

Photoshop Tip: Create a Neon Sign Animation

By [Bert Monroy](#), Digital Artist

In Adobe Photoshop, you can create an image to be the background for a neon sign. For an example, click on the pop-up graphics below:

- [Neon Leo On](#)
- [Neon Leo Off](#)

1. Using the Path tool, create the shape for the letters or symbol you wish to be the neon tube.
2. Select the Paintbrush tool. Create a new brush or choose an existing brush that has the size you wish the tube to be. Make sure the Spacing is set to the lowest percentage (1 percent).
3. Make a new layer to contain the neon tube. Choose white for the foreground color and make sure the Paintbrush is selected. In the Path's palette, drag the path for the tube over the Stroke Path icon at the bottom of the palette.
4. Duplicate the layer with the white tube and, with the Lock Transparency selected, fill the duplicate layer with black. Make sure the black filled layer is in back of the white one. Move the black filled tube layer over to simulate a shadow. Reduce its opacity to allow the background to show through.
5. Double-click on the layer with the white tube to bring up the Layer Styles dialog box. In the layer styles, set the Fill Opacity in the Blending Options to about 50 percent. Now add an Inner Glow. You can choose any color you wish. Increase the size to simulate the edges of the glass.
6. The Off-State of the neon is now complete. Create a new layer and have it as the selected layer. With the Option (Alt) button pressed, choose Merge Visible from the Layer's palette drop down menu. This will merge all the layers into the selected layer while leaving the original layers intact.
7. Turn off the eye for the completed layer and select the layer with the white tube. In the Layer Styles give it an Outer Glow. Choose a color that is similar to the color of the neon light.

8. Create a new layer above the white tube layer and stroke the path again, this time with a soft edged Airbrush tool using the color you wish for the light. Make sure the size of the brush is small enough to be contained within the tube.
9. Make the neon layer a selection by Command (Control)-clicking on it in the layer's palette. Expand the selection to a size that is about 3 times the size of the tube (Select>Modify>Expand). Feather the resulting selection to a radius that is about half of what the size of the expansion was set to. For example: Expand 20, Feather 10.
10. Create a new layer behind the neon tube and fill the selected area with the color of the neon light. Change the mode to Hard Light in the layer's palette.
11. Turn off the layer with the shadow and your neon's On-State is complete. You can then merge the layers. Note: Do not merge the layer with the Off-State.

Bert Monroy is a digital artist. You can get more info about Bert from his [website](#). He is also the author of [Bert Monroy: Photorealistic Techniques with Photoshop and Illustrator](#), which is available from Amazon.

"Bert Monroy: Photorealistic Techniques with Photoshop and Illustrator"

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