

How to combine layers in Photoshop

Sometimes it is necessary to combine or merge layers together to work on merged images or flatten all layers and form a single layer. Luckily, there are several options available for combining layers in Photoshop.

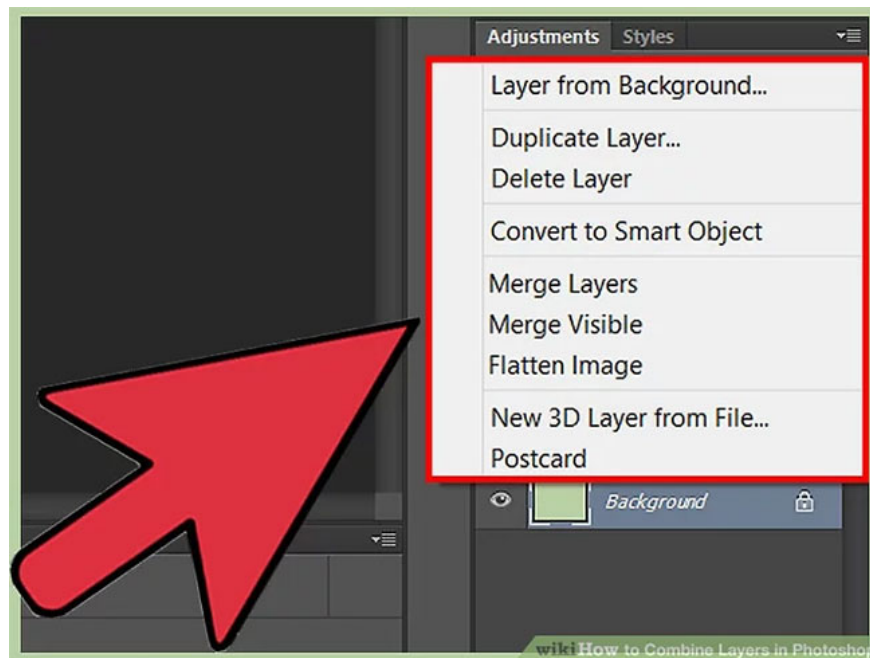
Layers in Photoshop allow you to work on one element of the image without disturbing the other. Users use them to make design work easier.

However, sometimes, it is necessary to combine or merge layers together - to work on merged images or flatten all layers and form a single layer. Luckily, there are several options available for combining layers in Photoshop.

Method 1: Use the merge option

1. Right-click a layer or multiple layers to display merge options. Switch to the layer panel and highlight the layer (s) you want to merge. Right click and look to the bottom of the menu that appears. You will see the options:

1. **Merge Layers** (or **Merge Down** , if you select only one layer)
2. **Merge Visible**
3. **Flatten Image**



The merge option

2. Select **Merge Down** to combine the currently selected layer with the layer directly below it. The layers will merge into one, taking the name of the layer below. However, note that you cannot do this if either layer is invisible or locked.

This option is replaced with **Merge Layers** , if you have multiple layers selected.

You can also press ? + E or Ctrl + E

3. Select multiple layers and use **Merge Layers** to combine them all into one layer. Press Shift + Click or Ctrl / Cmd + Click on all the layers you want to merge to highlight them. Then right-click on one of the layers and choose **Merge Layers** to combine them all.

These layers will merge into the top layer and keep that name.

4. Turn on and off layers to use **Merge Visible** . This is a good way to combine multiple layers quickly. Instead of clicking on all the layers you want to merge, simply uncheck the small "eye" icon on the left of each layer you don't want to merge. Then right-click on any visible layer in the control panel and choose **Merge Visible** . Only layers with "eyes" can be merged, other layers will be left.

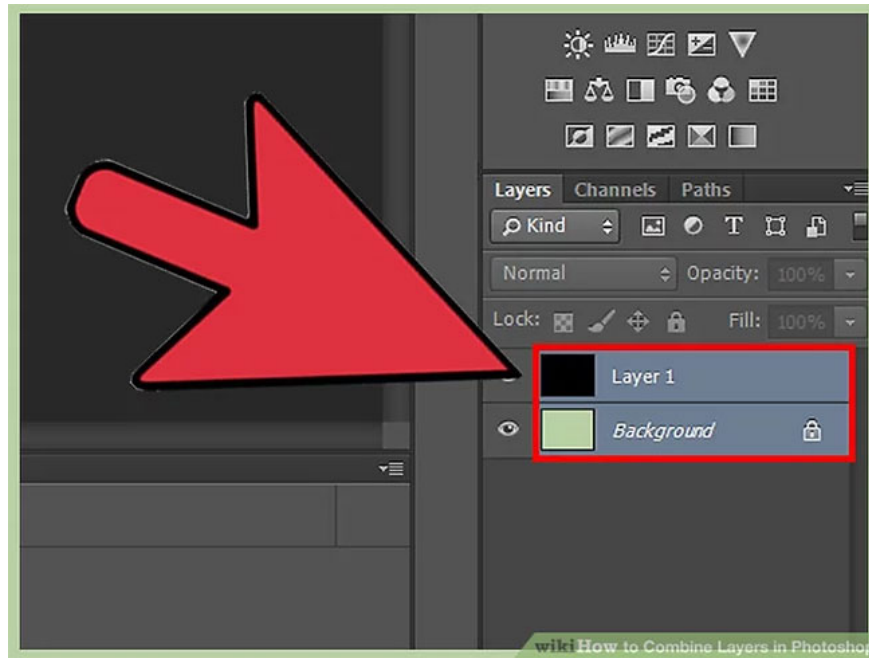
5. Press Alt or Opt and click **Merge Visible** to combine the layers into a completely new layer, while keeping the old layers. This combines all the visible layers, then copies them into separate layers. The smaller layers are intact and untreated, allowing you to keep them later if needed.

1. For Mac, hold the ? key.
2. For PC, hold Alt .

6. Select **Flatten Image** to merge all layers together, eliminating everything that is not visible. 'Flattened' images are typically reserved for the end of the project, right before saving the final finished image. The final image will include all the visible layers and turn them into a combined layer.

If there are any layers that are not visible, you are asked if you should remove it. Basically, the **Flatten Image** option takes everything you can see on the canvas (canvas) and combines them into a single layer in the panel.

7. Note that you cannot "unmerge" layers after combining them. Merging layers is useful, but you'll lose some of the tighter controls for your images. Make sure you merge the layers only when you finish the work on the individual layers.

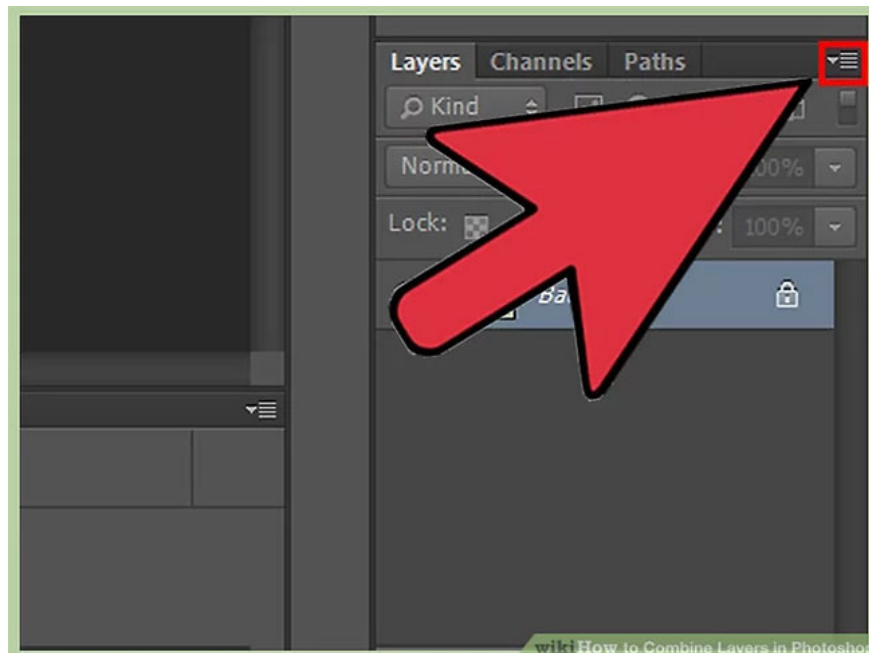


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It is not possible to "unmerge" layers after combining them

8. Know alternative ways to merge layers. There are two other ways to access these menus, so use the one you feel most comfortable with.

1. Click "**L**ayers" from the top menu. The options to merge will be near the bottom.
2. Click the small triangle and horizontal lines in the upper right corner of the **L**ayers panel. The merge option will be near the bottom.

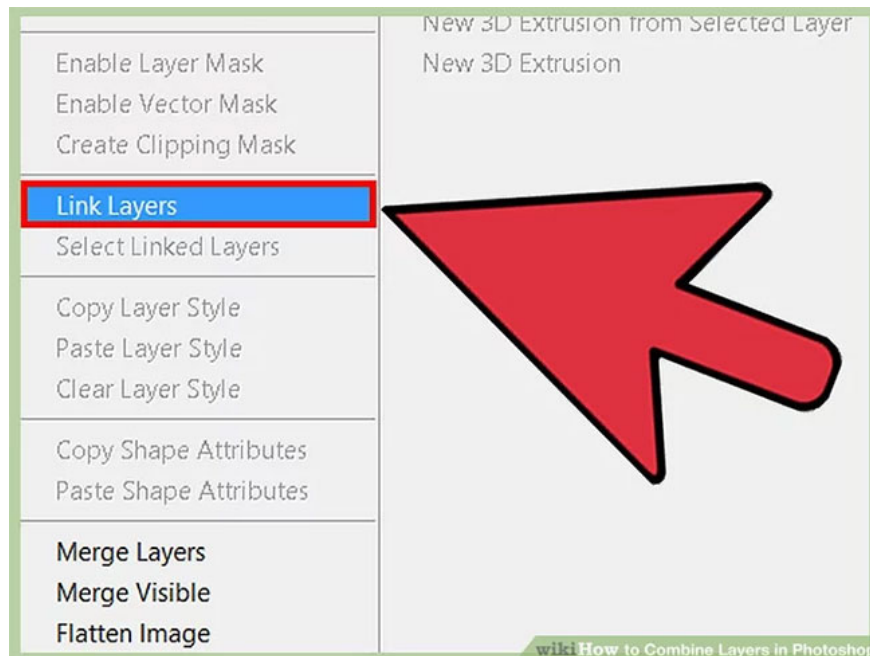


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Click the icon in the upper right corner to find the merge option

Method 2: Find an alternative to merging

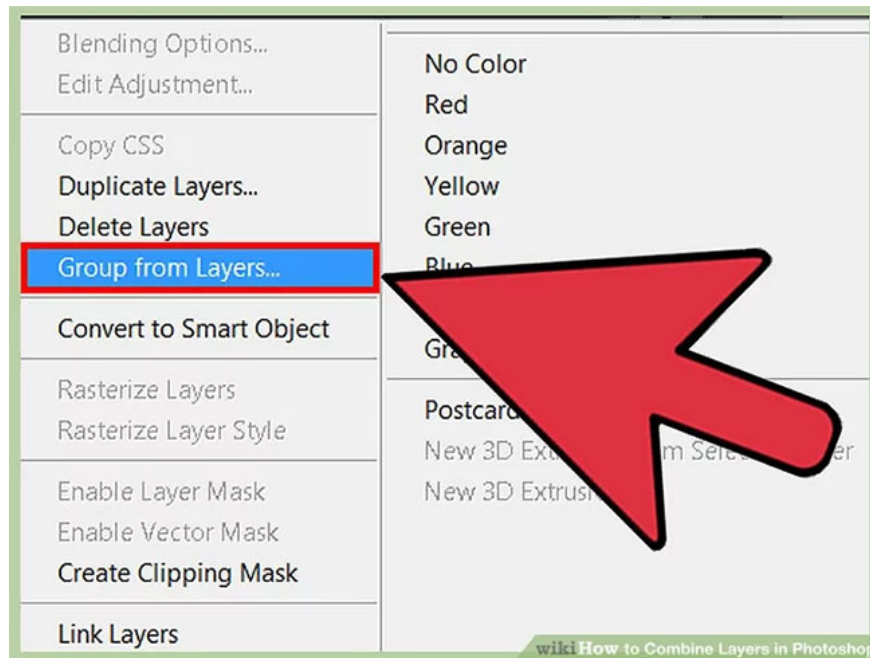
1. **Link layers to move, edit and copy them without merging** . The layers are disassociated, which means you can edit them separately if you want. However, every time you click on a linked layer, you automatically adjust the layer (s) to which it is linked. This is a great way to make big changes to multiple layers without having to merge.



Link layers to move, edit and copy them without merging

2. **Group layers to work on specific parts at a time** . If there are a series of layers that make up the same image, you can group them together. This allows you to see and work on only these layers in the larger image. To group the layers:

1. Select multiple layers in the **Layers** panel.
2. Right click and select **Group from Layers** . You can also drag layers into the small folder icon at the bottom of the **Layers** panel.



Group layers to work on specific sections at a time

3. **Fix the problem by rasterizing (converting from vector format to raster) any layer you cannot group or edit** . Sometimes, this is the only problem with consolidation. However, if no options appear to merge, try:

1. Right click and select **Rasterize**.
2. Check to make sure the layers are visible
3. Make sure clipping masks are also selected - you need to highlight them to merge.

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