

# PHOTO Elements TECHNIQUES

## Create Custom Snowflake Brushes

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Works in Photoshop Elements 13 and earlier versions

In this lesson, learn how to make custom snowflake brushes and save them in a brush set.

1. Create a new file with a white background as the base for your cookies. From the **File** menu, select **New**, then select **Blank File**.
2. In the **New** dialogue box:
  - a. Enter the dimensions of the file; for example, 800 px by 800 px.
  - b. Select **Transparent** for the **Background Contents**.
  - c. Click **OK**.
3. From the **View** menu, select **Rulers**. If needed, right-click on the top ruler and select **Pixels** as the unit of measurement.

4. To locate the center of the image:
  - a. Select the **Move** tool.
  - b. Drag a guide from the top menu down **400 px**.
  - c. Drag a guide from the left ruler **400 px** to the right.
5. From the **View** menu, select **Grid**. If needed, change the grid measurements:
  - a. From the **Edit** menu, select **Preferences**.
  - b. Select **Guides and Grid**.
  - c. In the **Grid** section, set a gridline every **50 pixels**.
  - d. Click **OK**.
6. Press **D** to set the foreground color to black.
7. Create a guide for the snowflake that has twelve sides. In the toolbox, select the **Star Shape tool**. In the tool options, enter the following:
  - a. **Sides: 12**
  - b. **Indent: 99%**.
8. Click and drag a star shape from the center of the image.
9. In the tool options, click **Simplify**.
10. Add a new layer above the star layer.
11. Using the **Zoom** tool, zoom in on the top half of the image.
12. Select the **Brush** tool. In the tool options:
  - a. Select a hard round brush.
  - b. Set the **Size** to **10 px**.
  - c. Set the **Opacity** to **100%**.
13. Click once in the middle of the star, then press **Shift** and click where you want the line to end to draw a perpendicular line about 100 px from the top of the image.
14. Add four or five diagonal lines to the right wedge of the star. To create a star shape in your snowflake, make sure that one line intersects with the first angled line. Otherwise, do not connect with the line.
15. Press **Ctrl + J** on the PC or **Cmd + J** on the Mac to duplicate the layer.
16. From the **Image** menu, select **Rotate**, then select **Flip Layer Horizontal**.
17. Using the **Move** tool, move the flipped layer to the left until the perpendicular lines match. Use the **Arrow keys** on the keyboard to nudge the image into place.
18. From the **Layer** menu, select **Merge Down**.
19. Press **Ctrl + J** on the PC or **Cmd + J** on the Mac to duplicate the merged layer.
20. Press **Ctrl + 0** on the PC or **Cmd + 0** on the Mac to fit the image to the screen.

21. From the **Image** menu, select **Rotate**, then select **Flip Layer Vertical**.
22. Using the **Move** tool, move the flipped layer down until you see a mirror image. Use the **Arrow keys** on the keyboard to nudge the image into place.
23. Right-click on the layer and select **Merge Down**, or press **Ctrl + E** or **Cmd + E**.
24. Press **Ctrl + J** on the PC or **Cmd + J** on the Mac to duplicate the merged layer.
25. From the **Image** menu, select **Rotate**, then select **Free Rotate Layer**.
  - a. In the tool options, enter **60** degrees.
  - b. Check the **green check mark** or press **Enter** to save your changes.
26. Press **Ctrl + J** on the PC or **Cmd + J** on the Mac to duplicate the merged layer.
27. From the **Image** menu, select **Rotate**, then select **Flip Layer Horizontal**.
28. In the **Layers** panel, select all snowflake layers. Click on the first snowflake layer, then press **Shift** and click on the top snowflake layer.
29. From the **Layer** menu, select **Merge Layers**.
30. Click the **Visibility icon** to hide the star guide layer.
31. From the **Edit** menu, select **Define Brush**. Enter a brush name and click **OK**.
32. Make variations on the snowflake. To make a fat snowflake:
  - a. Press **Ctrl** or **Cmd** and select the thumbnail of the snowflake layer to select the snowflake.
  - b. Create a new layer above the snowflake layer.
  - c. From the **Select** menu, select **Modify**, then **Expand**. Enter **15 pixels** and click **OK**.
  - d. From the **Edit menu**, select **Stroke (Outline) Selection**. Enter **10 px** and click **OK**.
  - e. From the **Select** menu, select **Deselect**.
  - f. In the **Layers** panel, press **Ctrl +click** or **Cmd + click** to select the two snowflake layers (basic and fat).
  - g. Press **Ctrl + Alt + E** on the PC or **Cmd +Opt +E** in the Mac to create a merged layer above the top layer.
  - h. Hide all layers except the top layer. Press **Alt** or **Opt** and click the visibility icon next to the top layer to hide all the layers below.
  - i. From the **Edit** menu, select **Define Brush**. Enter a brush name and click **OK**.
33. Make other variations using the same process described in Step 32.
34. To create a brush set, from the **Edit** menu, select **Preset Manager**. In the Preset Manager:
  - a. Select **Brushes** from the **Preset Type list**.

b. Press **Ctrl + click** or **Cmd + click** to select the snowflake brushes you made.

c. Click **Save Set**. Enter a name for the brush set and click **Save**.

35. Click **Done**.