

# MAKING SILHOUETTES

– *USE YOUR PHOTOS TO MAKE ELEMENTS!*

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Why not put your photos to use and make some elements you will use over and over again! Making silhouettes is easy and quick, I'll show you two different methods – for Photoshop and Photoshop Elements.

## Finding the Right Photo:

Choose photos that are full body – tip to toes! If the feet are in grass or water, you will have to 'make them up' so look carefully that you can see the whole foot enough to trace it.

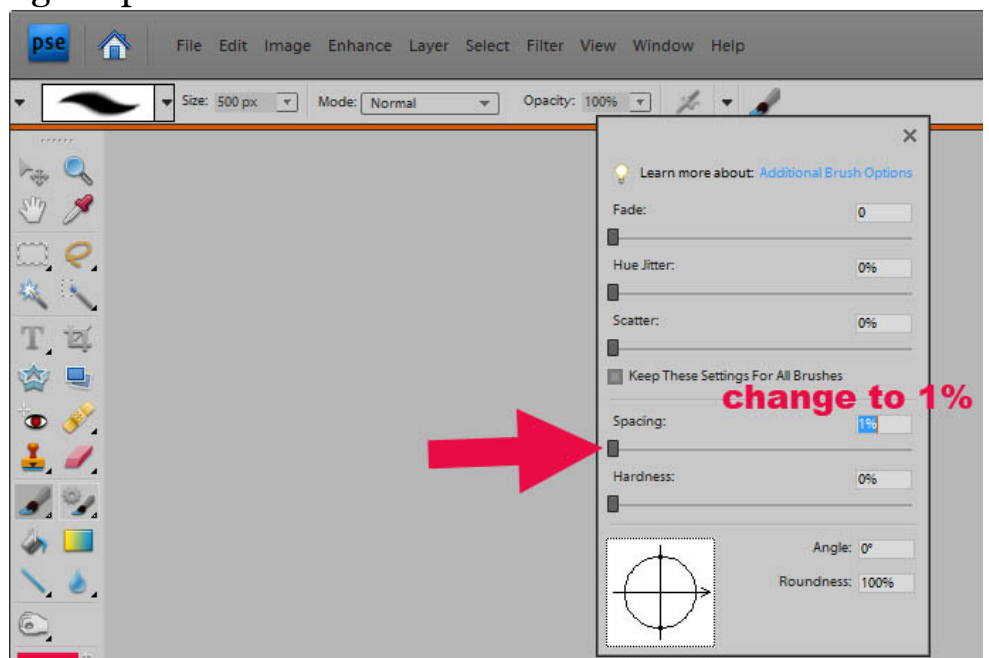
Action photos work best! Set your camera on a high shutter speed or the sports setting, and go outside and snap away. I'm not above 'directing' my kids to pose for me!

## How to do it:

### In PSE (this will work in PS too!)

1. Open the photo you are going to work with, and crop it so that you have only the figure you want to trace on the page.
2. Open a blank 12x12 document, and drag the photo onto it. Resize the photo large, so the figure takes up most of the space available. Don't worry if it looks bad, we're not really using the photos.

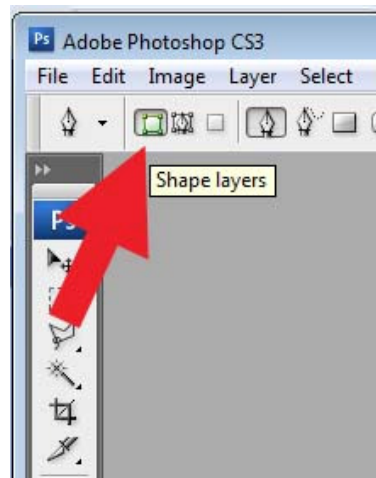
3. Choose a hard brush. Go to the brush options menu by clicking on the brush on the tool options bar at the top. Find the spacing slider and move it to the left until you get to 1%.



4. Make a new layer to paint on, and set your foreground color to black (press D to reset your colors to the default B&W). Change the opacity of that layer to about 50% or less so you will be able to see the photo through your paint.
5. Now we're just going to paint over what we want to keep! I recommend taking a very small brush and going around the perimeter, then fill in with a larger brush.
6. Turn off your photo layer from time to time to see how it's going. Feel free to take a little 'artistic license' to leave out or add in anything you think will look good.
7. When you are all finished, delete the photo layer. Crop the document close to the image, and save as .png to preserve the transparent areas.

### **In PS:**

1. Open the photo you are going to work with, and crop it so that you have only the figure you want to trace on the page.
2. Open a blank 12x12 document, and drag the photo onto it. Resize the photo large, so the figure takes up most of the space available. Don't worry if it looks bad, we're not really using the photos.
3. Make a new layer, and lower the opacity to 50% or below so you can see through your shape as you draw.
4. Choose your Pen tool, and select the Shape Layers option. This will fill in your shape as you draw it! Don't freak out if it's going all wonky, it will eventually even out when you get back around to where you started.
5. Click to start your path, then work your way around the image. See below for a quick tutorial on how to use the pen tool, if you are not familiar.
6. Turn off your photo layer from time to time to see how it's going. Feel free to take a little 'artistic license' to leave out or add in anything you think will look good.
7. When you are all finished, delete the photo layer. Crop the document close to the image, and save as .png to preserve the transparent areas.



## Pen Tool Mini-tutorial:

Here are the basics on how the Pen Tool works:

Click (and let up off the mouse button, don't drag) then move the mouse somewhere else and click again. You will see the path trail out behind your cursor as you move it, once you click again, that segment of the path is fixed and won't move again. Move the mouse and click again, until you get near where you started. When you hover the cursor over the beginning point, you will see a little o appear next to it – that means clicking will close the path. You don't HAVE to close your paths. If you don't want to close, just drag your cursor off the workspace, and the path will end at the last place you clicked.

Now we've got nice straight line segments. If you want to constrain those lines to being perfectly horizontal, vertical or 45 degrees, you can hold the shift key while you click, just like with the brush tool.

Here come the curved lines! This is where everyone gets scared, but we'll talk you through it!

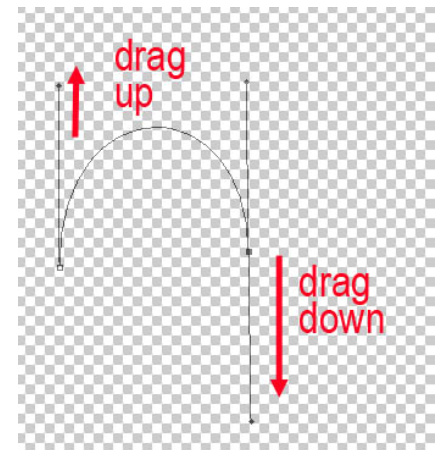


To make a curved line, when you click, DRAG your cursor in the direction you want the line to curve.

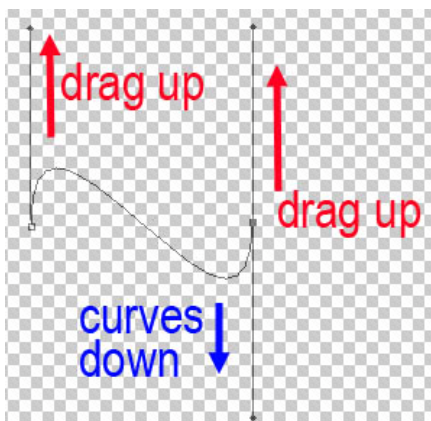
This will draw out the direction lines and points. The farther you drag, the steeper the curve.

Move your cursor to the right, and drag DOWN this time, and you'll get this:

Notice as you do this, the height of the curve is influenced by how much you drag.



But what if we'd dragged UP again?



If we drag UP on the second click, the curve goes down??

WHAA???

That's because the drag influences where the NEXT curve will go – and it creates another direction line and point in the opposite direction to control the end of the segment preceding the point.

*You don't have to remember this, you will be able to see it as you drag. If it's curving the wrong way, just drag back the other direction BEFORE you let off the mouse button. Once you let go of that button, you'll have to CTRL+Z to undo that point and try again.*