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Layer Effects

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About Layer Effects

Layer Effects was a great addition to Photoshop version 5. I was really surprised to see this new feature. Like Photoshop has its own built in Plug-in now for our daily tasks, I thought it was totally complete. As we used to do our entire Drop Shadows, Embossing, Glows etc. by hand, we can now go right up to the menu and have Photoshop do all the work for us. Another cool thing is that the effects we apply to the layers can be edited, changed and tweaked at any time, this made it way more than anything else I could expect. We can even embed any effect onto its own layer. When we do, this will enable us to actually edit the effect using any tool to get it just how we want it. I think it's great that we have this nifty new feature, like they were watching us day after day doing drop shadows and now with just a few clicks we are done and can move on to the real work. You can apply these effects to virtually almost any object or text. Layer Effects are especially useful for enhancing type layers. I'll give you an overview on what these effects look like and what we can do with them. If you would like to follow along. Make some type on its own layer and go to **Layer>Effects>Drop Shadow** to bring up the Effects.

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Drop Shadows & Glows



First in line is the Drop Shadow effect, probably the most used one out of all. I use it quite a bit myself. The Shadow effect along with the Glow effect contain most of the same general options. Lets go over what each one does:

- **Mode:** Is where you set how you want your shadow/effect to overlay on to the background or layer below it. In most cases, the default mode for each effect produces the best results.
- **Color:** Next to the Mode setting you will see a box, click on this and choose the color of the effect.
- **Opacity:** How visible you want the effect.
- **Angle:** Determines the lighting angle at which the effect is applied to the layer.
- **Distance:** How far the effect is from the Type or original graphic.
- **Blur:** Full control of our effects blur. Creates a softened effect. A higher value increases the spread of the diffuse.
- **Global Angle Check Box:** Your angle setting of this layer will change all the layers containing Effects. Uncheck this if you want that angle to be dependent on this layer only.
- **Preview Check Box:** This allows you to see a preview of the effect before you click the OK button.
- **Intensity:** Here you can adjust the strength of the effect that is applied to the layer. A higher value increases the strength of the effect.

Drop Shadow & Glow Samples

Now I'll show some variations for each of the effects. Most I have modified the settings from their default versions. So if you see something you like, you can copy my settings. I put a description next to each one.

Drop Shadow

Drop Shadow 1

Drop Shadow at default setting.

Drop Shadow

Drop Shadow 2

Default setting with 15 for Distance.

Drop Shadow

Drop Shadow 3

Change text to blue. Default setting.

Opacity: 100

Distance: 4

Blur: 4

Intensity: 600

**Inner
Shadow**

IG
inner glow

Outer Glow

Outer Glow

Inner Shadow

A darker smaller shadow usually makes a more cleaner sharper look. I really like this setting. Start with the Inner Shadow at Default setting.

Opacity: 90

Distance: 3

Blur: 4

Inner Glow

Usually the Inner Glow effect goes well when using larger type.

Text Color: Pastel Blue

Glow Color: Light Blue

Mode: Screen

Opacity: 100

Blur: 14

Intensity: 440

Edge

Outer Glow

Outer Glow at Default setting.

Color: Bright Yellow.

Opacity: 100

Blur: 3

Intensity: 600.

Cool outline text look.

Outer Glow 2

Background: Pink

Outer Glow default setting.

Mode: Dissolve

Color: Bright Green

Opacity: 100

Blur: 19

Intensity: 600

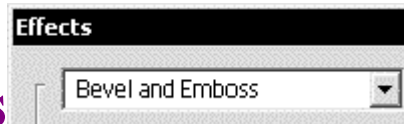
Great Halloween type look.

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Bevel &

Emboss Effects



The last on the list are the Bevel and Emboss Effects. These are extremely cool if used properly and not over used. We have quite a few new options here. Lets go over them.

- **Highlight/Shadow:** Full control of Mode, Color, and Opacity of these 2 areas.
- **Style:** Under the style menu we have several different choices of effects:
 - **Outer Bevel**
 - **Inner Bevel**
 - **Emboss**
 - **Pillow Emboss**
- **Angle:** Determines the lighting angle at which the effect is applied to the layer.
- **Depth:** A higher value results in a more accentuated bevel.
- **Blur:** A higher value increases the spread of the diffuse
- **Up/Down:** This is where you choose if you want your bevel to look popped up or pushed down.

Bevel & Emboss Effect Samples

Alright, now for the fun part. I'll make some examples of each Bevel Style. I will include my settings. By the way, the screen shot above is the default setting for the Bevel and Emboss Effects. If you need to reset to the default setting, press the **ALT key (Mac: Option)** and the Cancel button should change to a Reset button.



Outer Bevel 1

Really basic. Blue text having the same blue on the background layer.

Highlight Mode: Screen

Highlight Opacity: 100

Shadow Mode: Multiply

Shadow Opacity: 100

Style: Outer Bevel

Angle: 120

Depth: 12

Blur: 4

Up/Down: Up



Outer Bevel 2

Sort of a fruity one here. I used a dark purple background with light purple text.

Highlight Mode: Color Dodge

Highlight Opacity: 100

Shadow Mode: Darken

Shadow Opacity: 100

Style: Outer Bevel

Angle: 120

Depth: 20

Blur: 5

Up/Down: Up

Last I added [sparkles](#) with one of the default brushes.



Inner Bevel

Highlight Mode: Screen

Highlight Opacity: 75

Shadow Mode: Multiply

Shadow Opacity: 100

Style: Inner Bevel

Angle: 120

Depth: 20

Blur: 2

Up/Down: Up



Emboss

Start with color text on same color background

Highlight Mode: Screen

Highlight Opacity: 100

Shadow Mode: Multiply

Shadow Opacity: 100

Style: Emboss

Angle: 120

Depth: 1

Blur: 0

Up/Down: Down



Pillow Emboss

Sort of that trendy pushed in type look everyone's after. You can even Pillow some rectangles for some buttons.

Highlight Mode: Screen

Highlight Opacity: 77

Shadow Mode: Multiply

Shadow Opacity: 100

Style: Pillow Emboss

Angle: 120

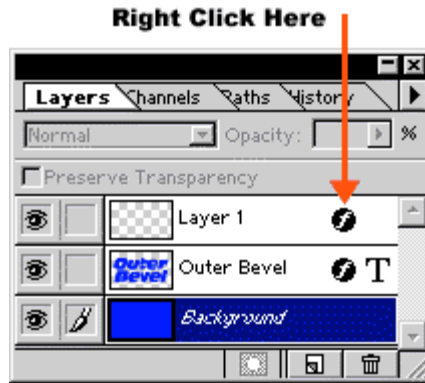
Depth: 6

Blur: 6

Up/Down: Up

Copy and Paste Effects

We can even copy effects from one layer and paste it on to another. To do this it's very simple. **Right Click** on the little " f " symbol on any layer with effects, then choose **Copy Effects**. Now make a new layer and Right Click on it and choose **Paste Effects**. Anything made on that new layer will result with effects that were pasted.



Multiple Effects at once

Photoshop allows us to do Multiple Effects at once. For example, when we apply a Bevel to a type layer, we can also give it a Drop Shadow. This is easy to do. Once you have applied an Effect, then select another effect (like a glow) from under the pop down menu, you might need to click on "Apply" to apply this 2nd effect. Now you have 2 effects going at once. You can apply all the Effects if you want to.



Embed Effect for editing

This is where Photoshop no longer has control of the effect you choose. Turning an Effect into a layer is very easy. Right Click on the Effects Icon (like shown above) and choose **Create Layers**. There you have it, Photoshop Automatically makes layers for the effect. This is great for wanting to erase parts of a Drop Shadow that could not be done while the effect is still being automated.