

Selecting Methods Finding the one that works for you.

The number one thing I am asked about when I teach Photoshop is the best way to select something. Everyone wants to know how to cut out backgrounds (COB) on photos.

While there are a whole bunch of ways to make selections in Photoshop, according to Photoshop guru Dave Cross, "Always aim to end up with a great selection." That means you should use as many of these tools as you need to, to get the selection you want. The page after this one shows you my a favorite method. It's what I call, "Down and Dirty" selecting.

Selection tips:

1. Try the automated commands first. This includes the magic wand, the Quick Selection tool, the Extract filter (no longer available in CS4) and the magnetic lasso tool.
2. Fine tune your selection by using keyboard modifiers.
 - a. Add to the selection by holding down the shift key.
 - b. Subtract from the selection by holding down the Option (Alt) key.
 - c. Use Transform Selection on the Selection Menu.
3. Sometimes it's easier to select what you don't want rather than what you do want and then inverse it.
4. Use Quick Mask to preview selection.
5. Use Refine Edges (CS 3 & 4 only).
6. Save your selection for future use. See Save Selection on the Selection menu.
7. Use Layers to save and make selections.
8. Turn a selection into a layer mask.
9. Make a selection using Channels (advanced stuff that I teach in the advanced class).

Bonus Selection Tips:

1. Select Inverse=Command (Control on PC) Shift I
2. DeSelect=Command (Control on PC) D or ReSelect=Command (Control on PC) D
3. Feather=Command (Control on PC)-Option (Alt on PC) D
4. Load a Selection=Command (Control on PC) click on a layer, channel or layer mask thumbnail

Selection Tools



Marquee tools

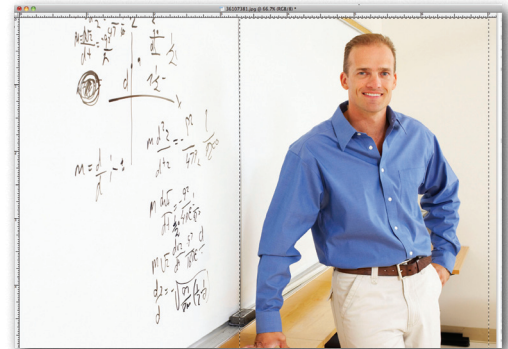
- Rectangular Marquee Tool M
- Elliptical Marquee Tool M
- Single Row Marquee Tool
- Single Column Marquee Tool

Lasso tools

- Lasso Tool L
- Polygonal Lasso Tool L
- Magnetic Lasso Tool L

Special Selection Tools

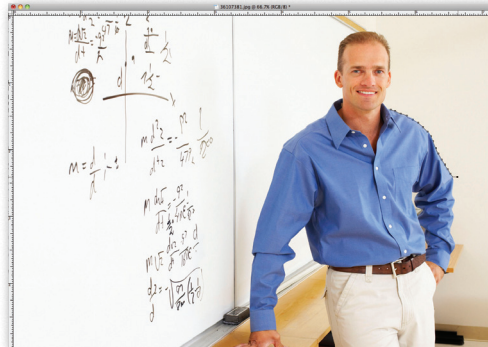
- Quick Selection Tool W
- Magic Wand Tool W



The Rectangular Marquee tool is used to select squares and rectangles. Great for an easy crop.



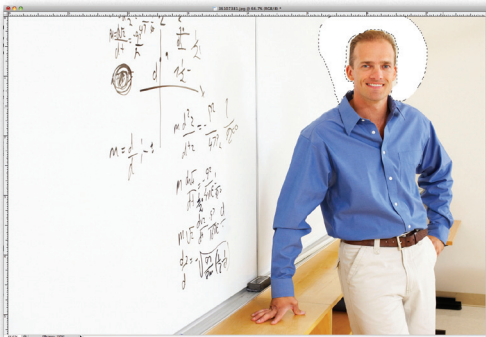
The Elliptical Marquee tool is used to select circles and ellipses. Great for vignetting.



The Magnetic lasso tool does very well when the subjects has two differing color or contrast areas.



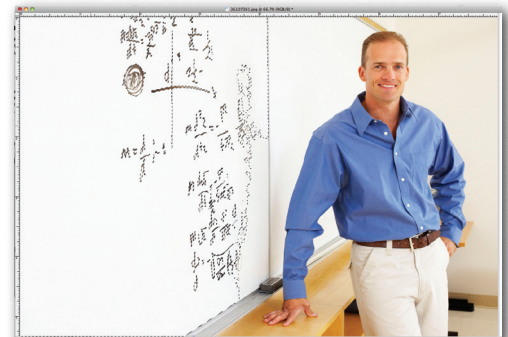
The Polygonal lasso tool is great for selecting anything with a straight edge.



The Lasso tool can be used to select all kinds of edges but can be very difficult to work with.



The Quick Selection tool is new to CS3 and works super until you run into color or contrast similarities.



The Magic Wand tool selects areas of similar color. Not always the best way to go.