Overview of Adobe Photoshop CS6 workspace

Starting to work in Adobe Photoshop

The Adobe Photoshop workspace includes the command menus at the top of your screen and a variety of tools and panels for editing and adding elements to your image. You can also add commands and filters to the menus by installing third-party software known as *plug-in modules*.

Photoshop works with *bitmapped*, digitized images (that is, continuous-tone images that have been converted into a series of small squares, or picture elements, called *pixels*). You can also work with *vector* graphics, which are drawings made of smooth lines that retain their crispness when scaled. You can create original artwork in Photoshop, and you can import images into the program from many sources, such as:

- Photographs from a digital camera
- Commercial CDs of digital images
- Scans of photographs, transparencies, negatives, graphics, or other documents
- Captured video images
- Artwork created in drawing programs

For information on the kinds of files you can use with Adobe Photoshop CS6, see “Choosing a file format” in Photoshop Help.

In this guide, you’ll learn your way around the Adobe Photoshop CS6 workspace, how to create custom workspaces, how to open images, use the Properties panel, create new Photoshop documents, and use basic pan and zoom tools.

Exploring the Photoshop workspace

You can customize the layout and functionality of the Photoshop workspace by using the workspace switcher.

To open Photoshop and explore the workspace:

1. Start Adobe Photoshop.

   If you don’t see the Photoshop icon, choose Start > All Programs > Adobe Photoshop CS6 (Windows) or look in either the Applications folder or the Dock (Mac OS).

2. From the workspace switcher menu, confirm the option is set to Essentials. Choose Reset Essentials to restore the default workspace (**Figure 1**).

   The Photoshop workspace appears as shown in the following illustration.

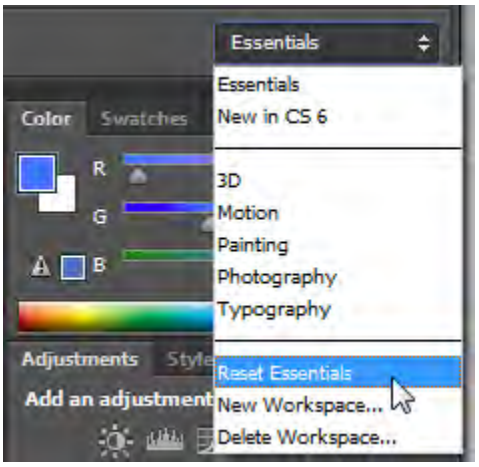

Figure 1 Workspace switcher menu

3. The default Essentails workspace in Photoshop (**Figure 2**) displays the main menu (Windows), or title bar (Mac OS). Below the main menu is the Options bar, with the Tools panel on the left, other panels, and one or more document windows that are opened separately.

   The *main menu* organizes commands in individual menus.

   The *Options bar* displays options for the currently selected tool and the workspace switcher menu.

   The *document window* displays the file you're working on.

   The *Tools panel* contains tools for creating and editing images, artwork, page elements, and so on. Related tools are grouped together.

   Panels help you monitor and modify your work. An example is the Layers panel. Another is the *Properties* panel which provides context-sensitive tools to make quick updates to the properites of your masks, adjustments, and video layers. Two other panels appear beneath the document window: the Mini Bridge panel and the Timeline panel.

   Certain panels are displayed by default, but you can add any panel by selecting it from the Window menu. Many panels have menus with panel-specific options. You can separate, group, stack, and dock panels into your preferred layout.

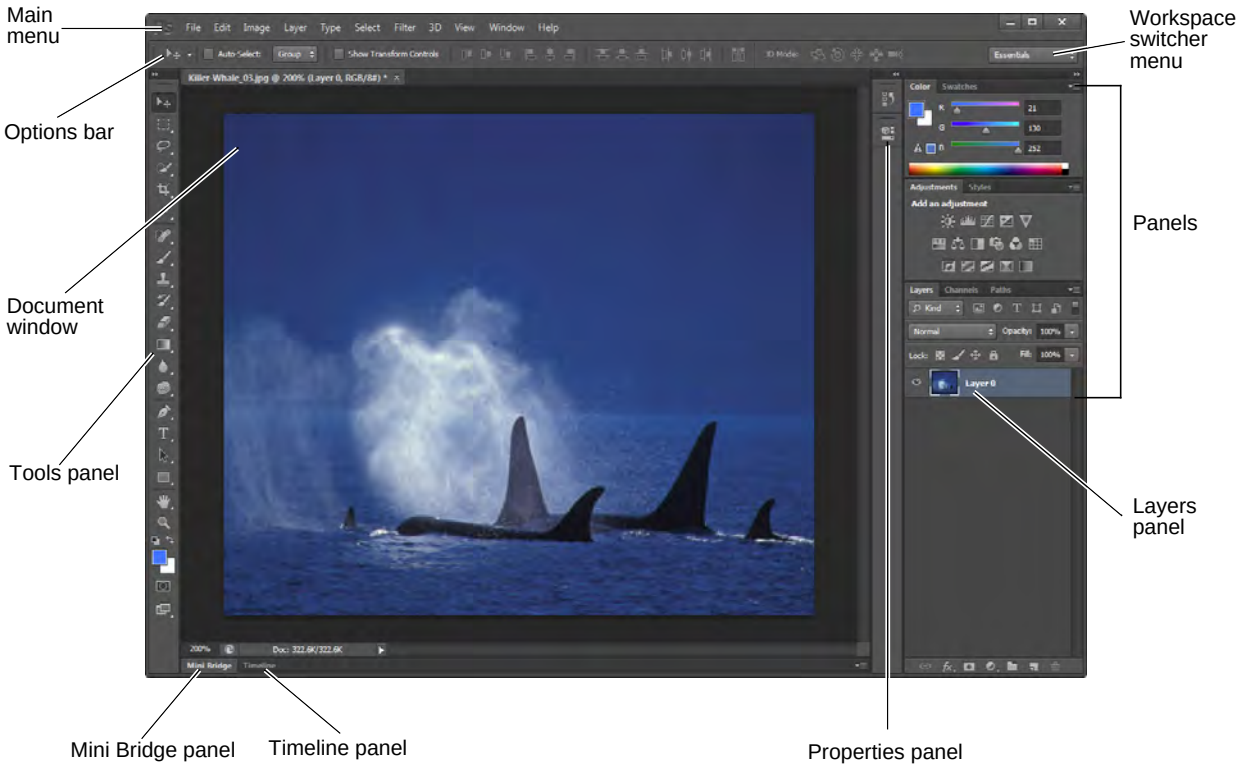

Figure 2 Adobe Photoshop CS6 interface

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You can restore the default workspace at any time by choosing Window > Workspace > Essentials (Default) (**Figure 3**) or by choosing Reset Essentials from the workspace switcher menu (**Figure 1**).

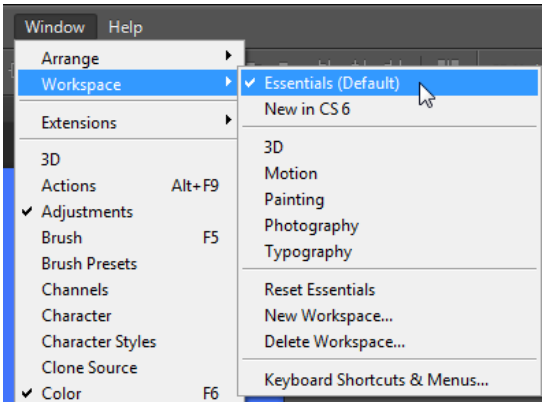

Figure 3 Selecting the default workspace

Customizing your workspace by using the workspace switcher

You may prefer your own panel layout when working on a document. You can save a current size and position of panels as a uniquely named workspace and restore that workspace even if you move or close a panel. The names of saved workspaces appear in the Window > Workspace menu.

To customize the workspace:

1. To create a custom workspace, move and manipulate the interface layout in Photoshop (**Figure 4**).
2. From the Workspace Swticher menu, select New Workspace (**Figure 5**).

Figure 4 Custom interface layout

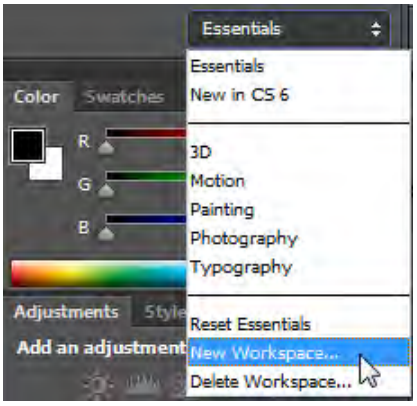

Figure 5 Creating the New Workspace

The New Workspace dialog box appears (**Figure 6**).

3. Name your workspace and select the Capture options to save in the workspace (Keyboard Shortcuts and Menus).
4. Click Save.

   Your new workspace appears in the upper-right corner of the interface in the workspace switcher area (**Figure 7**).
5. Open the workspace switcher menu.

   Even if you change to another type of workspace, at any time you can return to your saved workspace by reselecting it from the workspace switcher menu.

   Photoshop also records any changes you make to your task-specific or saved layouts, so that if you switch to a different workspace and then switch back during an editing session, the panels will be exactly where you left them.

   You can restore the saved workspace at any time by choosing Reset [your named] Workspace from the workspace switcher menu (**Figure 7**).

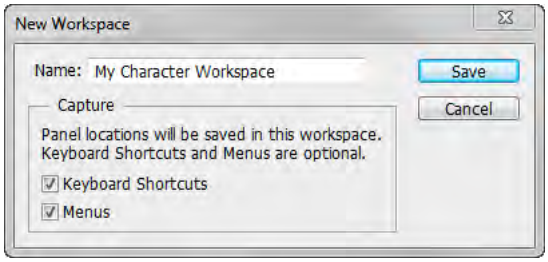

Figure 6 New Workspace dialog box

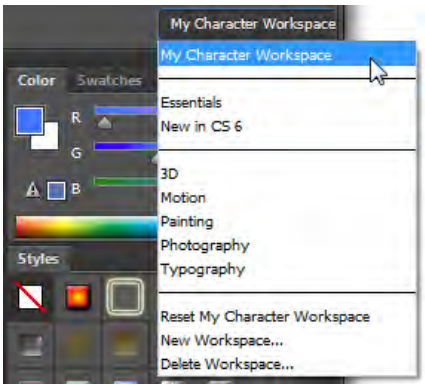

Figure 7 Reselecting a saved workspace

Opening a file in Photoshop

You can open files by using the Open command or the Open Recent command.

To open a file:

1. To open a file, choose File > Open and navigate to the location of your image.
2. Select your file and click Open.

   The file opens in its own window, called the image window (**Figure 8**).
3. To close the image file, choose File > Close or click the close button on the title bar of the window in which the photograph appears. (Do not close Photoshop.)

Figure 8 File open in the image window

How to open a file by using Adobe Bridge or Mini Bridge

You can also open a file by using Adobe Bridge, a visual file browser that helps take the guesswork out of finding the image file you need. There are two versions of Adobe Bridge to choose from: the full version which opens a seperate, full image browser window and works across the Creative Suite software family, or Mini Bridge, which allows you to access images directly within the Photoshop interface. The following steps illustrate how to use Mini Bridge, but you could just as easily use the full version to browse and open files.

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To open a file by using Adobe Mini Bridge:

1. If the Mini Bridge panel is not already open, click the Mini Bridge tab beneath the document window (**Figure 9**).

   Note: You can also open Mini Bridge by choosing File > Browse In Mini Bridge.

   Note: If this is the first time opening Mini Bridge, you may see a message stating "Bridge must be running to browse files" and a Launch Bridge button. Click the Launch Bridge button to start Bridge in the background and to open the Mini Bridge panel in Photoshop.

2. Use the file navigator in Mini Bridge to browse to the folder where you store your images.

3. Thumbnail previews of the folder contents appear in the Content pane of Mini Bridge (**Figure 10**).

   You can sort and filter images by using the View and Sort By Filename buttons.

4. Select a file in the Content pane and open the file by double-clicking its thumbnail.

   The image opens in Photoshop.

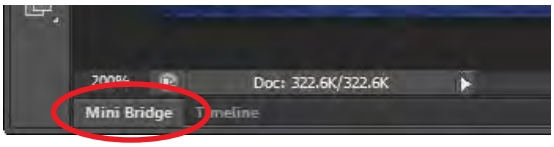

Figure 9 Mini Bridge tab

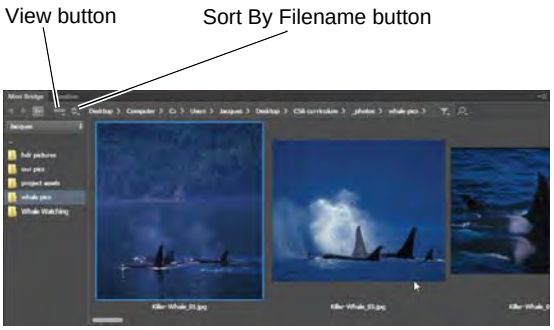

Figure 10 Mini Bridge panel

Creating a new Photoshop document

You can create a new Photoshop document and define a document size, resolution, color mode, and background contents.

To create a new Photoshop document:

1. Select File > New.

   The New Photoshop document dialog box appears, with options for your file (**Figure 11**).

2. Type a filename and values for the width and height of the canvas.

3. Type a value for Resolution.

   For an image to be used on the web, 72 pixels/inch is suitable. For an image to be printed, use a higher resolution, from 300 to 1200 pixels/inch.

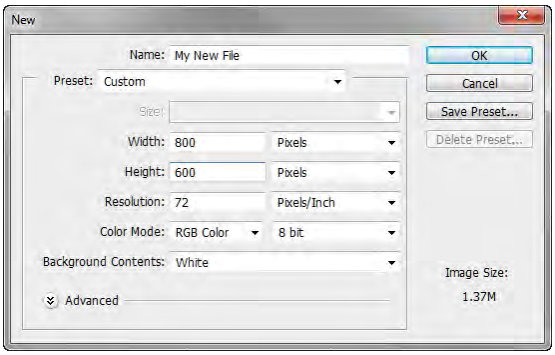

Figure 11 New Photoshop document dialog box

4. Choose a setting for Color Mode.

   Color Mode determines which color method is used to display and print the image you're working on. Photoshop bases its color modes on the color models that are useful for images used in publishing. Choose from RGB (Red, Green, Blue), CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black), Lab Color (based on CIE L* a* b*), and Grayscale.

5. Choose a setting for Background Contents.

   You can choose to use a white, transparent, or specific color background behind your image.

   In the lower-right corner, notice that the file size information changes as you adjust the settings for the new file.

6. Click OK.

   The new file opens in the image window, ready to use (**Figure 12**). Be sure to save your file as you work in it.

7. To save a file for the first time, select File > Save As from the main menu.

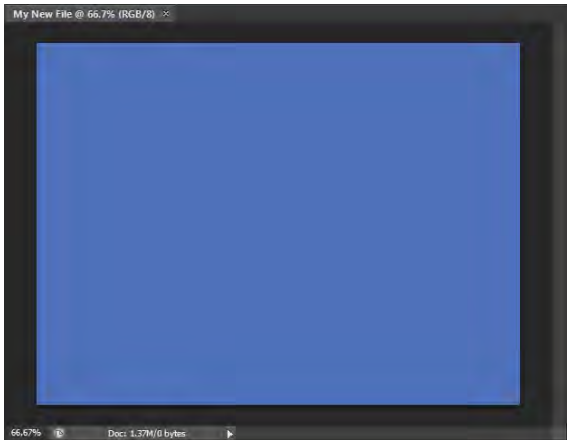

Figure 12 New image window

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Overview of the Tools panel

Photoshop provides an integrated set of tools with which you can produce sophisticated graphics for print, web, and mobile viewing (**Figure 13**). Some tools are arranged in groups, with only one tool shown for each group and the other tools in the group hidden behind that tool. A small triangle in the lower right corner of a tool icon is your clue to look for hidden tools. Select a hidden tool by clicking and holding down the small triangle.

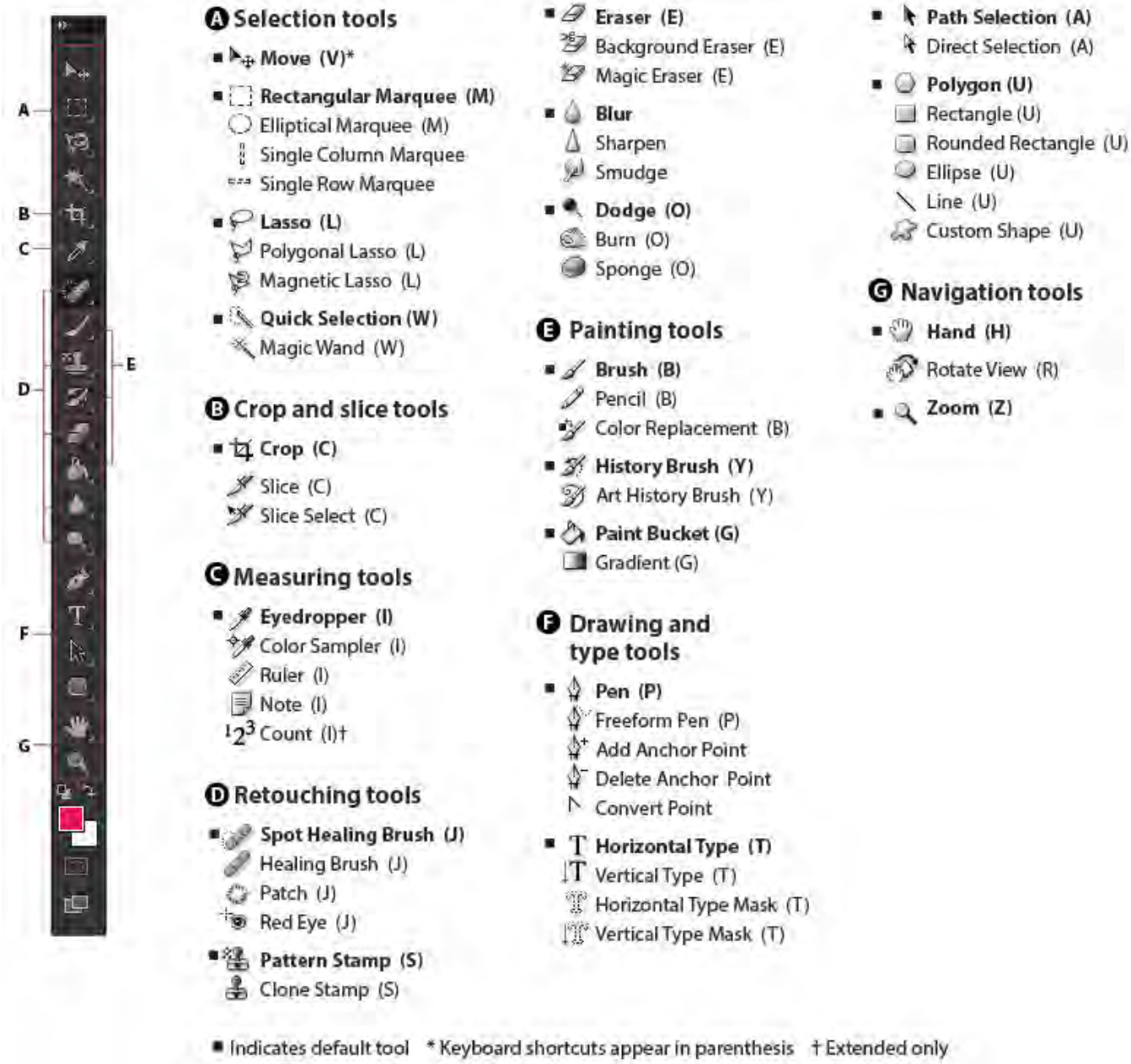

Figure 13 Overview of Tools panel

The following section covers the Zoom tool. The process for selecting and using this tool is similar to that for the rest of the tools in the panel.

How to select and use the Zoom tool from the Tools panel

The Tools panel—the long, narrow panel on the left side of the workspace—contains selection tools, painting and editing tools, foreground- and background-color selection boxes, and viewing tools.

To use the Zoom tool:

1. Notice the Tools panel appears as a single column. Click the double-arrow button at the top of the Tools panel to toggle to a double-column view (**Figure 14**). Click the arrow again to return to a single-column panel that uses your screen space more efficiently.
2. Open an image, examine the status bar at the bottom of the image window, and notice the percentage listed on the left end (**Figure 15**).

   This represents the current enlargement view, or zoom level of the image.

   Note: In Windows, the status bar may appear across the bottom of the workspace.
3. Move the pointer over the Tools panel and hover over the magnifying-glass icon until a tool tip appears, identifying the tool by name and providing its keyboard shortcut (**Figure 16**).
4. Select the Zoom tool either by clicking the Zoom tool button in the Tools panel or by pressing Z, the keyboard shortcut for the Zoom tool.
5. Move the pointer over the image window. Notice that it now appears as a tiny magnifying glass with a plus sign in the center of the glass.

Figure 14 Tools panel

Figure 15 Zoom level and Status bar in an image

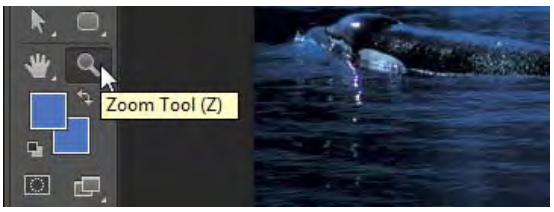

Figure 16 Tool tip

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6. Click anywhere in the image window.

   The image zooms in according to a preset percentage level, which replaces the previous value in the status bar. The location you clicked when you used the Zoom tool becomes the center of the enlarged view. If you click again, the zoom advances to the next preset level, up to a maximum of 3200%.

7. Click the Navigator icon in the right side of the workspace (or select Window > Navigator) to open the Navigator panel.

   Notice a red box is displayed around the zoomed area of the image (**Figure 17**). You can grab the box and move it around the Navigator to locate a specific area of an image.

8. Hold down the Alt key (Windows) or Option key (Mac OS) so that the Zoom tool pointer appears with a minus sign in the center of the magnifying glass (**Figure 18**), and then click anywhere in the image. Then release the Alt or Option key.

   Now the view zooms out to a lower preset magnification.

   Note: You can also hold the Alt key (Windows) or Option key (Mac OS) and use the mouse scroll wheel to zoom in and out of an image.

Figure 17 Navigator panel showing zoom area

Figure 18 Using the Zoom tool with a minus sign

How to scroll around an image with the Hand tool

The Hand tool moves an image within its window. This is useful if you want to see a part of the image that is currently out of view.

To use the Hand tool:

1. Open an image and zoom in until scroll bars appear on the image window.
2. Select the Hand tool from the Tools panel (**Figure 19**). You can also press Shift+H.

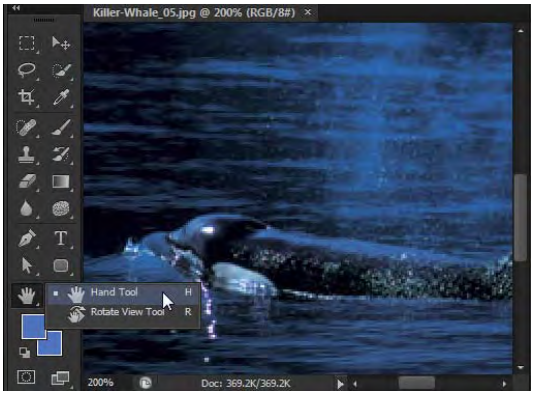

Figure 19 Hand tool in the Tools panel

3. Using the Hand tool, drag to scroll around and view different parts of the image (**Figure 20**).

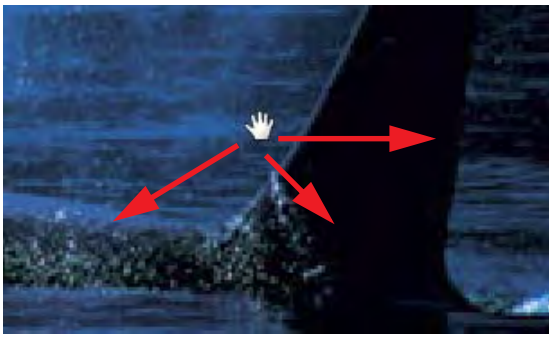

Figure 20 Dragging the Hand tool

Using the Navigator panel

Panning or zooming an image in the Navigator panel is another quick way to make large changes in the zoom level, especially when the exact percentage of magnification is unimportant. It's also a great way to scroll around in an image, because the thumbnail shows you exactly what part of the image appears in the image window.

To use the Navigator panel:

1. If the Navigator panel is not visible, choose Window > Navigator, or click the Navigator icon in the right side of the workspace (**Figure 17**).
2. Locate the slider under the image thumbnail in the Navigator panel and drag it to the right.

   The image in the image window enlarges (**Figure 21**).
3. Now drag the slider to the left and reduce the scale of the image in the image window.

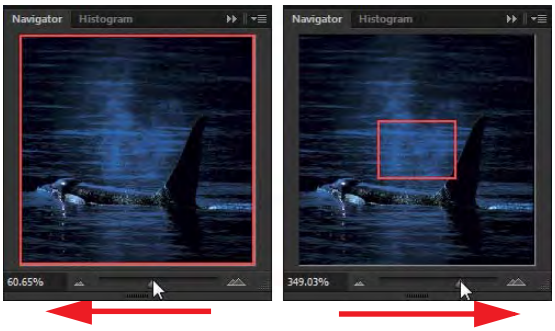

Figure 21 Using the slider to zoom in or out

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