

Photoshop: drag and drop automation using Droplets

Batch processing can significantly reduce the time required to complete repetitive processes in Photoshop, but with simple tasks like resizing, there is an even faster way. Photoshop allows you to create small shortcuts called Droplets which are stored separately on your disk. When you drag a group of images and drop them onto the Droplet, Photoshop completes the automated task on each image.

This is a tutorial for creating a simple Droplet; it will reduce the size of the images by 50% in both directions, save them to the desktop, and then close them. You can automate any actions Photoshop can perform, so steps 4 through 7 in this tutorial can be swapped for the tasks you need to complete. Keyboard shortcuts are shown with square brackets: [Macintosh keys first/PC keys second + OTHER KEYS IN UPPERCASE], menus are shown in *italics*, and buttons are shown underlined.

1 Open an image in Photoshop

- Go to *File > Open...*
Keyboard shortcut: [command/ctrl + O].
- Choose an image from your disk.
- Click the OK button.

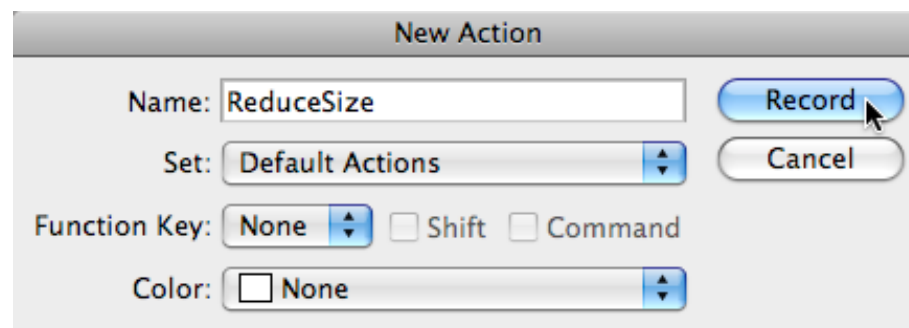
2 Display the Actions Panel

- Go to *Window > Actions*
Keyboard shortcut: [option/alt + F9].

3 Create a new Action

- Click on the Create New Action button at the bottom of the Actions Panel. This will open the New Action dialogue box.
- Type a meaningful name for your Action into the Name textbox. In this case it is ReduceSize.
- Select a set, basically a location inside of Photoshop, for your Action from the Set dropdown menu. In this case, it the Default Actions Set.
- Click the Record button to begin recording the tasks you want to perform.

Note: If you have not worked with Actions before, record can be a misleading term; Photoshop will only keep track of the tasks you perform, it will not take time into account.



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Open the Image Size dialogue box

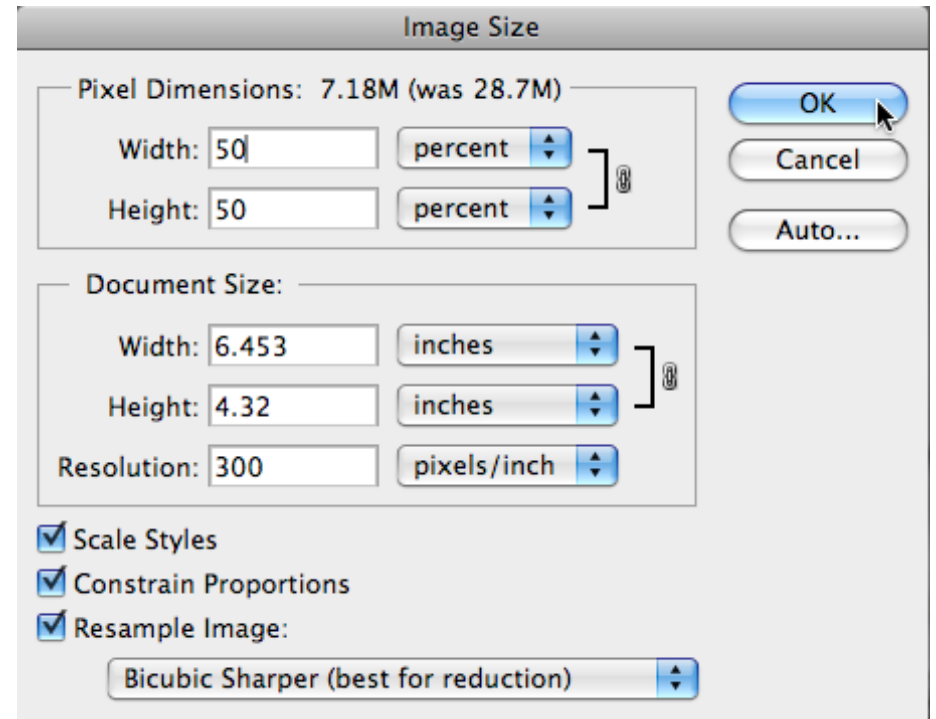
- Go to *Image > Image Size...*

Keyboard shortcut: [command/ctrl + option/alt + I].

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Reduce the image size

- Select Percent from the Pixel Dimensions dropdown menu.
- Check the Constrain Proportions checkbox.
- Type 50 into either the width or the height of the Pixel Dimensions textboxes.
- Check the Resample Image checkbox.
- Select Bicubic Sharper from the Resample Image dropdown menu.
- Click the OK button. This will apply the changes to the image.



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Save the image

- Go to *File > Save As...*

Keyboard Shortcut: [shift + command/ctrl + S].

- Click the Save button. This will open the JPEG Options dialogue box.
- Select Maximum from the Quality dropdown menu.
- Click the OK button to save the image.

Note: Be sure NOT to change the image's name. This is an automated task, and it will repeat the same way each time; so each image would save over the previous because it would have the same name.

7 Close the image

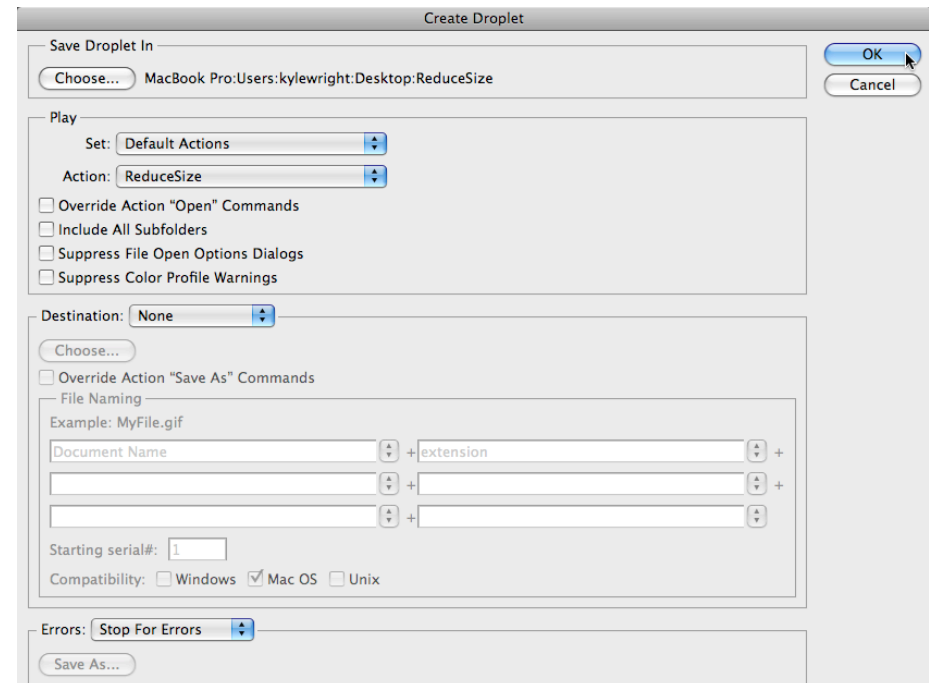
- Go to *File > Close*
Keyboard Shortcut: [command/ctrl + W].

8 Stop recording the Action

- Click on the Stop Playing/Recording button at the bottom of the Actions Panel.

9 Create the Droplet

- Go to *File > Automate > Create Droplet...*
- Select the Set you saved your Action in from the Play section's Set dropdown menu. In this case it is the Default Actions Set.
- Select the Action you just created from the Play section's Action dropdown menu. In this case it is the ReduceSize Action.
- Click on the Choose... button to open the Save dialog box.
- Type a meaningful name into the Save As textbox. In this case it is ReduceSize.
- Choose a location on your hard drive to save the Droplet.
- Click on the Save button to close the Save dialog box.
- Click the OK button in the Create Droplet dialog box. This will create the Droplet in the location you selected.



10 Drag and drop to automate

- Choose the images to which you want to apply the Action from within your operating system.
- Click and hold to drag the images onto the Droplet and release. Photoshop will perform the recorded Actions on each image.