

# Tons of Terrific Type Tips

## with Dave Cross

When you use the Type tool (or more accurately, any of the 4 Type tools) a Type layer is automatically created. That means that you do not have to add a new layer first.

Although there are 4 Type tools in Photoshop. Realistically, you'll most often use the Horizontal Type Tool, henceforth known (in this class at least) as the Type tool.

### Don't Use These Tools

The Horizontal and Vertical Type Mask Tools should be avoided as there is a better way to use text as a mask.

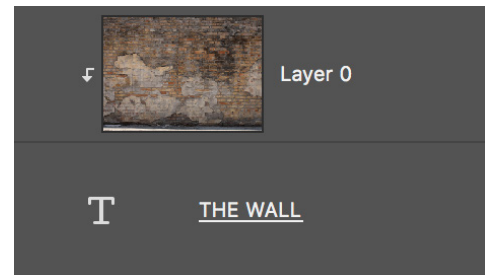
The Type Mask tools make a selection based on your type.



Then you can use that selection to make a Layer Mask. Problem is, the type is no longer editable.

Instead, use the Type tool to add the type. Then move the photo layer above the type layer (if it's a Background layer you'll have to unlock it first).

Then use Layer>Create Clipping Mask to get the desired result – with the ability to continue to edit the type.



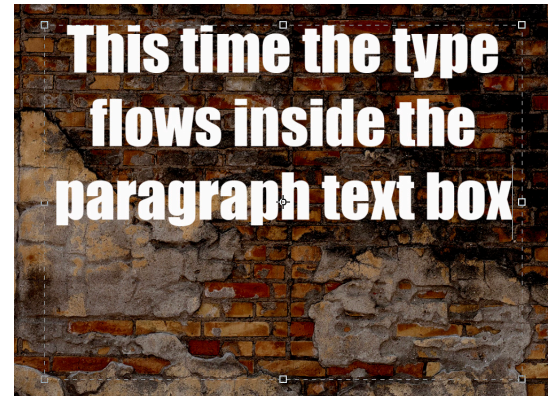
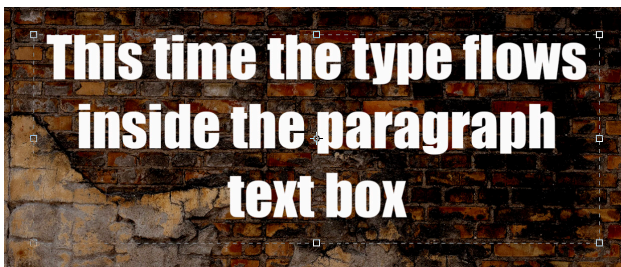
### Point or Paragraph Text

Next let's talk about what kind of text you want on your document: point text or paragraph text. Here's the difference: if you click once with the Type tool you'll create a single line of text known as Point Text. As you type, text will be added and will ultimately go right off the edge of the page. There are no "margins" in a Photoshop document so the text will literally just keep going. This suggests that clicking once to get Point Text is ideal when you're adding a few words.

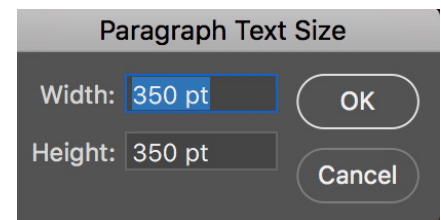
**TIP:** To tell the Type tool that you're "finished" so you can move on to other tasks, click the Commit button in the Options Bar or press Enter on your numeric keypad. If you want to abort and start over, press Esc. In the latest version of Photoshop CC you can simply move the cursor away from the text and click to commit the text.

If you need to reposition the text as you are typing, move your cursor just slightly away from the text until the cursor changes to the Move tool. Then click and drag to reposition the text, after which you can continue editing the text.

The other alternative is Paragraph Text, which is created by clicking and dragging as if you were creating a Marquee Selection. Then when you type, the text is bounded by this text box and will automatically wrap around to the next line. If you need to resize the text box, grab one of the handles – when you resize the text box the text reflows.



TIP: To create a Paragraph text box of a specific size, hold down Option (PC: Alt) and click once and the Paragraph Text Size dialog will appear. Enter the size you want (it defaults to points but you can enter a measurement you want such as “3 in” for 3 inches) and click OK.



TIP: If you have created Point type and then decide later that it should have been Paragraph text, go to the Type menu and choose Convert to Paragraph Text. Conversely you can convert Paragraph Text to Point Text.

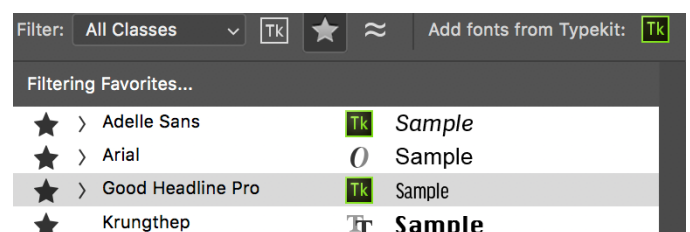
TIP: If you try to add new text too close to existing text, Photoshop will think that you want to edit existing text. To add new text close to existing text, hold down the Shift key and click once to add the new text.

## The Options Bar

The Options Bar determines most of the key settings for your text: with the text highlighted choose Font, Style, Size, Alignment and Color. The Character panel gives you even more control over your text, including things like the space between letters and lines of text. In both cases, the settings you choose will become the “default” every time you add more text, until you change the settings again.

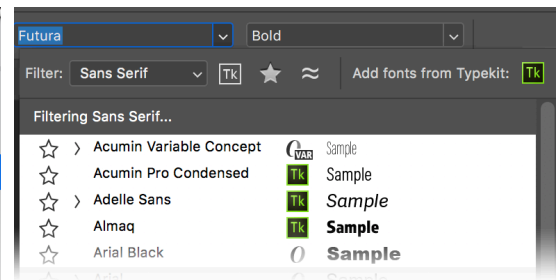
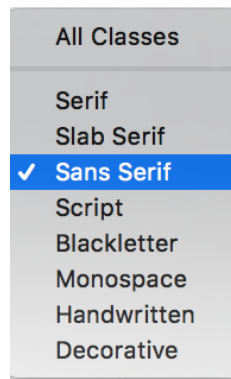


TIP: To access your favorite fonts more easily, click on the stars beside the font, and then click on the star beside Filter: to only show those fonts.



To search through only certain classes of fonts, choose the class from the Filter menu.

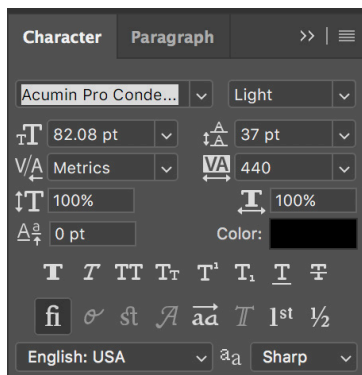
To find fonts similar to the current font, click on the symbol beside the star.



TIP: To highlight all the text on a layer, double-click on the type layer thumbnail in the Layers panel. This will also activate the Type tool if it's not already chosen.

## Tracking

If you want to change the spacing between all the letters in your text, you adjust the Tracking. Select the text and press Option (PC: Alt) and the Right Arrow to increase the tracking, or Option (PC: Alt) and the Left Arrow to decrease the tracking.



DOUGLAS WINTERS  
PHOTOGRAPHY

DOUGLAS WINTERS  
P H O T O G R A P H Y

You can also use the Character panel and change the value for the tracking amount: the higher the amount, the more space between all the letters; a negative amount with decrease the spacing between letters.

## Kerning

While the space between letters across a word is called tracking, it's also possible to adjust the kerning: the space between a pair of letters. Click once between the two characters and then press Option (PC: Alt) and the Left Arrow to tighten the space between the letters, or Option (PC: Alt) and the Right Arrow to increase the space. Generally, you'll probably use this mostly to pull the letters closer together. (Note: you can also do this through the Character panel but I think you'll find it easier and more visual to use the keyboard).

TIP: The need for kerning is most noticeable with text in all caps, and pairs of characters such as A V and A W.

OTTAWA  
OTTAWA

Note that it's the same keyboard shortcut to change both Tracking and Kerning – it really comes down to what you have selected. With an entire word or series of words highlighted, the shortcut will affect the Tracking. If you click once between 2 characters you'll adjust the kerning.

## Leading

Leading is the amount of space between lines of text – think of it like single and double spacing in word preprocessing, although it's controlled a little differently. By default when you first add some text, the Leading is set to “Auto”, that is basically a percentage of the point size of your text. For example if your text is 20 points, the leading would default to 24 points.

You can change the leading in the Character panel or by using keyboard shortcuts. To increase the Leading (more space between lines of text) press Option (PC: Alt) and the Down Arrow, or to decrease the leading use Option (PC: Alt) and the Up Arrow (Do you see the recurring theme with text shortcuts?)

Note: If you have previously created large text with equally large Leading, be sure to check the Leading setting when you enter smaller text. Sometimes the larger Leading number will still be in effect.

It is possible to change the size of the text using Free Transform: make sure the text is committed and then press Command-T (PC: Cntl-T). Drag a handle to resize the text. Hold down Shift to keep the sizing proportional – depending on your version of Photoshop CC. :)



TIP: One shortcut, two uses. With no text selected, pressing Command-T (PC: Cntl-T) will apply Free Transform. If you have text selected, press the same shortcut to open the Character dialog.

## Text Shortcuts

Command-Shift < or > (PC) Control-Shift -< or > decreases/increases point size by 1.

Command-Option-Shift < or > (PC) Control-Alt-Shift < or > (Win) increases/decreases point size by 5.

Command-Shift L (PC) Control-Shift L aligns text Left

Command-Shift C (PC) Control-Shift C aligns text Center

Command-Shift R (PC) Control-Shift L aligns text Right

Shift-Left Arrow/Right Arrow selects 1 character left/right

Shift-Down Arrow/Up Arrow selects 1 line down/up

Command-Shift-Left/Right Arrow (PC) Control-Shift-Left/Right Arrow selects 1 word left/right

Double-click to select a word

Triple-click to select a line of text

Quadruple-click to select an entire paragraph

Beauty isn't seen by eyes.  
It's felt by hearts,  
Recognized by souls,  
In the presence of love.

Beauty isn't seen by eyes.  
It's felt by hearts,  
Recognized by souls,  
In the presence of love.



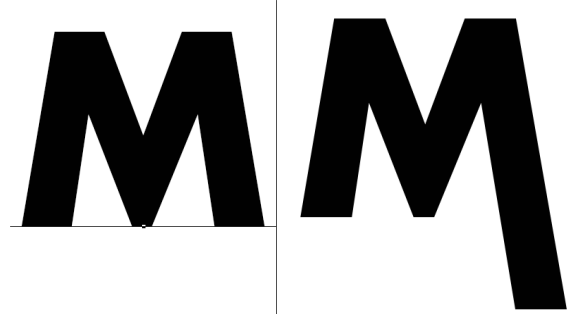
TIP: When you create a block of paragraph text in Photoshop, select the type and use the shortcut Command-Option-Shift + T (PC) Control-Alt-Shift T to toggle between the Adobe Single-line and Every-line Composer. The Adobe Every-line Composer will almost always produce tighter, better-looking paragraphs with more consistent spacing.

[Credit: Julieanne Kost]

## Edit Shape

To create an unusual letter you can convert text to a shape. From the Type menu choose Convert to Shape, and then use the Direct Selection tool to edit the anchor points and paths.

To preserve the original type “just in case”, duplicate the type layer and hide the copy, then convert the original layer.

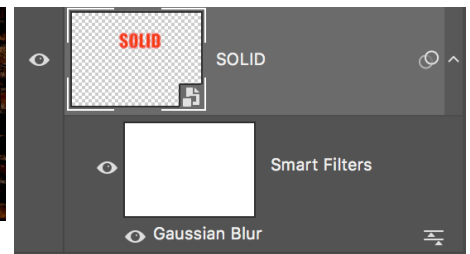


## Applying Filters

If you attempt to apply a Filter to text, you’ll see this warning dialog. Do not Rasterize, choose Convert to Smart Object. This will “protect” the text and allow you to apply a filter.



When the filter is applied it will appear in the Layers panel, where you can edit the settings (by double-clicking on the filter), mask the filter or change the blending options of the filter.



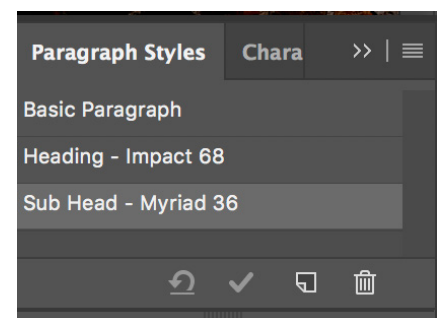
If you need to edit the original text, double-click on the Smart Object thumbnail and the text will open in a separate window. Edit the text, save the file and the original document will update.



## Type Styles

Save time by adding commonly-used text “looks” to Paragraph and Character Styles. Simply create some sample text in the font and size you want and then click the New Style button in the Character or Paragraph Styles panel. Then anytime you add new text you can click on a style to apply it.

Character styles can be applied to a single word (or more), Paragraph styles are automatically applied to an entire paragraph (you do not have to select the entire paragraph)



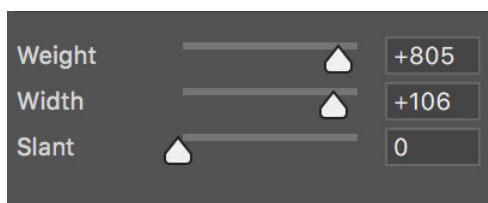
TIP: Make quotation marks look better by using hanging punctuation (so the quotes appear outside the paragraph box). The example on the left is with the standard setting. On the right the flyout menu in the Paragraph panel was used to choose Roman Hanging Punctuation.

“There is no better reason to be present than reason itself”

“There is no better reason to be present than reason itself”

## Variable Width Fonts

Photoshop includes several fonts that can be adjusted through the Properties panel. These fonts include “Variable” in the font name. Here’s the original And after making adjustments at the bottom of the Properties panel, the new look.

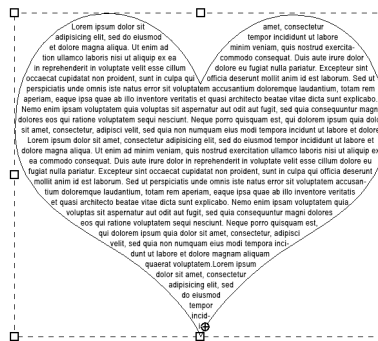


SMITH

SMITH

## Text inside a Path

Use the Shape tool (set to Path) to create a path. Take the type tool and click inside the shape. As you enter (or paste) text, it will conform to the shape of the path. It tends to work best with smaller font sizes with the alignment set to centered or justified.

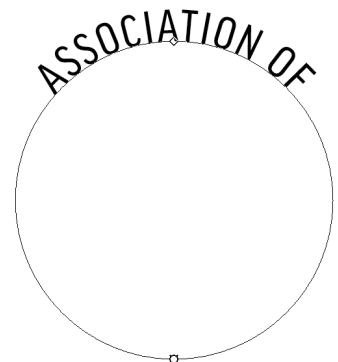


## Text along a Path

The same process as text inside a path except for where you click: make a path and position the Type tool on the path, not inside it. To position the text, use the Selection tool. As you reshape the path the text will automatically reflow along the path.



To have text on the top and the bottom of a circle it's easiest to duplicate the text layer and then move the text to the bottom of the circle. The text will be inside the circle, so use Base-line Shift to push it down so the top of the text touches the path.



## Text Wrap

Photoshop does not have a built-in text wrap function but you can create that effect in a few steps.

Use a selection method to select the subject around which you want to wrap the text. In this example Select Subject was used (right).

Next, Inverse the Selection (Select>Inverse).



With the Marquee tool hold down Shift and Option (PC: Shift and Alt) and drag a selection that overlaps part of the subject. This will create a selection that intersects the existing selection (left).

From the Select menu choose Modify>Contract. Enter a value that “moves” the selection away from your subject. You may have to experiment with this number.

In the Paths panel use the flyout menu to choose Make Work Path. Enter .5 for the Tolerance.

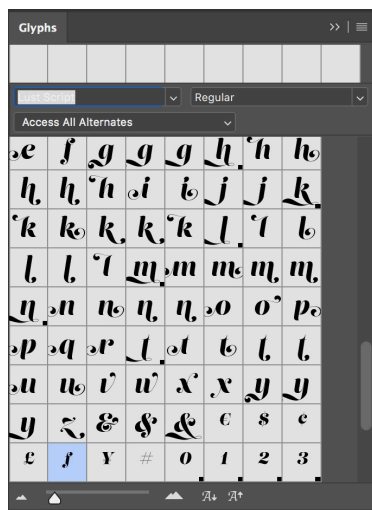


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Use the Type tool to enter (or paste) text inside the path.

## Using Glyphs

Many fonts have alternative characters built in that can be accessed through the Glyphs panel. In this example you can see the changes made to the “o” and “t”, simply by choosing from the Alternatives.



Some fonts have more alternatives than others.

Glyphs can also be used for fractions, punctuation marks, dashes and more.

*Disco  
Night  
Disco  
Night*

For 32 years Dave Cross has been helping photographers and creative professionals get the most out of their Adobe software. Since 1987, Dave has taught Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign to thousands of users around the world. He has a Bachelor of Education, is an Adobe Certified Instructor, a Certified Technical Trainer and in 2017 and 2018 was named an Adobe MAX Master Instructor. Dave has taught for Adobe, at Photoshop World, Creative Pro Week, Imaging USA and at numerous corporate locations. Dave has written many articles and multiple books, and has taught many online courses for Kelby One, Creative Live and now through his own training site LearningPhotoshop.CC.

Over the last 20 years, Dave has taught Photoshop in every state in the United States, throughout Canada and in Europe, consistently earning rave reviews. In 2009 Dave was inducted into the Photoshop Hall of Fame.