

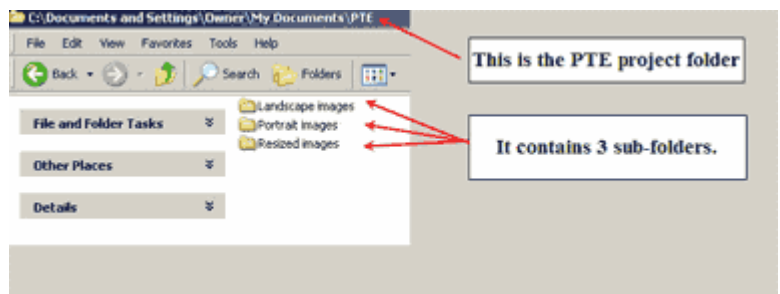
Actions & Batch Processing with Photoshop

What this is about If you need to use Photoshop to carry out the same editing procedure on a lot of images, e.g. in order to resize them and save as JPEGs for use with Pictures to Exe, then you need to use the “Actions” and “Batch” operations provided.

The following tutorial describes in detail how to use these to resize your images prior to using them in Pictures to Exe (PTE).

Preliminary work Before starting work in Photoshop, you need to do some preliminary work setting up files. It's a good idea to keep all the files needed for a PTE project together in a single folder.

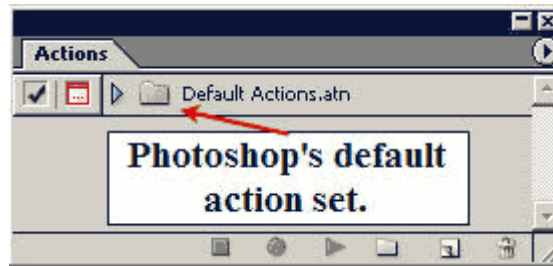
Have three sub-folders: for landscape-format images, for portrait-format images, and for the resized images.



Recording a Photoshop Action

1. In Photoshop, choose Window > Actions to get the Actions palette on screen.

Unless you have previously recorded or loaded any actions, it's likely that only Photoshop's default action set will be displayed.



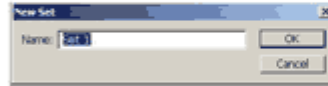
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2. Create a New Actions Set – the easiest way to do this is to click the folder icon.



click the folder icon to create a new action set

3. Choose a suitable name for this Actions Set.



choose a suitable name for the actions set



4. In the actions palette, click on "Create New Action".

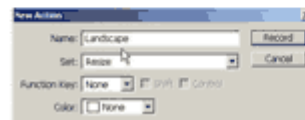


click the new page icon to create a new action

5. Choose a suitable name for your Action, and then click Record.



choose a suitable name for the action, then click Record

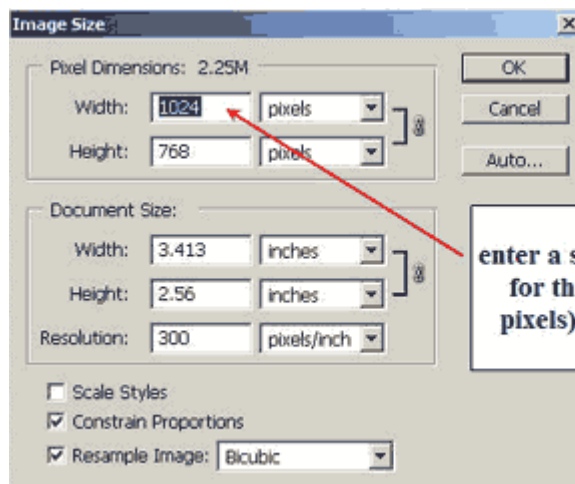


6. Resize the image by choosing Image > Image Size.
7. Enter the new width in pixels then click OK.

If you are re-sizing landscape-format images, it's quite likely that you will need them to be 1024 pixels wide.

For portrait-format images, set the height at 768 pixels.

There's no need to alter any other settings.

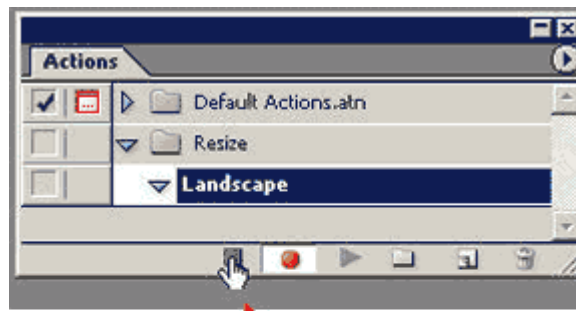


enter a suitable value for the width (in pixels) - e.g. 1024



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8. Now stop the recording.



click to stop
recording

N.B. You will need to record separate actions to resize landscape-format images and portrait-format images.



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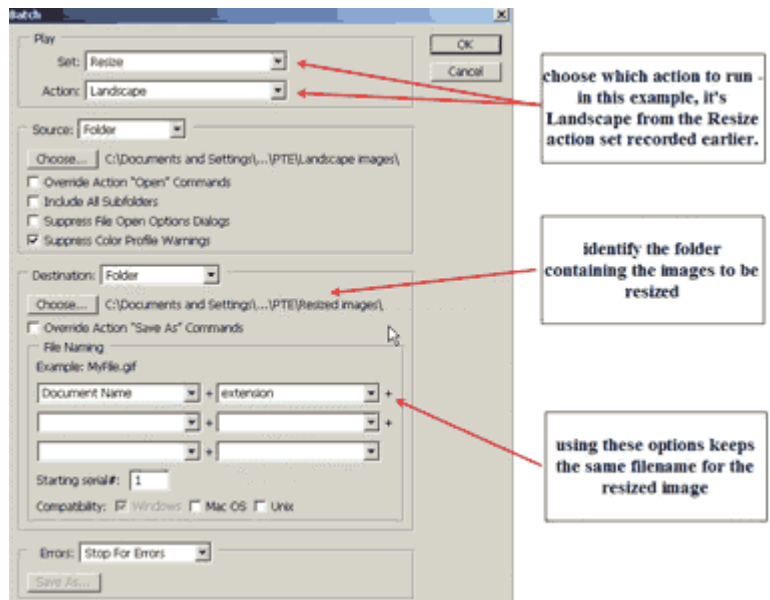
Batch Processing in Photoshop

Having recorded Actions to resize images in landscape and portrait format, we can now use Photoshop's Batch operation to automatically resize and save all the images in a folder.

In Photoshop, choose File > Automate > Batch.

Set options as shown opposite, then click OK.

Photoshop will now automatically open each image in the Landscape images folder, resize the image to 1024 pixels wide, then save the image in the Resized images folder.



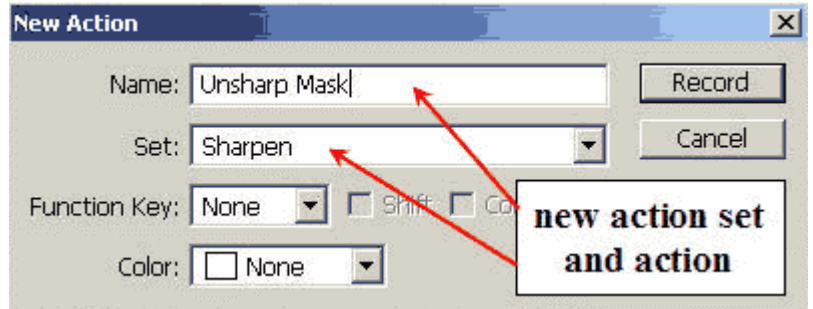
Repeat this to resize the Portrait-format images.



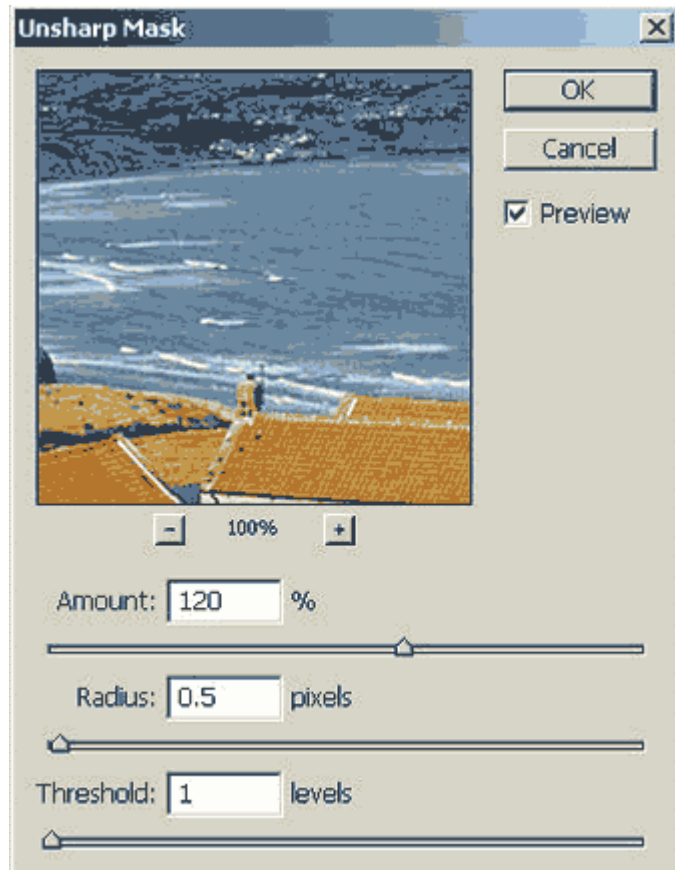
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Sharpen the image.

1. Create a New Action following the procedure described earlier and start recording.



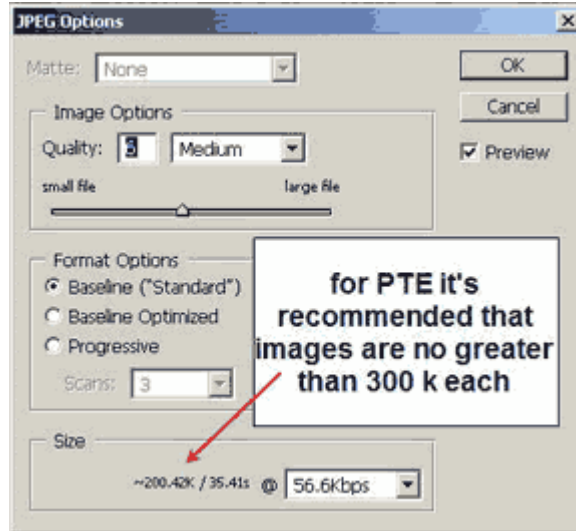
2. Select Filter > Sharpen > Unsharp Mask.
3. Set the values shown in the screenshot then click OK.



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Save the resized, sharpened image as a JPEG then stop the Action recording.

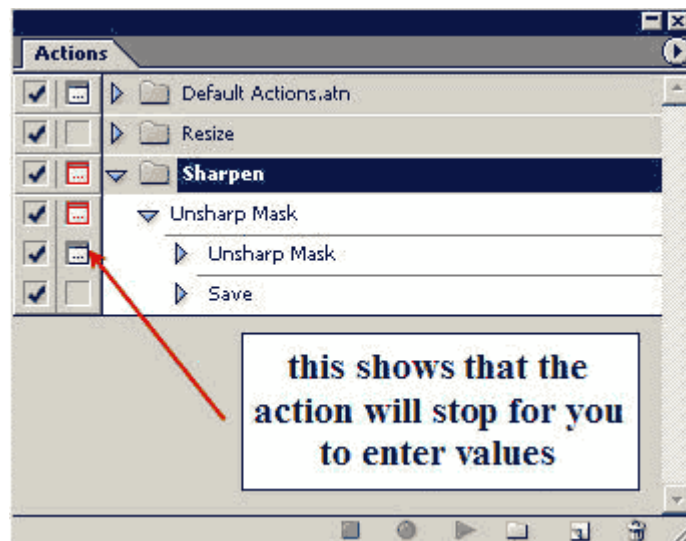
The option shown – Quality 6 – is a good compromise between file size and image quality.



The drawback of this approach is that Unsharp Mask will use the same values for every image.

This can be overcome by making the Action stop when it reaches the sharpening stage. This lets us enter different values of Unsharp Mask depending on the individual image.

1. In the actions palette, click in the box next to the Unsharp Mask stage.



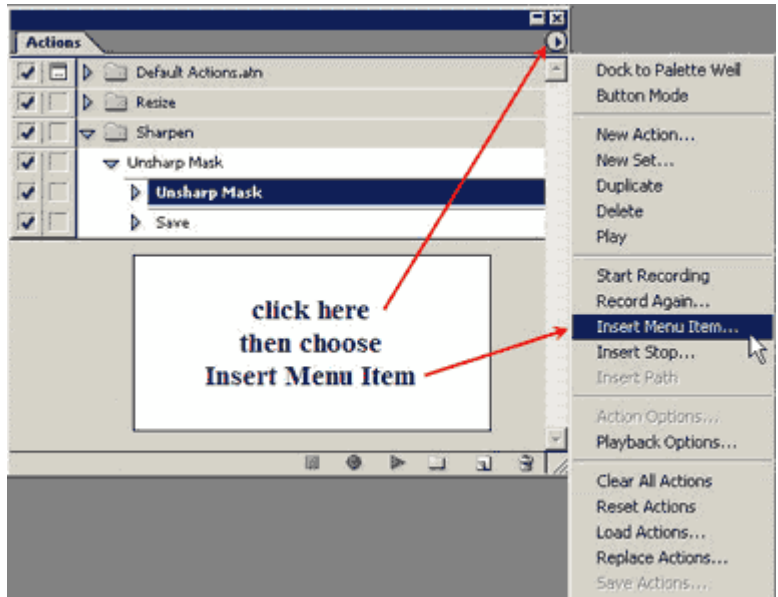
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A final "tweak" At this stage, the Action is complete but there is a small snag. Ideally when we use Unsharp Mask, we need to view the image's actual pixels. The Action needs two additions to allow this.

2. Click on the "Unsharp Mask" step in the Actions Palette, and then click the Palette's right arrow to see extra options.

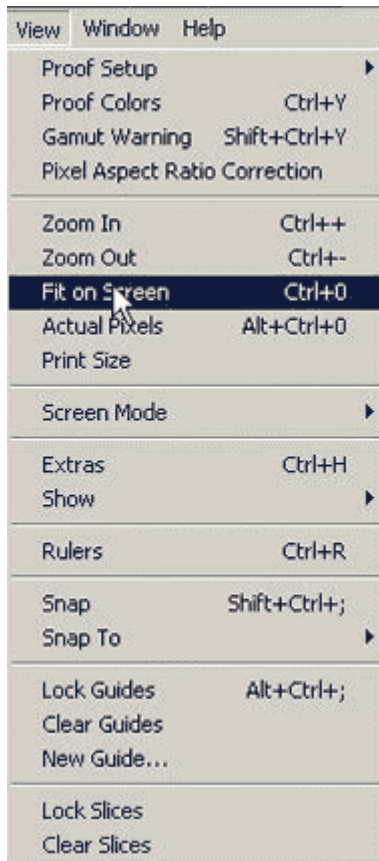
Choose "Insert Menu Item".

At this stage, simply ignore the warning box that appears.



3. Go to "View" then choose "Fit on Screen".

Then click OK.

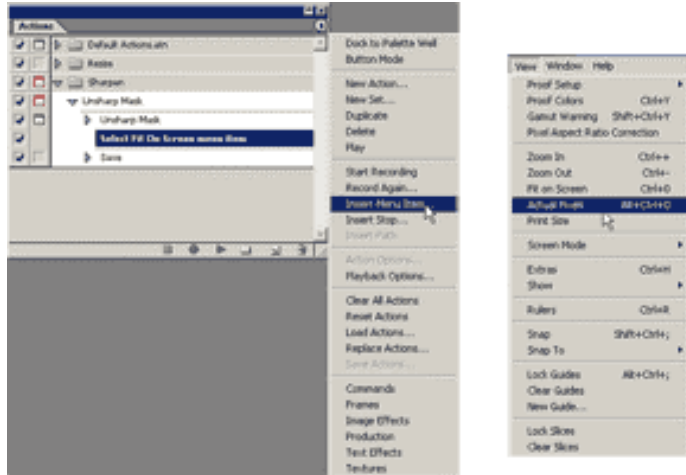


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- The Action Palette now shows that you have added a step to “Select Fit on Screen menu item”.

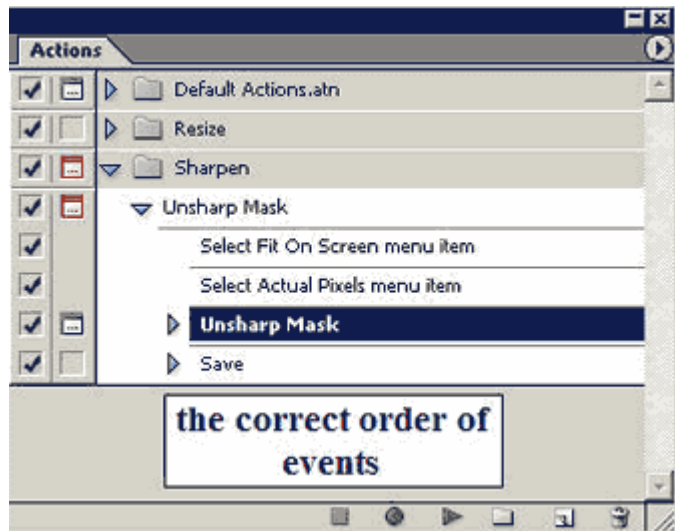
Repeat steps 2 & 3, but...

this time you need to choose “Actual Pixels”.



- The final step is to re-order the instructions in the Unsharp Mask action.

Simply click and drag the instructions into the correct order as shown here.



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Batch settings for the new action

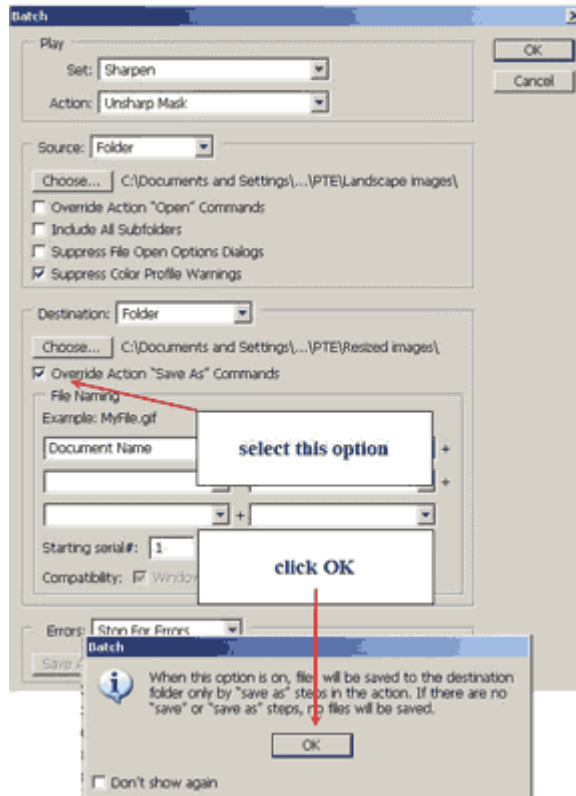
There is a slight difference between this and the settings we used earlier because the action includes a Save As command.

We need to tick the box:

Override Action “Save As” Commands.

Ignore the warning box that appears – just click OK.

The action will then run through all the images in the source folder (PTE\Landscape images in this example) and save them in the destination folder (PTE\Resized images) in jpg format, compressed to level 6.



What now? Some further modifications you may wish to include:

- Make the first step in the action “New Snapshot” (using the History palette). This gives a very useful “get out of jail card” if things go wrong.
- Make the next step in any action “Flatten image” – this will prevent problems that may occur with layered images.
- Make the sharpen action stop at the saving stage to allow adjustment of the jpg compression level.
- Combine the resize and sharpen actions into one to speed-up the process.

Using Actions and Batch Automation can reduce the time and effort needed to carry out many routine operations in Photoshop. It’s well-worth exploring!

