



Photoshop Layer Styles, what are they?

[Adobe](#) defines them as: *"A layer style is one or more effects applied to a layer or layer group. You can apply any of the preset styles provided with Photoshop or create a custom style using the Layer Style dialog box.... Typically layer styles are used for text effects, but they can be used on images, backgrounds, and any other layer as well."*

More simply stated, with just the click of a button, you can apply different effects to your designs. You can move your design around on your canvas without losing any of the effects; and you can experiment with different styles quickly and easily to see what you like best.

We get multiple questions from our readers asking how to load, use, and manipulate Styles; so over the next few weeks, let's take a look at Styles and how they can be useful to us.

When you are shopping for Styles, you may see a Styles icon on the product packaging, although not always. There is an icon on my [Color Outside the Lines Styles](#) pack pictured below. Not all Styles icons look exactly the same, so look for something that says FX, or Styles, or something similar. Because Styles come in .ASL format, you might also see that on a Style package. And, of course, you can check the product description to be sure you are purchasing Styles.



In today's tutorial, we will learn how to load Styles. This can be done in several different ways:

Method #1:

Go to the top menu bar: File > Open. Navigate to the Style (.asl file) you would like to open. Click on it to select it, then click OPEN. The Styles will appear at the bottom of your Styles Panel. This method is not available for Photoshop Elements users.

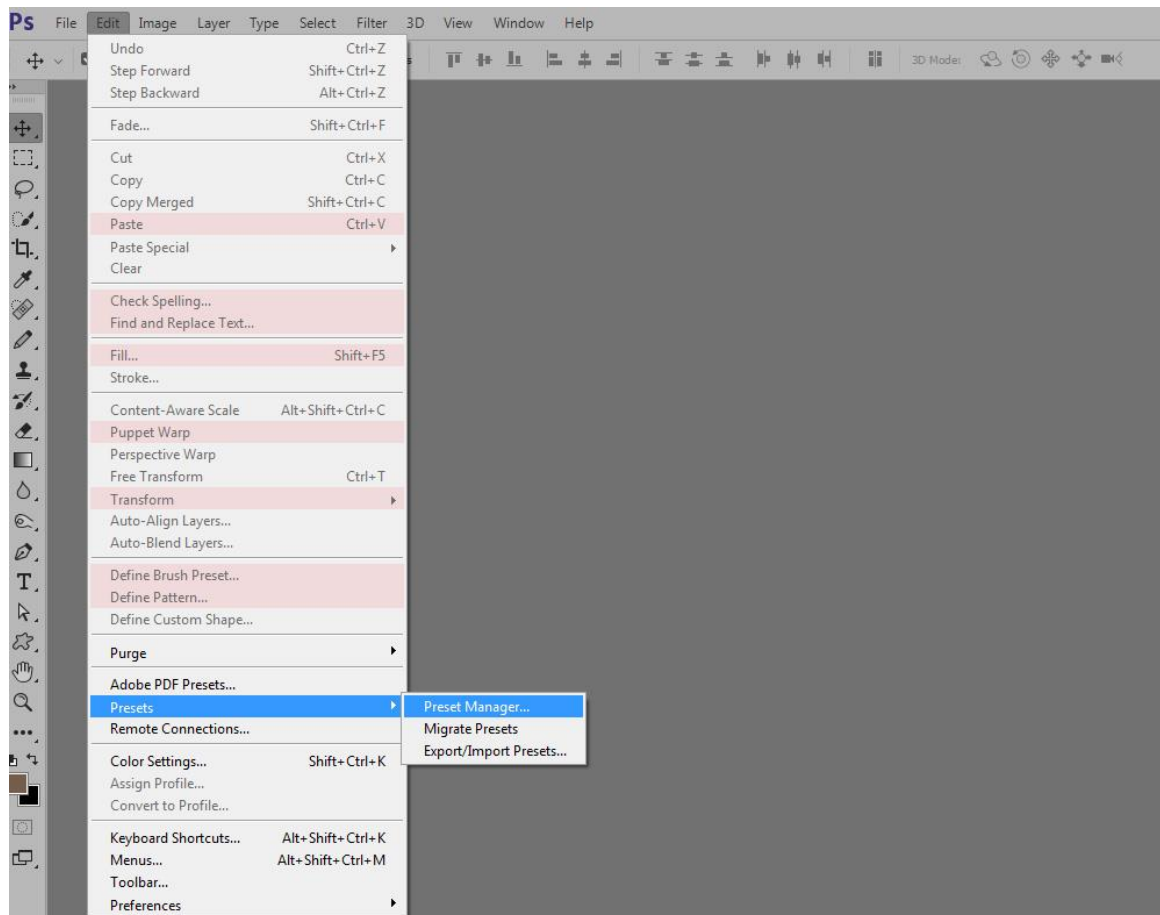
Method #2:

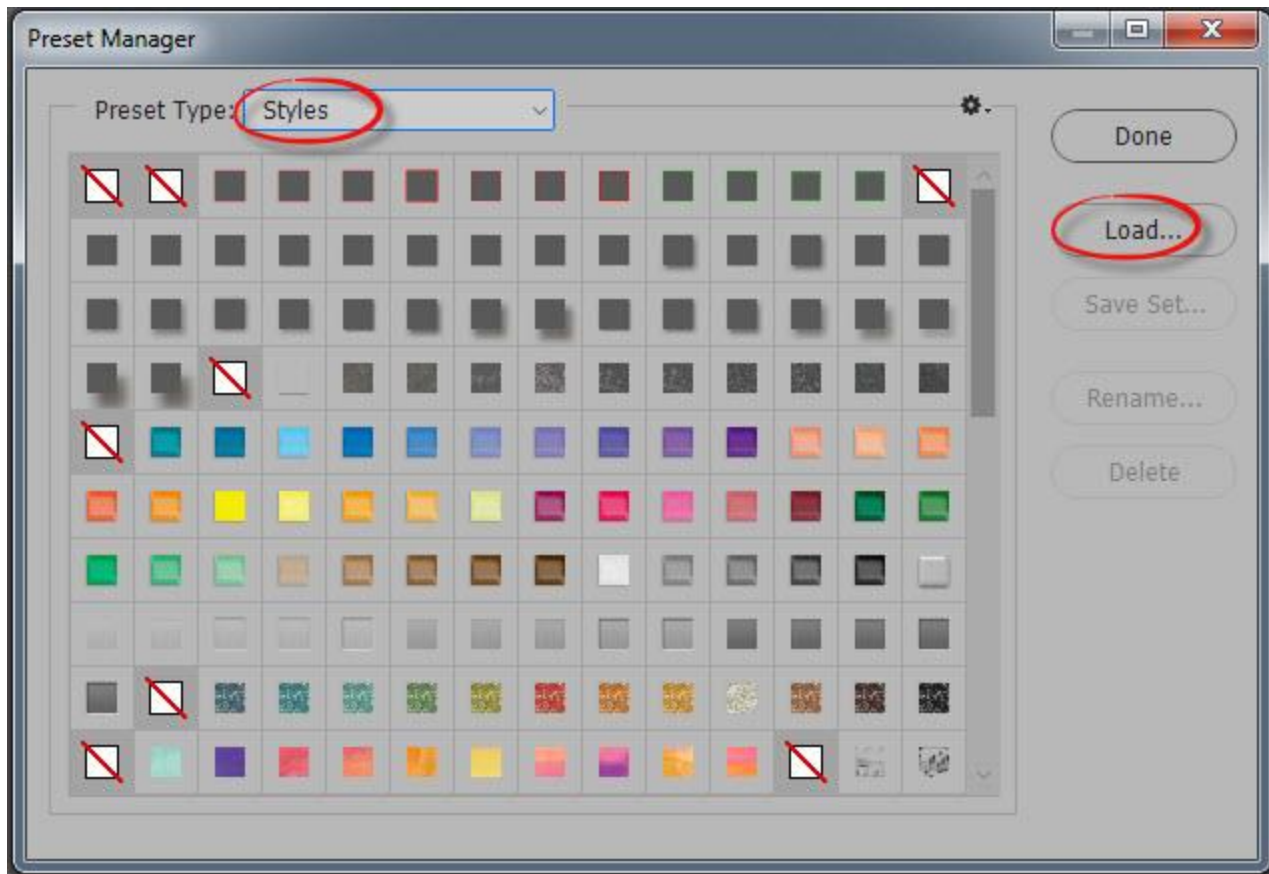
The quickest way to load Styles in Photoshop is simply to drag the .ASL file from its folder, directly into Photoshop, and drop it on the canvas. The Styles will load at the bottom of your Styles Panel. This option is not available for Photoshop Elements users.

Method #3:

For Photoshop Users:

In the top menu bar, go to Edit > Presets > Preset Manager. Select Styles from the dropdown menu, then click on "Load." Navigate to where your .ASL file is located. Select it. Click DONE.

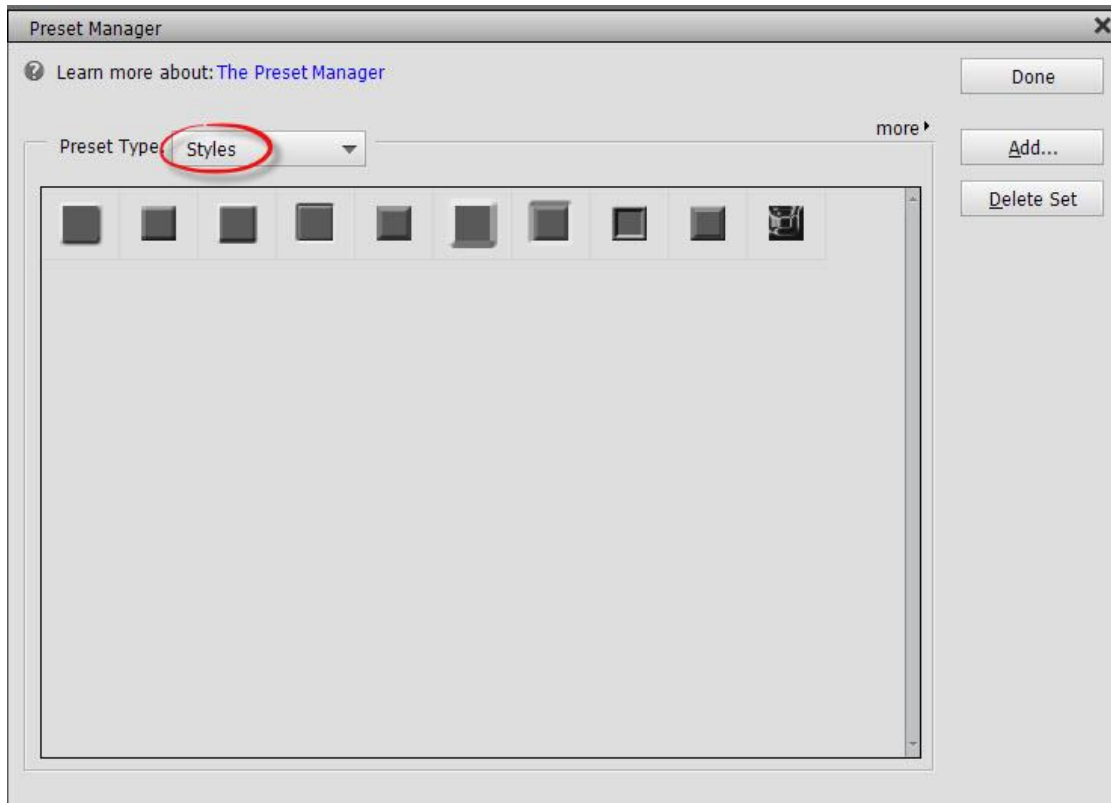




For Photoshop Elements Users:

Method #3 works the same way in Photoshop Elements; however, the path is just slightly different.

In the top menu bar, go to Edit > Preset Manager. In the Preset Type box, select Styles from the dropdown menu. Navigate to the .ASL file you would like to use, select it, and click DONE.

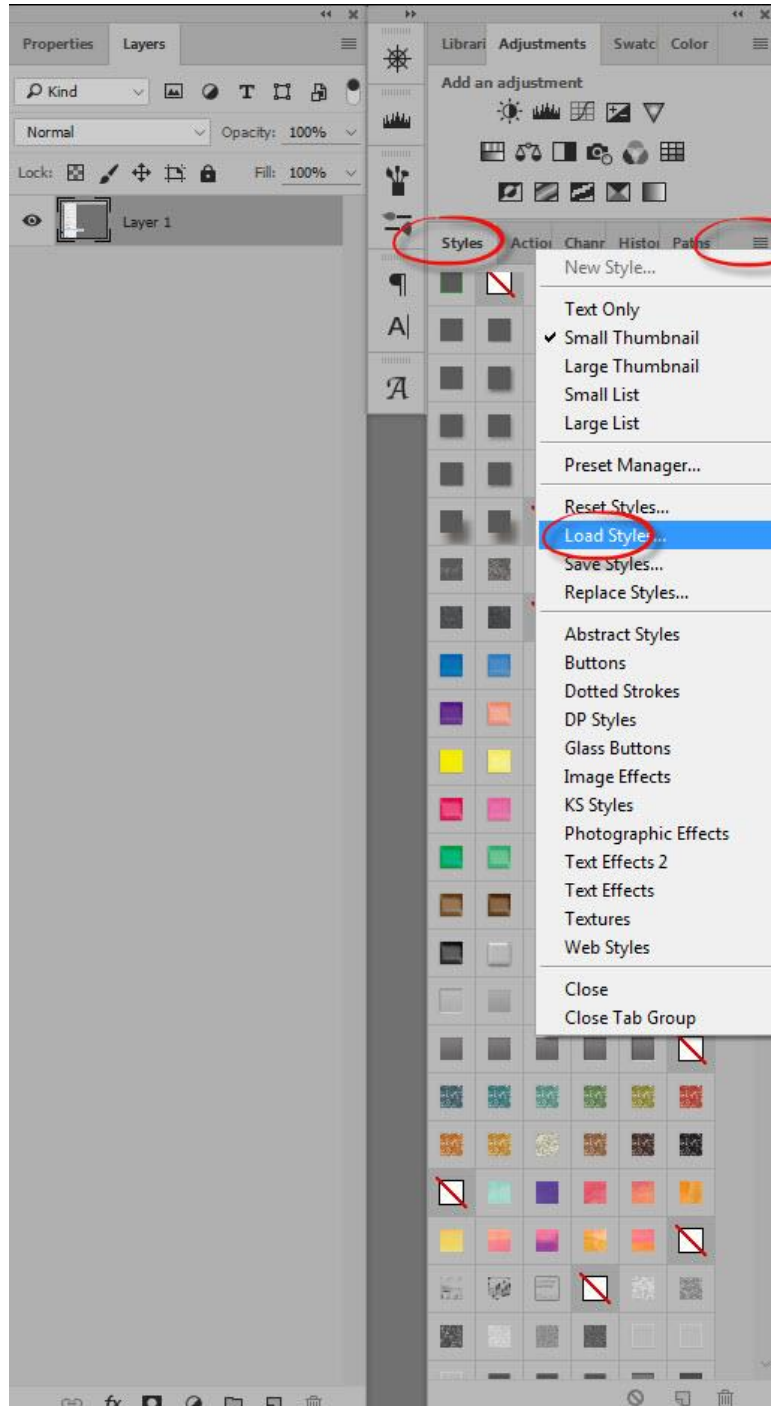


Method #4

Styles can also be loaded from the Styles Palette. This method is available and is the same in both Photoshop and Photoshop Elements.

- If you are using Photoshop and do not see the Styles Panel, go to the top Menu Bar > Window and click on Styles.
- If you are using Photoshop Elements, and do not see the Styles panel on the far right, be certain you are in Expert Mode.

To load Styles from the Styles Palette: click on the down-pointing arrow to the top, far right of the Styles Panel, then click on Load Styles. This screen capture is from Photoshop; but it looks similar to what you will see in Photoshop Elements. Again, navigate to the .ASL file you wish to load, select it, and click LOAD.

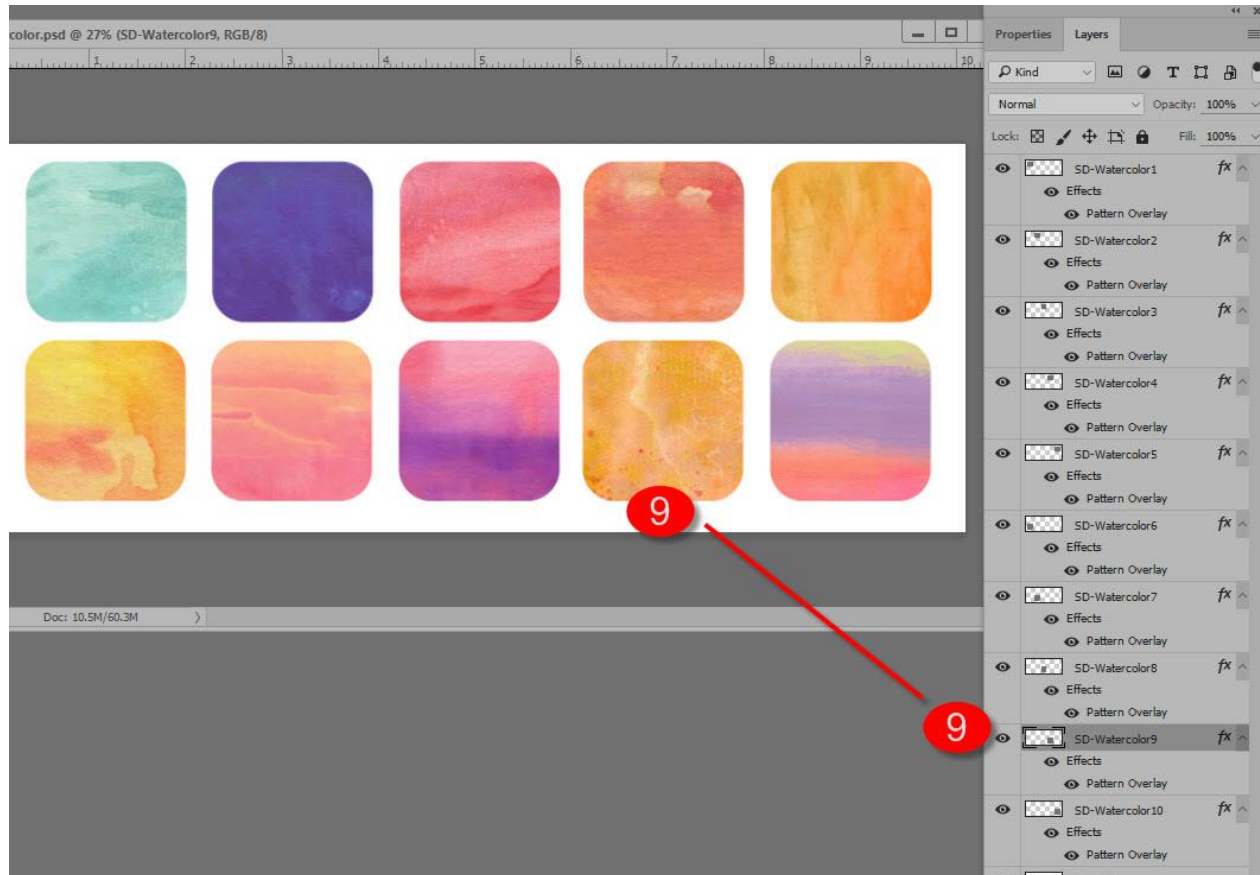


And here are the "Color Outside the Lines Watercolor Styles", at the bottom of the Styles Panel, just ready for us to use!



Do you prefer not to load your Styles? There is a way you can use Styles without loading them, and that is with a PSD Styles Strip. Not all designers include this strip in their Styles Packs, so if it is important for you to have this option, please be sure to read the designer's product description.

A PSD Styles Strip is a PSD file that contains the the Styles Effects on each layer. This is a PSD Styles Strip from "Color Outside the Lines."

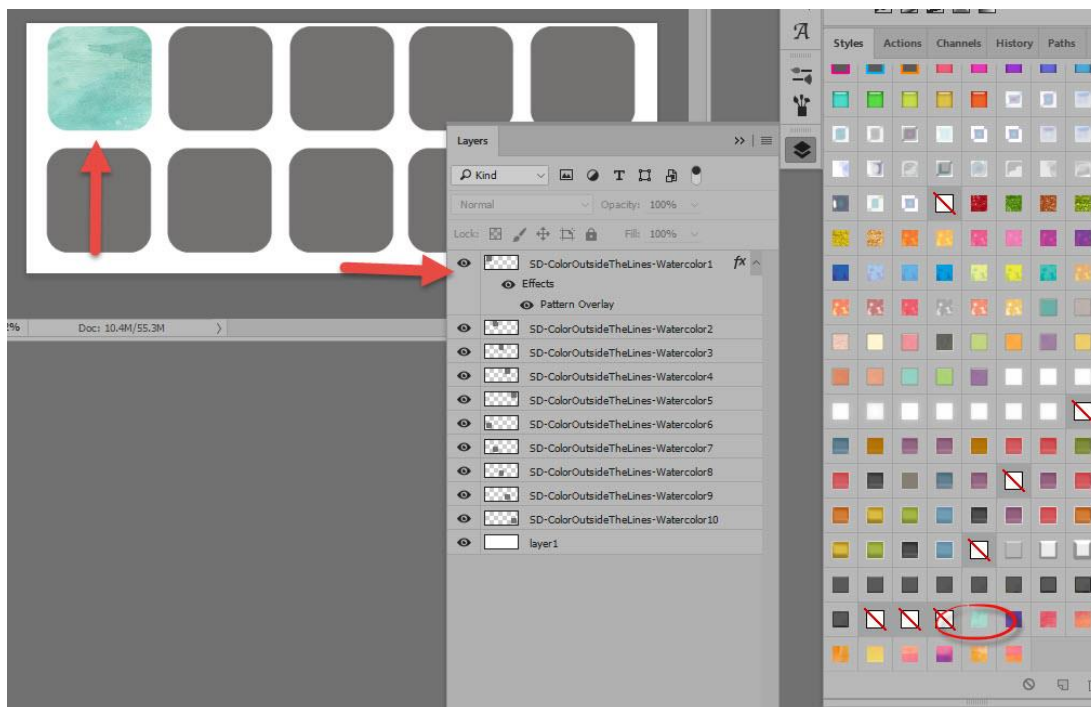


Here's how to use a PSD Styles Strip:

- Open the PSD file just as you would any PSD.
- Right click on the layer that has the style you would like to use then select "Copy Layer Style."
- Navigate to the object to which you would like to apply that style. Right click on the objects layer, and choose "Paste Layer Style. " And that's it! Close the PSD and you're done.

Create your own PSD Strip if you need to:

- Create a template for your Styles Strip, or download the template I use [HERE](#). Adjust the template to include as many or as few squares as you need.
- Load the Photoshop Style that you wish to create a Strip for.
- Go back to the template and name each layer.
- Click on the first square in the template and apply the first layer Style from the Styles set you are using. Click on the second square in the template and apply the second layer Style, and so on until your template is complete.
- Save the template as a PSD (or TIFF if you prefer).



If you would like to download a PDF of this tutorial, you may do so here: [How to Load Layer Styles in Photoshop and Photoshop Elements](#)

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I hope you have found this helpful!

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