

Quick Start Guide

Install the plugin, activate your license, run separations directly inside Photoshop. Same engine as the web app, native to your existing workflow.

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Photoshop version requirement: the plugin needs Adobe Photoshop **v23.0 or newer** (Photoshop 2022 and up). Beta-only installs aren't supported — install the standard release version too.

1 Download the Plugin

Sign in to your account at tonesmith.makerfoundryco.com/account.

Two things you need from this page:

- **License key** — format `TS-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-XXXX`. Click the Copy button next to it.
- **Plugin file** — click **Download tonesmith.ccx**. Save it somewhere easy to find (Desktop is fine).

The same key works on every Photoshop install you have — desktop, laptop, multiple workstations, all of it.

2 Install via Creative Cloud

Double-click `tonesmith.ccx`. Creative Cloud intercepts it and shows a confirmation dialog:

- Click **Install** when prompted to install a non-marketplace plugin.
- Read the permissions notice (the plugin reads/writes pixels and makes network requests for license validation), then click **OK**.
- Wait for the green "ToneSmith is installed" confirmation.

If Photoshop is already open, restart it so the plugin loads.

3 Open the ToneSmith Panel

Inside Photoshop, find the panel under either:

- **Plugins menu** → **ToneSmith**, or
- **Window menu** → **Extensions** → **ToneSmith** (older PS releases)

The panel opens floating. Drag it to dock with your other panels (we recommend the right-side stack near Layers and Properties), or leave it floating if you prefer.

4 Activate Your License

The first time the panel opens, you'll see the activation screen. Paste your license key and click **Activate**. ToneSmith verifies it against your account.

You'll see a green status indicator next to the settings cog when you're activated.

How it caches: after the first verification, your license is cached locally. The plugin only re-checks once a day, so it loads instantly each time you launch Photoshop. If your subscription lapses, the cache invalidates and you'll be prompted to re-activate.

5 Run Your First Separation

Open a piece of artwork in Photoshop. With the ToneSmith panel visible, follow the three-stage workflow:

- **Setup** — confirm image size, set shirt color and knockout color. Hit **Start ToneSmith**.
- **Live Preview** — tweak halftone (LPI, angle, shape), levels, and cleanup. Watch the canvas update inside Photoshop in real time. The panel uses Photoshop's native halftone filter, so what you see is exactly what your RIP will receive.
- **Finalize** — click **Apply Separation** when it looks right. Optionally generate the white underbase. Hit **Export as PNG** when you're done, or use Photoshop's normal File → Save As if you'd rather work with the layers directly.

Troubleshooting

Double-clicking the .ccx didn't open Creative Cloud?

- Make sure the Creative Cloud desktop app is running and signed in.
- Move the file to your Desktop and try again (some browsers download to a temp path that CC can't read).
- Confirm Photoshop v23 or newer is installed (not just the Beta release).

Plugin won't show up in Photoshop after installing?

- Quit and relaunch Photoshop completely — UXP plugins only register at startup.
- Check Plugins menu and Window → Extensions menu (different PS versions surface plugins in different places).

Last resort — manual install:

- Rename `tonesmith.ccx` to `tonesmith.zip`
- Extract the zip to a folder
- Drop the extracted folder into your Photoshop UXP plugins directory
- Restart Photoshop

Or try the free [ZXP Installer](#) tool from aescrypts — drag the .ccx onto it and let it handle the install path.

If none of that works, email tonesmith@makerfoundryco.com with your operating system, Photoshop version, and a screenshot of any error message. We'll help you within one business day.

Watch the Walkthrough Videos

Sign in and head to tonesmith.makerfoundryco.com/editor. Step-by-step training videos for every major workflow appear on the upload screen, alongside any saved projects.

Topics: dialing in halftones for specific printers, knocking out problem backgrounds, building underbases for dark colored shirts, and the levels tweaks that recover muddy gradients.

Join the Maker Foundry Community

Our Facebook community covers DTF, DTG, laser engraving, embroidery, sublimation, and more — not just halftone prep. Real print shops, real questions, real answers.

facebook.com/groups/makerfoundry

Posting your file plus what you're trying to do gets you faster help than wrestling with it alone.

You're in.

Now go press something clean.

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ToneSmith — by Maker Foundry

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