

Pen Tool and Paths Palette

Pen tool shortcuts (with pen tool selected)

Mac	PC	Function
⌘		Direct selection tool (whilst key is held down)
⌥		Convert direction tool (whilst key is held down)
Shift		Constrains the path drawing horizontally, vertically and at 45 degrees
Click on anchor point/path		Remove anchor point/add anchor point (toggle) (Auto Add Delete must be checked in the Options bar)
⌘ click path		Activate all control points without selecting them
⌘ click anchor point		Activate a single anchor point
⌘ Shift click anchor point		Add to selected anchor points
⌘ ⌥ click path in image		Select entire path or uppermost sub-path's anchor points
⌘ ⌥ Shift drag path		Clone selected path (Shift key constrains movement to 45 degree increments, let go after first dragging)

Tips

- Use as few Anchor Points as possible;
- Place Anchor Points at significant changes of curvature inflection;
- The *handles* that define a curve should not be longer than half the length of the curve they are describing;
- Close the path before fine-tuning it;
- Work at between 200% and 300% and stay one pixel in from the edge;
- Learn the basic Pen Tool shortcut keys;
- Do not fight the Pen Tool.
It is less stressful to delete an errant Anchor Point and to continue again;
- For angled corners: Click. Click. Click.
- For curves: Click, Hold, Drag. Click, Hold, Drag. Click, Hold, Drag.

Pen Tool +	Action
Click	Add an Anchor Point
Click	Hold + Drag - Add an anchor and describe a curve
Command Key ⌘	Direct Selection Tool – To select an anchor point or handle
Option Key ⌘	Convert an anchor point to a corner, or visa versa
Option Key ⌘	Select a single handle on an anchor point
Shift + P	Pen Tool or Freeform Pen Tool
Selection Tools	
Shift + A	Path Selection Tool or Direct Selection Tool
Command + Option	Change Selection Tools to Convert Point Tool

Other Shortcuts	
Spacebar	Hand tool - to move the image
⌘ + Spacebar	Zoom tool - to enlarge the image size
⌥ + Spacebar	Zoom tool - to decrease the image size

Paths		Palette shortcuts
Mac	PC	Function
Click New path button		Create a new path
↶ click New path button	alt click New path button	Create a new path showing the New Path dialog box
Drag path to New path button		Duplicate path
Click Delete path button		Delete path (with alert dialog)
↶ click Delete path button	alt click Delete path button	Delete path, bypassing the alert warning
Drag path to Delete button		Delete path, bypassing the alert warning
Double-click Path name		Edit the path name
Click Make work path button		Convert a selection to make a work path
↶ click Make work path button	alt click Make work path button	Convert a selection to make a work path via Make Work Path dialog (choose pixel tolerance setting)
Double-click work path icon		Save the work path as a new path
Drag a work path to the New path button		Convert a work path into a new path
⌘ click a Path in the palette	ctrl click a Path in the palette	Load the path as a selection
Click Load path as a selection button		Convert active closed path to a selection
↶ click Load path as a selection button	alt click Load path as a selection button	Convert active closed path to a selection via Make Selection dialog box
⌘ Enter (selection or path tool active)	ctrl Enter (selection or path tool active)	Convert active path to a selection
Click Stroke Path button		Stroke perimeter of path with Foreground color
↶ click Stroke Path button	alt click Stroke Path button	Stroke perimeter of path via the Stroke Path dialog box
Click Fill path button		Fill path with Foreground color
↶ click Fill path button	alt click Fill path button	Fill path via the Fill Path dialog box
Click empty Paths palette area		Deactivate path

“Click, Hold, Drag. Click, Hold, Drag. Click, Hold, Drag.”

Sources:

Eisman, Duggan & Porto, *Photoshop Masking and Compositing*, New Riders, 2012
 Evening, M, *Photoshop CS6 for Photographers*, Focal Press, 2012

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