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NOTE: Button names are underlined in the sections that follow.

LEGAL NOTICE

The TK8 plugin is copyrighted material (©Tony Kuyper). You may use the plugin for your personal work and enjoyment but transfer or sale is prohibited. If someone is interested in using the plugin, please have them visit my website www.Goodlight.us to obtain it.

The terms TKActions, TK8, Multi-Mask, and Quick Paint were coined by Tony Kuyper and are trademarks of his products— TKActions™, TK8™, Multi-Mask™, and Quick Paint™.

Thank you for respecting the time and effort it takes to develop these techniques and for showing the appropriate consideration for the intellectual property of others. As always, please feel free to [contact me](#) if you have questions, comments, or suggestions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The TK8 plugin owes much to the many photographers who have contributed suggestions and feedback. Affiliates [Sean Bagshaw](#), [Rafael Coutinho](#), [André Distel](#), [Antonio Prado](#), [Roy Yuan](#), and [Isabella Tabacchi](#) were alpha-testers for the many iterations. [Chris Wesselman](#) beta-tested the plugin and helped find issues related to Mac computers. [Steve Dell](#) also beta-tested and contributed the sketch actions. The plugin has also drawn on the work of [Alex Nail](#) (web-sharpening) and Chris Tarantino (saturation masks). In addition, numerous websites, videos, and customer recommendations have influenced and inspired my workflow and plugin-coding. I have included their names in the pertinent sections when I've kept track of them. Many of the icons used in the TK8 plugin come from the FontAwesome.com website and were not changed.

OVERVIEW

Since the publication of the [original tutorial](#) in 2006, luminosity masks have become widespread and widely-accepted in the digital photographic community. From initially intersecting selections, to 16-bit calculations, to the Zone-Picker, the Rapid Mask engine, and to Infinity Color masks, TK panels and plugins have been the leading innovator in integrating luminosity masks into the Photoshop workflow. The plugin continues to grow and evolve, and while luminosity masks are the primary masks used by most photographers, the spectrums of masks created by the plugin are no longer limited to just luminosity. Component channels, color, saturation, vibrance, and edge masks can now be accessed in a similar manner. And unlike masks with hard or mathematically feathered edges, pixel-based masks generated by the TK8 plugin are always self-feathering because they are generated from data encoded into image's pixels. There is wide agreement that pixel-value masks provide some of the most natural selections for blending and adjusting images.

TK8 uses Adobe's UXP architecture for coding Photoshop extensions. This plugin's primary function is to generate pixel-value masks, like luminosity masks, using the

Multi-Mask module. Normally these masks take many steps to create, but the Multi-Mask module does all the work so that these masks are generated in real-time with the click of a button or the movement of a slider handle. In addition to making the masks, the Multi-Mask module also provides ways to modify them and then offers multiple output options to accomplish a variety of image processing goals. The module's internal coding insures that 16-bit masks are available throughout all steps of the process.

NOTE: The terms "pixel-value masks" and "pixel-based masks" refer to masks based on specific data sets common to all pixels. Luminance, hue, and saturation are the primary types of data that serve as the source for pixel-value masks. Pixel-value masks are able to take one set of data and generate a variety of different masks based on that data. Luminosity masks, for example, use pixel luminance as the data source to make Lights masks, Darks masks, Midtones masks, and Zone masks. Masks generated using pixel data accurately and continuously adjust to perfectly match every pixel in the image. As such, they are completely self-feathering and this insures seamless blending when they are used to adjust an image.

Making pixel-value masks, while extremely useful, is only part of what the TK8 plugin can do. There are also the Combo and Cx modules that provide even more functionality. Both these modules do the same thing, they just have different layouts to accommodate different workspaces. The main interface of the Combo and Cx modules provide one-click access to many Photoshop functions without having to memorize the Photoshop menus or keyboard shortcuts. So it's easy to run Photoshop directly from one of these modules. There are also many useful actions programmed into the modules Actions menu, and users can even program their own actions into a separate menu or the buttons on the main interface. Finally, Combo and Cx both have an advanced web-sharpening algorithm that allows for preparing images for display on the internet.

Workflow efficiency continues to be an important factor in TK8. The compact, modular design of previous versions is maintained. TK8 keeps its familiar, small footprint and fits conveniently in any workspace. The Combo/Cx modules run Photoshop and the Multi-Mask module makes all the masks. There's no need to open multiple modules or to be constantly shifting to a different interface or tab. Smart menus provide quick access to extra features and these menus know when to close once they've served their purpose.

For those already using the TK7 panel, TK8 will be a smooth transition to an even easier workflow that incorporates luminosity and other masks. For those new to these advanced masks, the plugin's layout will help guide them through the process of building and deploying masks in order to quickly start using them with their images. TK8 is designed to make luminosity masks easy for everyone, and to make sure there is plenty of room to keep growing once you see what these masks can do.

VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. The TK8 modules only work starting in Photoshop 2022 version 23.2.0.

Adobe says they should keep working in future versions of Photoshop as well. TK8 will NOT work in older versions of Photoshop. It's necessary to have Photoshop 2022 or later in order to use the TK8 plugin.

2. Properly set up the working color space. There is a PDF called "*Setting Up the Color Working Space*" in the download folder. It explains how to properly set the color and gray working spaces in Photoshop. Be sure to read it and implement its recommendations to get the best results when using luminosity masks.

3. The actions in the plugin are meant to be used with images in RGB Color mode. While some actions might work in Lab, Grayscale, and CMYK, the buttons have only been tested in RGB Color mode.

4. Speed will vary. The TK8 plugin significantly speeds up the process of generating pixel-value masks and carrying out complex actions, but speeds will vary depending on factors such as computer speed, image size, and available memory. A "wait" cursor or progress bar are indications that Photoshop is taking a few seconds to complete a particular task.

5. Nothing is perfect. While I try to get everything right when coding the plugin, it's complex and there can occasionally be some bugs. In addition, periodic Adobe updates to Photoshop frequently cause unexpected problems for all plugins. If you have issues with the TK8, [contact me](#) and I can look into it. If I can reproduce the problem, I can usually find a way to fix it.

INSTALLATION

There is an installation guide in the download folder that explains how to install the TK8 plugin.

COMBO/CX MODULES

The Combo and Cx modules perform identical functions. They just have different layouts so the user can dock the modules in a workspace configuration that works best for them.

The Combo module (right) is the same width as the Multi-Mask module. This makes for aligned stacking in a dedicated panel dock in Photoshop

The Cx module (next page) is tall and skinny and is meant to be used in a different fashion. This toolbar-style layout is similar to the Photoshop Tools panel. As such, the Cx



module can be conveniently tucked to the side of the workspace so that its functions are always available but with a minimal horizontal footprint to allow maximum space for working on the image. While it's still best to put the Cx module in a dedicated dock to insure proper interaction with the image workspace, it's just half the width of the stacked Combo/Multi-Mask module. When using the Cx module, stacking it in the same dock as the Multi-Mask module is not recommended. They are different widths and will not align properly resulting in wasted space. Instead, when using the Cx module, it's usually best to dock the Multi-mask module ABOVE Photoshop's Layers panel. Since it's not needed all the time, Multi-Mask can be minimized to just its tab by double-clicking on the tab. Whenever Multi-Mask is needed, single-clicking its tab will instantly maximize it. This makes Cx available all the time while still having Multi-Mask quickly available when it's needed. [This video](#) by Sean Bagshaw provides an excellent overview on how to create a custom workspace with different modules.

The Combo/Cx modules have buttons for menu commands and keyboard shortcuts frequently used with Photoshop. In addition to running many common Photoshop functions, the modules have menus for creative actions, user actions, and web-sharpening. The purpose of the Combo/Cx modules is to provide quick-click access to these different functions.

The Combo and Cx modules also have a smart object indicator. This shows as a blue, orange, or red outline around the Smart Object button when the active layer is a smart object. The color of the outline tells the type of smart object.

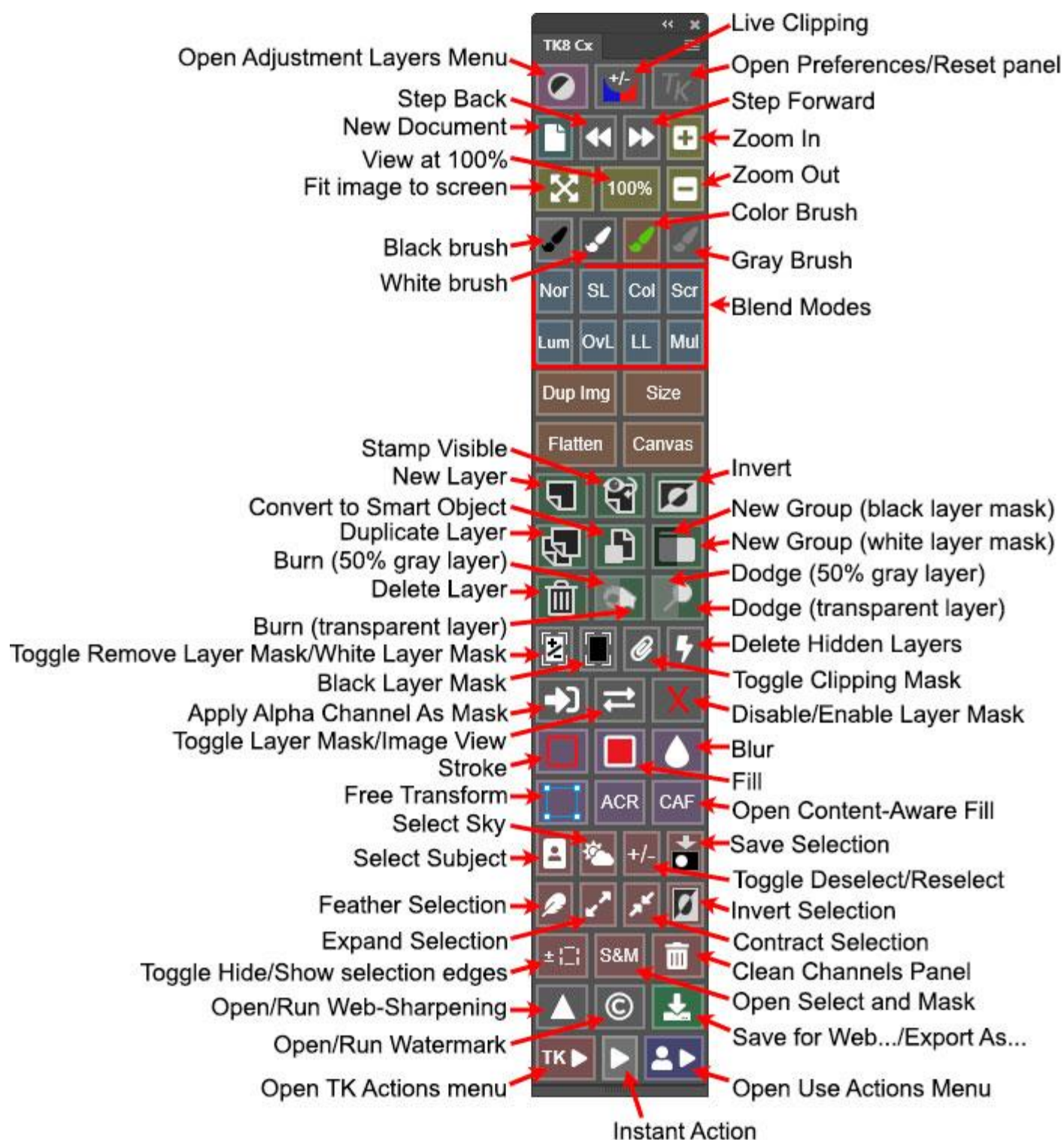
Blue—The smart object contains a RAW file that is NOT linked to another smart object with the same embedded RAW file in the layer stack. Double-clicking the smart object thumbnail opens the Adobe Camera Raw filter for adjusting the RAW image embedded in this smart object.

Orange—The smart object contains a RAW file that IS linked to another smart object with the same embedded RAW file in the layer stack. Double-clicking the smart object thumbnail opens the Adobe Camera Raw filter for adjusting the smart object, and, because this RAW file IS linked, another smart object in the layer stack will receive the same adjustment.

Red—The smart object is NOT a RAW image. It is a smart object composed of one or more Photoshop layers. Double-clicking the thumbnail opens a new document in Photoshop containing the contents of the smart object.

The Combo/Cx modules use a variety of icon buttons for different commands. The image below provides details for what each icon and abbreviated button means.





The color of each button helps group buttons with similar function together. The saturation of the color can be changed using the slider in the module's preferences. Also, right-clicking on most buttons makes their color extra-saturated. This provides a method of highlighting the buttons you use most to make them easier to find.

Duplicate Layer—Duplicates the active layer. If the active layer is a smart object, the duplication process runs the "New Smart Object via Copy" so that the embedded object in the new duplicate smart object layer is independent of the original smart object.

Smart Object—Creates a smart object of the current active layer(s). CTRL/command+click creates a new layer at the top of the layer stack, merges the contents of the active layers into this new layer (merge visible), and then turns the layer into a smart object.

Group—Puts the selected layer or layers into a group. More than one layer can be selected to be included in the group. If there is an active selection, it is turned into a mask for the group. If there is no active selection, then the group is given a white (reveal-all) layer mask. The left half of this button has a black overlay. Clicking this part of the button creates the group layer with a black (Hide All) layer mask. The Group button is particularly useful for the [masking-the-mask technique](#) described in Sean Bagshaw's videos.

Delete Layer—Deletes the active layer. This is a particularly useful button for experimentation. If an experiment doesn't work, click the Delete Layer button and try something else. If multiple layers are selected they are all deleted.

Burn—Creates a "Burn" pixel layer set to Soft Light blending mode for painting black to darken image contents below the layer. Once the layer is created this action also selects the Brush tool and changes the foreground color to black in preparation for burning. A transparent pixel layer is created by the right half of the button. A transparent burn layer makes it easy to Ctrl+click (Mac: command+click) on the layer thumbnail to create a selection of its contents, which can be useful for additional adjustments and masks. The left half of this button has a gray overlay. Clicking the gray half of the button fills the layer created with 50% gray. This can be useful when turning off the visibility of other layers to see what has been painted on the Burn layer. While the user can choose between a transparent and 50% gray Burn layer, the actual results of painting on either layer will be the same.

Dodge—Creates a "Dodge" pixel layer set to Overlay blending mode for painting white to lighten the contents below the layer. Once the layer is created this action also selects the Brush tool and changes the foreground color to white in anticipation of dodging. The button can create two different types of layers: transparent and gray-filled. A transparent pixel layer is created by the right side of the button. Transparency makes it easy to Ctrl+click (Mac: command+click) on the layer thumbnail to create a selection of its contents, which can be useful for additional adjustments and masks. The left half of this button has a gray overlay. Clicking the gray half of the button fills the layer created with 50% gray. This can be useful for turning off the visibility of other layers to see what has been painted on the Dodge layer. While the user can choose between a transparent and 50% gray Dodge layer, the actual results of painting on either layer will be the same.



Purple buttons are some miscellaneous functions. These actions need to be allowed by Photoshop in order for the buttons to work. If nothing happens when a button is clicked it means that Photoshop cannot perform the action. Example: A Gaussian Blur is not possible on an adjustment layer without a layer mask.

Stroke—Opens the Stroke dialog window. There are lots of rules in Photoshop as to when it's possible to use the stroke function. If this function doesn't work or you get an error message, it's possible that you've violated one of Photoshop's rules which make the stroke function unavailable. One of the safest things to do before using the stroke function is to make an active selection of the edge that you want to stroke.

Fill—Opens the Fill dialog window.

Blur—Opens the Gaussian blur dialog window.

Free Transform—Initiates free transform mode for the active document.

ACR—Opens the dialog for the Camera Raw filter. This filter only works when a pixel layer or a smart object layer is the active layer, or when the layer mask is the active element of an adjustment layer. If the button is clicked when another element is active, a pixel layer is automatically created at the top of the layer stack and the contents of the other layers are merged into the new layer (merge visible) so that the filter can be opened. If the ACR button is clicked on a smart object layer, the results become a smart filter for that smart object.

CAF—Opens the Content-Aware Fill dialog window normally activated using the menu Edit > Content-Aware Fill... Content-Aware Fill requires an active selection of the area to be filled. Use a selection tool, like Lasso or Marquee, to create that selection before clicking the CAF button.

Normally, Content-Aware Fill also requires that the active layer be a normal pixel layer. However, the module checks the current layer type and creates a new pixel layer if need be. So an active selection is the only requirement to use the CAF button since the action can automatically generate the normal pixel layer if the current active layer is a different type.

Red buttons are associated with selections, masks, and the Channels panel.

Select Subject—Activates Photoshop's Select > Subject command. The button on this module works in some situations where the Photoshop command does not work, like when a Type layer is the active layer. This button tries to use all layers when selecting the subject. However, there are still some cases where even the module's button doesn't work, like when a group layer is the active layer.

Select Sky—Activates Photoshop's Select > Sky command. The button on this module works in some situations where the Photoshop command does not work, like when a Type layer is the active layer. This button tries to use all layers when selecting the subject. However, there are still some cases where even the module's button doesn't work, like when a group layer is the active layer.

+/- (Deselect/Reselect)—This button toggles between Photoshop's Deselect and Reselect commands.



Save Selection—Opens the Save Selection dialog window so the active selection can be saved as a channel mask on the Channels panel.

Feather Selection—Opens the Feather Selection dialog window in order to feather the active selection.

Expand Selection—Opens the Expand Selection dialog window in order to expand the active selection.

Contract Selection—Opens the Contract Selection dialog window in order to contract the active selection

Inverse—Inverts the current selection.

+/- Selection Borders—A toggle button to turn the selection borders (marching ants) off and on.

S&M (Select & Mask)—This button opens Photoshop's "Select and Mask" dialog.

Clear channels (trashcan icon)—Removes non-color channel masks (alpha channels) from the Channels panel. This provides an easy way to clean the Channels panel before saving a document in order to decrease file size.

Web-Sharpen section

The Web-Sharpen section of the Combo/Cx modules is a way to prepare any full-size image for presentation in a web browser. It uses an algorithm that has its origin in this post by Alex Nail:

<http://www.alexnail.com/blog/tutorials/resize-and-sharpen-for-web/>. The module includes several modifications that appear to be beneficial for most images and that allow the user to further customize how their images are sharpened for the web.

On the main interface there are three buttons to access the module's web-sharpen features (red outline, image at right):

Web-Sharpening (triangle)—This button opens a new WEB-SHARPEN interface where several web-sharpening parameters can be entered. Once the web-sharpening parameters are established, CTRL/command+click this button to run web-sharpening based on the chosen parameters WITHOUT having to open the web-sharpening dialog again. See "The WEB-SHARPEN interface" section below.

Watermark (©)— This button opens a new WATERMARK interface to choose a logo watermark document to apply to an image along with several parameters for how it gets applied. Once the watermark parameters are established, CTRL/command+click this button to apply the watermark to the current active document based on the chosen parameters WITHOUT having to open the WATERMARK dialog again. See the "The WATERMARK interface" section below.

Save-- Once satisfied with the web-sharpened image, clicking this icon button opens Photoshop's (now legacy) Save for Web dialog window in order to save the image on the computer's hard drive.

CTRL/command+click on this button to open Photoshop's Export As... dialog.



NOTE: I personally prefer the Save for Web (Legacy) dialog window when saving web-sharpened images, but it is a "legacy" function within Photoshop, which means it may eventually be removed once Adobe feels the Export As dialog window is adequate for most users.

The WEB-SHARPEN interface

Clicking the Web-Sharpening button on the main interface opens a new interface for setting the web-sharpening parameters that the module uses for sharpening. Once these choices are made, clicking the Vertical, Horizontal, or Fit buttons at the bottom of the interface web-sharpens the image(s) according to these settings. The module remembers what the user enters for these web-sharpening values and they become the default. Then, the next time you want to run web-sharpening, you can simply CTRL/command+click on the Web-Sharpening button on the main interface. Even when Photoshop is closed and reopened, the saved web-sharpening values will still be used when CTRL/command+clicking on the Web-Sharpening button on the main interface.

NOTE #1: When performing web-sharpening, the module duplicates the current image first so that the original document is always unchanged.

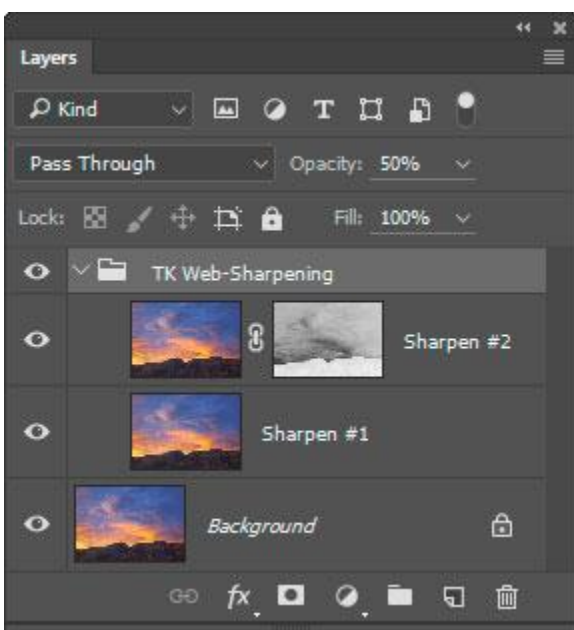
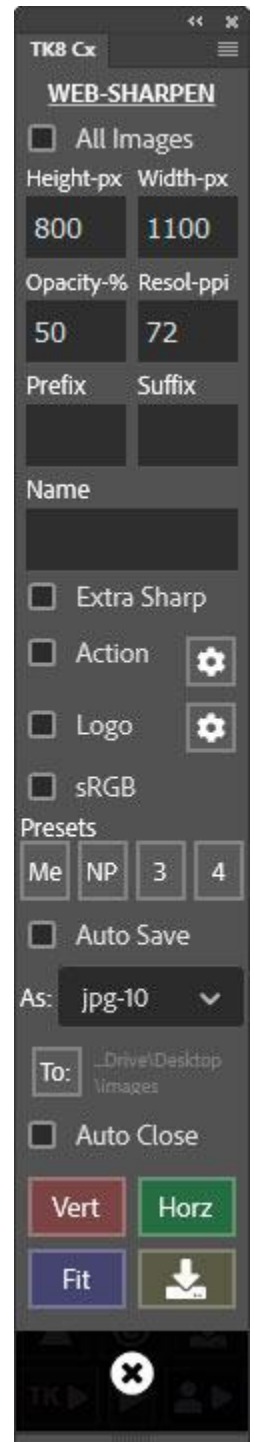
NOTE #2: While there are lots of options, the only ones that actually need to be filled in are Height, Width, and Opacity.

All Images—When this checkbox is checked, the web-sharpening action will be run on all open images in Photoshop.

Height—This input value, in pixels, is the final height of the web-sharpened image when the Vertical button is clicked or is the maximum height of the web-sharpened image when the Fit button is clicked.

Width—This input value, in pixels, is the final width of the web-sharpened image when the Horizontal button is clicked or is the maximum width of the web-sharpened image when the Fit button is clicked.

The Opacity parameter is the opacity, in percent (1 to 100), of the "TK Web-Sharpening" group that actually sharpens the image. A higher value causes the final web-sharpened image to be sharper. This value can vary depending on the image. An Opacity setting of 50% is a good starting point. Images with lots of detail or large output size can often handle a higher Opacity setting.



Images that are grainy or with soft, smooth features might benefit from a lower value. The user's workflow can also affect the Opacity setting. If significant sharpening has already been added during RAW file conversion, for example, then a lower Opacity setting might work better.

Resol.—This input value is the resolution desired for the web-sharpened image expressed in "pixels per inch."

Name—This input value allows giving the web-sharpened image a name. If the All Images checkbox is checked, each image will also receive a sequential number as part of the name in order to distinguish the different images on the basis of their names.

Prefix—This input value allows adding a prefix to the name of the web-sharpened image. A hyphen is automatically inserted between the prefix and the file name as part of the sharpening process.

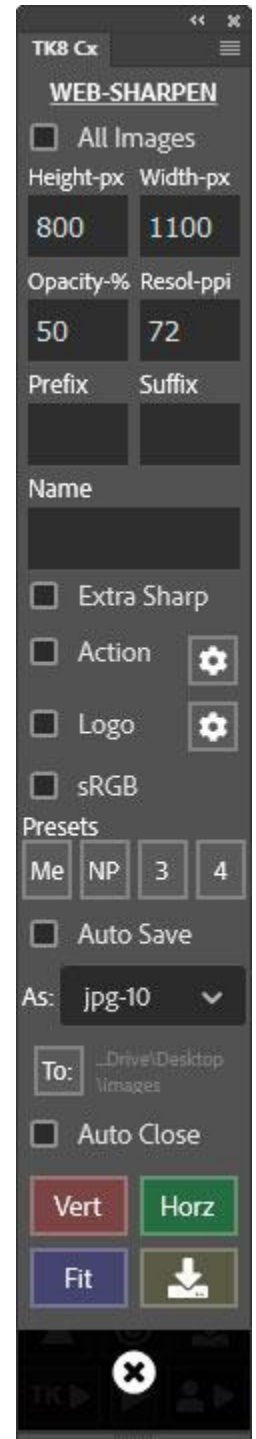
Suffix—This input value allows adding a suffix to the name of the web-sharpened image. A hyphen is automatically inserted between the file name and the suffix as part of the sharpening process.

Extra Sharp—This checkbox, when checked, disables the layer mask on the Sharpen #2 layer. This mask has the effect of confining sharpening to darker values in the image in order to prevent light halos from appearing in the sharpened image. For highly detailed images, though, these halos might not be a problem, and disabling the mask by checking Extra Sharp might look OK. However, disabling this mask can cause the web-sharpened image to look a bit crispy sometimes. The mask can be re-enabled with a Shift+click on this layer mask (or by using the red X button on the Combo or Cx modules) in the sharpened version.

Action—This checkbox, when checked, makes it possible to automatically play an action from Photoshop's Actions panel after the image has been sharpened and resized. The Gear button to the right of the Action checkbox opens an interface for selecting the action set and action to run. Once selected, the name of the action will appear below the Action checkbox. As an example, adding a watermark to the image is a common task that is convenient to run after web-sharpening an image. Sean Bagshaw demonstrates how to create a watermark in this YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GLKpfnW8Q4>.

sRGB—This checkbox, when checked, converts the web-sharpened image to the sRGB color profile as part of the action. The sRGB profile is often preferred for images posted on the internet.

Logo—This checkbox, when checked, applies your chosen watermark logo to the web-sharpened image. Use the Gear button to the right to set the parameters for the document that will be used as the watermark.



Presets—All web-sharpening settings, including watermark and file-saving options, can be saved as a preset using one of the Presets buttons. There are four buttons available for this, and each can save a separate group of parameters. To save a group of parameters as a preset, first set all the web-sharpening and watermark parameters the way you want. Then CTRL/command+click on one of the Presets buttons. A dialog opens confirming the current settings are saved as a preset. The dialog window also offers the opportunity to give the preset a name, which will then appear on the button. However, due to limited space, the name can only contain two characters in order to fit on the button. When you want to use the preset parameters again for web-sharpening, click the preset button to load them into the appropriate fields. *NOTE: To remove a preset entirely, right-click on the button of the preset you want to remove.*

Auto Save—When this checkbox is checked, the sharpened image is automatically saved using the parameters directly below that describe the file type and saving location.

As:—This drop-down menu provides a list of file types for saving. Choose whichever you prefer. The .jpg format with a quality of "10" is the default.

To:—his button opens a window for selecting a folder where the web-sharpened image is to be saved. The name of the folder will appear to the right of the To: button once it's selected.

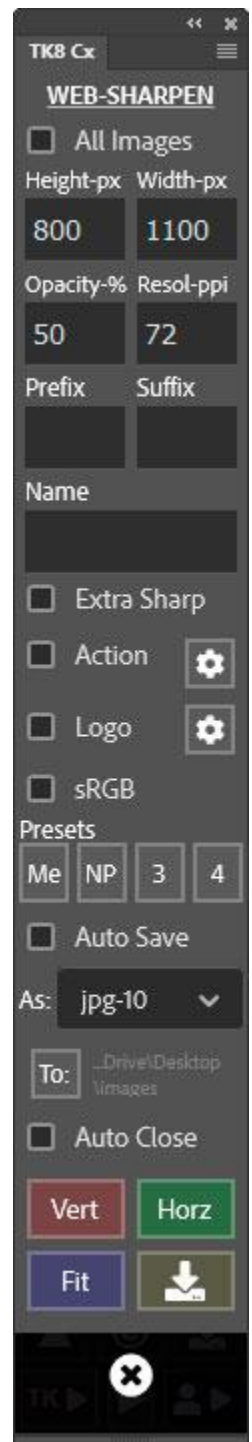
Auto Close—When this checkbox is checked, the web-sharpened image is automatically closed once it has been saved.

Vert—This button runs web-sharpening using the values of the various parameters in this WEB-SHARPEN dialog window. The value in the Height input field becomes the final vertical dimension of the web-sharpened image.

Horz— This button runs web-sharpening using the values of the various parameters in this WEB-SHARPEN dialog window. The value in the Width input field becomes the final horizontal dimension of the web-sharpened image.

Fit—This button downsizes and sharpens the full-size image according to the parameters in the WEB-SHARPEN dialog window so that it fits within a box created by the Height and Width input fields.

NOTE: The orientation (portrait or landscape) and aspect ratio of the image is NOT changed during the downsizing and sharpening process. Even with the Fit button, the ratio of the sides of the sharpened image is the same as original image.



Save Settings—This button saves the current settings for future sessions of Photoshop without having to run the web-sharpening action using the Vert, Horz, or Fit buttons .

After the web-sharpen action completes (and the Auto Save and Auto Close checkboxes have not been checked), the user can visit the Layers panel to further adjust the downsized and sharpened image. For example, it's possible to adjust layer opacity or add a layer mask to restrict the sharpening to specific areas of the image if desired. The Combo/Cx modules can also be used to add adjustment layers if there is need to adjust things like brightness, contrast, color, or saturation.

The WEB-SHARPENING interface closes once the process is complete. However, all the parameters, including the choice of Vertical, Horizontal, or Fit, have been saved and can be called by CTRL/command+clicking the Web-Sharpening (triangle) button on the main interface. There is no need to return to the Web-Sharpening Options interface unless the web-sharpening parameters need to be changed.

Once satisfied with the web-sharpened image, clicking the Save button on the main interface opens Photoshop's Export As dialog window in order to save the image on the computer's hard drive. The Save button also has a CTRL/command+click option that opens the Save for Web (Legacy) window instead.

NOTE: Web-sharpening is not intended for print output. Web-sharpening and print-sharpening are two very different processes. Web-sharpening, because it involves significant down-sizing of most images and display on a single medium (computer monitor), can be programmed as a series of steps that work for all images. Print-sharpening, on the other hand, may involve enlarging or down-sizing the image with output on a variety of different media each requiring a different sharpening algorithm and frequently color profile conversions as well. While everyone seems to have their own preferred print-sharpening method, my personal recommendation is Nik Sharpener Pro. It provides a nice variety of sharpening options, and, once the user finds what works for them on their preferred paper, the same settings can be used repeatedly with good results. Nik Sharpener Pro was free for a period of time, but is now available from DxO: <https://nikcollection.dxo.com>

The WATERMARK interface

Clicking the Watermark (©) button on the main interface or the "Logo" Gear button on the WEB-SHARPEN interface opens the WATERMARK interface. This interface allows for choosing a document that will serve as the watermark logo and for determining how the watermark is applied to the open document. There is an Apply button for testing the watermark's application in this interface to make adjustments while the WATERMARK



dialog is open. However, once the parameters are established, the watermark can be applied directly from the main interface by CTRL/command+clicking on the Watermark (©) button. It can also be applied automatically as part of the web-sharpening process by checking the Logo checkbox in the WEB-SHARPEN interface. The watermark parameters are saved by the plugin, so they do NOT need to be reset with each new Photoshop session.

Choose—This button opens a window to choose an image file to serve as the watermark logo. File types supported by Photoshop should be usable (.psd, .tif, .jpg, .png, etc.). Once selected, the file path appears in the box below the Choose button. *NOTE: The path to the chosen file and the file name itself should contain no special characters (+* / \ & ^ % \$ # @ !). Only letters and numbers can be used, though hyphen appears to be acceptable.*

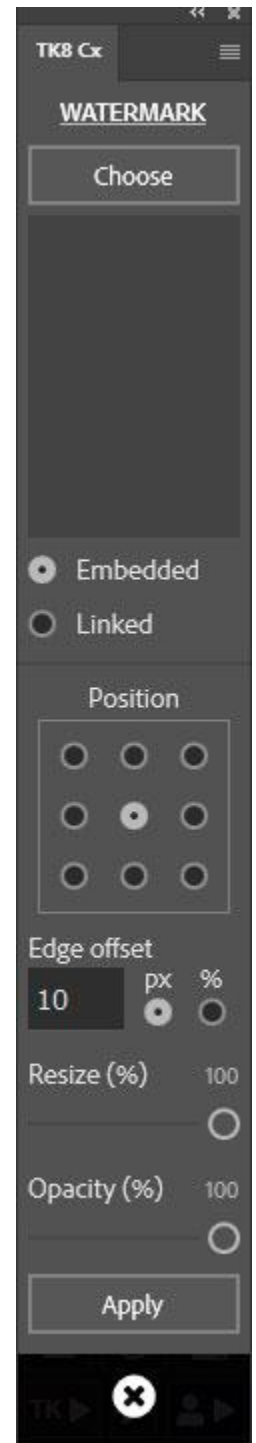
Embedded / Linked—The chosen logo image is applied as a smart object. These radio buttons allow choosing whether the smart object is embedded or linked. Linked smart objects directly reference the original logo file. Updating this original file will cause the watermark to be changed on all images where it has been linked. Embedded smart objects simply embed a copy of the logo file in the smart object. Changing the original file will NOT update an embedded smart object.

Position—The radio buttons here determine where the logo image gets applied on the active document.

Edge offset—This value, in percent, determines the distance between the watermark logo and the edge of the image. The Position choice above places the edge of the watermark on the chosen edge(s) of the image. It's usually visually more appealing, however, to have the logo moved away from the edge a bit, and the Edge offset allows this to occur. For the three "top" and three "bottom" positions, the offset amount is calculated as a percentage of the image's vertical dimension. For the "center-left" and "center-right" positions, the offset amount is calculated as a percentage of the image's horizontal dimension.

Resize—This slider allows downsizing the logo image to better fit on the image to which it's applied. Ideally, when the slider is set to 100%, the smart object, which contains the logo image, will be as wide as the image itself when it's placed in the document. To ensure that this happens, create a logo image that is at least as wide as the widest image to which it will be applied. If the image is smaller than the logo image, the placed smart object containing the logo image will be automatically downsized proportionally to fit within the image's dimensions.

Opacity—This slider sets the opacity of the smart object layer containing the logo image. It's often best to set it at less than 100% to make it appear as a watermark where some of the original image color and



texture still show through.

Apply—This button applies the chosen watermark logo image to the active document.

The TK▶ button

The TK▶ button opens a menu of actions useful in working with or enhancing images. It usually will not need to be accessed as frequently as some of the other buttons on the Combo/Cx modules, but in the right situation, the actions accessed here can create some nice effects in the image or can speed up processing. It is divided into three submenus—Actions, Color, and Blend. The individual menu items are discussed below.

This is a smart menu. It closes automatically after running the action that was clicked. However, if you prefer to manually close it in order to keep using the different actions in the menu, uncheck the Auto-close TK▶ checkbox in the module's preferences.

Color-tagging is an option for all items listed. To access it, just right-click on any menu item and then choose a color from the pop-up list of choices. The background color for the menu item turns that color. Color-tagging lets you organize this list by color-coding actions that you use most frequently.

The TK▶ button—ACTIONS menu

Vignette—This action creates an oval/circular vignette for the image. The action stops to allow the user to choose the blur radius for the vignette to facilitate the best blending of the vignette into the image. The module makes a best guess as to a blur radius that might work for the image as a starting point, but you're free to increase or decrease it. The resulting vignette will likely be a bit stronger than what is desired. Lowering the Vignette layer opacity or painting black on the white part of the mask will dial back the vignette to what works best for the image.

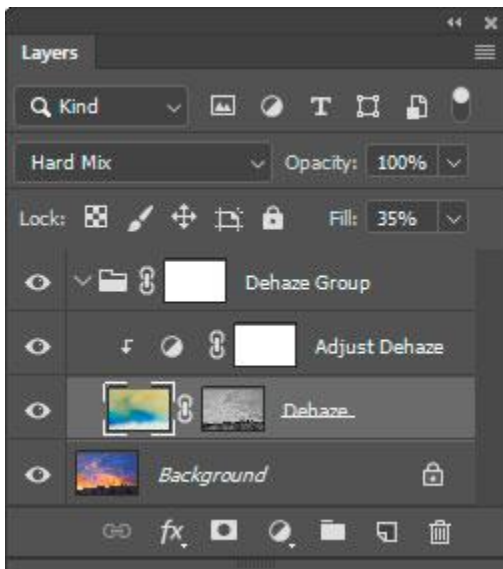
Freehand Vignette— In order to use this action, first make a freehand selection with the Lasso tool around those parts of the image where the vignette is desired. Then clicking this menu item creates a vignette using the selection as a guide. The action stops at Gaussian Blur so the blur radius of the vignette can be adjusted to what works best for the image. The module makes a guess at an appropriate amount of blur for the vignette based on the size of the image, but this can be adjusted in the



final step. After the action is finished, use the layer's opacity setting to strengthen or dial back the effect.

Spotlight—This action is a way to add a lightening effect to parts of the image, usually to help move the viewer's eye to that location. It works by the user again using the Lasso tool to create a selection that will be spotlighted. Then, clicking the Spotlight menu item runs an action to subtly lighten that part of the image. The action stops at the Gaussian Blur so the spotlight can be adjusted to best blend into the image. (The starting blur value is the module's best guess at what might work.) Once the action finishes, use the layer's opacity setting to adjust the brightness of the spotlight.

Dehaze—I was introduced to this action by [Sean Bagshaw](#). It creates an effect similar to the "Dehaze" slider in Lightroom/Adobe Camera Raw when it's pulled to the right. Clarity and contrast are added to a wide range of midtone values so that it effectively removes the sense of atmospheric haze in nature photographs. However, compared to the "Dehaze" slider in Lightroom/Adobe Camera Raw, this Dehaze action causes less of a color shift to warmer colors. It's also worth trying this action on non-nature images since the effect is quite pleasing sometimes. After the action finishes running, there is a new "Dehaze Group" group on the Layers panel that contains the results. There are several ways the effect can be modulated:



1) The "Fill" slider for the "Dehaze" layer in the group can be used to increase or decrease the effect.

2) There is an "Adjust Dehaze" layer that is a clipped Brightness/Contrast layer with a preset adjustment added as part of the action. The Properties panel for this layer can be used to adjust the brightness of the effect. (The Contrast slider has little effect).

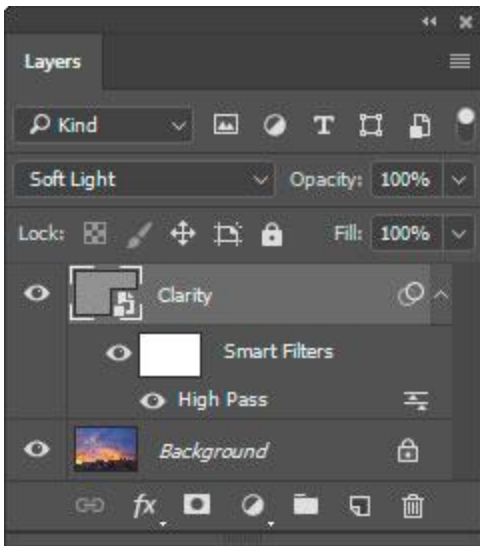
3) The layer mask on the "Dehaze Group" layer can also be painted with a black brush to mask the effect out of various parts of the image if that's needed.

4) The layer mask created for the "Dehaze" layer as part of the action is somewhat important to getting the best results. You can try replacing it if you'd like, however, it's hard

to return to the original mask if you do, and you might just want to delete the entire group and start over if alternative masks aren't working.

The dehaze effect is modulated by the action to look good on any size image. Usually you can just click the [Dehaze](#) menu item and then adjust the results with the "Fill" slider on the "Dehaze" layer as needed.

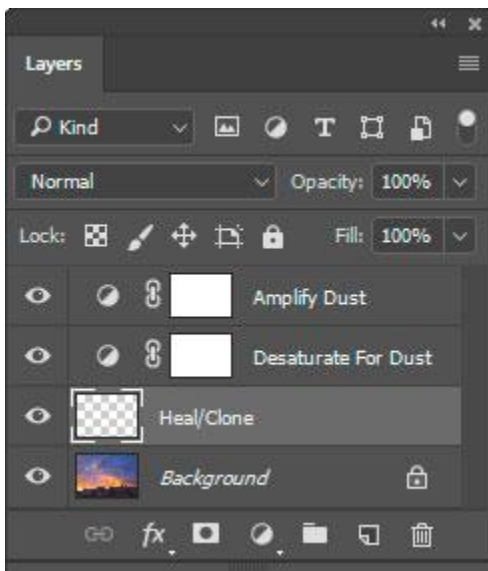




Clarity—This option uses Photoshop's High Pass filter and a smart object to increase edge contrast in the image. However, it does so in a way that does not change color saturation. The Clarity action stops to allow the user to select a radius value. Choose a lower radius value (5 to 15 pixels) if the effect is going to target lighter tones in the image or to enhance fine detail. Choose a higher radius value (30 to 60 pixels) if the effect is going to be constrained to darker tones or for a more artistic effect. As always, some experimentation is useful in deciding how much clarity to add. It is often helpful to constrain clarity to specific tonal ranges in the image—Lights, Midtones, or Darks. The Layer Mask Mode of the Multi-Mask module makes it easy to experiment with different masks as layer masks on

the Clarity layer. In addition, since added clarity was accomplished using a smart object, it's possible to adjust the final result by double-clicking "High Pass" under the "Smart Filters." This will reopen the "High Pass" dialog where a new radius can be chosen.

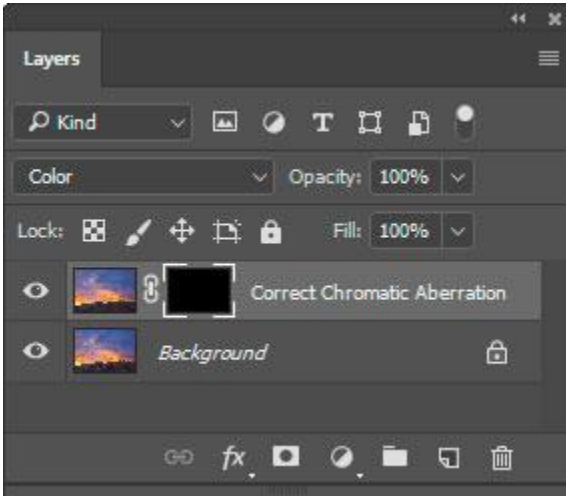
Clean Dust—This menu item helps find sensor dust. It is actually a toggle that does two different things. Clicking the menu item the first time creates several layers at the top of the Layers panel. The image is changed to black and white via the "Desaturate For Dust" layer. This monochrome view has its contrast enhanced via the "Amplify Dust" Levels



adjustment layer above it to better show dust spots. Below these two layers is a blank pixel layer called "Heal/Clone" where the actual dust removal occurs. The image is zoomed to 100% magnification to better see the dust spots and the Spot Healing Brush is activated. It's only necessary to click on the sensor dust spots on the image to remove them. (NOTE: Make sure that "Sample All Layers" is checked in the Spot Healing Brush's options.) Each image is different and it may be necessary to adjust the sliders in the Properties panel of the "Amplify Dust" layer to better see sensor dust. Once the dust has been removed, click the Clean Dust menu option again to remove the "Amplify Dust" and "Desaturate For Dust" layers since they are no longer needed. The image will return to a

size where it fits on the screen. This will also close the TK▶ button menu. The "Heal/Clone" layer can also be used for cloning instead of healing. To do this, just change the tool to the Clone Stamp and make sure the tool's "Samples:" option is set to "Current & Below."





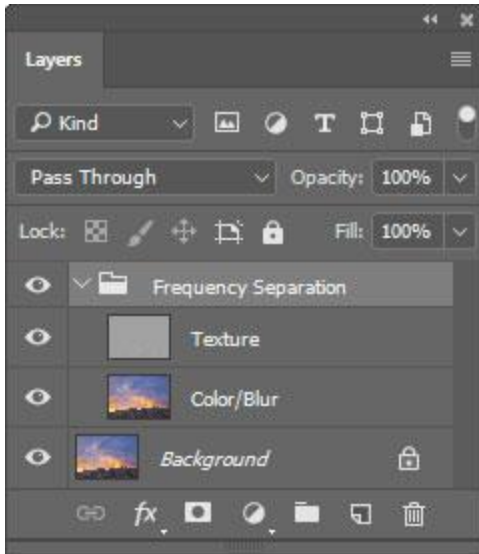
Correct CA—Chromatic aberration (CA) is most often seen along high contrast edges in the image and is usually best removed by the RAW convertor initially. Light Room and Adobe Camera RAW generally do a good job of eliminating it. The Correct CA option could be useful in situations where obvious chromatic aberration remains despite attempts to optimize its removal during conversion of the RAW file. The Correct CA option works simply by creating a Gaussian Blur that blurs away the unwanted colored edges. The action creates a new layer in Color blend mode and stops so the user

can zoom in and choose the optimum pixel radius to create a CA-removing blur. The blur necessary to remove chromatic aberration almost always produces undesirable color changes in the rest of the image. So the action finishes by creating a black (Hide All) mask on the new layer and selecting the Paintbrush tool set to white. When the action is finished, the user zooms in to the areas with chromatic aberration and paints white on the mask to selectively reveal the blurred layer without the chromatic aberration.

RGB ⇌ Lab—This is another action suggested by [Sean Bagshaw](#). It allows edits in Lab Color mode to be incorporated into an image being processed in RGB Color mode. Clicking this menu item creates a smart object of the current state of the RGB image, opens the smart object as a new document in Photoshop, and converts the document to Lab Color mode. From here, the user can make edits in Lab Color Mode. Some photographers prefer using Lab Color mode for certain color adjustments or print sharpening. Once these edits are complete, click the RGB ⇌ Lab button again to save the image back to the original document and close the smart object image. If it's necessary to revisit the Lab edits, simply double-click the smart object's thumbnail image to reopen the Lab document. It will again open as a second document with any of the adjustment layers previously added still intact.

Frequency Separation—This is an interesting option most often associated with portrait photography to even out skin tone and texture. But it can also produce useful and artistic effects with landscape and other types of photography. This video shows how it's created and used with portraits: <https://phlearn.com/amazing-power-frequency-separation-retouching-photoshop>





The Frequency Separation menu item in the Combo/Cx modules creates a "Frequency Separation" group on the Layers panel containing two layers. The bottom layer, called "Color/Blur," contains a Gaussian blurred version of the image. The action stops to allow the user to enter a blur radius when this layer is created. Choose a radius that blurs away some distracting tonal difference in the image, such as a too-bright highlight, color transition, or even a distracting element. After clicking OK in the Gaussian Blur dialog, the action continues and updates the "Texture" layer so that it perfectly counteracts the blur, resulting in no noticeable change to the image when the action finishes. But this is where the fun begins. Frequency

separation effectively separates color and texture so they can be managed independently. Gaussian Blur and the Clone Stamp tool are the most common methods for doing this. Below are a few suggestions, but there are no doubt many more practical and artistic applications for Frequency Separation.

- 1) To create more even color transitions, make the "Color/Blur" layer active and using the Lasso tool with a generous feathering radius to select areas with uneven color. Then Gaussian Blur these areas to create the degree of color evenness desired. The "Texture" layer above maintains texture in these areas; only the image's color changes.
- 2) Use the same technique, but use the Lasso to draw around areas of the image where a bit of Orton-like glow would look good. Again, Gaussian Blur the selected area, being sure to select the same blur radius that was used when the Frequency Separation group was created. This creates a subtle color-glow in the selected area with the original texture being maintained.
- 3) To make a more dramatic color change, use the Clone Stamp tool. On the "Color/Blur" layer, ALT+click (Mac: option+click) on the area whose color is to be sampled. Then use the Clone Stamp tool to paint this color on the area where the color change is desired. The color changes to the sampled color (and can be aligned to the sampled area via the options bar), but the texture remains the same because it's controlled by the "Texture" layer. Using the Clone Stamp tool at lower opacity allows the color change to be built up gradually using multiple mouse clicks (or click-and-drags). This technique can be used to help manage lens flare.
- 4) To change the texture of an area, use the Clone Stamp tool on the "Texture" layer with the "Sample:" option set to "Current Layer." This is a particularly effective technique if the blur radius selected when creating the Frequency



Separation group is sufficiently large to blur away a particularly distracting element in the image. Then, cloning in new texture similar to the texture surrounding that item on the "Texture" layer effectively eliminates the element from the image. The blurred color from the "Color/Blur" layer comes through, and the texture, if sampled correctly from an adjacent area, matches that of the surrounding texture.

Fill Transparent—This is a one-click action that uses content-aware fill to fill transparent parts of the image that can sometimes result when focus blending or using warp transform. A new pixel layer is created to contain the "filled" content.

Lights TP/Darks TP—The Triple Play (TP) is a technique that uses luminosity masks on adjustment layers to simultaneously affect brightness, contrast, and detail in an image. It uses multiple layers, and the user controls the effect by choosing which layers to make visible. The Triple Play was originally released in 2011 in Version 1 of the TKActions panel. It survived in the panel through Version 3 as a series of 36 buttons so that the different variables (Lights/Darks, Curves/Levels, and pixel blur) could be controlled by the user. The Version 4 panel did not include the Triple Play technique. I was personally using it less as I learned new ways to use luminosity masks. Additionally, coding those 36 buttons into the V4 panel would have been a Herculean task. However, the absence of the TP in the V4 panel prompted emails of dismay from several users who had developed their own way of using this technique in their workflow. I said I would try to bring it back and am glad to say it's present again starting in the V6 panel. It's been reduced to just two menu options, Lights TP and Darks TP. The user is prompted for their preferred blur radius at the start, and then the masked layers are generated as Curves adjustment layers. There is a 39-page PDF that fully explains how to use the Triple Play. To access this tutorial, click the Free Tutorials link in the preferences for the panel. This opens a browser window where you can download this PDF tutorial plus several others.

The TK► button—COLOR menu

The options in this sub-menu are a collection of actions that can alter, enhance, and correct image color.

Add Color—This action is a technique I learned from a [Ryan Dyar](#) video. Ryan's method was essentially to burn and dodge with color instead of just using black and white paint. The TK7 panel improves on this by using a Solid Color adjustment layer instead. The way it works is to first click the Add Color menu item. It creates the Solid Color adjustment layer and sets the blend mode to Soft Light. When the Color Picker opens, choose a color that you want to add to the image, maybe only in certain parts. The preview will show the color across the entire image at full strength, but you'll be able to actually paint it in as you like



later. The preview just lets you pick a good starting color. After the color is chosen, the adjustment layer's layer mask is inverted so that it becomes a Hide All layer mask. The action finishes by choosing a white brush at 20% opacity. At this point, simply adjust brush size and start painting on the image. White paint will be slowly applied to the layer mask revealing the adjustment layer's underlying color in just those parts of the image where you paint. Use multiple brush strokes to gradually build up the effect in a realistic manner. After the color starts to show in the image, it's also possible to fine-tune it by double-clicking the layer icon and choosing a different color when the Color Picker opens. It's also possible to clip additional adjustment layers to this layer to further refine the painted area, like making it darker or lighter with a Curves or Levels adjustment.

Paint Contrast—This is a technique I learned from Bruce Bartholomew. The action creates a layer where you can paint in contrast and color at the same time. Paint with 50% gray to add contrast to all tones. Paint with black to primarily darken shadows. Paint with white to primarily brighten highlights. Or paint with varying shades of gray to affect varying zones of the image. Adding color to the paint adds that color to the image in addition to the contrast changes. The intensity of the painting's effect can be enhanced by increasing the Fill amount on the Layers panel. It defaults to 15% when the action runs, but can be increased slowly to enhance the effect. Fill amounts of up to 30% can still look OK depending on the image and the amount of paint that has been applied to the layer. Likewise, lowering the Fill amount can be used to decrease the effect.

Soft Pop—This is another technique originally created by Bruce Bartholomew. It's a one-click method to subtly boost contrast, saturation, and sharpness throughout the image. It works fine on many images but the Opacity of the final layer can be lowered if it's too strong. Additionally, the Fill amount on the Layers panel can be increased or decreased to modify the effect. *NOTE: Layer Mask mode, found in the Multi-Mask module, can also be used to see the result of using different luminosity layer masks to guide the effect to different tonal ranges in the image.*

Orton Effect—The Orton Effect was originally an in-camera technique developed by Michael Orton using transparency film to make photographs look more like paintings. You can read more about it on [Michael Orton's website](#). Photoshop makes it easy to create a similar effect during post-processing, and the Orton Effect option offers a starting point. It creates a degree of blur and color intensification for the image that provides a nice glow in many situations. The action stops at the blur step so the user can enter a Gaussian Blur radius that best suits their image. Photoshop-produced Orton Effects are generally too strong unless starting with a dull

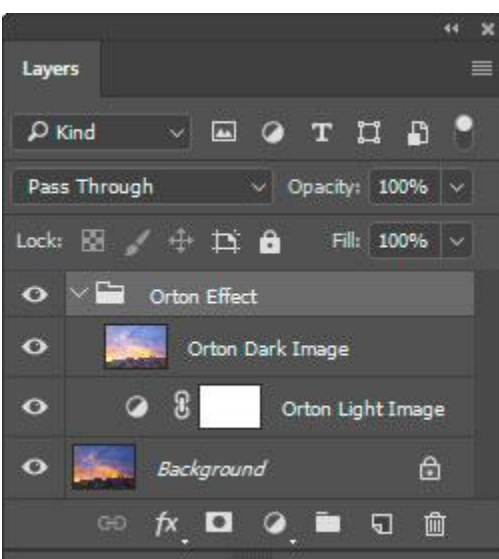
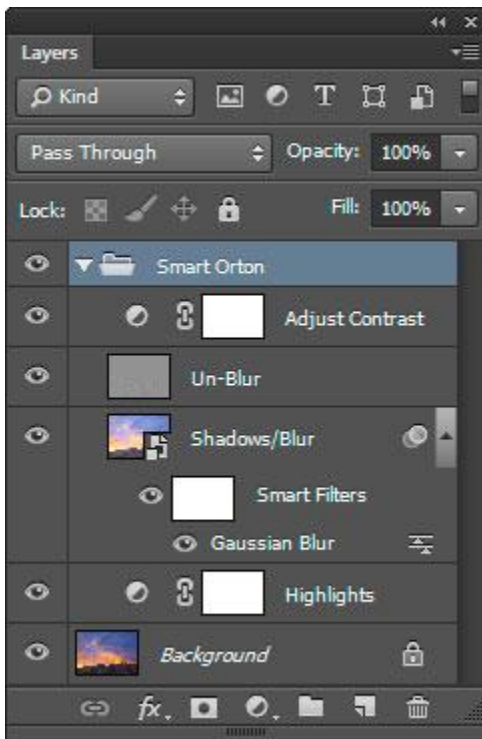


image. So, lowering the Orton Effect group opacity can help moderate the effect produced by the action. However, a better alternative is to add a Lights or Midtones luminosity mask to the Orton Effect group layer. The Orton Effect can over-saturate dark colors sometimes, so targeting the effect to lighter tones or midtones is often beneficial. Layer Mask Mode in the Multi-Mask module makes it easy to try different luminosity masks on this final group layer to see what works best. By using a luminosity mask, layer opacity needs to be adjusted less and the tone-targeted effect will have greater impact.



Smart Orton—This action attempts to give photographers more control over the different aspects of the Orton Effect. It's loosely based on a soft glow technique that [Sean Bagshaw](#) shared with me. Shadow darkening, highlight lightening, blur radius, un-blurring, and contrast can all be addressed in the layers created in the Smart Orton group that this action creates.

Shadows and Highlights can be adjusted by changing the opacity of the correspondingly named layers. Gaussian Blur can be changed by double-clicking "Gaussian Blur" in the "Smart Filters" of the "Shadows/Blur" layer.

The "Un-Blur" layer offers a unique method to moderate or completely remove the spatial pixel blur introduced as part of creating the Orton Effect while leaving the color blur intact. The image's original sharpness and contrast are maintained even as the Orton Effect's color-enhancement-via-blur is added. Setting this

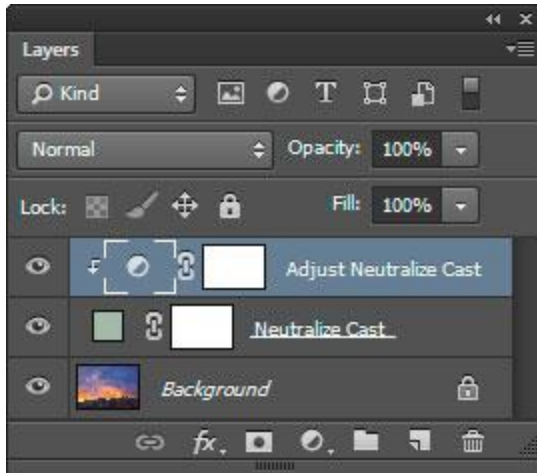
layer's opacity to 0% provides the standard Orton Effect. As the layer's opacity is increased, the blurriness of the Orton Effect is decreased but the color blur is still visible. Opacity of 40% is the default setting for this layer. At this setting the image generally still has some Orton Effect spatial blur and plenty of color blur. But every image is different, so it's worth experimenting with the "Un-Blur" layer's opacity to see what works best. The "Adjust Contrast" layer is simply a Curves adjustment layer to allow a contrast adjustment as part of this action.

As with many of the actions in these menus, adding a luminosity mask to the "Smart Orton" group layer is a good way to confine the effect to specific tones, and Layer Mask mode in the Multi-Mask module is an easy way to quickly try different masks to see what works.

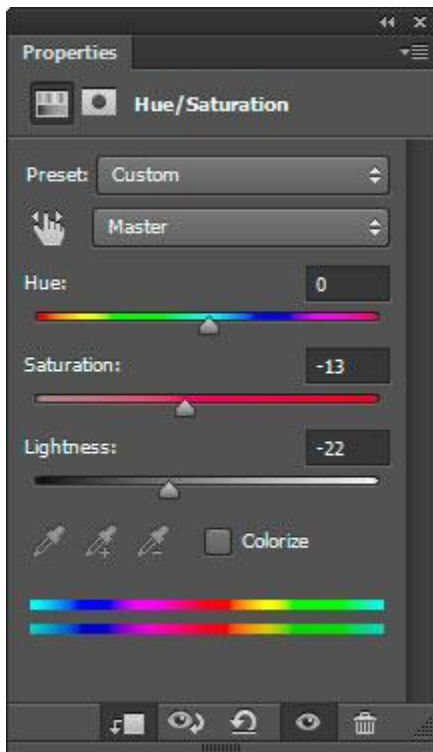
Color Lum—This is an action for adjusting brightness of different colors and is based on a tip in this YouTube video by Jesús Ramirez: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyPMM3HFSzq>. Clicking this option creates a Black and White adjustment layer set to Luminosity blend mode. When



the action completes, the Properties panel is opened so the user can move the sliders to adjust the brightness of the various color ranges lighter or darker. The color sliders in the layer's Properties are initially set so that there is no change to the image. To make it even easier to adjust color brightness, use the targeted-adjustment tool. It can be used to click and drag on the image itself to change the brightness of the chosen colors. While a Black and White adjustment layer is used for this action, the image is NOT converted to black and white. The Luminosity blend mode makes it so that only color luminosity is affected.



Neutralize Cast 1—This menu option uses the "Neutralize" option in Photoshop's Image > Adjustments > Match Color menu command to create a best guess at the correct color balance for the image. Since this is a one-click action, the results won't automatically be good or even expected. Often, however, there is something useful in the outcome, so lowering layer opacity or applying a luminosity mask using Layer Mask Mode in the Multi-Mask module can provide a degree of control as to how this action ultimately affects the image.

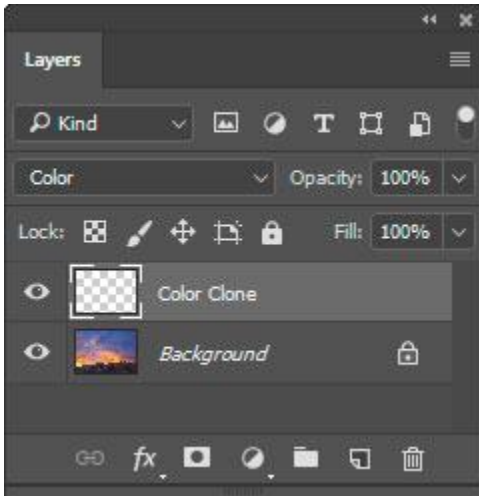


Neutralize Cast 2—This action provides another method to counterbalance a color cast in the image with more control than the previous option. It's a variation on a technique described by [Blake Rudis](#). Neutralize Cast 2 creates a Solid Color adjustment layer whose color is a negative of the Blur Average for all pixels in the image. It is set to Soft Light blend mode and provides a neutralization effect of the image's "average" color. Beyond that, though, a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer is clipped to the Solid Color layer. This allows additional control over the neutralizing color. The Saturation and Lightness sliders are particularly useful. The Saturation slider increases or decreases the strength of the neutralizing color depending on the direction it is moved. The Lightness slider increases or decreases the brightness of the neutralizing color. These two adjustments allow such fine control of the images color cast that it's worth experimenting with this action at least once on most images since it can help impart a very natural look when done right. In addition, a luminosity mask can be added to the

Solid Color adjustment layer, or the layer mask can be painted appropriately, to confine the effect to specific parts of the image.



Make-It-Glow—This action imparts a glowing quality to the image. It is like a mild Orton Effect except that only the color is blurred; the underlying texture is not. It is described in the Make-It-Glow tutorial included in the tutorials that can be downloaded by clicking the "Free Tutorials" link in the module's preferences. The action stops to allow the user to input a pixel radius for the Gaussian Blur step. A good starting point is the megapixel count of the image's original capture, i.e. a 24-pixel radius Gaussian Blur for an image from a camera with a 24-megapixel sensor. The module attempts to calculate this blur radius based on the image's dimensions..



Color Clone—This action creates a pixel layer set to "Color" blending mode. It is used for changing color in the image while maintaining the underlying texture. This is described in detail in the Cloning Color, Retaining Texture tutorial. The basic technique is to first make the necessary layer by clicking the Color Clone menu item. Then select an appropriately sized and feathered brush to match the area to be painted. Next, Alt+click (Mac: option+click) on a color to paint with from another part of the image. This selects the desired color that will be cloned into the mis-colored area.

Painting the new color on the "Color Clone" layer changes the area's color, but not the underlying texture. It's usually best to start with a low-opacity brush and slowly build up the effect using multiple brush strokes and multiple color samples.

NOTE: Painting on the Color Clone layer only affects hue and saturation. Sometimes it's necessary to also adjust the brightness of the area that was painted. To do this, CTRL+click (Windows) or command+click (Mac) on the actual Color Clone pixel layer. This loads the painted areas as an active selection. Now simply add a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer, which turns the selection into a mask for that layer. The mask allows making a brightness adjustment that perfectly targets the areas that were painted on the Color Clone layer.

The TK► button—BLEND menu

Stack—This action stacks all images open in Photoshop into one document with each image becoming a layer in the document. The layers are given names that match the name of the original image. The original images are closed as part of the stacking process. The Stack action is useful for images that will be composited from multiple exposures. Exposure-blending and focus-blending are examples of situations where the Stack action might be useful if there are separate images open in Photoshop that need to be stacked into one document.



Align—This action executes Photoshop's Edit > Auto-Align Layers... menu command. It is intended to be used after the Stack action to insure that the image layers stacked in the Layers panel are properly aligned with each other in case the camera shifted between exposures or if resizing occurred as a result of focus shift. *NOTE: This action does NOT work on smart object layers since Photoshop's Auto-Align Layer... command only aligns non-smart object layers.*

Focus Blend—This action executes Photoshop's Edit > Auto-Blend Layers... menu command with the "Stack Images" and "Seamless Tones and Colors" options turned on. This action is the final step in what is frequently referred to as "focus stacking." It should be use AFTER the Stack and Align actions. *NOTE: Again, this action does NOT work on smart object layers since Photoshop's Auto-Blend Layer... command only works on non-smart object layers.*

Align + Focus—Since they're frequently done one after the other, this action combines the Align and Focus Blend actions into one action. So if you plan to do both, this would be the best choice as it will complete all steps in one click.

NOTE: Focus Blend and Align + Focus both create a composite of the focus-blended image at the top of the layer stack when the focus blend action finishes running. In addition, the layer masks Photoshop produced to create the focus-blended image on the layers below the composite are removed. So if there are areas of the blended image that need to be touched up, 1) choose the appropriate layer, 2) drag it above the composite layer, 3) give it a black mask, and then 4) paint white on the mask to reveal the parts of that layer needed to touch up the blended image.

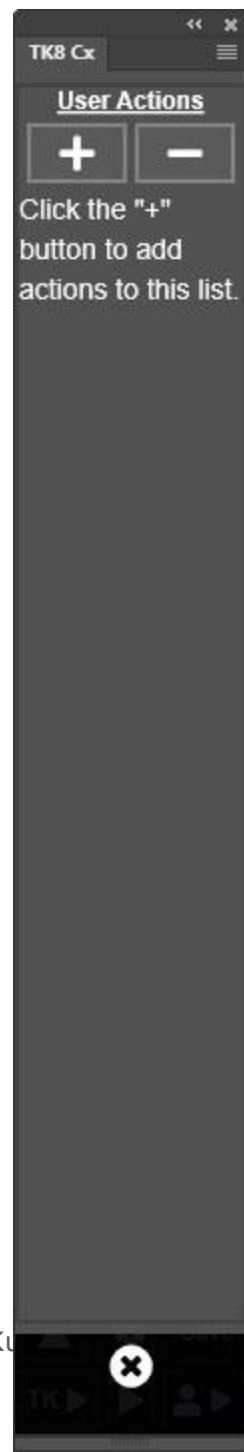
Fill Edges—When this checkbox is checked, Photoshop uses content-aware fill to attempt to fill the transparent edges that frequently occur when focus-blending an image.

The User ► button

The User ► button opens a menu that provides access to your personal actions or any actions located on Photoshop's regular Actions panel.

The Plus (+) button can be used to add actions to this list and the Minus (-) button can be used to subtract actions from the list. In the case of adding actions to the list, you will be prompted to select an action set first and then an action from that action set.

The number of actions that can be added is unlimited. The list will include a scroll bar on the right side if there are more actions in the list that can fit within the module's vertical boundaries.



The actions in this list of user actions can be color-coded. Simply right-click on an action name and choose a color from the pop-up window to associate with this action.

This menu of user actions closes automatically after an action finishes running. If you prefer to manually close it in order to keep using the different actions in the menu, uncheck the Auto-close User▶ checkbox in the module's preferences.

NOTE: Only letters and numbers should be used for naming actions that are included in the list of user actions. Special characters, like &, >, and <, are not accepted and will cause an error when trying to play the action from the plugin.

Instant Action (▶) button

Between the TK▶ and User▶ buttons on the main interface, there is a single right-pointing arrow button (▶). This is the Instant Action button that can be programmed to run one frequently-used action without having to open the User▶ menu. To program it, simply CTRL/command+click on the ▶ button and follow the menus to select an action set and then the action that will serve as instant action. Then, whenever the button is clicked, this action will run.

NOTE: Only letters and numbers should be used for naming actions that serve as the instant action. Special characters, like &, >, and <, are not accepted and will cause an error when trying to play the action from the plugin.

User-programmable buttons

Fifteen (15) buttons on the Combo and Cx modules can be reprogrammed by the user to play actions from Photoshop's regular Actions panel. The buttons that have regular type on them, instead of an icon or symbol, are the ones that can be reprogrammed (red outlines, image at right).

To reprogram one of these buttons, CTRL/command+click on it. This opens a menu to choose an action set from Photoshop's regular Actions panel. Choosing an action set then opens a list of actions in that action set. Choosing one of these actions then associates that action with button AND gives the button the same name as the action. Clicking the button then plays that action.

To return to the default function for that button, CTRL/command+click on it and then click the "RESET" button in the menu that opens.

NOTE #1: It's best to give the actions that will be associated with the module's buttons short names in Photoshop's regular Actions panel before



associating them with a module button. For some of the smaller buttons, two or three characters are all that will fit on the button. Another option for the small buttons is to give the action a two-word name where both words do not exceed three letters, "My act" for example. On the smaller buttons, this name will be split into two lines, breaking at the space between the words.

NOTE #2: Only letters and numbers should be used for naming actions that are associated with the module's buttons. Special characters, like &, >, and <, are not accepted and will cause an error when trying to play the action from the plugin.

NOTE #3: If you change the name of an action on Photoshop's Actions panel after assigning it to one of the module's buttons, you will have to CTRL/command+click on the button again and associate the new action name with that button.



Right-click color-tagging

All buttons on the Combo and Cx modules can now be made more prominent by right-clicking on them. Doing so adds more saturation to the buttons color, like with some of the button in the image at the left. Color-tagging can be useful for highlighting buttons that are frequently used or those that have been reprogrammed with the user's personal actions. To undo color tagging for a button, right-click the button again.

Color-tagging is also an option in the TK▶ button and User▶ button menus. Simply right-click any menu item and choose a new background color for that item. Color-tagging can make it easier to find your favorite actions when you open these menus. The image at the right show the color-tagging option being used to give the Clean Dust action a red highlight.



Combo/Cx module preferences

Clicking the **TK** button at the top of the module opens the Preferences interface. Here there are several options for customizing the module.

Button Color slider—This slider changes the intensity of the color associated with the buttons on the module.

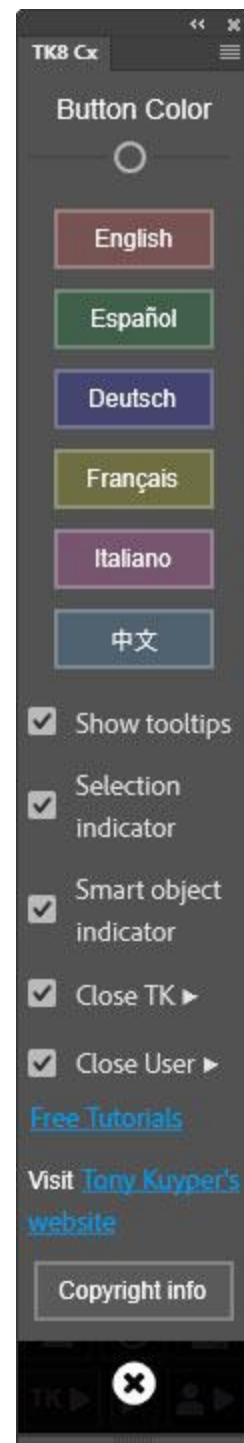
Language buttons—Choose a language. For languages other than English, button names, tooltips, and error messages change to the chosen language. A few things, like layer names for special layers generated by the module, do not change.

Show tooltips—When checked, this option turns on tooltips for the different buttons and menu items. Tooltips display at either the top or the bottom of the module. When unchecked, tooltips are still available by holding down the "ALT" key on Windows or the "option" key on Mac and rolling the mouse over a button.

Selection indicator—When checked, the active selection indicator displays around the module's perimeter whenever there is an active selection even if the selection is not sufficient to trigger the presence of selection edges (marching ants) or if the selection edges have been intentionally hidden.

Smart object indicator—When checked, the smart object indicator displays as a colored border around the **Smart Object** button to help indicate the type of smart object. Blue = a smart object with an embedded RAW file not linked with another RAW file smart object on the Layers panel. Orange = a RAW file smart object that IS linked with another RAW file smart object on the Layers panel. Red = A smart object that does not contain an embedded RAW file.

Auto-close TK ►—When checked, the **TK►** menu automatically closes when the selected action finishes running. This is usually desirable in order to return to the module's main interface. However, if you use these TK actions a lot, unchecking this checkbox keeps this menu open until it is manually closed using the **X** button at the bottom of the menu. Also, by unchecking this button on either the Combo or Cx module, that module could serve as an "Actions-only" panel in the workspace where the TK Actions menu remains continuously open. The other module (Combo or Cx) would display the main interface where all the Photoshop control buttons are located. This arrangement of using Combo and Cx to display different interfaces allows continuous access to both the main interface and the TK Actions interface.



Auto-close User▶—When checked, the User▶ menu automatically closes when the selected action finishes running. This is usually desirable in order to return to the module's main interface. However, if you use these User actions a lot, unchecking this checkbox keeps this menu open until it is manually closed using the X button at the bottom of the menu.

Free Tutorials—This link opens a website in the computer's default browser where a collection of free PDF tutorials can be downloaded.

Visit Tony Kuyper's website—This link opens the front page of Tony Kuyper's website.

Copyright info—This button opens a window in Photoshop that reviews copyright and end-user license agreement information.

NOTE: CTRL/command+clicking on the TK button reloads the panel. This is rarely necessary, but can be used to reset the panel if it appears to not be functioning properly.

MULTI-MASK MODULE

Making and using pixel-value masks has four main steps:

1. Choose a data **SOURCE** for making the mask.
2. Choose a **MASK** based on that data source.
3. **MODIFY** the mask so it better matches what needs to be selected from the image.
4. **OUTPUT** the mask so it can be used to alter or adjust the image.

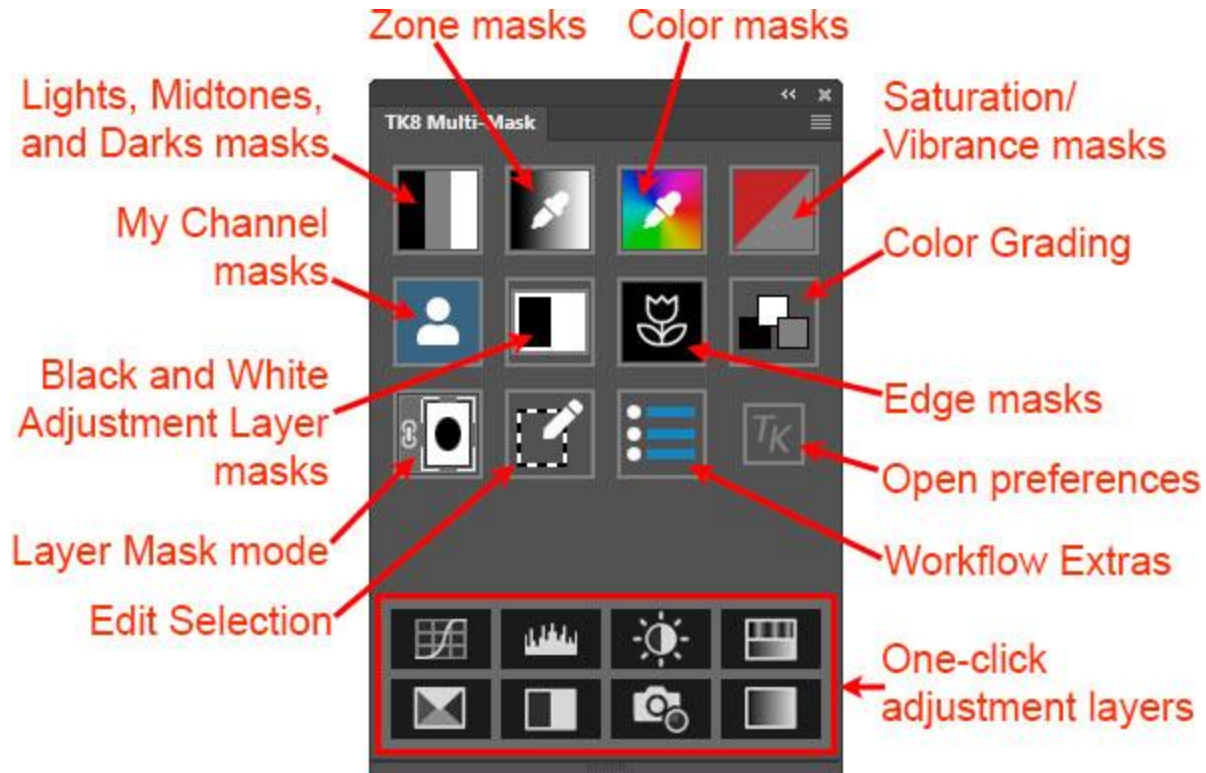
These four steps (SOURCE, MASK, MODIFY, and OUTPUT) all have specific sections in the Multi-Mask module. While it takes a little practice to get used to using these masks initially, the module provides visual clues to guide you through the process. The user interface updates to constantly show you what options are available. Just keep in mind that the workflow for making and using the module's masks generally matches the steps listed above. Working methodically through these steps, especially at first, will help you to quickly get comfortable with how to use pixel-value masks and how the Multi-Mask module can help you quickly generate them.

NOTE #1: The Multi-Mask module only works for images in RGB Color mode (8-bits and 16-bits per channel).

NOTE #2: The Multi-Mask module is NOT designed to work with other "TK" panels you might be using. The layers and channels created by the Multi-Mask module are meant to only be used with the Multi-Mask module.

1. SOURCE

The illustration below lists the function of all the buttons on the main interface. A brief description of these buttons is below.



This main interface is the entry point for making the different types of pixel-value masks. The Multi-Mask module makes eight different types of masks.

- **Lights, Midtones and Darks masks.** These masks use pixel luminance to generate preset Lights, Midtones, and Darks masks. Different color channels, like Red, Green, and Blue, can also be used as the data source for these masks.
- **Zone masks.** Pixel luminosity is the data source for these masks, which can be built around any tonal value in the image.
- **Color masks.** Hue is the data source for Color masks. Color masks can be built around any hue in the image.
- **Saturation and Vibrance masks.** These masks use pixel saturation values to generate masks.
- **My Channels masks.** These masks utilize user data in the form selections, channel masks, and layer masks as the starting point for making masks.
- **Black and White Adjustment Layer masks.** A Black and White adjustment layer is the starting point for generating a completely custom mask based on color.
- **Edge masks.** This type of mask relies on pixel contrast found at the edges of different elements in the image as the starting point for making a mask.

- **Calculated masks.** While there is no button for it on the main interface, the module contains a mask calculator, and the output of these calculations provides another SOURCE for creating unique and useful masks.

In addition to initiating the mask-making process, the main interface of the Multi-Mask module provides access to some additional features.

- **Color grading.** This button opens the module's Color Grading interface.
- **Layer Mask mode.** The layer mask on the active layer is the starting point for adjusting and making masks with this button. Layer Mask mode allows for determining the optimal mask by observing the actual image as the layer mask is adjusted.
- **Edit selection.** When there is an active selection, this button allows for editing the selection using the same adjustment options as with Layer Mask mode.
- **Workflow Extras.** This button opens a list of additional actions that can provide special effects or can be helpful to creatively process images.
- **One-click adjustment layers.** At the bottom of the main interface are eight buttons for making different types of adjustment layers. These aren't associated with making different masks, but are a convenience feature for when this main interface is visible in the workspace. Clicking these buttons creates the corresponding type of adjustment layers with a single click. The different types of adjustment layers are 1) Curves, 2) Levels, 3) Brightness/Contrast, 4) Hue/Saturation, 5) Selective Color, 6) Black and White, 7) Photo Filter, and 8) Gradient Map. The new adjustment layer is placed above the current active layer in the layer stack. To create the new adjustment layer to the top of the layer stack, CTRL/command+click on one of these buttons instead of just clicking it.

2. MASK

The mask-making interface for the module changes depending on the SOURCE chosen for generating a mask. This section will review the different interfaces and what the buttons in each does.

NOTE: The Multi-Mask module creates a "_TK_Mask" group (or layer) and a "_TK_Modify" group on the Layers panel whenever it is generating masks. The "_TK_Mask" group contains layers that get adjusted as you click buttons or move sliders in the mask-making interfaces of the module. It's the adjustment of these layers that create the different masks. The "_TK_Modify" group contains layers that get adjusted when you modify the mask using the MODIFY section of the module. The module keeps track of the different layers in these groups and makes sure the correct one is active for a particular adjustment. It is strongly recommended to NOT manually make adjustments to these layers unless the module gives you the option to do so, like with the Curves and Layers buttons in the MODIFY section. Also, do not manually remove these layers or groups. Doing so causes the mask being created to be lost. To exit making a mask, use the X button in the upper right corner. It will clean the Layers and Channels panels of

any masks the Multi-Mask module has created and return you to the module's main interface.

Lights, Darks, and Midtones presets

The buttons in this interface are used to generate standard Lights, Darks, and Midtones luminosity masks, which are based on pixel luminance. There are also seven buttons near the top that provide different channels that can be used to generate masks:

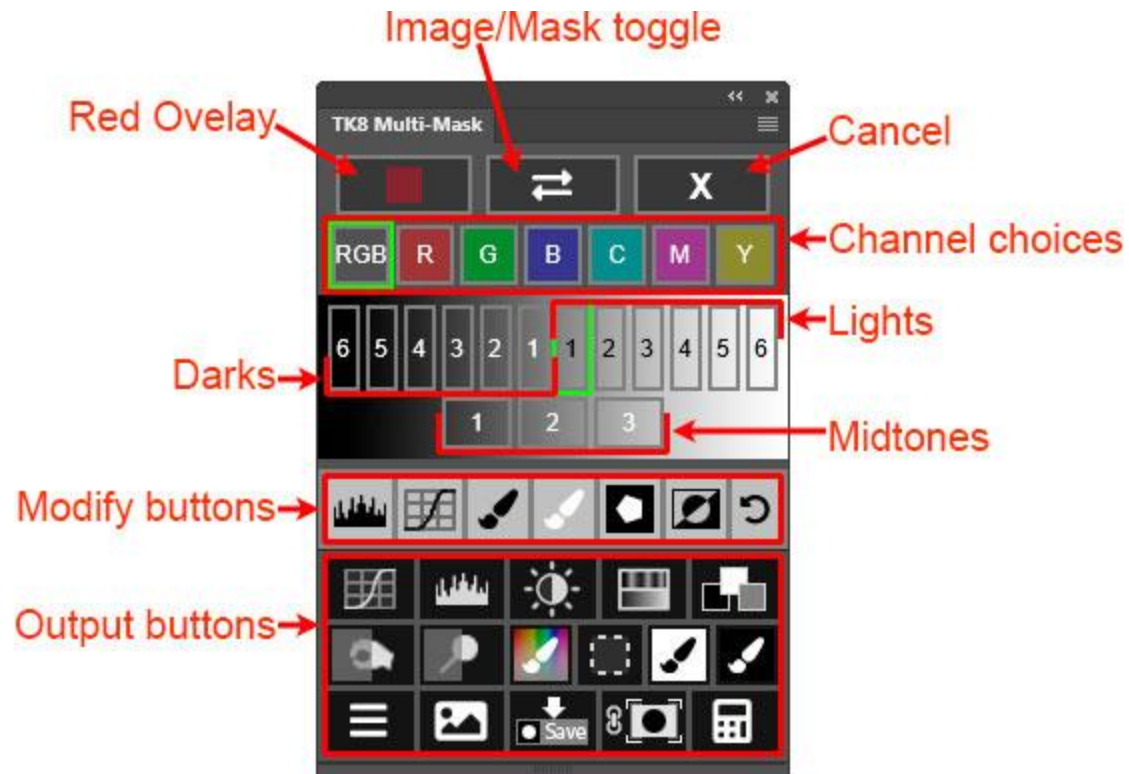
RGB button—This channel option is the default for this section and makes traditional luminosity masks

like those described in the [original tutorial](#). The masks generated correspond to the Lights, Darks, and Midtones masks that use luminance of the Composite RGB image as the data source.

Red (R), Green (G), Blue (B), Cyan (C), Magenta (M), and Yellow (Y) channel buttons—The Red, Green, and Blue buttons produce masks corresponding to the Red, Green and, Blue channels that make up the composite image. The Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow buttons make masks based on corresponding (but fictitious) channels via a method similar for creating the Red, Green, and Blue channels masks. So, while there is no matching Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow channel for these colors in RGB Color mode, the Multi-Mask module can simulate them.

NOTE 1: The module allows you to flip between the seven different channels at any time when generating and modifying a mask. This ability flip-on-the-fly provides a quick and efficient way to determine if a different color channel might yield a more useful mask.

NOTE 2: The buttons leading to the chosen mask will be outlined in green. For example, in the image shown there is a green outline RGB button and the Lights-1 button. This indicates that a Lights-1 traditional luminosity mask made from the composite RGB image is currently being displayed on screen. These green outlines



help keep track of the mask's origins and makes it easier to try different alternatives.

The Red Overlay, Image/Mask toggle, and Cancel (X) buttons are present in all interfaces that provide different MASK options.

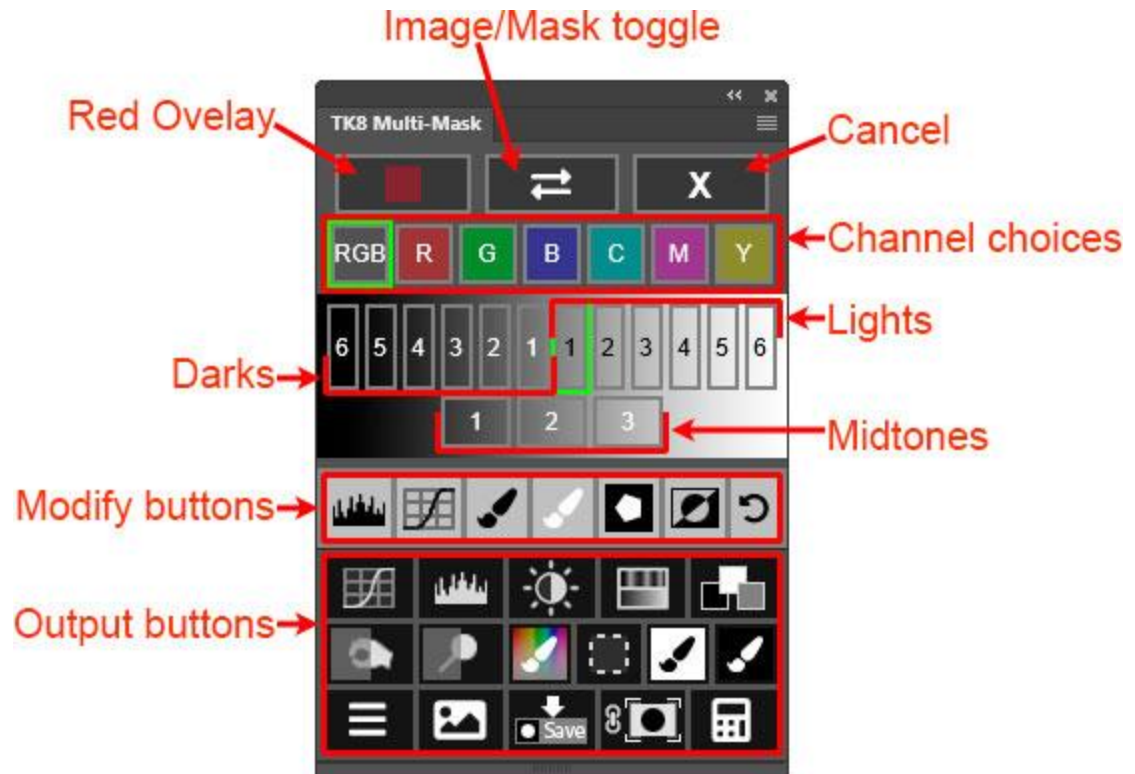
The Red Overlay button changes the revealed areas in the mask to colors that range from bright red to faint pink depending on the degree to which the pixels are selected. Pixels that are 100% selected will show as a saturated red color when the overlay is active. As the degree of selection falls, so does the intensity of the color. Once pixels turn a textureless gray

color with the overlay turned on, pixels are 0% selected. This color overlay helps to better see weakly selected pixels that would otherwise be nearly black in the on-screen mask. If you like this red overlay, you can leave it turned on as you try out different masks.

The Image/Mask toggle button toggles between viewing the mask and viewing the actual image on which the mask is based. Toggling back and forth can help determine if the mask being created is targeting the correct parts of the image.

The Cancel button exits the process of generating a mask. The MASK interface is closed and the main interface is displayed. Layers on the Layers panel being used to create the mask are also deleted and the main image is once again displayed in the workspace.

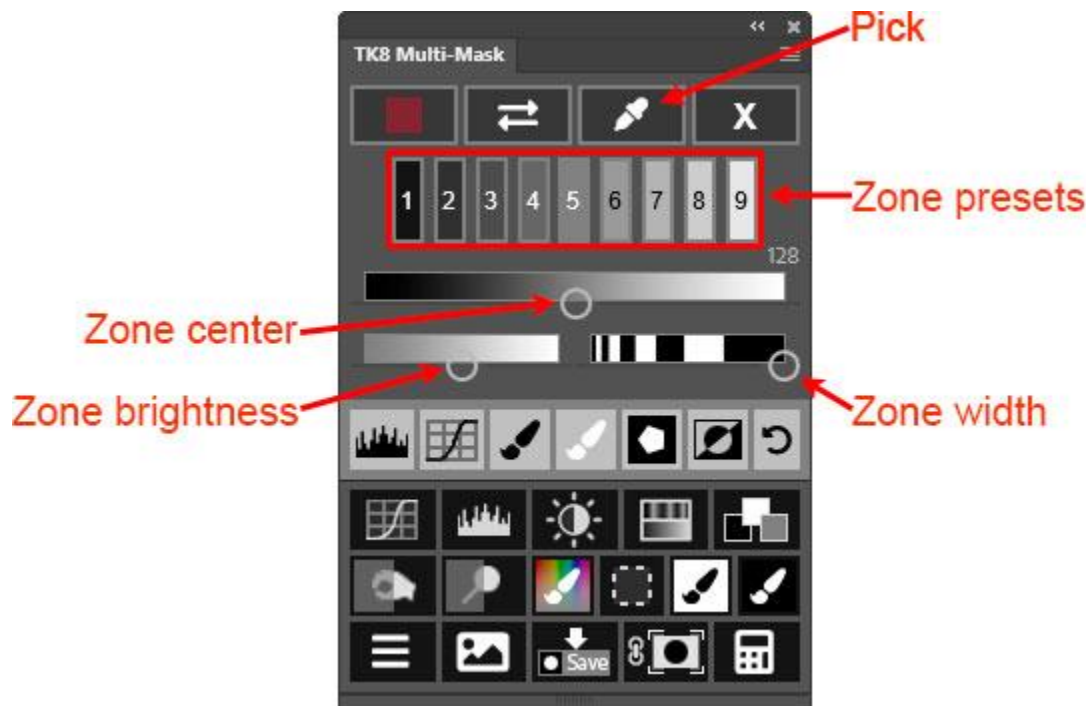
The Modify buttons and Output buttons are the same in all mask-making interfaces. A gray background identifies the Modify buttons and a black (or much darker background color) identifies the Output buttons. The Modify and Output buttons are discussed as separate topics later in this document.



Zone masks

The Zone masks in the Multi-Mask module generate masks based on pixel luminosity specifically centered on a selected tone from the image. The selected tone appears lightest in the mask. Similar tones, both lighter and darker than the selected tone, will appear light gray in the mask. As tones differ more from the selected tone in brightness, they get darker in the mask.

To make a Zone mask, click the Zone mask button on the main interface. The Color Picker opens to select a tone from the image. Clicking OK in the Color Picker causes the module to build a mask centered on that tone. A new interface opens for adjusting this mask. The image below reviews the options.



Zone center slider—This slider's position shows the tone that will be brightest in the mask. In the above image, the slider handle is centered on middle gray and so would be generating a Zone 5 mask on-screen. *NOTE: If you have your Eye Dropper tool set to "3 by 3 Average" or "5 by 5 Average" when selecting a tone using the Color Picker, the Zone center calculated by the module should already be very accurate for making your selected tone the lightest tone in the mask. As such, there may be little need to adjust the Zone center afterwards.*

Zone brightness slider—This slider determines how bright the lightest gray value will be in the mask. *NOTE: My personal experience is that Zone masks generally work better when there is no pure white in the mask. This produces a mask with less contrast that makes for better blending.*

Zone width slider—This slider adjusts the Zone mask's tonal width. By default the Zone width slider is set at its widest setting. As the slider handle is moved to the left, the selected zone becomes narrower while remaining centered at the position of the Zone center slider handle. Extremely narrow Zone masks, especially for midtones, can sometimes lack sufficient pixels for smooth blending, so be a little cautious in adjusting the Zone width in order to make sure the mask has well-feathered edges.

Pick button—This button for Zone masks allows you to change your selected tone at any time. Simply click it to open the Color Picker to choose a new tone from the image as a starting point for making a Zone mask.

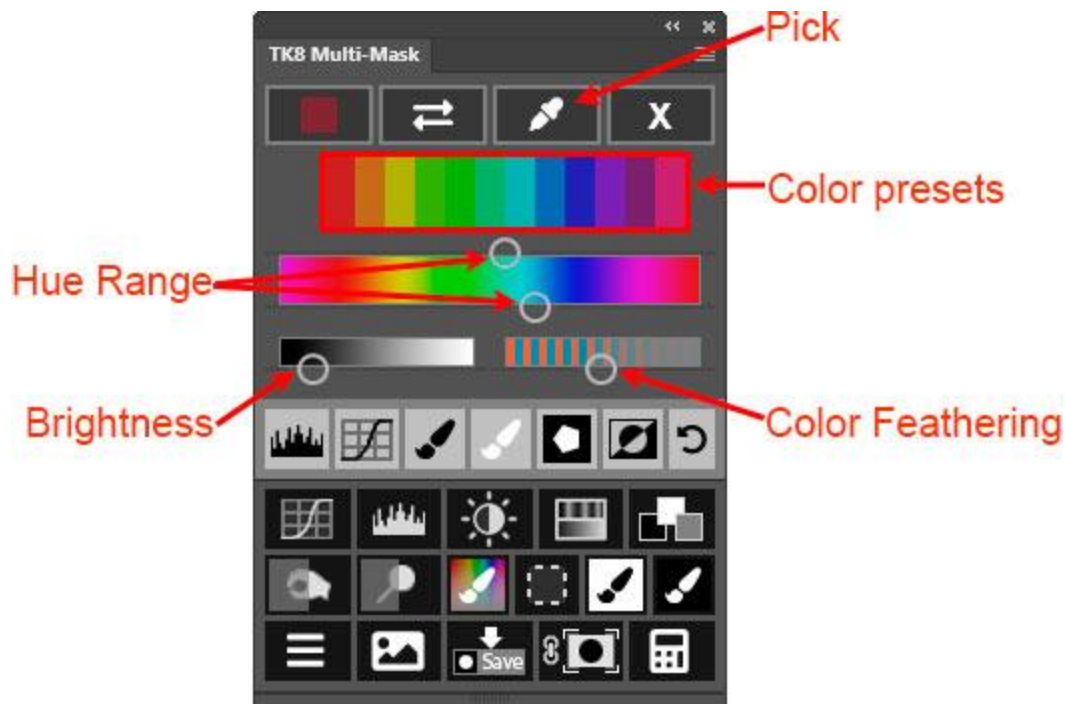
Zone presets (1 through 9)—These buttons make preset Zone masks based on specific tones. Clicking one of the Zone preset buttons positions the Zone center slider handle under that button and resets the Brightness and Feathering sliders to their default positions. The Brightness and Feathering sliders can, of course, still be used to further fine-tune a preset Zone mask.

NOTE #1: Zone masks can be generated for any tone, however, for a Zone 0 mask (100% black tones in the image), consider using a Darks luminosity mask, like Darks-5 or Darks-6. To create a Zone 10 mask (100% white tones in the image), consider using a Lights luminosity mask like Lights-5 or Lights-6. Lights and Darks masks already emphasize the pure white and pure black tones at the two ends of the tonal spectrum, and there are more options available for making these masks (like color channels) in the Lights, Darks, and Midtones masks interface.

NOTE#2: The on-screen Zone mask sometimes has significant banding, especially for narrow zones. These are compression artifacts caused by Photoshop when it shrinks images with multiple adjustment layers to fit on the monitor. The banding completely disappears when the image is viewed at 100%, and the final mask output from the Multi-Mask module will be just as smooth. So if you see banding when making Zone masks, don't be too concerned. It's not actually present in the mask and likely will not be there when the mask is output unless the bands are already present in the image itself.

Color masks

To create a Color mask, click on the Color mask button in module's main interface. The Photoshop Color Picker opens. Use its eyedropper to select a color from the image around which the mask will be built. Clicking OK on the Color Picker opens the Color mask interface as a new Color mask is generated on-screen. You can then use sliders and buttons in the figure below to further adjust the mask.



Hue Range slider—The top and bottom sliders of this color gradient select the range of hues around which the Color mask is built. The top slider selects the lower bound for the hue range and the bottom slider selects the upper bound. The hue range can be contracted or expanded depending on what needs to be selected in the image.

Brightness slider—This slider adjusts the brightness of the Color mask. Masks that target weak colors (those with low levels of color saturation) can benefit from an increase in brightness.

Color Feathering slider—This slider adjusts the color feathering into surrounding colors. This is feathering based on color hue, not on brightness and not on the physical proximity to the selected color in the image. Pull the slider left to create sharper boundaries between similar colors and move the slider right for a more gradual transition into similar colors. This color feathering allows excellent blending of adjustments through color masks into the rest of the image.

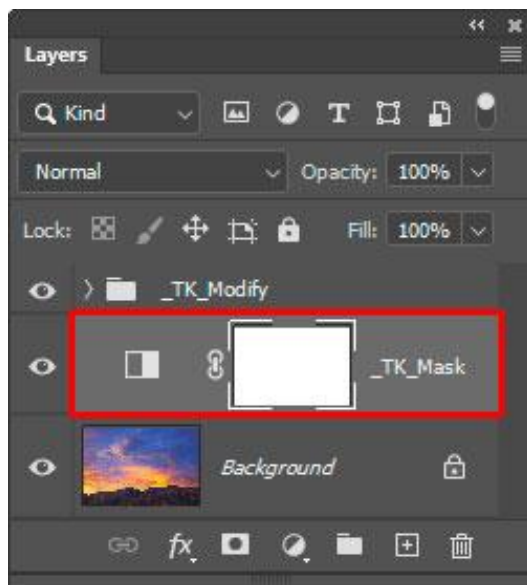
Color presets—These buttons make preset Color masks based on the color of the button clicked.

Pick button— The Pick button allows for selecting a new color from the image around which a new Color mask is built. Clicking it opens the Color Picker to select a new color from the image as a starting point for making a Color mask.

Note: Sean Bagshaw has [an excellent video](#) on Color masks that shows some of the many ways they can be used. The video uses a different panel, but the layout and interface is similar to that in the Multi-Mask module.

Black and White Adjustment Layer masks

While Color masks described above are probably an easier way to create a mask based on color, a Black and White Adjustment Layer mask also has some utility when it comes to making a color mask. Specifically, this type of color mask can include neutral colors, like white and gray, as selected pixels in the mask. Neutrals are colors with zero saturation. In the Color masks described in the previous section they display as black and are concealed in the on-screen mask. With Black and White Adjustment Layer masks, though, neutrals are present in the mask based on how bright they are in the image. Gray and white clouds, for example, will be present in a Black and White Adjustment Layer mask in proportion to how bright they are in the image regardless of the color chosen to be brightest in the mask. This characteristic can be either positive or negative. Sometimes it's helpful to include the clouds when selecting a blue sky. In this case, a Black and White Adjustment Layer mask will work better than a Color mask.

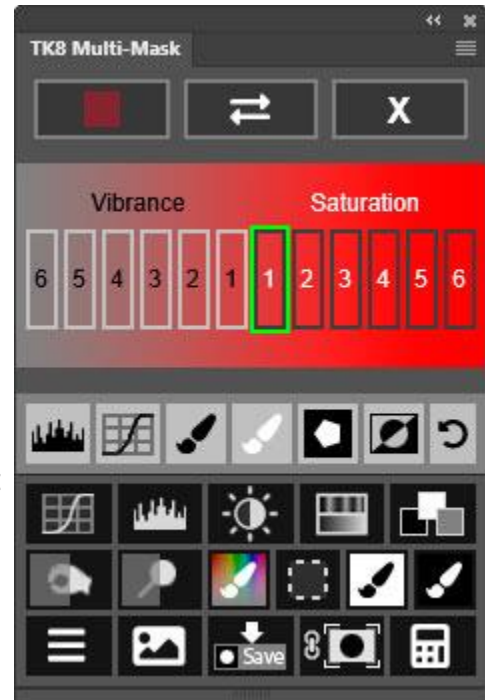


Another reason to consider using a Black and White Adjustment Layer mask is that it offers a high degree of customization that is easy to control. An Adjustment Layer mask uses the familiar Black and White adjustment layer to create a mask. Moving a slider in the Properties panel for the "_TK_Mask" layer either darkens or lightens the on-screen mask for the specific color associated with that slider. The targeted adjustment tool in the Properties panel can also be used to select which color gets adjusted. It's a very intuitive way to work with multiple colors to generate a mask. Keep in mind, though, that black, white, and gray in the image will NOT be affected by moving the Properties panel sliders for a Black and White adjustment layer. Black, white, and gray will appear the same in the mask as in the original image.

Saturation/Vibrance masks

Saturation and Vibrance masks are accessed using the gray and red button on the main interface. Again, when this button is clicked, a new interface opens and a new mask appears on-screen. Saturation and Vibrance masks use pixel saturation as their data set for creating masks. Saturation masks show pixels with high color saturation as being brightest in the mask, and Vibrance masks show pixels with low color saturation as being brightest in the mask. [This tutorial](#) has additional information about these masks and how to use them. Global and local adjustments with these masks open a new world of precision saturation control that isn't normally part of the workflow, but can make a noticeable difference once it's applied.

NOTE: The colors in most photographs are nowhere near the maximum saturation level allowed by Photoshop. Consequently, Saturation masks tend to be dark since there are no 100% saturated pixels in the image. The MODIFY section of the Multi-Mask module can be used to lighten Saturation masks if needed. Vibrance masks, on the other hand, tend to be quite light since there are normally lots of low-saturation pixels in an image. A more restrictive Vibrance mask (Vibrance-3, -4, or -5) can be used to generate a more Vibrance-focused mask.



My Channels masks



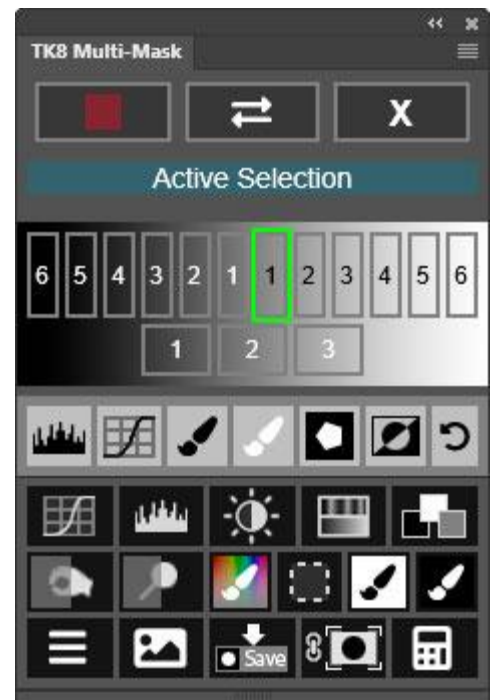
My Channels masks are a way to bring existing selections and masks into the mask-making process. Click the My Channels button on the main interface to open a menu of available choices. Depending on the current state of the image, the following items will appear on the list:

- The current active selection (if one exists)
- The current layer mask of the active layer (if one exists)
- User-saved alpha channels on the Channels panel (if they exist)

The Multi-Mask module looks for all these options and what it finds gets displayed as a list in a new window that opens on the module. Clicking one

of the items in the list loads that option as a new mask and displays the My Channels interface, where different variations of the mask can be tried. The mask can also be modified and deployed using the new interface. The teal-colored title bar in the My Channels interface displays the data source (Active Selection, Layer Mask, or Channel name) that was used to generate the mask.

My Channels masks are particularly useful for calculations using the mask calculator in the OUTPUT section. Highly specific masks can be created by combining pixel-value masks generated by the Multi-Mask module with an active selection or with masks previously saved by the user that target specific elements in the image.



[This video](#) by Sean Bagshaw shows several ways to use My Channels masks. It uses the different panel, but the same concepts apply with the Multi-Mask module.

Edge masks

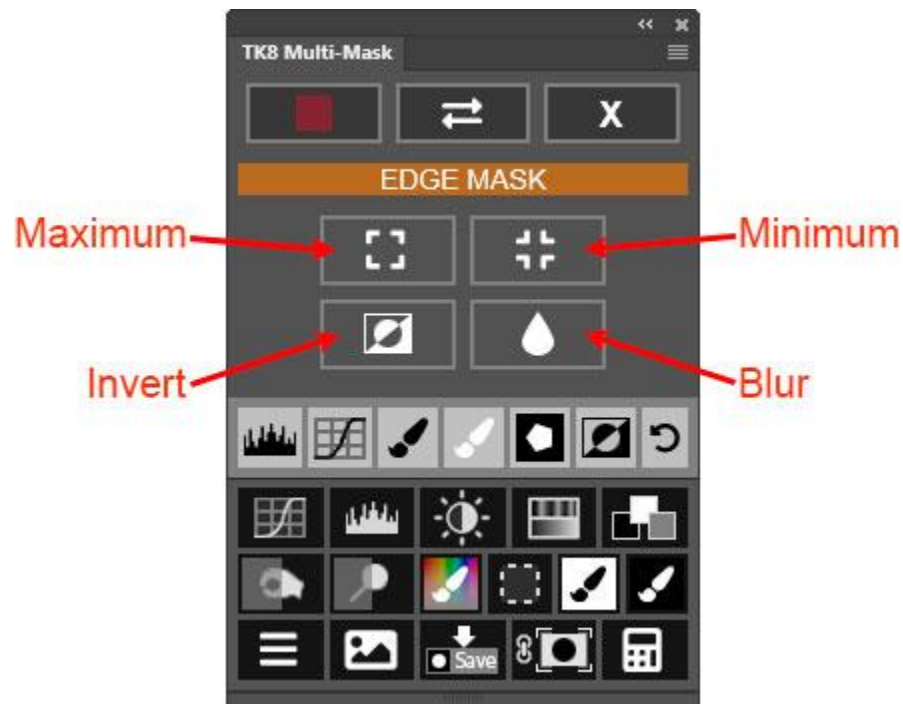
An Edge mask looks at pixel contrast. Light areas of the mask indicate high contrast between adjacent pixels. As with the other masks, Edge masks have their own interface for adjusting the mask to better fit the image as described below.

Maximum—Opens the Maximum dialog window for expanding the selected areas of the mask.

Minimum—Opens the Minimum dialog window for contracting the selected areas of the mask.

Invert—Inverts the mask.

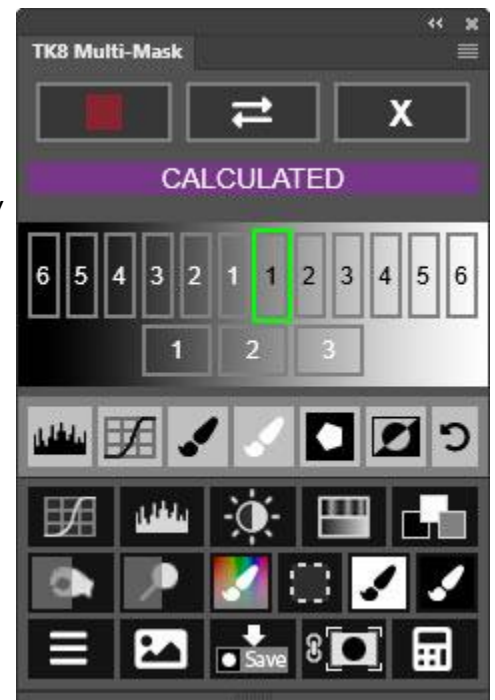
Blur—Opens the Gaussian Blur dialog window for blurring the selected areas of the mask.



Calculated masks

The Calculated mask interface only appears after completing a calculation using the mask calculator found in the OUTPUT section of the module. There is no button for the Calculated masks on the main interface. It is only activated after clicking the Equal (=) button to finish a mask calculation. The Calculated mask interface is very similar to the Lights, Darks and Midtones interface except it lacks the different channel options (RGB, Red, Green, Blue, Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow), which aren't applicable since this interface is for making different masks from a calculated mask source and NOT directly from the image. Calculated masks can themselves be used for additional calculations with the mask calculator.

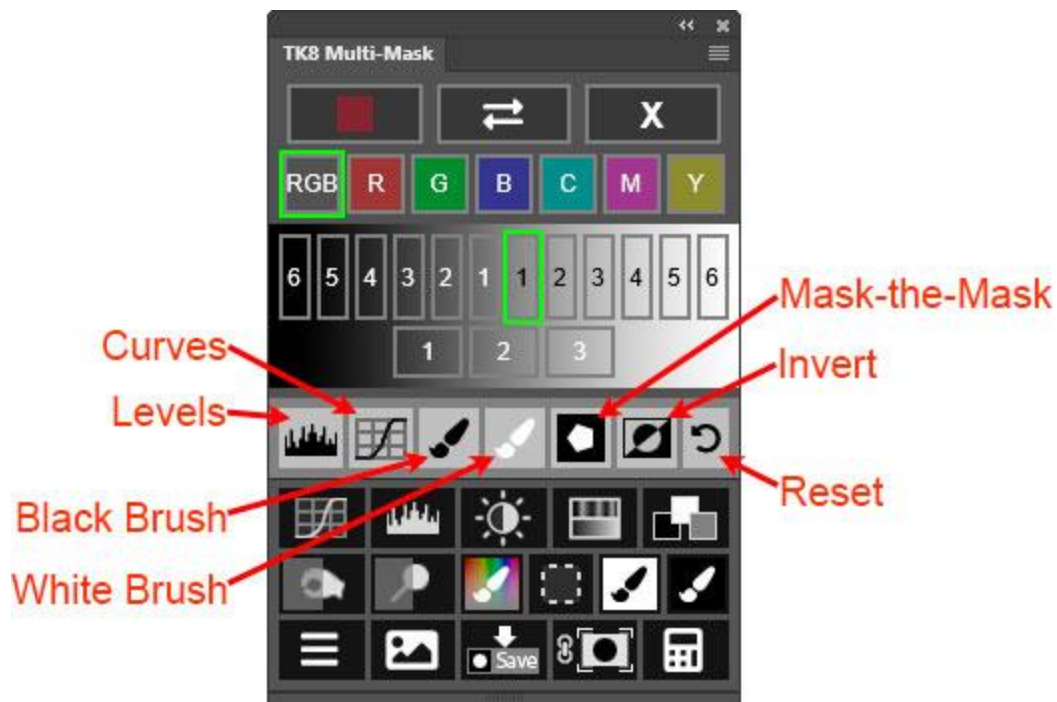
The mask calculator is explained in greater detail in the OUTPUT section below.



3. MODIFY

Below the interface for creating a specific mask using the buttons and sliders available for that mask, there is a single row of light gray buttons that can be used to further modify the mask to better target it to specific parts of the image. The buttons in this section allow modification to be accomplished quickly and accurately. The figure below labels the different buttons and is followed by a description of each button and how it is used.

NOTE: The "_TK_Modify" group on the Layers panel is where the module performs the various modification operations. Generally, this group is closed, but it will open to provide the user access to the various layers in the group for specific modification functions like Curves and Levels adjustments and when brushing black or white paint onto the mask. It's recommended to NOT manually access or adjust the layers in this group. Let the Multi-Mask module provide you the access by clicking the buttons in the MODIFY section.

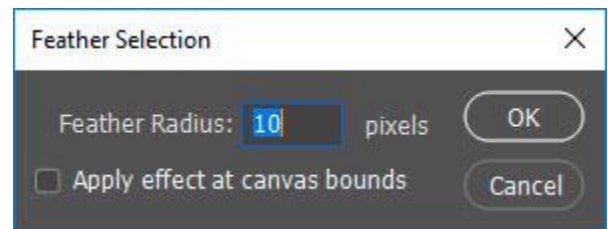


Levels and Curves buttons. These buttons select a corresponding adjustment layer in the "_TK_Modify" group as the active layer and open the Properties panel for that layer. Use the Properties panel to make an adjustment to the mask.

Black Brush and White Brush buttons. These two buttons activate the corresponding brush color (black or white) so that you can paint that color directly on the on-screen mask. Black paint conceals what is selected by the mask and white paint reveals what is selected by the mask. Brush opacity is automatically set to 100%. Select brush size and hardness as required to achieve the desired modification of the mask.

Mask-the-Mask button. Sometimes you might want the selected part of a mask to be confined to certain parts of the image, like the clouds in a landscape photograph or the face in a portrait. Areas outside the designated element, however, may have similar pixel-value characteristics and be included as selected tones in the initial version of the mask. To quickly remove them, create a selection of just those elements to be included in the mask. This can be done with a selection tool, like the Lasso or Marquee tool. A saved selection can also be loaded to define the desired area where the luminosity mask should be revealed. Then click the Mask-the-Mask button to turn the areas outside the selection edges black. This effectively conceals these areas when the mask is deployed as a layer mask or active selection.

NOTE: While pixel-value masks created by the Multi-Mask module are naturally self-feathering, combining them with a hard-edged selection can still produce a hard-edged mask. Feathering can help insure smooth blending for traditional selections created using



Photoshop's standard selection tools (Lasso or Marquee). To facilitate this feathering process, the module calculates and displays a recommended feather radius in a "Feather Selection" window when the Mask-the-Mask button is clicked. Unfortunately, there is no preview possible to see how the feathering will actually look. If you prefer no feathering at all, simply click the Cancel button in the "Feather Selection" window.

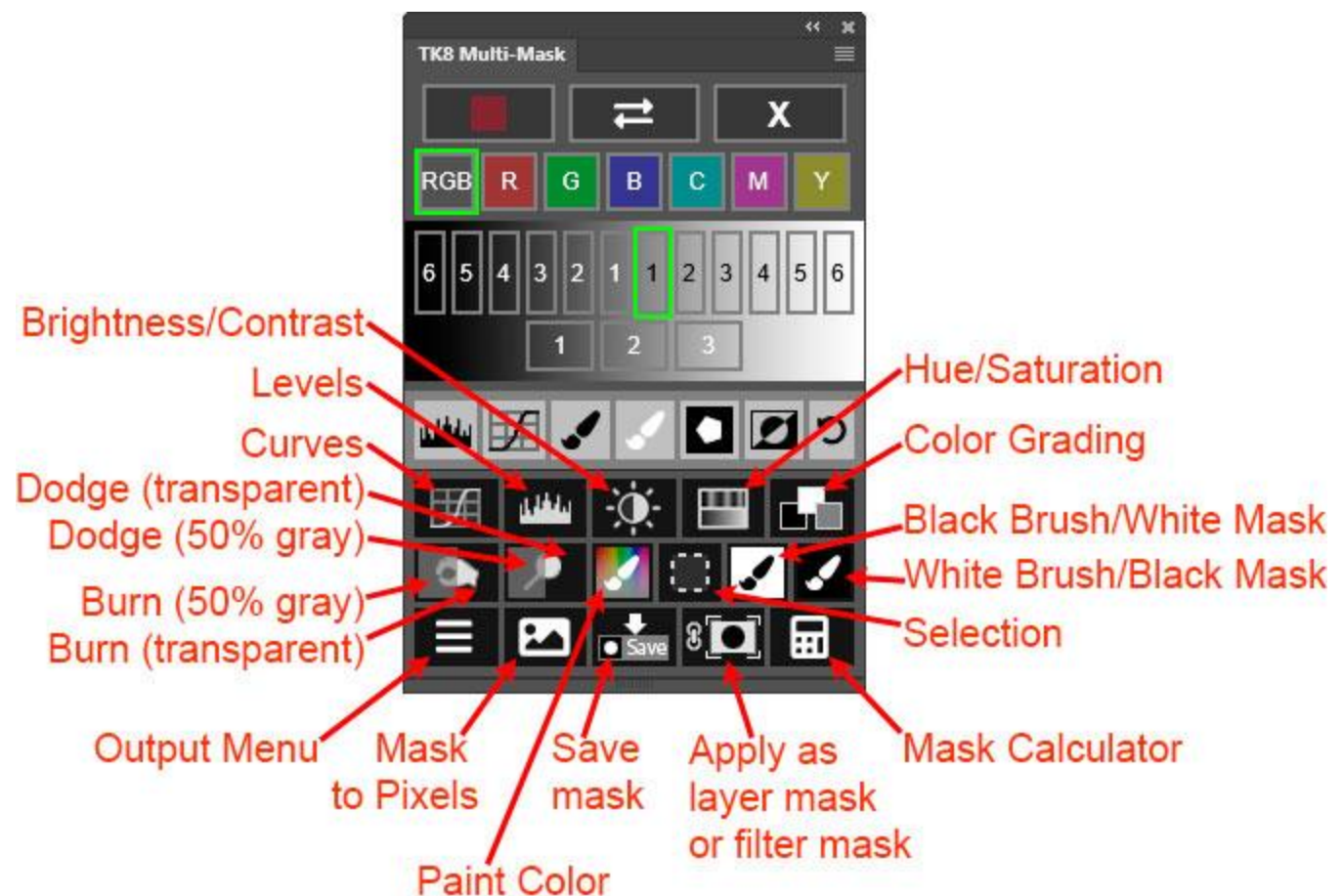
Invert button. This button inverts the mask. This is useful for making a mask that conceals parts of the image that were originally selected.

Reset button. This button resets all modifications so that the mask returns to what it was before any modification occurred.

4. OUTPUT

The OUTPUT section of the Multi-Mask module is where the mask that is being generated, viewed, and modified on-screen is actually turned into a mask or selection and put to use to alter the image. The figure below identifies each button, and the paragraphs that follow describe the operation of the buttons and provide additional information regarding their use.

NOTE: With the exception of the Save Mask button and the Mask Calculator button, the groups and layers creating the on-screen mask preview are removed from the Layers panel when output occurs. So, it's not possible to reuse mask previews because generally the Layers panel will be needed to further adjust the image once the mask is deployed. If there is a mask that you think you'll want to reuse in the future, first save it using the Save Mask button so it can be accessed via the Channels panel later on.



Curves, Levels, Brightness/Contrast, and Hue/Saturation buttons. These buttons create the corresponding type of adjustment layer with the on-screen mask as the layer mask on the layer. The Properties panel opens to facilitate making the appropriate adjustment. The layer mask filters the adjustment to the pixels selected by the mask.

Color Grading. This button creates a "Color Grading" Curves adjustment layer and applies the on-screen mask as a layer mask on this layer. The Multi-Mask module's Color Grading interface is then opened to allow using it, instead of the Properties panel, to make color grading adjustments to the image in areas revealed by the layer mask.

Burn/Dodge buttons. Both these buttons have two sides. A "gray" side on the left and a "transparent" side on the right. Clicking the "gray" side creates that type of layer (Burn or Dodge) with the layer filled with 50% gray. The advantage of using a 50% gray layer for burning and dodging is that it's easier to see where you've burned and dodged on the image since the black and white paint is more obvious against the 50% gray background. The transparent sides of these buttons (the right side) create a Burn or Dodge layer that is completely transparent. The advantage to using transparent layers for burning and dodging is that the paint applied to the layer can easily be loaded as a selection by CTRL/command+clicking on the layer itself. This selection can then be used as a layer mask for additional adjustment layers that affect the painted pixels. In addition to making the chosen type of Burn/Dodge layer (50% gray or transparent), these buttons also load the current on-screen mask as a selection, activate the Brush tool, and choose the appropriate paint color (black for burning and white for dodging). After clicking the button, adjust brush size, hardness, and opacity and start painting on the image. The active selection of the mask controls which areas of the image receive paint and which don't.

NOTE: Starting in TK8 version 1.2.0, you can CTRL/command+click on these buttons to create a layer mask of the current on-screen mask instead of loading it as an active selection. In this scenario, the layer mask determines which areas receive paint instead of an active selection.

Paint Color. This could also be called "dodge and burn with color" as it closely aligns with the concepts for dodging and burning described above. This button creates a transparent pixel layer set to Linear Light blend mode and a Fill opacity of 15%. This layer functions very much like the Dodge and Burn layers described above. The mask is loaded as a selection and then the user is prompted to choose a color with the Color Picker. Generally a color will be selected from the image. The color should be one that will be helpful in providing color accents or a color wash in the areas selected by the mask. Because the blend mode is set to Linear Light, in addition to adding color the image, lighter colors will also lighten the painted areas and darker colors will darken them. Additional variation is possible by painting with multiple colors and by changing the layer's Fill opacity.

NOTE: Starting in TK8 version 1.2.0, you can CTRL/command+click on this button to create a layer mask of the current on-screen mask instead of loading it as an active selection. In this scenario, the layer mask determines which areas receive paint instead of an active selection.

Selection. This button loads the on-screen mask as an active selection. This is usually done in order to paint on a layer mask (mask painting) or for burning and dodging on Burn/Dodge layers.

NOTE: The module hides selections edges (marching ants) by default when it creates an active selection. It also displays an animated black and white selection indicator around the perimeter of the module whenever there is an active selection. So even though no selection edges are visible, the module continues to remind you when there is an active selection.

The Black Brush/White Mask and White Brush/Black Mask buttons are Quick Paint buttons and intended to be used to quickly set up mask painting. These buttons do several things:

- 1) A layer mask is added to the current active layer that matches the background color of the button. A "Hide All" mask is black and a "Reveal All" mask is white.
- 2) The Brush tool is activated.
- 3) The foreground color is set to match the button's brush color (black or white), which is the opposite of the mask's color.
- 4) The visibility of the active layer is turned on if it's been turned off.
- 5) The layer mask is selected as the painting canvas.
- 6) The on-screen mask is loaded as a selection.
- 7) The on-screen mask is deleted after being turned into a selection.

Once the Quick Paint button action finishes, adjust brush size, hardness, and opacity and start painting on the image. The active selection now controls where paint gets deposited on the layer mask.

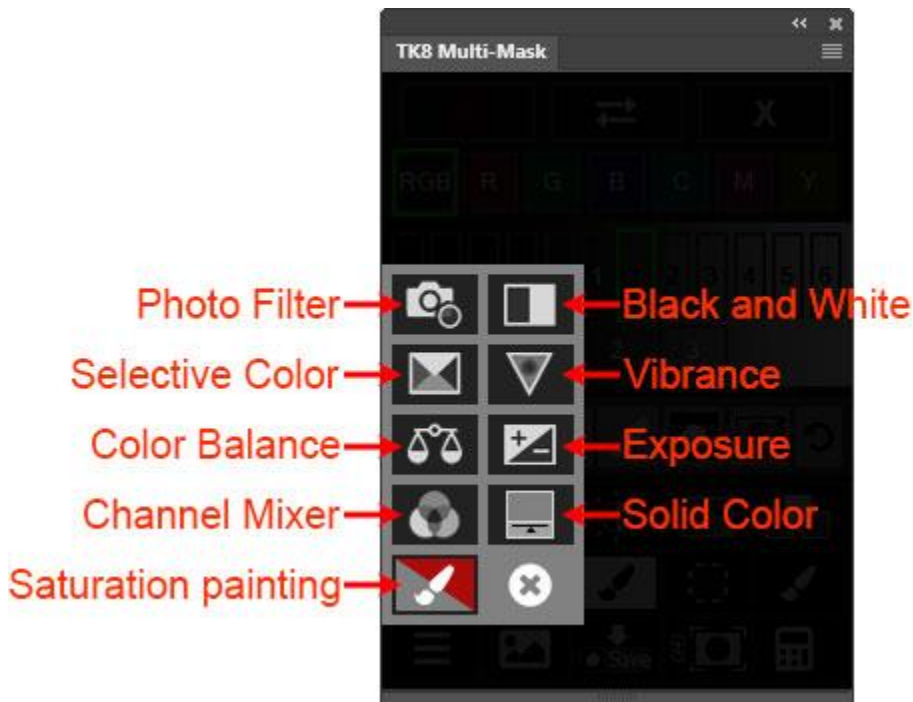
Mask to Pixels. While layer masks and selections are the common uses for the pixel-value masks generated by the Multi-Mask module, there are also uses for these masks as actual pixel layers. This button converts the on-screen mask to a pixel layer and places it at the top of the layer stack. This pixel layer offers one possibility for converting color images into monochrome (black and white) images. Other applications for these Mask-to-Pixel layers involve changing the layer's blend mode or opacity, or adding layer effects.

Apply as layer mask or filter mask. Clicking this button applies the on-screen mask as a layer mask to the active layer. To choose the layer that gets the mask, click on it to make it active BEFORE clicking the Apply button. Then when you click the Apply button, the on-screen mask gets added as a layer mask to that chosen layer. If you don't specifically choose an active layer before clicking this button, the layer that was active before generating the mask receives a new layer mask matching the on-screen mask. CTRL/command+clicking on this button applies the on-screen mask as a filter mask. Filter masks can only be applied to a smart object layer that has smart filters, so be sure a smart object layer is the active layer before choosing the filter mask option.

Save mask. This button saves the on-screen mask as an alpha channel on the Channels panel. A dialog window opens to allow you to give the mask a new name.

NOTE: Unlike the other output options, saving the on-screen mask as a channel does not delete it. The mask can still be deployed using other OUTPUT options after saving it as a channel mask.

Output Menu—This button opens a menu of some additional output options.

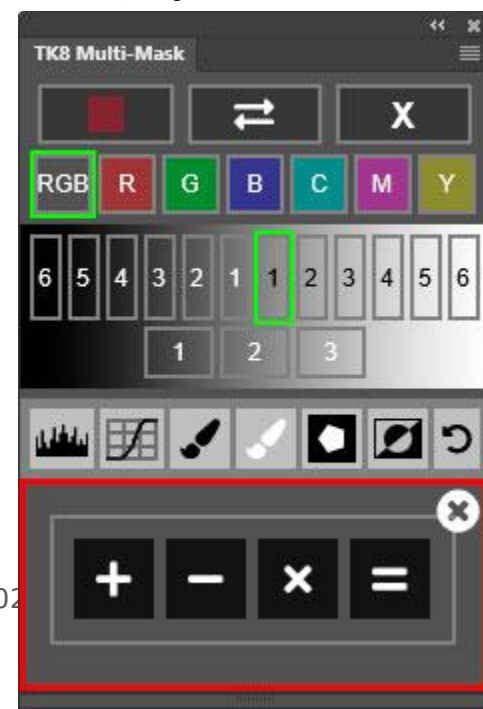


1) Photo Filter, Black and White, Selective Color, Vibrance, Color Balance, Exposure, Channel Mixer, and Solid Color adjustment layers. These buttons create the corresponding type of adjustment layer with the on-screen mask as the layer mask on the layer. The Properties panel opens to facilitate making the appropriate adjustment. The layer mask filters the adjustment to the pixels selected by the mask. For the Solid Color option, the blend mode of the adjustment layer created is changed to Soft Light

2) Saturation Painting. This button sets up the necessary

elements to begin saturation painting. a) It creates a blank pixel layer set to Saturation blend mode. b) It sets foreground color to gray (saturation = 0%) and background color to red (saturation = 100%). c) It activates the Brush tool. d) The on-screen mask (generally a Saturation or Vibrance mask for this process) is loaded as an active selection. When the action finishes, adjust brush size, hardness, and opacity; and pick either gray or red as the foreground color. Gray decreases saturation and red increases saturation. The selection limits where the effect is applied. A detailed description of saturation painting is found elsewhere in this document. There is also a [video demonstration](#) on my website.

Mask Calculator. The mask calculator works pretty much like a regular calculator except that it uses masks instead of numbers to do math. Start by creating an on-screen mask. Then click the Mask Calculator button to turn the calculator on. Turning it on saves the current on-screen mask as a channel on the Channels panel and opens the calculator keypad at the



bottom of the module. There are three operations possible from this interface: Plus (+) for addition, Minus (-) for subtraction, and Multiply (x) for intersection. Choose one. Doing so creates a green outline around that operator to indicate the calculation being performed. Then make another on-screen mask by 1) using the MASK and MODIFY sections already present on the module, or 2) by closing the current MASK interface with the X button in the upper right corner of the module and choosing a new SOURCE from which to make the second mask. *NOTE: The calculator interface remains open until either the Equal (=) button is clicked to complete the calculation or the Close (circle "x") button is clicked to turn the Mask Calculator off.* Once satisfied with the second mask, click the Equal (=) button to perform the chosen operation on the two masks. Completing the calculation creates a new on-screen mask representing the result of that calculation and a new "CALCULATED" interface with buttons to choose different variations of this mask. Here are some examples of useful calculations:

1) *Subtracted masks.* One example is to subtract a more restrictive mask from a less restrictive mask. Lights-1 minus Lights-3, for example, creates a calculated mask that removes the much lighter selected tones of Lights-3 from those selected by Lights-1. Another example is to subtract a Color mask targeting blue from a Lights-1 luminosity mask. Such a mask makes it possible to remove pixels based on color from those originally selected based on luminance.

2) *Mask addition.* This combines two masks into a new calculated mask. A My Channels mask targeting one element in the image could be added to another My Channels mask targeting another element to create a single mask that targets both elements.

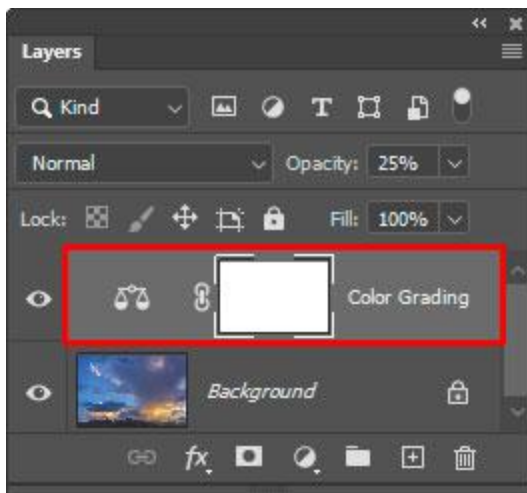
3) *Intersected masks.* These are useful when combining a selection saved as a mask on the Channels panel, like that of the land or sky, with a pixel-value mask. First create a pixel-value mask (a luminosity mask, for example) using one of the module's mask-making interfaces, which would target tones throughout the image. Then intersect it with the saved selection using the My Channels option to retrieve the saved mask. In this way, a pixel-value mask can be confined very accurately to selected areas previously saved for the image.

NOTE: The mask calculation is performed using the last calculation button clicked. If the incorrect calculation button is accidentally chosen simply click the correct button instead. When you click the Equal (=) button, the calculation using the operator highlighted with the green outline color is carried out.

5. Color Grading

Clicking the Color Grading button on the main interface opens the Multi-Mask module's color grading interface. Color grading occurs when the plugin interacts with a special "Color Grading" Curves adjustment layer on the Layers panel. Generally the first step is to click the Plus (+) button to create the necessary Curves adjustment layer. The module will automatically give it the name "Color Grading." If there are already

"Color Grading" Curves adjustment layers present on the Layers panel, it is also possible to set one as the active layer. In this case, color grading will be performed using that layer and will be based on any color grading already performed using that layer. It's possible to have multiple "Color Grading" adjustment layers for an image and to independently adjust the color grading on each of them using the plugin's color grading function.

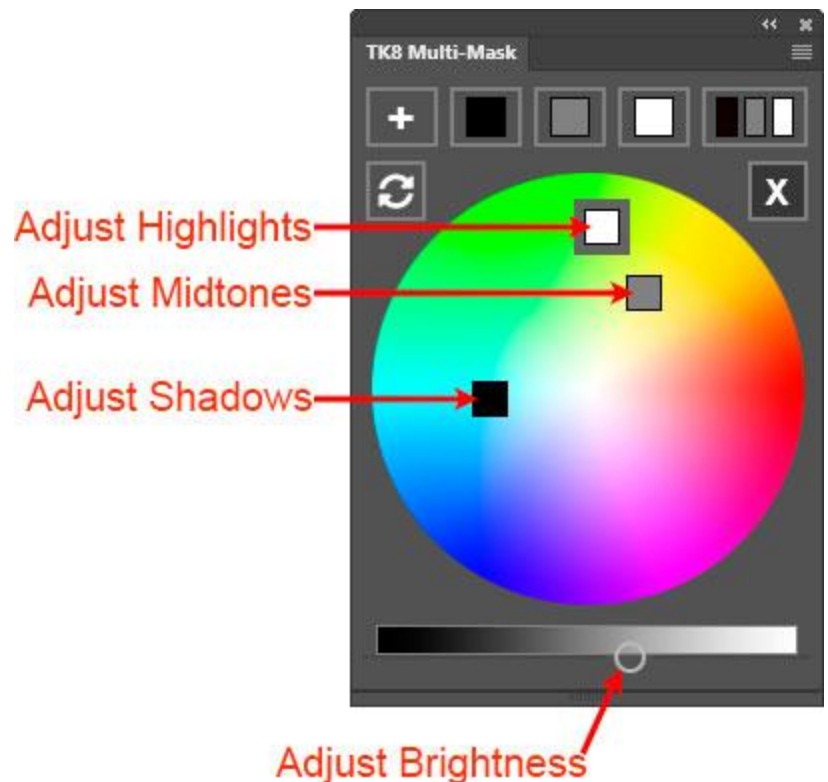


NOTE: The "Color Grading" Curves adjustment layers are designed to properly interact with the Multi-Mask Color Grading interface. Manually moving, adding, or removing points from this Curves adjustment layers will likely cause color grading to generate errors or to produce unexpected results. Therefore, do not manually adjust a "Color Grading" Curves adjustment layer unless you are certain you will no longer be using the Multi-Mask Color Grading interface to change the settings on this adjustment layer.

The Shadows, Midtones, Highlights, or All tones buttons allow you to target a tonal range that will limit the extent of any color shift to the selected range of tones. Clicking the Shadows, Midtones, or Highlights button turns on color grading for that tonal range. A square matching the square on the button appears on the color wheel. To color grade that tonal range, simply drag and drop the square on a color to which that tonal range should be shifted. For example, to get warmer colors in the highlights, first click the Highlights button and then drag and drop the

white square from the center of the color wheel, where it appears initially, to a warmer color (red, orange, or yellow). Or, to get cooler midtones, click the Midtones button and then drag and drop the gray square from the center onto a cool color (blue or cyan) on the color wheel. Darks can be color graded in the same way. Click the Darks button and then drag the black square to a color on the color wheel to shift the dark tones to that color.

In addition to being able to color grade specific tonal ranges with the color grading squares, the Brightness slider below the color wheel allows the brightness of the chosen tonal range to be changed. Moving the slider left darkens the tonal range and moving it right lightens it. This brightness slider always matches the chosen color grading range (highlights, midtones, or shadows). When changing to a different color grading tonal range, the slider automatically updates to where it was last set for that tonal range. So the brightness slider is always synced with the chosen tonal range. This happens automatically when clicking on a color grading button at the top of the Color Grading interface or when clicking on one of the tonal range squares on the color wheel.



Here are some additional things to keep in mind when color grading using the color wheel.

- a) The further the color-grading square is moved from the center of the color wheel, the more pronounced the color shift in that tonal range. Generally, only small changes in the location of color grading squares on the color wheel are required to provide the necessary color shift in the image.
- b) Once all three tonal ranges have been adjusted, clicking the All Tones button makes all three color-grading squares visible at once on the color wheel. This makes it possible to quickly fine-tune the image's overall color balance by being able to adjust color grading of the different tonal ranges simply by clicking the corresponding square on the color wheel. A dark gray border appears around the square to indicate the active tonal range. The brightness slider always matches the selected tonal range, so when quickly jumping between different tonal range color-grading squares on the color wheel,

whatever brightness change has been chosen for that tonal range will be displayed by the brightness slider.

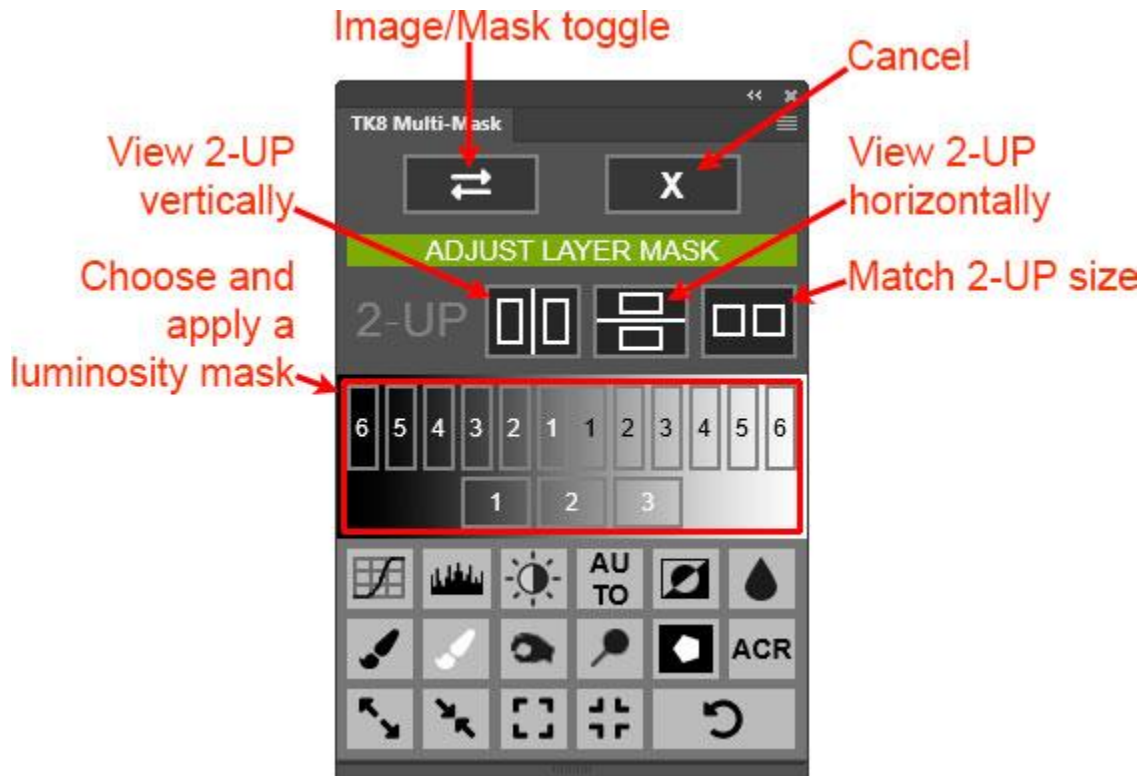
- c) The color shift from dragging and dropping the color-grading squares only occurs when the mouse button is released. The module cannot do real-time updating as you drag the color-grading squares; however, AFTER releasing the square, the update is instantaneous.
- d) Once color grading is finished, clicking the X button near the top of the interface returns to the main interface. To resume color grading at some later point in the workflow, simply select a "Color Grading" layer on the Layers panel and click the Color Grading button on the main interface. Once the Color Grading interface is visible, clicking one of the Shadows, Midtones, Highlights, or All tones buttons causes the plugin to evaluate the current color grading of this "Color Grading" layer and appropriately place the color grading squares on the color wheel when the corresponding tonal range button is clicked. Even if the image is closed and reopened, the color grading feature will resume from the last adjustment as long as a "Color Grading" Curves adjustment layer is the active layer.
- e) To jump between different Curves "Color Grading" adjustment layers that contain different color grading adjustments, select the new Curves adjustment layer on the Layers panel and then click the Shadows, Midtones, Highlights, or All tones button until the squares completely disappear from the Color Wheel. It may require one or two clicks. Then click any of these buttons again to turn on color grading for a specific tonal range. At the point that the square appears on the color wheel, the color grading in the new Curves adjustment layer will have been evaluated, and the square representing the chosen tonal range will be properly placed on the color wheel to match the color grading in the current adjustment layer.
- f) In order to start over with any particular color range (or all three color ranges), right-click on the corresponding Shadows, Midtones, Highlights, or All tones button. This resets the corresponding color-grading square(s) to the center of the color wheel and removes the current color grading for that tonal range.
- g) Move the color-grading squares slowly. The mouse can "slip off" if they're moved too fast.
- h) Sometimes color grading leads to unexpected brightness shifts in the image. If this happens, try clicking the Normal/Color toggle button to switch to Color blend mode. This often allows the colors to shift with much less effect on image brightness.

6. Layer Mask mode

Sometimes, after applying a mask to a layer as a layer mask and making adjustments through the mask, the result in the image isn't quite what was expected. The on-screen mask is always a best guess for what will work, but it's not always perfect once it's deployed. Layer Mask mode provides one way to continue to refine a layer mask to help it produce better results. To activate Layer Mask mode, make sure the layer with the layer mask you want to adjust is active,

and then click the Layer Mask mode button main interface of the Multi-Mask module.

Clicking the Layer Mask mode button opens the Layer Mask mode interface, shown below. The buttons can be used to 1) to change out the current layer mask with a different luminosity mask, and/or 2) to modify the layer mask of the active layer using the available tools.



Initially in Layer Mask mode, the image appears on the screen, not the layer mask. This is so that as changes are made to the layer mask using the buttons in this interface, the image is visible for evaluating these changes and judging whether or not they achieve the desired result. To see the mask while adjusting it, click the Image/Mask toggle button to toggle between viewing the layer mask and viewing the image. Or, to see both the layer mask and the image simultaneously, choose a 2-UP option: Vertical or Horizontal.

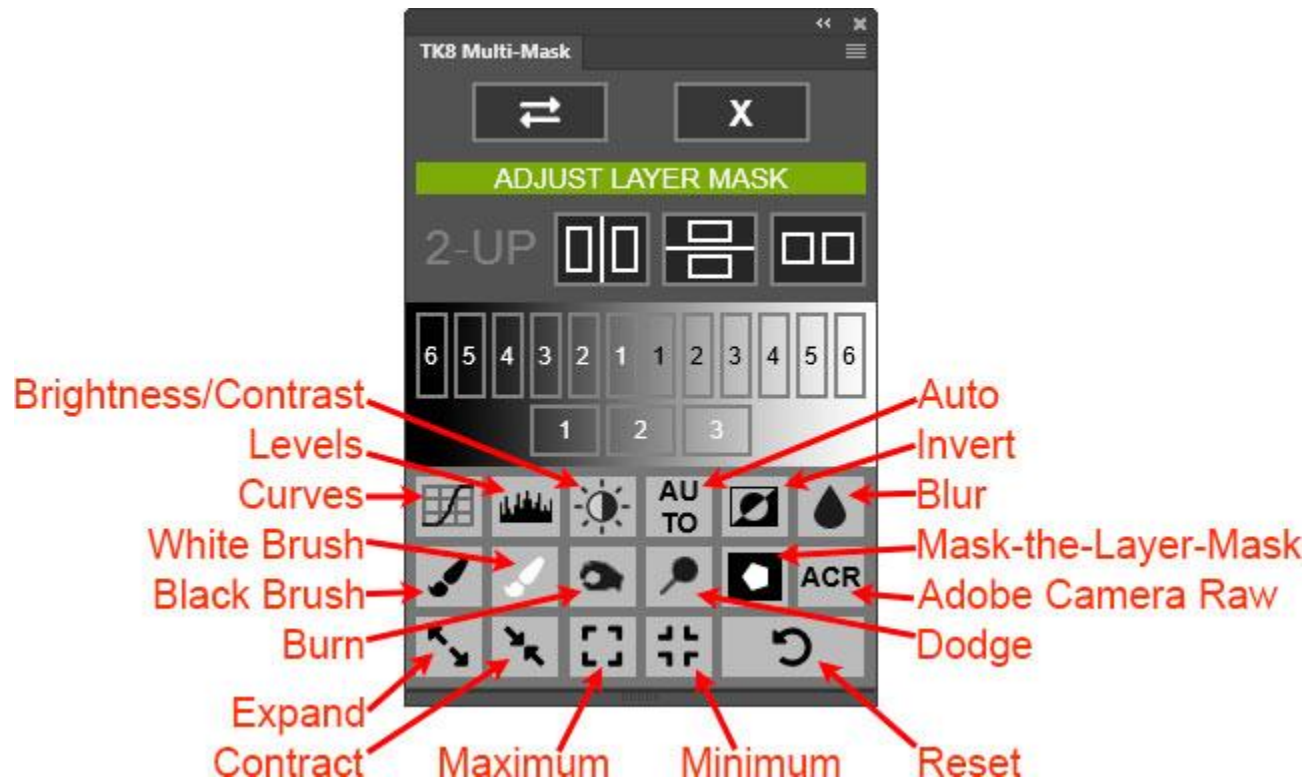
NOTE #1: To exit 2-UP viewing, manually close one of the 2-UP windows.

NOTE#2: The Match Size button is for those situations where one of the 2-UP windows has been zoomed-in. Clicking the Match Size button synchronizes the two different views so they are both zoomed to the same part of the image.

Below these interface options are buttons for the standard Lights, Midtones, and Darks luminosity masks. Clicking one of these applies that luminosity mask as a layer mask on the active layer. *NOTE: The current state of the image when*

entering Layer Mask mode is used as the starting point for creating these luminosity masks.

At the bottom of the Layer Mask mode interface are a variety of different options for modifying the layer mask on the active layer. The figure below identifies what each button does.



Curves, Levels, Brightness/Contrast—Opens a window to perform the designated type of adjustment on the layer mask.

Auto—Executes an auto-Levels command on the layer mask so that the mask's tonal range extends from pure black to pure white (0 to 255).

Invert—Inverts the layer mask.

Blur—Opens the Gaussian Blur dialog in order to blur the layer mask as desired.

Black Brush / White Brush—Paint with black or white on the layer mask. The brush opacity is automatically set to 100%. Adjust the brush parameters (hardness and opacity) and, while painting on the mask, watch the result on the image.

Burn—Selects Photoshop's Burn tool. Sets the tool's "Range" to "Shadows" and the tool's opacity to 50%. This tool is useful for turning dark gray pixels in the layer mask black without affecting the whites in the mask.

Dodge—Selects Photoshop's Dodge tool. Sets the tool's "Range" to "Highlights" and the tool's opacity to 50%. This tool is useful for turning light gray pixels in the layer mask white without affecting the blacks in the mask.

Expand / Contract—Uses Photoshop calculations to either expand or contract the selected areas in the layer mask in small increments. Each of these buttons uses its own calculation method, so it's not possible to completely reverse what one button does by clicking the opposite button. To accurately undo what has happened, use the History panel to go back to a previous state.

Mask-the-Layer-Mask—Allows restricting what is revealed by the layer mask to the parts of the image defined by another selection. To use this features, first make a selection using a selection tool, like Lasso or Marquee. Then click this button to turn the non-selected areas of the layer mask black. The action stops to allow feathering the selection. The module calculates a recommend Feather Radius to produce smooth edges, but can, of course, be adjusted. If no feathering is desired, click Cancel in the Feather Selection dialog window. *(NOTE: One alternative to using this Mask-the-Layer-Mask feature is to place the layer in a group, and then paint black on the group's layer mask to conceal the parts of the layer that you don't want affected. This approach has the advantage of preserving the original layer mask.)*

ACR—Opens the Adobe Camera Raw filter so that the layer mask can be modified using the controls in this filter.

Maximum—Opens the Maximum dialog window. This option would be useful for expanding an Edge mask.

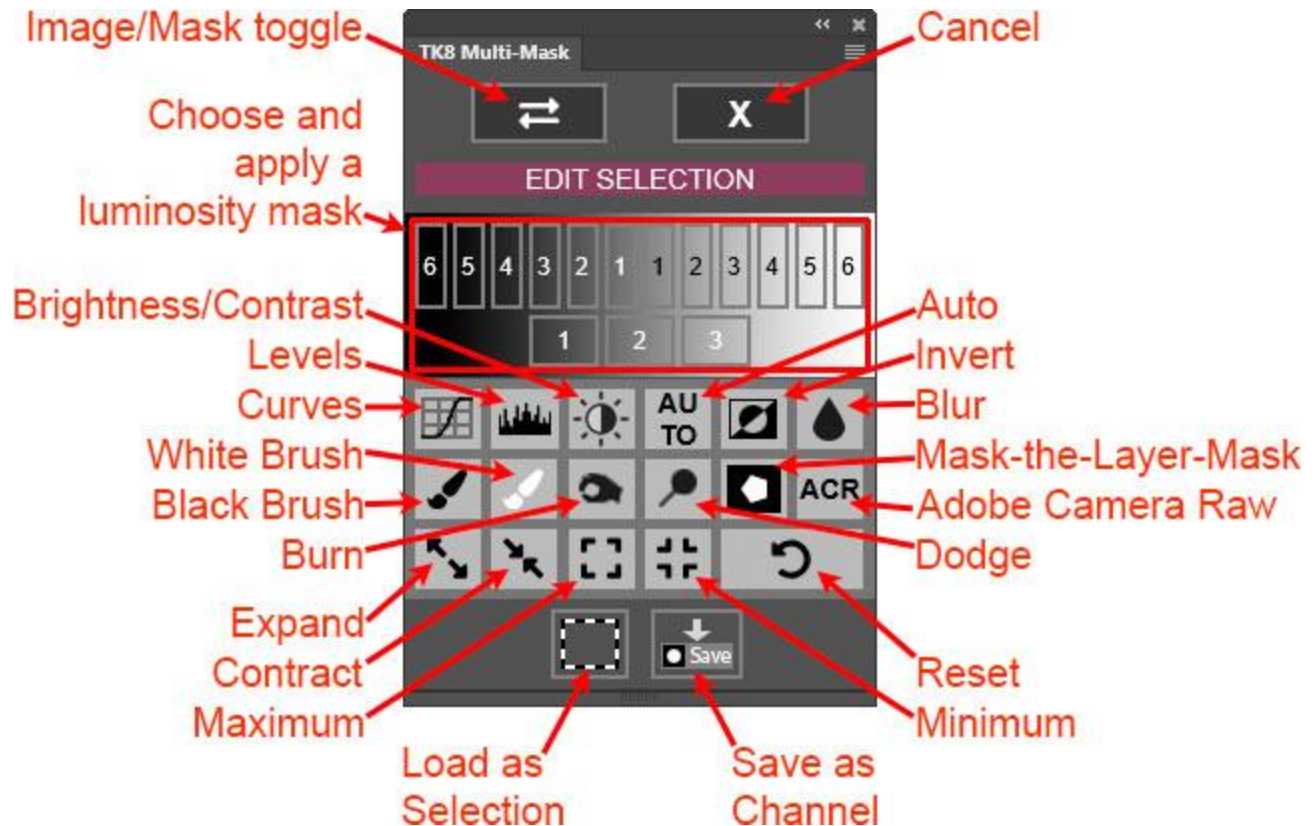
Minimum—Opens the Minimum dialog window. This option would be useful for contracting an Edge mask.

Reset—Resets all adjustments and returns the layer mask to the state it was in when entering Layer Mask mode.

When finished adjusting the layer mask, click the X button in the upper right corner of the module to return to viewing the Multi-Mask module's main interface.

7. Edit Selection

The Edit Selection button opens the Edit Selection interface, which is sort of like Layer Mask mode for an active selection. Instead of adjusting the layer mask to change how the mask reveals that layer's values in the image, Edit Selection makes a temporary layer mask of the active selection, and then the Edit Selection interface allows for altering this mask. The modify options in the Edit Selection interface are the exact same ones that are available in the Layer Mask mode interface described above. *NOTE: The luminosity mask choices are based on the current state of the image.*

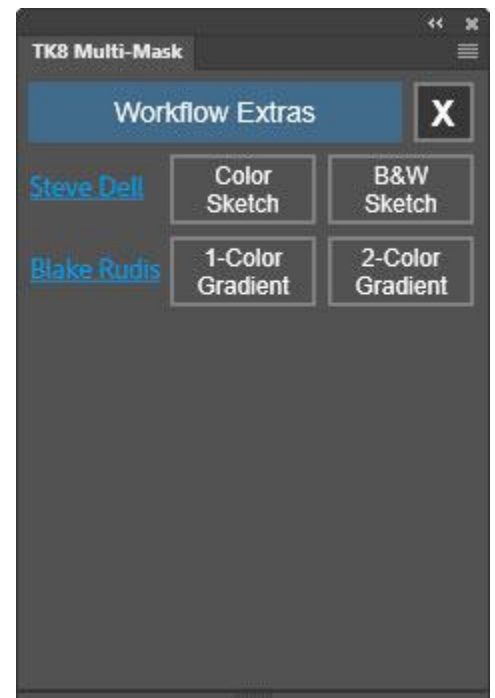


Once the selection mask has been adjusted as desired, there are two output options at the bottom: Load as Selection and Save as Channel. Load as Selection will load the adjusted mask as a selection and close the Edit Selection interface. Save as Channel saves the modified mask as a channel on the Channels panel, but does NOT close the Edit Selection interface.

8. Workflow Extras

The buttons in this section provide creative methods for adjusting the image. Where appropriate, there are also links to online content that help explain the technique or to the photographer who introduced me to the technique.

Color Sketch—This action turns a photograph into a colored sketch. Sketch lines are added at obvious edges and colors are made more even, especially darker colors which end up lighter. The action stops so the user can enter a "Radius" value in a "Minimum" dialog window. This value determines how wide the edge lines will appear in the image. The default is 4 pixels. Larger values create wider edge lines. The action also creates a Levels adjustment layer above the "Color Sketch" group.



After creating a color sketch, adjusting the Properties of this layer often helps to create a better brightness balance in the image's dark and light tones. *NOTE: Images and elements lacking distinct edges sometimes show little change after running the Color Sketch action. Clouds, for example, may change very little because they generally lack distinct edges and are usually also already bright in the image.*

B&W Sketch—This button works the same as the Color Sketch except that the resulting sketch is monochrome instead of color.

1-Color Gradient—This action creates a Gradient Fill adjustment layer where the gradient extends from one color (yellow is the default) to transparent. Using this gradient with the Radial or Diamond style adds a focused, colored highlight to an image that can simulate lens flare or that can add glow light to the image. The Gradient Fill dialog window provides many options for customizing the effect, like changing the color, style, and scale. While this dialog window is open, the Move tool is active and can be used to position the effect to wherever it's desired in the image.

2-Color Gradient—This action creates a Gradient Fill adjustment that uses two colors in combination with the Linear gradient style. The Gradient Fill dialog can be used to change the gradient's colors, scale, and angle. The move tool is active when the dialog window is open to allow positioning the gradient where it works best in the image.

NOTE: For both the 1-Color Gradient and 2-Color Gradient actions, clicking the Blake Rudis link in the interface opens a video where Blake Rudis and Sean Bagshaw demonstrate how to creatively apply these color gradients to images.

9. Tooltips

Multi-Mask has extensive tooltips coded into almost all buttons and sliders. It is turned on by default the first time the plugin is opened and will display tooltips at either the top or the bottom of the module whenever the mouse moves over an element that has a help message. These constantly appearing tooltips can easily be turned off by unchecking the "Show tooltips" checkbox in the preferences interface, which is accessed by clicking the TK button. Once turned off, tooltips are still available. Just hold down the "ALT" key on Windows or the "option" key on Mac and then move the mouse over a button or slider. The help message for that button will appear either at the top or the bottom of the module.

10. Preferences

The preferences settings for the Multi-Mask module are accessed by clicking the TK button on the plugin's main interface. From this window you can set the following options:

Language—The user interface for the module can be displayed in six different languages simply by clicking the corresponding language button.

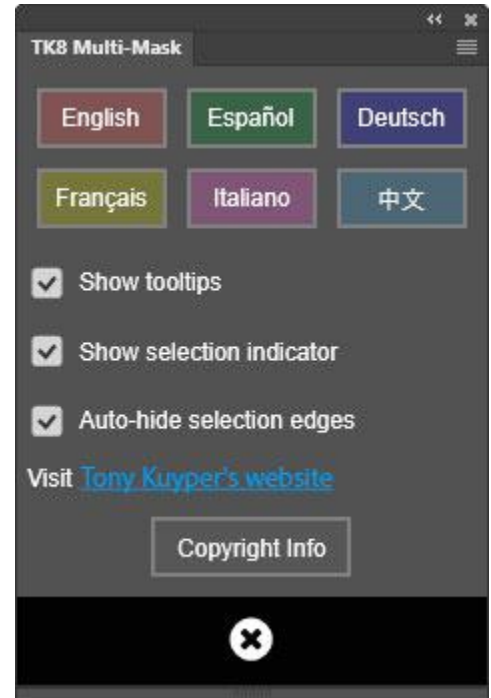
Show tooltips—Checking this box automatically displays help messages at the top or bottom of the module when moving the mouse over buttons or sliders. Unchecking it turns off these constant help messages, but they can still be displayed by holding down the "ALT" key on Windows or the "option" key on Mac when rolling over a button or slider.

Show selection Indicator—An animated, black-and-white selection indicator turns on and surrounds the perimeter of the module whenever there is an active selection. Even if the selection edges are hidden, the selection indicator serves as a reminder that an active selection exists. There are occasional reports that this animated indicator requires excess CPU resources. If this happens, the best solution is to uncheck the "Show selection indicator" checkbox.

Auto-hide selection edges—When this option is checked, selection edges (marching ants) are automatically hidden when the module outputs a selection. This is generally desirable since the effectiveness of painting through the selection is best judged with the edges turned off. Having this option turned on means the module automatically hides the edges and you can just start painting on your image. The default for this option is to have the checkbox checked.

The Preferences interface also has a link to visit Tony Kuyper's website and for viewing copyright and end-user license agreement information.

NOTE: CTRL/command+clicking on the TK button on the module's main interface reloads the panel. This is rarely necessary, but can be used to reset the panel if it appears to not be functioning properly.



MY ACTIONS MODULE

The TK8 My Actions module provides a convenient way to organize your favorite actions into a single list. Actions can be quickly added and removed, tagged with different color backgrounds, and moved higher or lower in the list. Instead of scrolling through different action sets in Photoshop's regular Actions panel, the My Actions module puts your most important actions into one list that can be easily updated whenever needed. An unlimited number of actions can be added to the My Actions module.

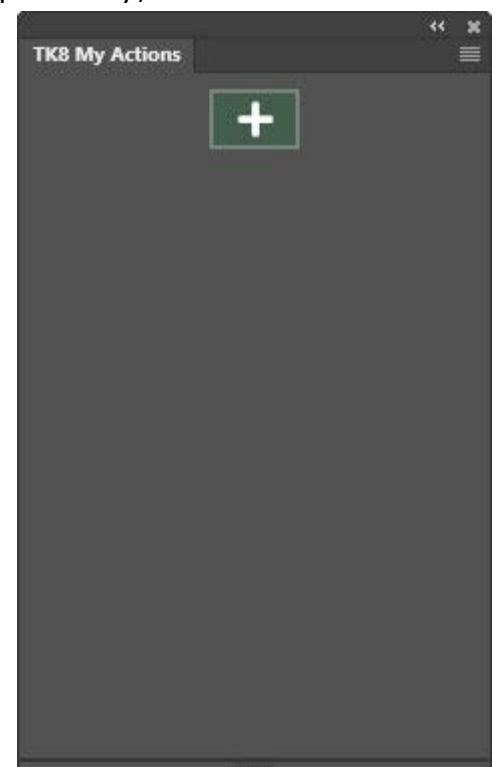
The module is dynamic both in the way the user's actions can be organized and also in the way it can be docked in the workspace. Many TK8 users have some extra space below their docked Combo or Cx module. The My Actions module conveniently fits below both, and the interface adjusts to the different widths.

My Actions works similarly to the User Actions on the Combo and Cx modules, but has several new features.

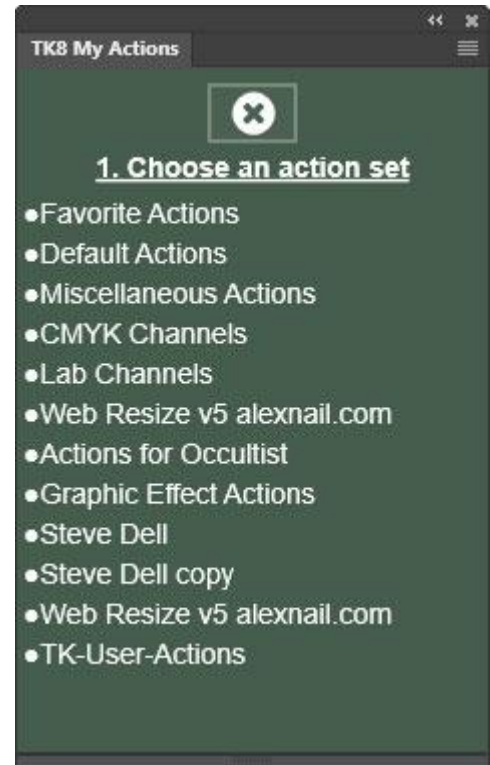
- Multiple actions can be added and removed at the same time.
- Actions can be moved higher or lower in the actions list for better organization.
- Action names wrap so that they do not get cut off at the end if the action name is longer than the width of the module.
- The action name appears as the history state on the History panel when an action is run from the My Actions module.
- More colors available for color-tagging individual actions with different background colors.
- Module preferences, like language choice, are now incorporated into the fly-out menu accessed in the upper right corner of the module.
- No rollover help. The module is pretty much self-explanatory, so there's no tooltips.
- Users are alerted if they try to add duplicate action names and action names with special characters that cause problems.

1. Adding actions

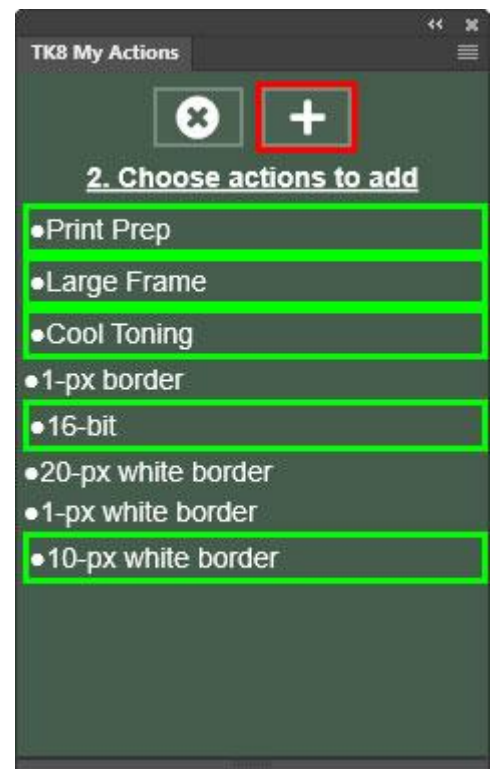
There's only one button when the My Actions module opens, and that's the green-shaded "+" button. Click it to get started.



Clicking the "+" buttons opens a new green-shaded interface where the user is asked to select an action set from those found on the user's Actions panel.

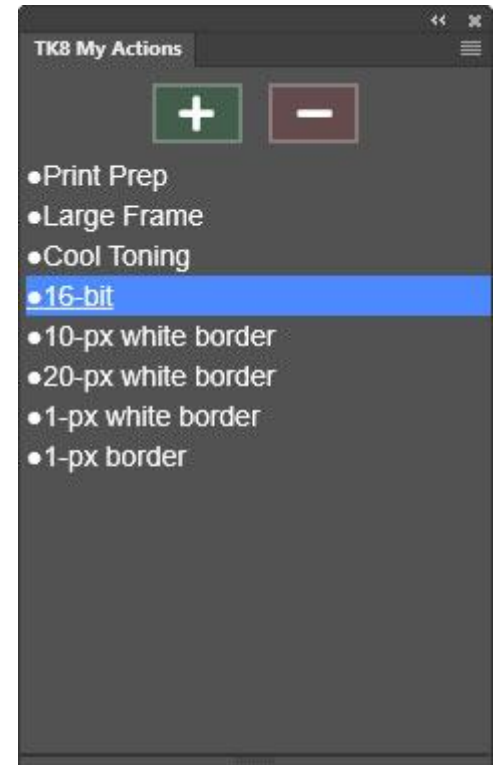


Clicking an action set opens a list of actions in that action set. From this list of actions, the user chooses one or more actions they intend to add to the module's actions list. A green outline appears around each action that's selected. *NOTE: To unchoose an action, simply click it again to remove the green outline.* Once the action(s) have been chosen, click the "+" button at the top of the interface to add them to the module's actions list.



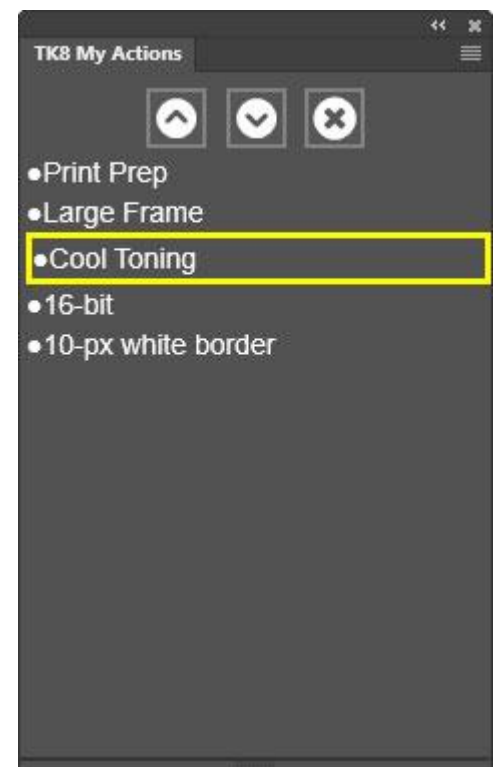
2. Playing an action

To play an action that's been added to the actions list, simply click its name in the list. The action plays and the action's name is added as a new history state on the History panel. *NOTE: Actions that contain ExtendScript code cannot be run directly from the module. To play an action that contains ExtrendScript code it is necessary to first create a separate action on Photoshop's action's panel that plays the action with the ExtendScript code and then add this new action to the module's actions list.*



3. Moving actions

Once actions have been added to the module's action list, they can be moved higher or lower on the list for better organization. To do this, CTRL+click (Windows) or command+click (Mac) on one of the actions in the list. This places a yellow outline around the actions name and displays the "move" buttons at the top of the module. Using the up and down arrow "move" buttons, move the selected action higher or lower in the list. *NOTE: Only one action can be selected and moved at a time.* Once action-moving is complete, click the "X" button at the top of the module to hide the "move" buttons.



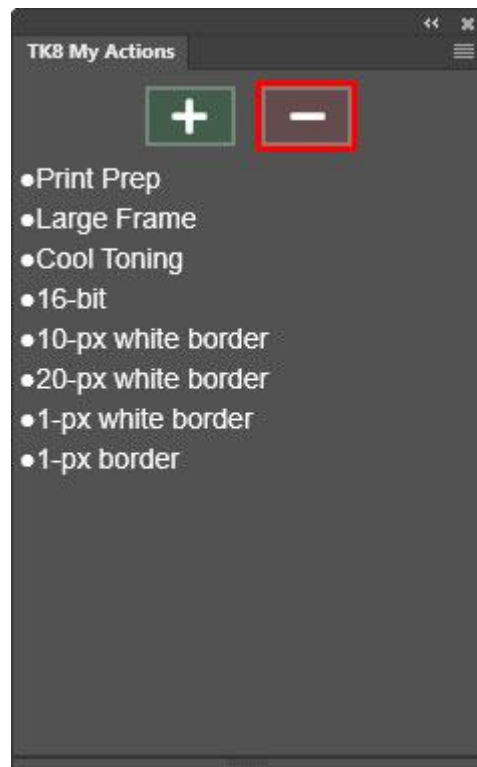
4. Changing background colors for actions

To also help organize the actions in the actions list, the background color of each action can be changed to one of ten different colors. To do this, right-click on any action to open a window of available color choices and click on a color swatch. The chosen action will then have its background color changed accordingly. *NOTE: To remove a previously added background color, click the gray outline (center option on the bottom row) in the window of available color choices.*



5. Removing actions

To remove actions from the module's actions list, click the red-shaded "-" button at the top of the module.



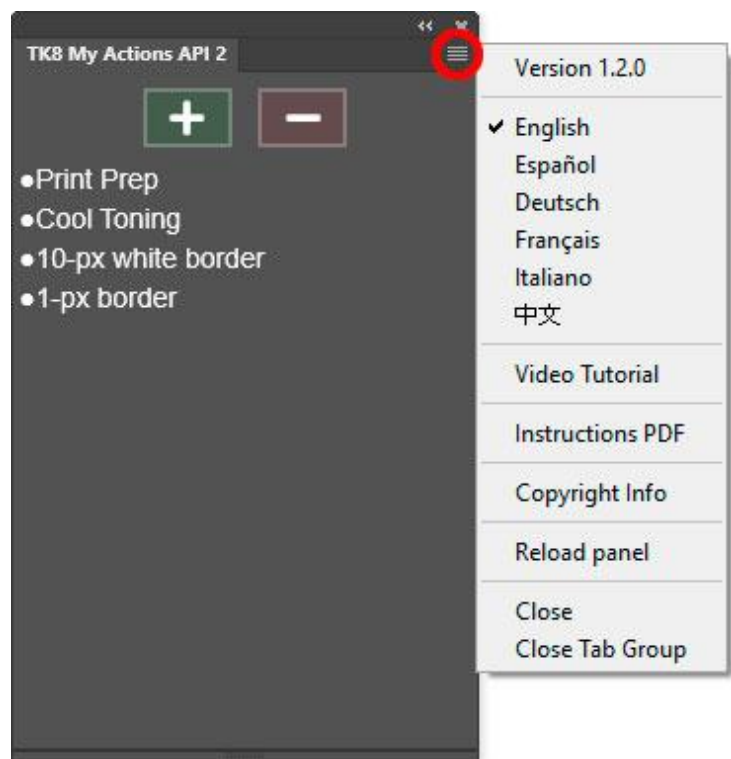
A new red-shaded interface opens. Choose one or more actions to remove. A red outline appears around each chosen action. NOTE: To un-choose an action for remove, click it again to remove the red-outline. Finally, click the "-" button at the top of the interface to remove the chosen actions and return to the main action-list interface.



6. The fly-out menu

There is no "TK" button on the My Actions module to access module preferences. Instead, the fly-out menu in the upper right corner provides preferences access. This menu can be used to

- Check the version number
- Set the language
- Watch an instructional online video
- Open the instructions PDF
- Review copyright information
- Reload the module if it's not functioning properly



SATURATION/VIBRANCE

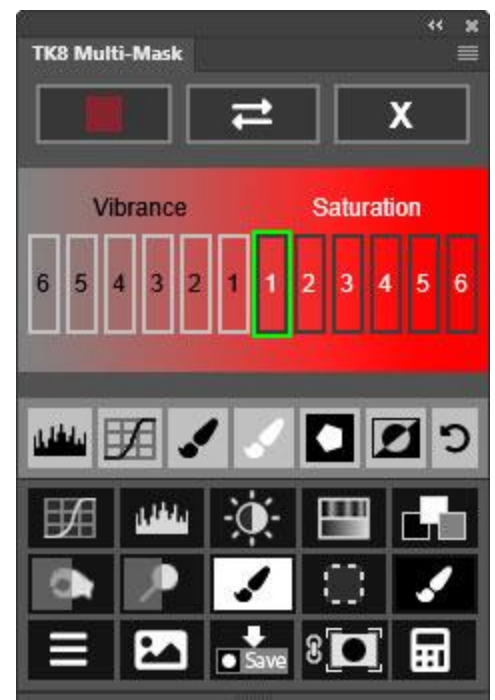
Saturation is just another dataset for making masks with the Multi-Mask module. It treats it like any other pixel-value dataset that can be accessed and used to make masks and selections.

While saturation is very different than luminosity, it's also similar in that there are positive and negative masks associated with both properties. For luminosity, positive masks are the Lights-series and negative masks are the Darks-series. For saturation, the positive mask is the Saturation mask. This is a mask where the more saturated the color, the lighter the grayscale tone in the mask. The negative of saturation is vibrance. So in the same way that a Darks-1 mask is a negative of a Lights-1 mask, a Vibrance-1 mask is the negative of a Saturation-1 mask. In a Vibrance mask, the less saturated the color is in the image, the lighter its gray value in the mask, and the more saturated the pixel color, the darker the grayscale tone in the mask. So luminosity has Lights and Darks masks, and saturation has Saturation and Vibrance masks (see images below). More information on saturation masks can be found in [this blog post](#).



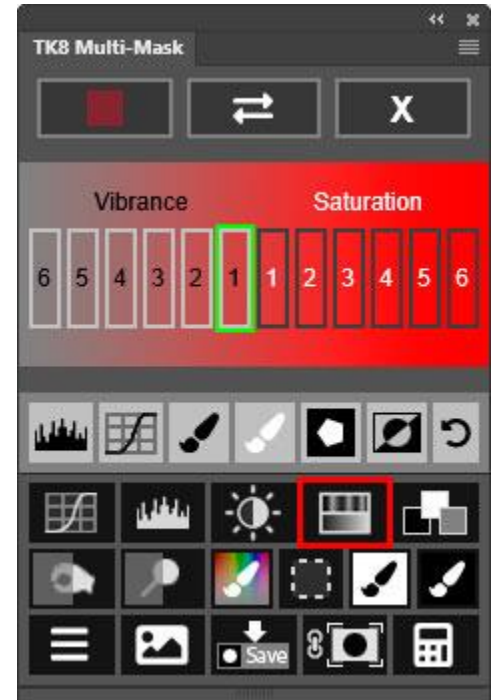
There are two main ways to use the saturation features in the Multi-Mask module to adjust image saturation. The first is through Hue/Saturation adjustment layers. Use the Saturation/Vibrance button on the main interface to create an initial "Saturation-1" Saturation mask.

Saturation masks can be used to control over-saturated colors in the image. To do this, find a Saturation mask using the buttons that shows white or light gray in the over-saturated colors that need to be desaturated. As mentioned above, saturation in most images is generally less than expected, so saturation masks tend to be quite dark. It might be necessary to brighten the Saturation-1 mask using Curves or Levels in the MODIFY section to create a mask with the needed light gray values. Once an appropriate Saturation mask targeting the image's over-saturated colors is available, use the use the Hue/Sat



OUTPUT button to generate a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer with the on-screen Saturation mask applied as a layer mask. Then go to the Properties panel for this Hue/Sat layer and move the Saturation slider to the left to decrease saturation in either the Master channel or in one of the color channels in the drop-down menu. The image's over-saturated colors, now targeted by the layer mask, will have their saturation decreased as a result, and, because the layer mask is pixel-based, the adjustment will blend perfectly into the rest of the image. Low-saturation colors will not be affected by this adjustment. They are dark or black in the layer mask and therefore effectively concealed from this adjustment.

Vibrance can be addressed in a similar manner. Start by making a Vibrance-1 mask. Most photographic images have a lot of low-saturation colors, so the initial mask for vibrance usually has a lot of light gray and white tones and is not generally useful for accurately targeting perceptually unsaturated colors. However, it's easy to try different Vibrance masks to further restrict the selection to progressively less-saturated colors thereby producing a more functional mask. Vibrance-3, -4, or -5 are usually more appropriate. Once an appropriate mask targeting vibrance is generated, use the OUTPUT section to generate a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer with on-screen mask as the layer mask. Then use the Properties panel to make the necessary adjustment. For vibrance, the goal is almost always to boost the saturation of the low-saturated colors, so drag the Saturation slider to the right to add saturation. The Vibrance layer mask will insure that the adjustment targets unsaturated colors and that the adjustment blends well into the image. It's often surprising how far the Saturation slider can be pushed to the right when a Vibrance mask is filtering the effect and preventing saturated colors for being affected.



By using Saturation and Vibrance masks on separate Hue/Saturation adjustment layers, it's usually possible to bring a better saturation balance to the image and often to creatively improve it.

NOTE: Using Hue/Saturation layers with Saturation and Vibrance masks has two advantages over using Photoshop's Vibrance adjustment, which also has sliders for Saturation and Vibrance. The first is that Photoshop's Vibrance adjustment layer does not treat all colors equally. It tries to prevent oversaturation of flesh tones, which means reds are treated differently than greens. For some images, like portraits, that's ideal, but for others, like fall foliage, it might not be. Not only does a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer NOT make this distinction for red colors, it actually lets the user select the color channel they want to adjust. And this is the second important difference. There are no color channel options with Photoshop's Vibrance adjustment layer. Saturation and vibrance of different colors, like blue

and magenta, can only be addressed independently using a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer.

Saturation Painting

A second method to add or remove color saturation is with saturation painting. This is very similar to [luminosity painting](#). However, instead of painting with black and white through a luminosity selection to affect image brightness in specific tones, saturation painting paints with a saturated or unsaturated color through a Saturation or Vibrance selection to affect saturation in specific colors.

Here's how to do. Start by making a Saturation mask that adequately targets over-saturated colors in the image. Then click the [Saturation Painting](#) button found in the [OUTPUT menu](#) button of the OUTPUT section. This creates a blank pixel layer set to Saturation blend mode and loads the current on-screen Saturation mask as a selection. It also resets the default foreground and background colors to gray and red. Gray painted onto the "Saturation Painting" layer removes color saturation. Red increases it. Brush opacity is varied to control the effect.



Generally, the goal of saturation painting is to better balance saturation in the image by removing excess saturation from over-saturated colors (painting with gray onto the "Saturation Painting" layer). Over-saturation is often a local problem confined to small and specific areas of the image. The Saturation mask is used to precisely target where the paint is applied. A Saturation mask selection only allows gray paint to be brushed onto the saturated colors in the image. Because saturation painting can have dramatic effects when brush opacity is high, it's best to start with low opacity (around 10 or 20 percent) and slowly build up the desired saturation change with multiple brushstrokes.

While saturation painting works locally to lower saturation on over-saturated pixels, vibrance is often best adjusted more globally. A Hue/Saturation adjustment layer with a Vibrance mask described above often works well for this. Most images can handle a global increase in saturation in the under-saturated colors. These global saturation increases through a Vibrance mask often look completely natural since additional saturation of more saturated colors is prevented by the Vibrance mask, which appropriately restricts the saturation change to unsaturated colors.

In summary, proper saturation balance can usually be achieved using a combination of (a) saturation painting through a Saturation selection to decrease oversaturation and (b) a Hue/Saturation adjustment through a Vibrance layer mask to increase saturation of under-saturated colors. This combination often allows more saturation to be incorporated into the image without the image looking over-

saturated. The key is to use Saturation and Vibrance masks in a way that insures that both global and local saturation are properly addressed.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The module has been tested on Mac and Windows. There are occasionally unexpected problems when using the module. A few of the most common problems and possible solutions are listed on the following pages. If you have other problems, please [contact me](#) and I'll try to help.

1. The modules have been installed but don't show up in Photoshop. There are a couple of things to try.

a) Make sure to check for the modules in the Photoshop "Plugins" menu.

The Plugins menu is new starting in Photoshop 2021. The old place of finding the TK panel under Window > Extensions (legacy) no longer works with this TK8 plugin.

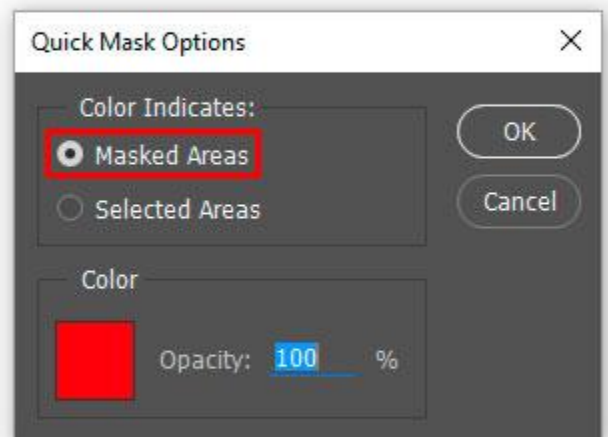
b) Try rebooting the computer.

2. The masks generated by the module are inverted (the "Lights" masks are negatives and the "Dark" masks are positives).

This is NOT a problem caused by the module. If you create a selection using one of the Photoshop's other selection tools and then save the selection as a mask, it will also be inverted. So this is a Photoshop problem. There are two possible solutions.

a) Double-click the Edit in Quick Mask Mode button (rectangle with a circle inside) near the bottom of the Tools panel. From the pop-up window, make sure the radio button for "Masked Areas" is selected. If the "Selected Areas" radio button is selected, masks will be inverted.

b) If the first solution doesn't work, it's possible the Photoshop "Preferences" file is corrupted and needs to be reset. An online video to help do this can be found [here](#).

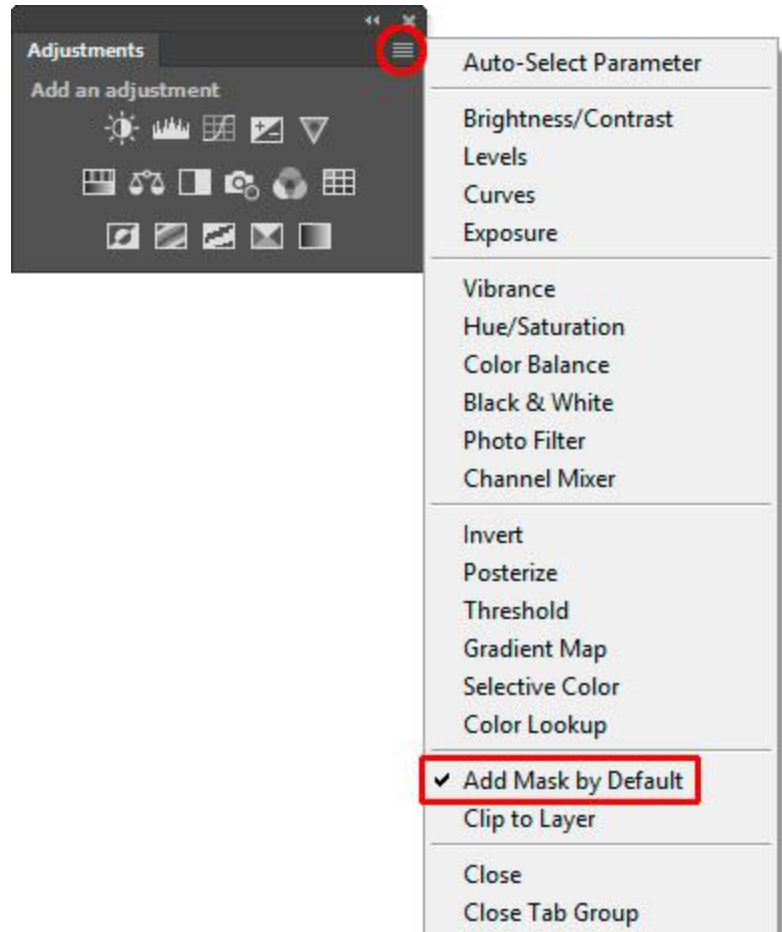


3. A recommendation to properly manage adjustment layers and layer masks.

As mentioned earlier in this PDF, it's generally a good idea to make sure Photoshop is adding a layer mask automatically when it creates a new adjustment layer. To check for this, first open the Adjustments panel (Window > Adjustments).

Then open the fly-out menu (four bars in upper right corner) and make sure the "Add Mask by Default" is checked. If not, click on it to toggle the check mark on.

Also make sure that "Clip to Layer" is NOT checked. If it is checked, click it to turn off the check mark.



I hope the TK8 plugin is useful to you and that it helps you achieve your artistic goals in Photoshop. Please feel free to [contact me](#) if you have any questions, problems, or suggestions.