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# Learning GIMP - Part 1

## *The Introduction*

Gimp icon
Gimp.com

 GIMP a.k.a. GNU Image Manipulation Program is a 100% free software created to view and edit almost all image formats out there. Not only that it is the best FREE photo editor, it is also compatible with many operating systems like Linux, Windows or Mac OS X and translated into many languages.I think many of you knew what GIMP is and what it can do, but the problem we will discuss here is: Do you really know GIMP? Do you really know he's powers? I mean, learning GIMP and working with it on your every day tasks happens to be a big problem out there for many users. The goal of this guide is to help as many users as possible to learn and understand GIMP.Enough said, let's start the lesson. Ready?**The Interface**First thing that scares the new GIMP users is the interface, because it opens a couple of windows with many buttons and options. So what? Almost every professional image editor out there opens a lot of little windows with all kinds of information and options (see Photoshop, Pixel, Krita), only GIMP opens them individually, and that shouldn't scare you!Before we get to the main window of GIMP, if you just installed it into your system, the first time you start GIMP, you must follow some basic user installation instructions.It's a matter of a few "Next" clicks. After this, two main windows will appear and the usual Tip of the day screen, which you should disable it immediately by unchecking the "Show tip next time GIMP starts" option in the left-down corner.The "Show tip next time GIMP starts" window can always be accessed from the GIMP's main windows on "Help" menu.As for the "Layers, Channels, etc." window, you can close it for now. This is what scares the new GIMP users and for the time being, it is not needed.All you need to see is the window where it says 'The GIMP', that's the main windows and that's what the new users should learn to use first.The main window of GIMP is composed of three basic parts (please see the picture above for better understanding). In the first part of the main GIMP window, you will find the image editing tools, in the second part of the main GIMP window are extra options like foreground and background color or a preview of the current image (if you have many images opened) and finally, the third part lets you optimize the selected tools from the first part, so basically, every time you select a tool to edit a picture, the third part changes with the options of that tool. Simple?*Important note: All the tools have tool tips, so I suggest you point the mouse over each one and see what it does.***GIMP Configuration**To work better and faster with GIMP, you should use both your keyboard and mouse. I see many users today that hate to use the keyboard in such operations. Don't! If you will learn a few keyboard shortcuts, not only will you be able to work easier on your daily image editing tasks, but you will also save a lot of time. Imagine for example, pressing one or a combination of two keys on your keyboard is much faster than going with the mouse on a menu, searching for the editing action and then use it.So, open the Preferences window, from File -> Preferences, and go to "Interface" (third option on left) and then press the "Configure Keyboard Shortcuts..." button. A new window appears where you can set keyboard shortcuts for almost any actions you want. Just press on an action and it will ask you to select a keyboard shortcut; if the shortcut is in use by another action, it will notify you. See pictures below for a better understanding.For example, the most used actions I need are: Indexed image, Crop image, Scale image. And I set a CTRL+R for Crop Image, CTRL+' to Scale an image and CTRL+ALT+K to obtain an indexed image.*Important note: You should also learn the keyboard shortcuts of the tools when you point the mouse on them in order to see what each one does. (e.g. Move tool shortcut is M key). The shortcut of each tool is shown in the tool tip, after the description of the tool.***Basic image editing: Crop, scale, rotate**How to crop an image*Note: Please remember the fact that GIMP allows

*drag & drop of images in the first part (see picture 4) of its main window.Note: Please remember the fact that GIMP opens large images in a "Fit to window" aspect ratio. In order to adjust this, please open the "Preferences" window and select "Image Windows" option from the left side and where it says "Initial zoom ratio:" select from the drop down box, the 1:1 option. Now, all the images will open in their original size.*Drag the image over the first part of the GIMP's main window and drop it. The image will open allowing you to do any necessary editing operations. Press the R key and with the mouse, select the area of the screen that you want to crop (See screenshot below). To crop the selection press CTRL+R (my shortcut for Crop image action, you should set yours as I explained above) key combination. Then, you can save your image as a new one with CTRL+Shift+S key combination.How to scale an imageNow, if you need to resize your selection (a.k.a. Scale), press CTRL+' (my shortcut for Scale image action, you should set yours as I explained above), enter the desired Width and Height and press "Scale" button.*Note: If you don't want to maintain image proportions, click on the little chain in the right-middle side of the Width & Height boxes (See picture below).*How to rotate an imageTo rotate an image is again a basic and easy task, just press the Shift+R (default key combination) and in the window that appears, input the desired angle and hit the "Rotate" button. See pictures below for a better understanding.I think this should keep you guys occupied for a while, until we learn more about GIMP's powers. And remember, practice makes perfect!To be continued...Download the latest stable version of GIMP for Linux now from **Softpedia**.Download the latest stable version of GIMP for Windows now from **Softpedia**.Download the latest stable version of GIMP for Mac OS X now from **Softpedia**.