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# **Working with Selections**

January 26th, 2011 Intended for: <u>beginners</u>

Have you ever been working on a picture and wanted to do something to just the sky, or make the picture black-and-white except for just one thing? But that kind of magic is only for the pros, right? Wrong. It's easy and you can do it too, thanks to selections.



Like the name suggests, selections help you select one part of a picture to affect independently of the rest of it. The examples above are pretty typical ways you might use them. Below, we'll talk about how to set them up. Once you've got them set up, you just use the editing windows you would normally use to edit the whole picture—if there's a selection, the edits affect only the selection instead.



## **Making Selections**

There are several selection tools in Zoner Photo Studio: rectangular selection, elliptical selection, lasso, polygonal lasso, magnetic lasso, magic wand, and selection brush. Each of these tools works in a specific way that make it better suited for a different job (or part of a job). They all can be found on the Editor's side toolbar.

As soon as you activate any of these tools, the Options toolbar—that's the one that keeps on changing as you work—shows options relevant for the given tool. These options include a choice of "selection mode." Normal Mode simply creates a new selection, replacing the previous selection if there was one. Add to Selection mode helps you grow the selection by adding areas to it. You can also add to a selection by holding down Shift while working in Normal Mode. Remove from Selection Mode lets you shrink a selection by drawing out areas to subtract, and this mode can be turned on temporarily using Ctrl. The last mode, Intersection, is a bit unusual. It creates a new selection based on the intersection between the current selection and what you "draw." It too can be turned on temporarily—via Ctrl+Shift.

The Blur value sets how the selection fades out at its edges. (Be careful with this value or you can set a value so high that it "blurs away" the whole selection!) The Invert button makes the unselected part of the picture selected and vice versa. To move the selection around, click inside it, hold the mouse button down, and... move it. To throw the selection away, press Esc.

#### Mode: 📰 🌆 🛅 🖪 Blur: 0 📫 🛛 Invert 🔹 Snap to edges

#### **Rectangular and Elliptical Selections**

Rectangular selections are in a sense the simplest kind. They're not widely useful, but they have their days. Just need to work with some rectangular area? Catch it with this tool. (Squares? In case you've forgotten your geometry lessons: those are rectangles too.) Just click, drag, and release. For the square kind of rectangle, hold down Shift as you drag. To make your starting point be the center of the rectangle instead of a corner, hold down Ctrl as you drag. All of these tricks work for the Elliptical Selection tool too—but with Shift shifting you from an ellipse to a circle.



You really won't get too much use out of rectangles and ellipses, as few things out there form those shapes —not even this tire does.



## Lasso, Polygonal Lasso, Magnetic Lasso

Use the lasso tool to select areas with irregular contours. Activate the tool, click on the picture, hold down the mouse, and start drawing around what you want to select. The polygonal lasso, meanwhile, is for selecting areas that it's easier to wrap in a series of lines than in a freehand-drawn shape. To use that tool, activate it, click the picture, then click once to start each new line to be used for the lasso. In short: click around what you wish to select. If you misclick along the way, don't worry. Just press Backspace or Delete to remove the last point you added. To finish lassoing, either click near the selection's starting point or double-click anywhere.



The polygonal lasso is ideal for selecting small parts of a picture that form an irregular shape.

Hold down Alt to temporarily switch to the Magnetic Lasso. This lasso type is of course also available as a separate tool. The Magnetic Lasso works by snapping to edges it finds in a picture. (It detects the edges by looking for high-contrast areas.) For this kind of lasso, the Options toolbar offers settings affecting how far from the cursor the program looks for edges and whether or not to smooth out (anti-alias) the selection border.



With the magnetic lasso you can handle even complex selections like the one above in just a few minutes.





## The Magic Wand

Use the magic wand to select areas similar to a spot of your choice. What "similar" means depends on the mode—normally it's based on the color elements (red/green/blue), but it can also be "similar brightness" or "similar hue." The Continuous option, meanwhile, determines whether the wand should select just the similar area surrounding the spot clicked—that is, "one continuous area"—or any similar areas anywhere in the picture. To use this tool, just activate it and click in the place that the selected area should be similar to.



The quickest way to get what you want out of the Magic Wand is to combine it (via selection modes) with the Selection Brush.

The last tool down among the selection tools is the Selection Brush. Use it to "paint" areas into the selection, with a brush size, density, edge blurring level, etc. of your choice. Using Remove from Selection mode, you can paint areas out of the selection too. Combine the Brush and other tools cleverly, and you can mark out the exact area you want to affect in no time.