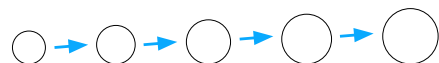


Photoshop 2026 brush guide illustrated advanced technique



Set the Pixel Diameter Size

While the Brush tool is active, and hovered over image, use left square bracket [to decrease; or right square bracket] to increase the pixel diameter of the brush.



Or, right-click over the image to pop-up the Brush Preset Picker panel. Change size and hardness, and begin to paint again. The panel will vanish as you begin to paint.

Set Hardness Control

Press Shift + [or] to decrease/increase hardness. Each press moves the feathering in 25% increments, from 100% (solid color from the center to the edge of brush), to 0% (fading to no color at edge of brush).



Or, right-click the image. The Brush Preset picker panel pops up. Make your changes to size and hardness, and begin to paint again. The panel will vanish as you paint.

Resizing Using the Heads-Up Display

Mac: Ctrl+Opt+drag ↔ to change size; and ↑↓ to change hardness. Win: Alt+Right-Click+drag. To change Opacity instead of Hardness on vertical drag, choose Preferences > Tools and uncheck Vary Round Brush Hardness based on HUD vertical movement.

Set the Opacity Control

Use number pad to set opacity. Example: Type 3 = 30%, or typing 77 = 77%. Or hover over Opacity label name in the Options Bar Control Panel and scrubby slide (drag) left or right.

Rotate Brush Tip

Rotate the brush tip by using the ← and → arrow keys.

Set the Flow Control

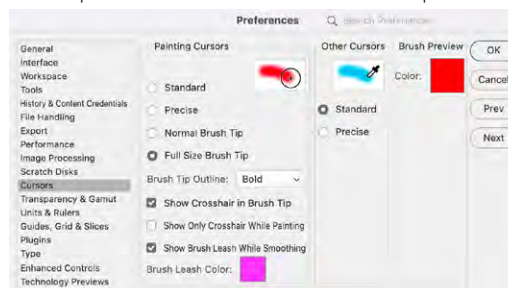
Use SHIFT + numbers to set flow. Or, hover over Flow label name in Control Panel and scrub (drag) left or right.

Airbrush Mode Shortcut

Shift+Opt+P (Mac) or Shift+Alt+P (Win) simulates air-brushing. Paint builds up as you hold the mouse button

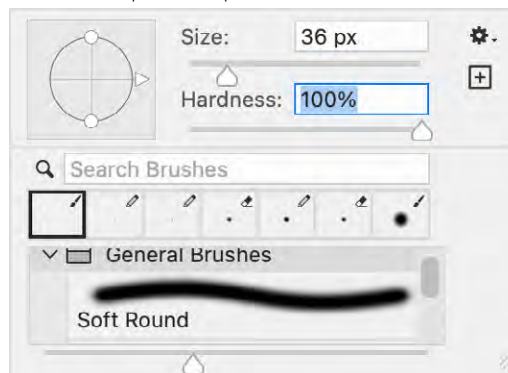
Brush Tool Cursor

Switch to Precise Cursor by pressing Caps Lock key or: Preferences > Cursors > Painting Cursors. Choose Full Size Brush tip and Show Crosshair in the Brush Tip:



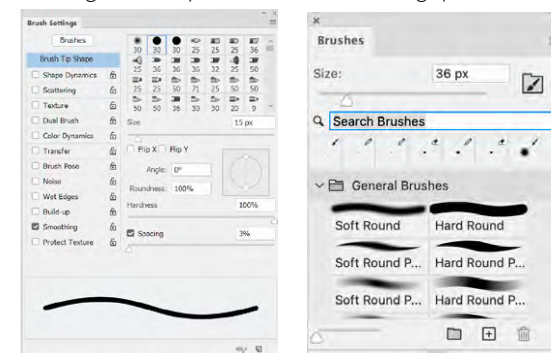
Brush Preset picker panel

Right-click on image in document window. Or click on Brush Preset picker drop-down arrow in Control Panel.



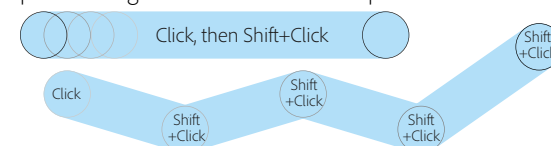
View Brush Settings panel

Pressing the F5 key shows the Brush Settings panel.



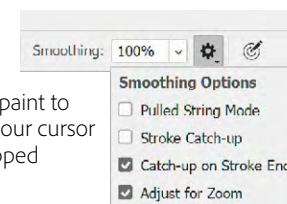
Paint a straight line

Hold the Shift key for a constrained line at 0°, 45°, or 90°. Or click a spot, hold down Shift key and click another spot to paint a straight line between the two points:



Brush Smoothing

Pulled String Mode paints only when the string is taut. Stroke Catch Up allows the paint to continue catching up with your cursor while you've paused or stopped painting the stroke.



Opt/Alt key samples color

Hold the Opt/Alt key and click to sample image color.