

Installing Layer Styles In Photoshop Elements

Layer Styles are fun to use and will open up a whole new world of creativity for you! You must do just a little work in order to be able to use them; however, I'm sure you will find the few minutes required well worth your time!

If you have Photoshop open, close it.

First Step:

First of all, let's check your folder visibility settings. The intent is to allow you to see invisible folders.

Windows XP: Open a folder (any folder is fine), click on the Tools drop-down menu, then click on Folder Options. Next click on the View tab. Scroll to "Hidden Files and Folders" and click on "Show Hidden Files and Folders." Click ok.

Vista: You may follow the same instructions as for Windows XP, or alternatively, you may follow this path: Start > Control Panel >

- If you are in "Control Panel Home" view (you will see this on the left in the blue pane), Click on "Appearance and Personalization," which is on the right. Next Click on "Folder Options." A "Folder Options" box will open. Click on the 2nd tab, which is entitled "View." Scroll down to see the folder named "Hidden files and folders." Click on "Show hidden files and folders," then click OK.
- If you are in the "Classic View" (left blue pane), click on "Folder Options" on the right. A "Folder Options" box will open. Click on the 2nd tab, which is entitled "View." Scroll down to see the folder named "Hidden files and folders." Click on "Show hidden files and folders," then click OK.

Windows 7: Click Start>Control Panel>Appearance and Personalization. If you do not see Appearance and Personalization, look at the "View By" options in the upper right corner of the screen. You will see that you are viewing by "icons." You must be in "View by Category" to see "Appearance and Personalization." Simply click on the down arrow near "view by" and in the drop down menu choose "Category." Then, on the main screen, look for "Appearance and Personalization" then click on it. Scroll down and click on "Folder Options" At the top of the next window, click on "View". Then click on "Show hidden files, folders and drives". Then click OK.

Click on Start > Control Panel > Appearance and Personalization> Folder Options. A “Folder Options” box will open. Click on the 2nd tab, which is entitled “View.” Scroll down to see the folder named “Hidden files and folders.” Click on “Show hidden files and folders,” then click OK.

Second Step:

Styles have their own file extension, which is .asl. Most designers name their styles just like they name their kit products (their design initials, followed by the product name). For example, the styles that coordinate with my Smooth Sailing kit look like this: SD_SmoothSailing.asl

We need to get the .asl file into the proper Adobe folder so that when you open Elements, the styles will be available for you to use. To do this, you will need to identify the version of Elements that you have, as well as the Operating System (OS) that you use (XP, Vista, Windows 7) from the list I have provided below.

For now, simply find your PSE version and Operating System, then move on to Step Three

FOR XP USERS:

PSE 4 and below: Program Files\Adobe\Photoshop Elements X\Presets\Styles

For these versions, you will need to replace the “X” after “Elements” with the PSE version that you have. So if you are using PSE4, you would replace the “X” with a “4.” The new path would read: Program Files\Adobe\Photoshop Elements

4\Presets\Styles. (You can easily do this by simply copying the path above, pasting it into WordPad or some other editing software, replacing the “X” with your PSE version number, then copying your newly edited path for the next step.)

PSE 5:

C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Application Data\Adobe\PhotoshopElements\5.0\Photo Creations\Special Effects\Layer Styles

In PSE 5, once you are in the Layer Styles folder, you will need to create another folder with the name of the layer style you are installing. When you get to that point, you will simply right click anywhere inside the Layer Styles Folder to get a fly-out menu. In the fly-out menu, you will be able to select “New” to create a new folder. Do so, then rename the New Folder the name of the Style that you are installing. (right click and highlight folder in order to rename).

PSE 6:

C: > Documents and Settings > All Users > Application Data > Adobe > Photoshop Elements > 6.0 > Locale > en_us > Photo Creations > Layer Styles

PSE 7:

C:\Documents & Setting\All Users\Application Data\Adobe\Photoshop Elements\7.0\Photo Creations\layer styles

PSE 8: Start > Computer > Local Disk (C) > Documents and Settings > All Users > Application Data > Adobe > Photoshop Elements > 8.0 > Photo Creations > layer styles

FOR VISTA USERS:

PSE 5 and under:

Program Files\Adobe\Photoshop Elements X\Presets\Styles

For these versions, you will need to replace the “X” after “Elements” with the PSE version that you have. So if you are using PSE5, you would replace the “X” with a “5.” The new path would read: Program Files\Adobe\Photoshop Elements 5\Presets\Styles. (You can easily do this by simply copying the path above, pasting it into Wordpad or some other editing software, replacing the “X” with your PSE version number, then copying your newly edited path for the next step.)

PSE 6:

C: Program Data > All Users > Application Data > Adobe > Photoshop Elements > 6.0 > Locale > en_us > Photo Creations > Layer Styles

PSE 7:

Start > Computer > Local Disk (C) > ProgramData > Adobe > Photoshop Elements > 7.0 > Photo Creations > layer styles

PSE 8:

C:\ProgramData\Adobe\Photoshop Elements\8.0\Photo Creations\layer styles

FOR WINDOWS 7 USERS:

PSE 8:

C:\ProgramData\Adobe\Photoshop Elements\8.0\Photo Creations\layer styles

PSE 7:

Start > Computer > Local Disk (C) > ProgramData > Adobe > Photoshop Elements > 7.0 > Photo Creations > layer styles

It is my understanding that the navigational path for Versions 6 and under follow the path as that of Vista; therefore, for PSE 6 and below, please refer to Vista paths (listed above).

STEP 3:

Click on the Start Menu in Windows, then click on My Computer, THEN follow the navigational path (as listed above) that applies to your PSE version and Operating System. Once you are inside the very last folder in your navigational path, simply copy the .asl file that you wish to install (right click on the style, click on copy), go back to the Adobe folder you have open, and right click in a blank area. In the fly-out menu that will open, click on paste. You should now see your new style in the Adobe folder.

Note: It is advisable to keep the original .asl file in the original Designer folder.

By copying and pasting the asl file, you will keep the original file safe in its original folder, and be placing the copy in PSE.

STEP 4:

At this point, if you chose to close the Adobe folder and open PSE, you would see your new Style listed in alphabetical order in the Palette ("All Show"). However, if you have numerous styles installed, your list can become quite long, and scrolling up and down to find what you want can become tedious.

If you prefer not to go any further with Styles Installation, you may certainly stop right here. Close the Adobe Folder, open PSE, and enjoy your newly installed Styles.

However, if you would like to categorize your Styles to make them easier to find, let's move on to Step 5.

OPTIONAL STEP 5:

If you have not closed the Adobe folder where you copied/pasted your style yet, you are in the right place. If you have closed it, navigate back to that folder.

In the Style Folder, some designers may include a .xml file. The .xml file is what will tell PSE how to categorize your new style for you. If a .xml file was not included, you may make one, although it can be an intimidating process for some. For now, let's assume one is included.

Copy the .xml file and simply paste it into the Adobe folder (the same folder where you pasted the style). Do not close the folder yet... keep reading ;)

Still in this folder, use your browser's Back button (top left), and click on it twice. This will take you 2 steps back on the navigational path. You should see a file named "ThumbDatabase.db3." Right click on that file to rename it. Simply add OLD in front of the file name, so now it will read "OLDThumbDatabase.db3." You may now close this Adobe folder.

Open PSE. You will receive a message that states that PSE is rebuilding the Database. This is exactly what you want to happen. Wait. It may take a while, depending on how many styles you have installed. Five to twenty minutes might not be unusual.

Once the Database has rebuilt, enter Edit mode in PSE. On the right, under the Effects Tab, click on the 2nd icon. If you hover over it, you will see that this is the "Layer Styles" tab. Then go to the far right of that menu bar and click on the down-pointing arrow to access the drop-down menu. You should see your new layer style by name, right there in its own category!

Navigate back to the folder where the "OLDThumbDatabase.db3" file is. There will now be a new file named "ThumbDatabase.db3." You may safely delete the "OLDThumbDatabase.db3" file. Once deleted, you may close the entire folder.

That's it! You are done!

So what happens if a .xml file is not included in your purchased Style?

Please see my tutorial: "How to Create your own Metadata File"

Additional information you may find helpful!

If you are using a layer style that appears too large or too small (in pattern size), you may adjust the pattern size in this manner: Click on the Layer tab at the top of PSE screen (in the Menu bar). In the drop-down menu, click on Layer Style, then on Scale Effects. You may simply enter a percentage in the box provided. Alternatively, you may click on the down-pointing arrow next to the percentage to get a sliding scale. Just grab the tab on the scale and move it back and forth until you are happy with the result.

If you still feel uncomfortable installing styles, you might like the Add-o-matic program by Graficalicus Addomatic. Here is a link to the website for this product:

http://www.graficalicus.com/graffishop/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=37. At the time of this writing it is \$11.99. My understanding, however, is that it will not create categories for you (.xml files).

A brief word of caution: If you have too many Styles installed, PSE will become bogged down upon opening the program, so only keep the styles that you will really use a lot installed. (Once you become familiar with the installation process, you can always install styles that you are using for a particular project, and then uninstall them when finished. You might not want to do this frequently, but it is an option if you have a LOT of styles and find that PSE is sluggish.)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at:

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