



Interface & Core Concepts

Key Panels

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| Layers Manage image components, blend modes, and masks. | History Track and revert steps non-destructively. |
| Adjustments Apply non-destructive photo corrections (Brightness, Contrast, Curves, etc.). | Filters Apply non-destructive effects (Blur, Sharpen, Distort, etc.). |
| Brushes Select and configure painting/erasing brushes. | Swatches Manage colors for painting and fills. |
| Navigator Small window for easy panning and zooming. | Transform Precise numerical control over size, position, rotation, shear. |
| Stock Browse and import images from stock providers. | Pixel Persona Standard photo editing tools. |
| Develop Persona Raw image processing. | Export Persona Configure slices and export settings. |

Essential Tools

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| Move Tool (V) Select and transform objects/layers. | Selection Brush Tool (M) Paint to create selections. |
| Pixel Tool (B) Standard pixel painting brush. | Eraser Tool (E) Removes pixels. |
| Crop Tool (C) Resize and straighten canvas/image. | Gradient Tool (G) Apply linear, radial, or conical gradients. |
| Flood Fill Tool (F) Fill areas with color or gradient. | Dodge Brush Tool (O) Lighten areas. |
| Burn Brush Tool (O) Darken areas. | Clone Brush Tool (S) Copy pixels from one area to another. |
| Inpainting Brush Tool (J) Remove objects seamlessly. | Healing Brush Tool (J) Heal blemishes by sampling nearby texture. |
| Blur Brush Tool (R) RECENTLY MOVED FROM 'R' TO 'U' Soften areas. | Sharpen Brush Tool (R) RECENTLY MOVED FROM 'R' TO 'U' Increase detail contrast. |
| Pen Tool (P) Create vector paths. | Text Tool (T) Add artistic or frame text. |

File & View Basics

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| New Document Cmd/Ctrl + N | Open Document Cmd/Ctrl + O |
| Save As Cmd/Ctrl + Shift + S Saves as .afphoto (native format). | Export Cmd/Ctrl + E Exports to JPG, PNG, TIFF, PSD, PDF, etc. |
| Close Document Cmd/Ctrl + W | Close All Cmd/Ctrl + Alt + W |
| Actual Size (100%) Cmd/Ctrl + 1 | Fit to Screen Cmd/Ctrl + 0 |
| Zoom In Cmd/Ctrl + + or Cmd/Ctrl + Scroll Up | Zoom Out Cmd/Ctrl + - or Cmd/Ctrl + Scroll Down |
| Pan Hold Spacebar and drag. | Rotate Canvas Hold Shift + Spacebar and drag. |
| Show/Hide Rulers Cmd/Ctrl + R | Show/Hide Guides Cmd/Ctrl + ; |
| Show/Hide UI Tab | Fullscreen Shift + Tab |

Tips for Beginners

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| Non-Destructive Editing: Always use Adjustment Layers and Live Filters whenever possible. They can be edited or removed later without altering the original pixels. |
| Learn Layers: Understand how layers work, including blending modes, opacity, and masking. This is fundamental to complex edits. |
| Use Personas: Affinity Photo is divided into Personas for different tasks (Develop, Pixel, Export). Switch between them using the icons in the top-left. |
| Refine Selections: The 'Refine' button in the context toolbar (when a selection tool is active) is crucial for complex selections like hair or fur. |
| Practice with Masks: Layer Masks allow you to hide parts of a layer non-destructively using black (hide), white (show), and gray (partial transparency) paint. |
| Explore Adjustments: Don't just use Brightness/Contrast. Experiment with Curves, HSL (Hue/Saturation/Luminosity), and White Balance adjustment layers. |
| Keyboard Shortcuts: Learn the essential shortcuts (V, B, E, M, Cmd/Ctrl + S, Cmd/Ctrl + Z) to speed up your workflow. |
| Brush Opacity/Flow: Adjusting brush opacity and flow gives you fine control over pixel painting and erasing. |

Tools & Techniques

Selection Methods

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| Marquee Tools (M) Rectangular, Elliptical, Column, Row Marquee for basic shapes. | Lasso Tool (F) Draw freehand selections. Polygonal Lasso for straight lines. |
| Selection Brush Tool (M) Paint over areas to select. Use Alt to subtract from selection. | Magic Wand Tool (W) Selects contiguous pixels based on color similarity (Tolerance setting). |
| Flood Select Tool (W) Selects all pixels of similar color globally, not just contiguous. | Pixel Selection (Cmd/Ctrl + Click) Selects opaque pixels on a layer. |
| Select Sampled Color Select > Select Sampled Colour (selects based on Eyedropper pick). | Select Tonal Range Select > Select Tonal Range (selects Highlights, Midtones, or Shadows). |
| Refine Edge Essential for complex edges (hair, fur). Opens a dedicated dialog. | Invert Selection Select > Invert Pixel Selection or Cmd/Ctrl + Shift + I . |
| Deselect Cmd/Ctrl + D or Select > Deselect. | Reselect Select > Reselect. |
| Hide Marquee Cmd/Ctrl + H (Hides visual selection outline, selection is still active). | Convert to Mask Select > Convert to Pixel Selection > Rasterise (then apply as mask). |

Adjustments & Filters

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| Adjustment Layers Apply corrections non-destructively. Added via Adjustments panel or Layer > New Adjustment Layer. | Live Filters Apply effects non-destructively. Added via Filters panel or Layer > New Live Filter Layer. |
| Brightness/Contrast Basic exposure and contrast control. | Levels Adjust black point, white point, and midtone gamma. |
| Curves Precise tonal control via a graph. Most powerful adjustment. | Exposure Adjust overall brightness, offset (blacks), and gamma. |
| HSL Shift Control Hue, Saturation, and Luminosity for specific color ranges. | White Balance Correct color cast based on temperature and tint. |
| LUT Apply Look-Up Tables for creative color grading. | Vibrance Adjust color saturation intelligently (less effect on skin tones). |
| Gaussian Blur Smooths image details. Live version is preferable. | Unsharp Mask Sharpens by increasing contrast along edges. |
| Noise Reduction Reduce luminance and color noise. | Split Toning Apply different colors to highlights and shadows. |
| Clipping Mask Adjustments Drag an Adjustment Layer onto another layer in the Layers panel and indent it to apply it only to that layer. | Masking Adjustments Paint on the mask thumbnail of an Adjustment Layer (black hides, white reveals) to apply the adjustment selectively. |

Working with Layers

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| New Pixel Layer Shift + Cmd/Ctrl + N or Layers Panel icon. | New Group Cmd/Ctrl + G or Layers Panel icon. |
| Duplicate Layer Cmd/Ctrl + J or Layers Panel icon. | Delete Layer Delete key or Layers Panel icon. |
| Layer Mask Add via Layers Panel icon or Layer > Layer Mask. | Clipping Mask Right-click layer > Clip to Layer Below, or Cmd/Ctrl + Alt + G . |
| Merge Down Cmd/Ctrl + E or Layers Panel icon. Merges selected layer with one below. | Merge Visible Layers Panel icon. Creates a new layer with all visible layers flattened. |
| Flatten Layer > Flatten. Merges all layers into a single background layer (destructive). | Blend Modes Control how layers interact (Normal, Multiply, Screen, Overlay, etc.). Found in Layers Panel dropdown. |
| Opacity & Fill Control layer transparency in Layers Panel. Opacity affects everything, Fill affects pixels/vector fills but not effects. | Lock Layer Layers Panel icon. Locks position, transparency, or pixels. |
| Rename Layer Double-click layer name in Layers Panel. | Colour Tag Right-click layer name in Layers Panel > Set Colour Tag. |

Retouching Techniques

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| Inpainting Brush (J) Select area, brush over it. Affinity samples surroundings to fill. | Healing Brush (J) Alt + Click to sample source, brush over area to heal. Matches texture, tone, and transparency. |
| Clone Brush (S) Alt + Click to sample source, brush over area to clone. Simple pixel copying. | Blemish Removal Tool (J) Click on blemishes (like dust spots, acne). Works well on simple backgrounds. |
| Dodge Brush (O) Lighten pixels. Good for enhancing highlights or eyes. Use sparingly. | Burn Brush (O) Darken pixels. Good for deepening shadows or adding drama. Use sparingly. |
| Frequency Separation Advanced technique. Separate image into low frequency (color/tone) and high frequency (texture) layers for targeted retouching. Requires manual setup. | Liquify Persona (Cmd/Ctrl + Shift + L) Push, pull, twist, and pinch pixels. Useful for subtle reshaping (e.g., fixing distortion, minor figure adjustments). |
| Red Eye Removal Tool (J) Click and drag a circle over red eye. Automatically corrects color. | Patch Tool (J) Select an area, drag selection to a source area. Replaces selected area with source, blending texture and tone. |
| Smudge Brush Tool (U) Drag to smear pixels, mixing colors. Be careful, can look unnatural. | Sponge Brush Tool (O) Saturate or Desaturate pixels depending on mode. |

Exporting Your Work

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| Export Dialog ⌘/Ctrl + E. Choose format, preset, size, and quality. | Supported Formats JPG, PNG, TIFF, PSD, GIF, PDF, EPS, SVG, EXR, HDR, TGA. |
| JPG Best for photos. Lossy compression. Good balance of file size and quality. Adjust quality slider. | PNG Good for web graphics, logos. Supports transparency. Lossless compression. |
| TIFF Professional format. Supports layers, transparency, higher bit depths. Larger file size. Lossless or LZW compression. | PSD Export to Photoshop format. Good compatibility but may lose some Affinity-specific features. |
| Export Persona Define 'Slices' to export multiple areas or assets simultaneously with different settings. | Slice Tool Create manual slices in the Export Persona. |
| Automatic Slices Can create slices from layers, groups, or objects automatically in Export Persona. | Presets Save frequently used export settings as presets for quick access. |
| Resampling Choose method when resizing on export (Bilinear, Bicubic, Lanczos). Lanczos is often best for reducing/increasing size. | Embedding Metadata Option to include camera info, copyright, etc. |
| Embed ICC Profile Ensure consistent colors by embedding the color profile used (e.g., sRGB, Adobe RGB). | Matte For formats with transparency (PNG, GIF), choose a matte color to blend transparent pixels against if needed. |

Keyboard Shortcuts

General Shortcuts

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| Undo | ⌘/Ctrl + Z |
| Redo | ⌘/Ctrl + Shift + Z |
| Cut | ⌘/Ctrl + X |
| Copy | ⌘/Ctrl + C |
| Paste | ⌘/Ctrl + V |
| Paste Special (Paste Inside) | ⌘/Ctrl + Shift + V |
| Duplicate | ⌘/Ctrl + J |
| Delete | Delete key |
| Show/Hide Panels | Tab |

Tool Shortcuts

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| Move Tool | V |
| Selection Brush / Magic Wand / Flood Select | M / W |
| Pixel Tool (Brush) | B |
| Eraser Tool | E |
| Crop Tool | C |
| Gradient Tool | G |
| Flood Fill Tool | F |
| Dodge / Burn / Sponge Tool | O |
| Clone / Healing / Inpainting / Blemish / Red Eye / Patch Tools | S / J |
| Blur / Sharpen / Smudge Tool | U |

Selection Shortcuts

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| Select All | ⌘/Ctrl + A |
| Deselect | ⌘/Ctrl + D |
| Invert Pixel Selection | ⌘/Ctrl + Shift + I |
| Hide Marquee (Selection Outline) | ⌘/Ctrl + H |
| Select Opaque Pixels of Layer | ⌘/Ctrl + Click on Layer Thumbnail |
| Add to Selection (Selection Brush) | Hold Shift while brushing |
| Subtract from Selection (Selection Brush) | Hold Alt while brushing |
| Toggle Refine Selection Dialog (when selection active) | ⌘/Ctrl + Alt + R |

Layer Shortcuts

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| New Pixel Layer | Shift + ⌘/Ctrl + N |
| New Adjustment Layer | Shift + ⌘/Ctrl + A |
| New Live Filter Layer | Shift + ⌘/Ctrl + F |
| New Group | ⌘/Ctrl + G |
| Ungroup | ⌘/Ctrl + Shift + G |
| Merge Down | ⌘/Ctrl + E |
| Clip to Layer Below | ⌘/Ctrl + Alt + G |
| Add Layer Mask | Layers Panel Icon / Layer Menu |
| Rename Layer | Double-click layer name |

View Shortcuts

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| Zoom 100% (Actual Size) | Cmd/Ctrl + 1 |
| Zoom to Fit | Cmd/Ctrl + 0 |
| Zoom In | Cmd/Ctrl + + |
| Zoom Out | Cmd/Ctrl + - |
| Show/Hide Rulers | Cmd/Ctrl + R |
| Show/Hide Guides | Cmd/Ctrl + ; |
| Show/Hide Grid | Cmd/Ctrl + ' |
| Show/Hide UI | Tab |
| Toggle Fullscreen | Shift + Tab |