# RECEIPT SCANNING TUTORIAL

When submitting expenses for reimbursement, you have to attach images of the receipt(s). This is a painful (and often failed) process for some, so the purpose of this tutorial is to make it less painful and consistently successful.

It is important to note I have no way of knowing what type of scanner you have, or what type of software is loaded on your computer, so this tutorial will try to phrase the instructions in a generic manner for scanning your receipts. If you still have problems after reading this tutorial, feel free to call me and I'll get together with you to address how to do this with your specific hardware and software.

Part I: Scanning the Receipt

I have a scanner on top of an inkjet printer. You, of course, might have something different. Hopefully, though, you will have a computer desktop application to run the scanner. This is what mine looks like.
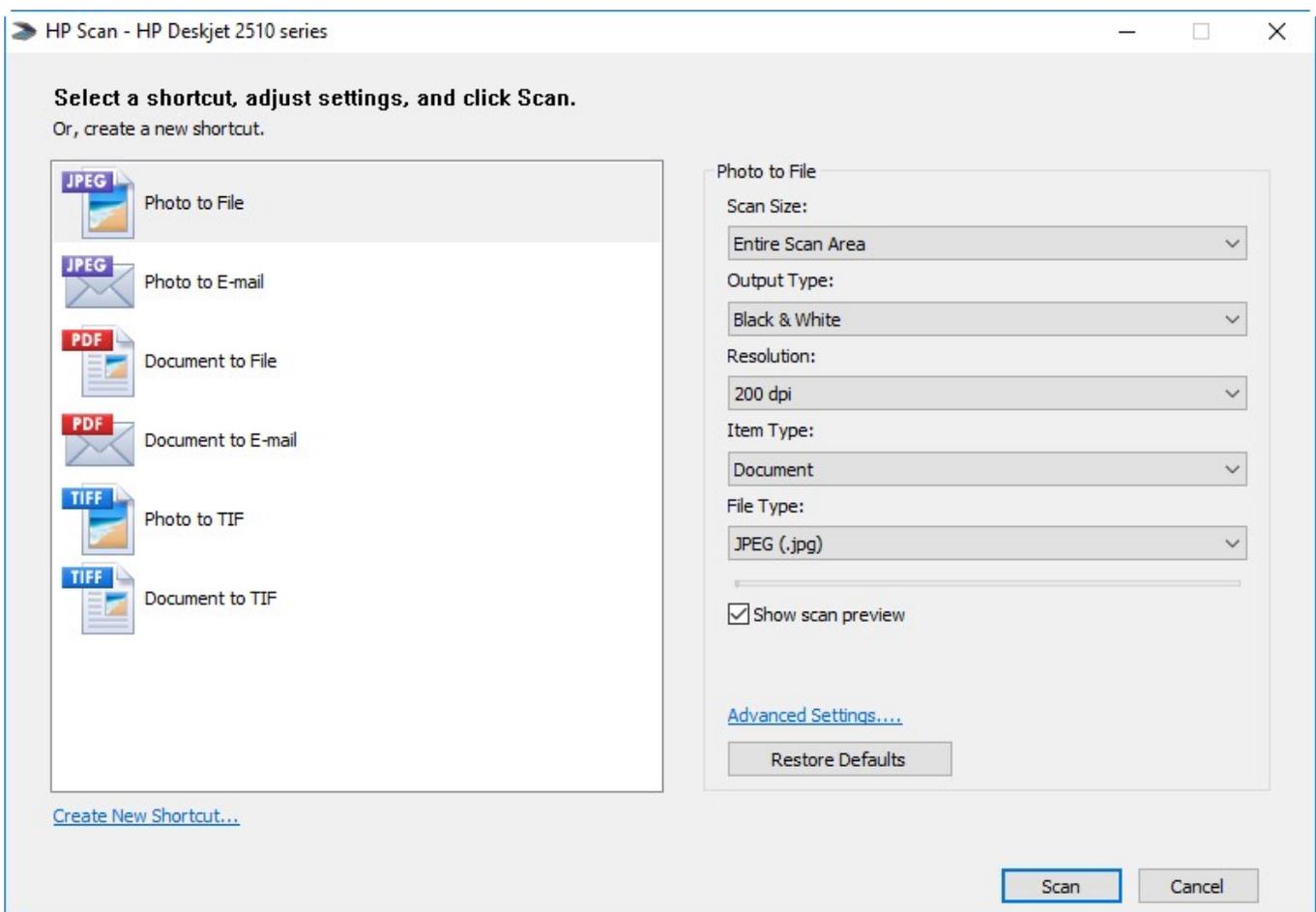
In this application, there are 6 options from which to choose when scanning something. You may have more or less. However, for the purposes of scanning a document to submit with an expense report, stick to **Photo to File** (.**jpeg** format) or **Document to File** (.**pdf** format).

Do NOT use the .tiff format for scanning/saving images intended to be attached to expense reports. That format results in extremely large file sizes which will certainly cause rejection. (If you question that, look on the last page of this document for a comparison table.)

In the right column of this application you can select characteristics of the file you will be creating. Whatever scanning program you have, there has to be a way to make these selections.

- Even if you have a receipt printed in color, **choose black and white**. Color drives larger file sizes, and a black and white image is all they want/need. Whatever steps you have to take with your scanning application, choose black and white scanning.

- **Resolution**: For most receipts, **200 dpi** (dots per inch) is fine. If your receipt is especially crappy, you might want to go with 300 dpi, but that's an exception, not the rule.

  REMEMBER: Scanning a crappy receipt will always result in a crappy scan, regardless of the resolution, and high resolution results in a large file size, which is exactly what we DON'T WANT.

When I scan a document, the screen you saw on the previous page changes to show a 'rough' version of the scan. Don't worry about the quality at this point: It is just a reduced-size representation of the final product which will be much better.
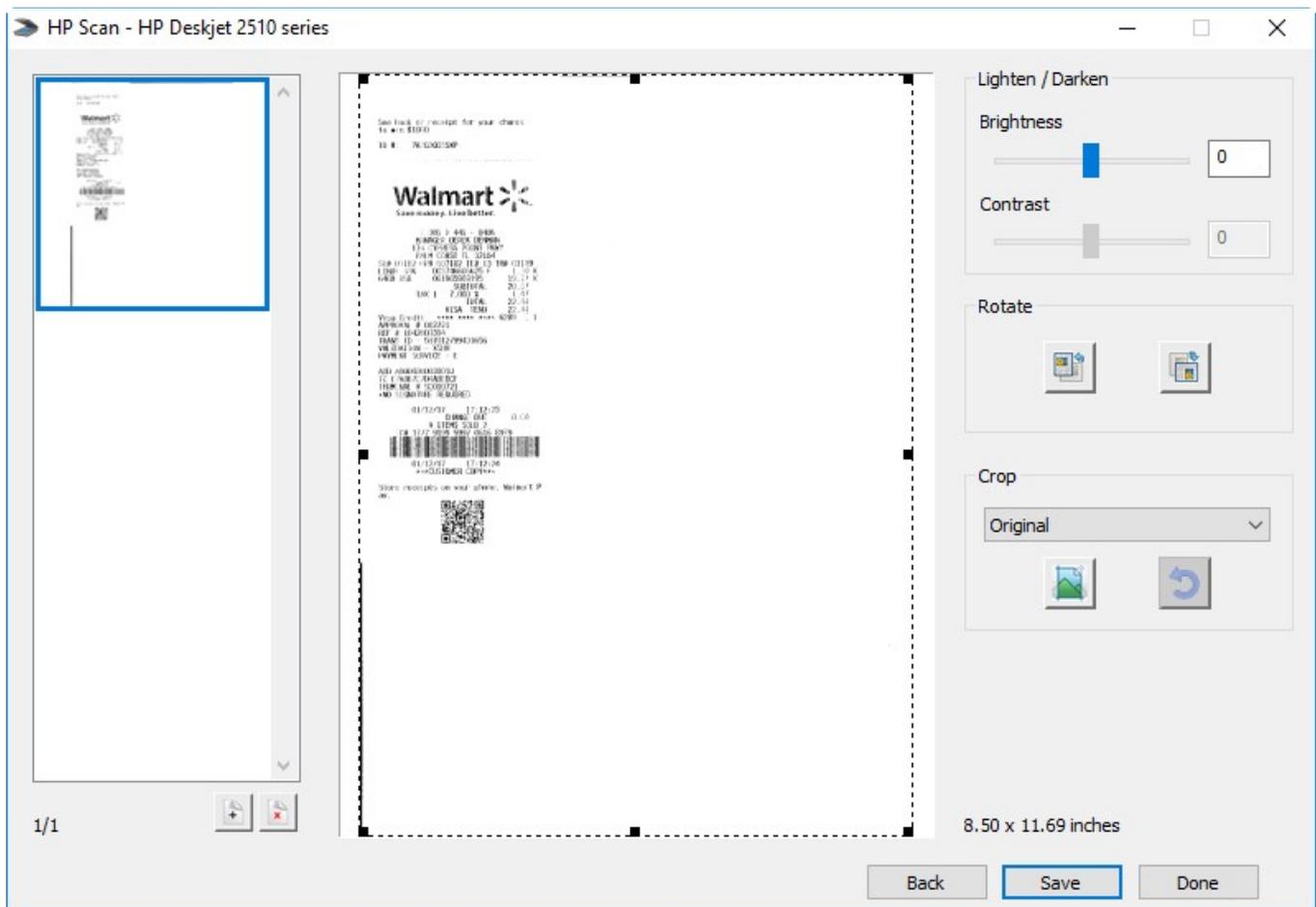
Part II: Saving the Image

All that's left to do now is to save the image. There is a button in the above window to do that: Your application may have a different thing to do.

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What is important is to **save the image as a .jpeg (or .jpg) file, or a .pdf file**, giving it an easily recognized name. My suggestion is to use one or two words to summarize the item(s) purchased, and the purchase date. Having them named this way makes it easy to tell them apart when you finally get to preparing the expense report. Do whatever makes you comfortable, but remember to make the names distinctive so you don't have to say… "Huh???" at a later time.

Among my scanned receipts are netis_router_12-11-16.pdf; paper_12-4-16.pdf; paper_12-7-16.pdf. I'm sure you can at first glance figure out what I bought and when I bought it. Easy-peasy when it came to expense report time.

Earlier I wrote that the dpi number determines file size: higher numbers drive larger file sizes. This table shows different file sizes for the same scanned image (shown in the picture on page 2).

Full-page (8.5" x 11") receipt image

	.jpeg	.pdf	.tiff
200 dpi	199 KB	168 KB	2,000 KB (2 MB)
300 dpi	398 KB	325 KB	4,493 KB (4.5 MB)
600 dpi	1,312 KB (1.3 MB)	1,109 KB (1.1 MB)	15,445 KB (15.4 MB)

The goal is to keep receipt image sizes below 1 MB (1,000 KB).

- Every **.tiff image** in the above table failed the file size goal at every resolution (red cell background).
- The **600 dpi .jpg and .pdf images** also failed the size goal (yellow cell background).
- **You should always work with 200 dpi or 300 dpi scans saved in the .jpg or .pdf format** (green cell background)**.**