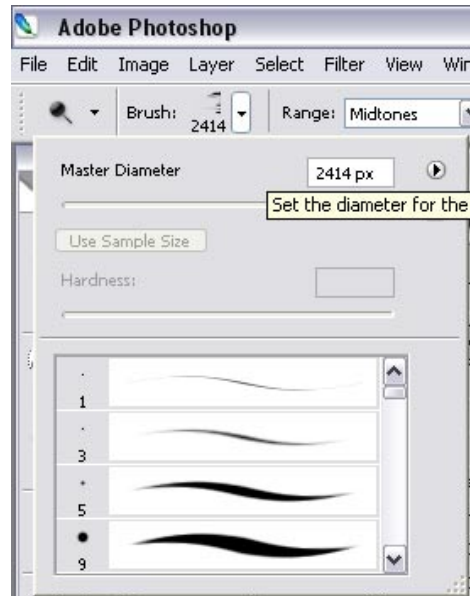
> Tip:- Create a new layer before beginning your brushwork so that it can be easily erased if need be by deleting everything on the layer or the layer itself.

I am editing a 400x575 pixel photo in this tutorial, and will need to adjust my brush sizes accordingly. You can reduce or increase the size of your brushes to suit your needs using the Master Diameter setting.

As you can see below, I have selected white from my colour palette and have begun my brushwork on a new layer by clicking on the areas of my canvas that I wish the brushwork to appear, much like 'stamping' the image on the screen. In the sample below you can see the outline of the brush as an indicator of how it will appear on the canvas.

Your brush will not always be angled in the position you wish to use it, to rotate your brush to suit the angle you require, click on the Brush Tip Shape option to the left of the Brushes palette. Here you will find further options for editing your brush. To change the rotation of the brush, you can click on and drag the arrow to an angle that suits, or enter the angle into the Angle box. You can also edit the diameter of your box in this area.
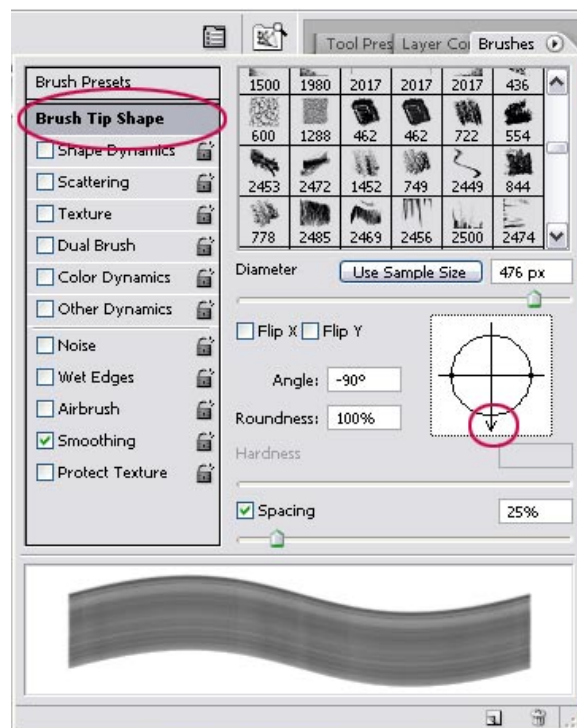
You may notice the other options down the left side of your palette. There is great scope for experimentation here, however these will not be covered in this basic tutorial.

Below is the finished product, with several different brushes applied. (some inked edges & a crayon line brush).

If you want to take it one step further, you can experiment with blend modes and additional brush work to create different effects. Below are the blend modes I have used for my Ink Edges layer and also a second layer of grunge brushwork I have done on the image following.
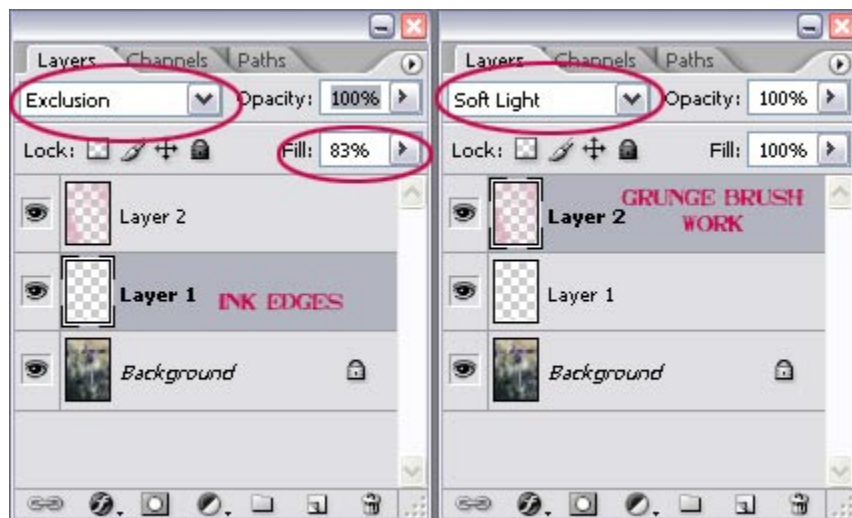
Below is the end result of the above blend modes (Exclusion – Layer 1 & Soft Light – Layer 2) and an extra layer of additional brushwork.

Or for a more defined border, I have changed the blend mode on the inked edges layer to Difference.

The techniques you have learned in this tutorial can be applied to your favourite background papers or photos and even when designing blinkies. The possibilities are endless! You can add layer layer styles, vary the opacity and apply further effects as well to add further enhancements to your work.