HOW TO CREATE PHOTOSHOP ACTIONS
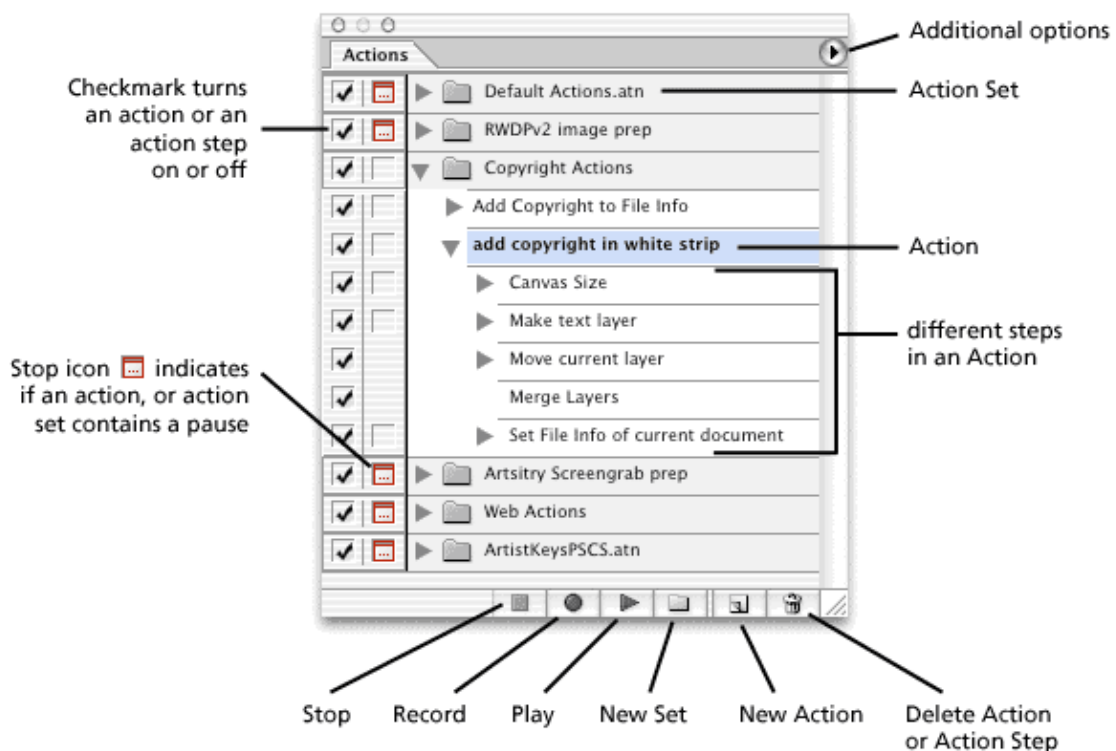
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The procedure below describes how to create a simple Photoshop action and talks you through creating the High Pass Sharpening technique.

Note: If you Photoshop Elements, you are unable to create actions, but can load them into Photoshop Elements.

Anatomy of Photoshop Actions Window

The below example if from the Mac version of Photoshop and is identical except the "Additional Options" button is a different icon but can be found in the same place.
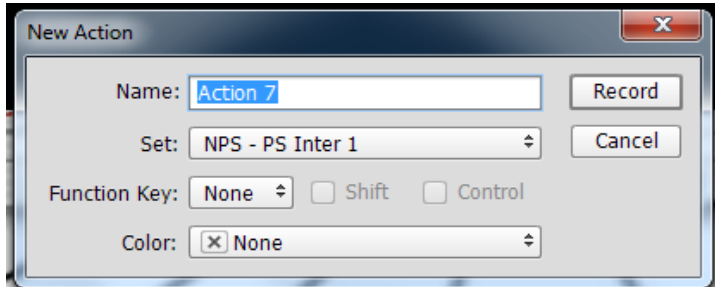

Recording the Action

Before recording the action, run through what you want to do a few times, as the action records everything you apply to the photograph, to ensure you record it in as few attempts as possible. When ready -

1) Select the actions window in Photoshop. If the Actions window is not open, it can be opened by selecting the Windows Menu and then selecting Actions.

2) A best practice is to keep all you're actions separate from the Photoshop actions so you can save and transfer them to newer version of Photoshop, should you upgrade or export them. To do this click on the "New Set" at the bottom of the Action Windows and name the action.

3) Select the action set you want the action to be saved in and then select "New Action". From the dialogue box that appears, you can name you're action here, select the set, assign a function key (speeds up editing if you do assign functions keys) and a colour (makes them easier to identify the action in the actions windows). Once you are happy with the naming, etc. of the new action, press the "record" button.

4) Select the background layer and duplicate it.

5) Select the Filter Menu, then Other and High Pass.

6) The photograph will go grey at this point and as you move the radius slider parts of the image will start to appear through the greyness and these areas are where the sharpening will take effect. Remember you only want to sharpen the edges with this technique, so set the Radius slider between 0.5 and 5. Then select "OK". The amount of sharpening will also depend on the original size of the images, the smaller the image the lower the amount of sharpening required.

7) Set the Layer Blend Mode to "Overlay" on the new layer.

8) Press "Stop" at the base of the Actions Window. You have now recorded your first action.

As you'll want to sharpen each image individually, select the "Stop Icon" (see Anatomy of Photoshop Actions Window for location) next to "High Pass" and this will display the High Pass dialogue box every time the macro runs.