

Autumn 2025 Issue

Adobe Photoshop user

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Photoshop has become an integral part of any photographer or digital artist's workflow. Understanding how it all works can be daunting, but we're here to guide you on the way to knowing just how powerful Photoshop can be.

Photo editing has become an important part of the daily lives of amateur and professional photographers everywhere. As digital cameras capture the world around us in ever increasing detail and clarity, so photo editing programs have become ever more elaborate and feature rich to keep pace with the desire to explore our creativity in the world of image editing and manipulation.

More and more people are learning how to incorporate various post-production techniques into their photographs and digital artwork, and we are here to help.

We will show you editing techniques to help you get the most out of your digital photographs, create stunning original art and much, much more. Read on to discover exactly what photo editing can do for you in the 100% unofficial Photoshop User!



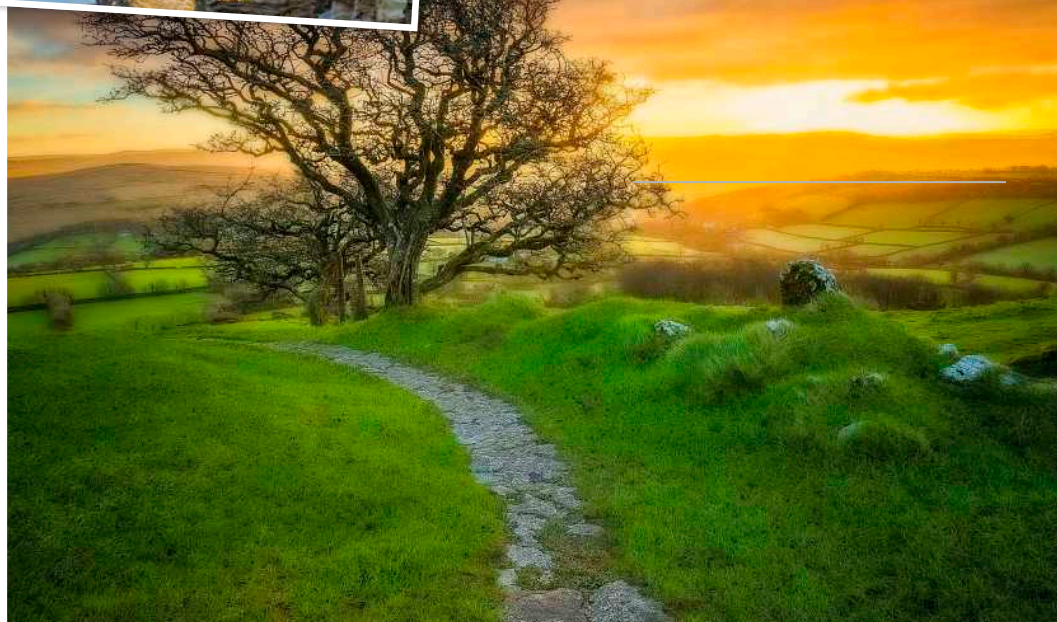
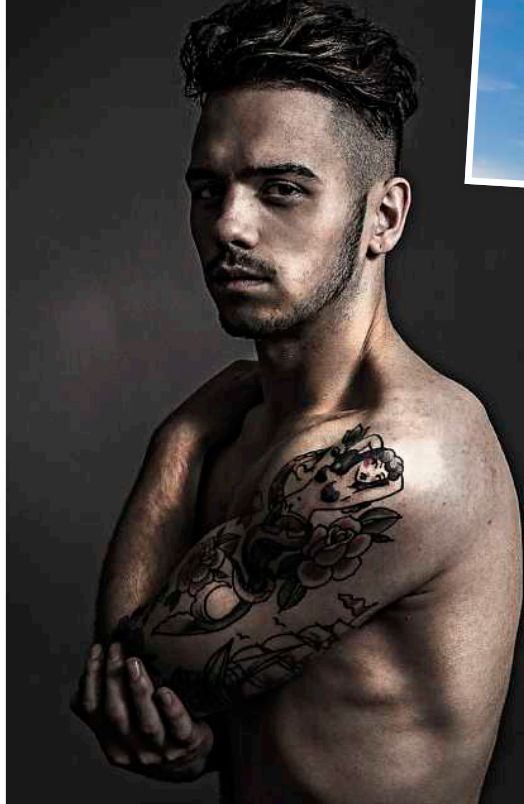
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Learning Basic Editing Techniques

Using Photoshop's tools to edit and improve images

Now you know what tools you've got available, let's take a look at some of the techniques you can perform with them. There are many reasons to edit a photograph or other image. Sometimes it's simply to improve factors such as exposure or colour balance, or perhaps you might want to create an original artwork by combining several elements together. Using Photoshop tools and techniques, there's almost no limit to what you can achieve, and over the next few pages we'll show you the basic techniques you'll need to create your own masterpieces.

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The Levels control is one of the most useful tools that Photoshop has for correcting exposure and contrast. It's one that you'll find yourself using over and over again. Read on to see how it's used.

Making Selections

The ability to select and modify only part of an image is fundamental to how Photoshop works



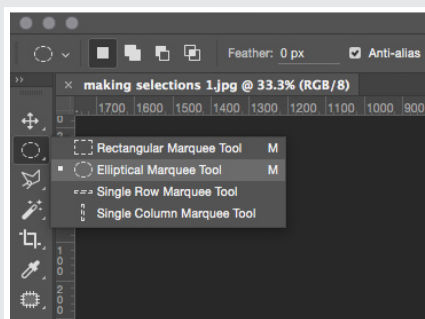
One of the most basic features of Photoshop is the ability to modify only part of an image, leaving the rest unchanged. The way that we do this is by using Selections, and there are several tools and menu operations that we can use to achieve this.

After the Move tool, the next three icons on the Tool Palette are all selection tools, giving you a wide range of methods for isolating an area of your image. Some are fully manual, while others use varying degrees of automation.

The most basic Selection tools are the Rectangular and Elliptical Marquee tools. These both allow you to manually select a simple shape of any size, or of a fixed size or aspect ratio. You can select several areas, either separately or joined together, and with a hard edge or a soft feathered edge. The various Lasso tools let you select an area of irregular shape, again with the option of a feathered edge. You can draw the area freehand, or use point-to-point lines for greater precision.

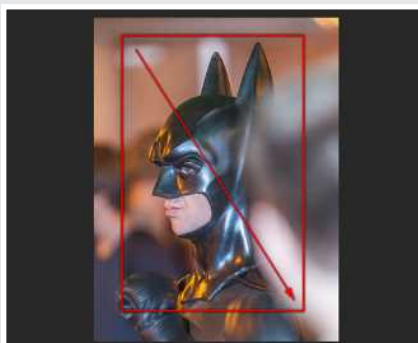
Let's take a look at the process of making a selection, and examine the various options that are available.

Elliptical Marquee Tool



01 The Elliptical Marquee tool works in much the same way as the Rectangular Marquee, but draws a curved shape.

02 As with the Rectangular Marquee, you can set the size or aspect ratio. A ratio of 1x1 draws a circle, other ratios draw ellipses of various sizes.



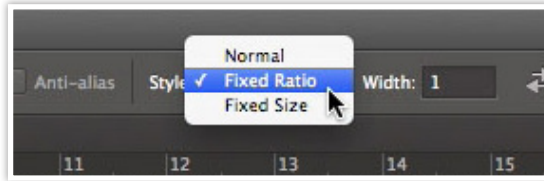
03 To draw an ellipse around your selection, imagine that it's actually a rectangle, start from one corner and drag to the diagonally opposite corner. This can be tricky to get right, so alternatively hold down the Alt key and start from the centre of where you want your ellipse to be.



Simple Area Selection

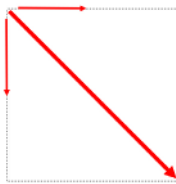


01 Let's start off with the simplest selection tool, the Rectangular Marquee. This is used, as the name implies, for selecting simple rectangular shapes.

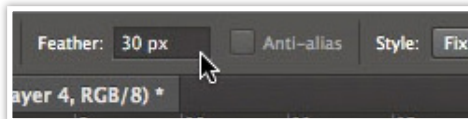


02 You can draw a freehand rectangle, or fix the size or aspect ratio by using the tool options. Let's draw a perfect square selection by setting a ratio of 1x1.

03 To draw a square, click on a point where you want one of the corners to be, then hold and drag to the diagonally opposite corner. You'll see the "marching ants" line of the selection box appear following the cursor.

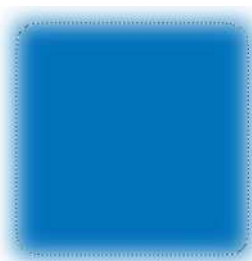


04 If you use the Paint Bucket tool to fill the area you've selected you'll see that the edges are very sharp.



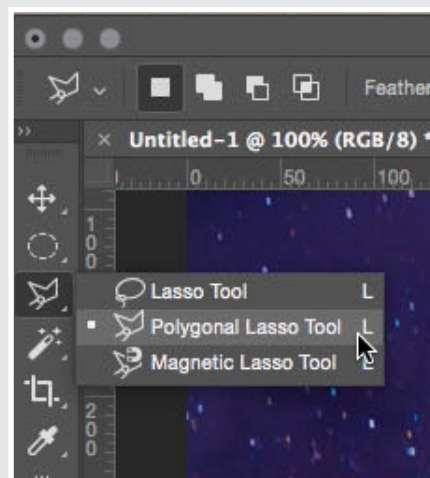
05 To make a soft-edged selection, type a number into the Feather box. The higher the number, the more blurred the edge will be.

06 This time if you draw a selection and fill it, you'll see that the edges are very blurred, with the marquee "marching ants" line in the middle of the blurred area.



There are a number of options you can use with the Marquee and Lasso tools. If you want to select more than one area or add to the current selection, holding down the Shift key will temporarily put the tool into "Add to Selection" mode, while holding down the Alt key will activate the "Subtract from Selection" mode, also temporarily. Holding down both Shift and Alt simultaneously will activate "Intersect with Selection" mode. You can toggle all three of these modes using the buttons on the tool options bar.

Polygonal Lasso Tool



01 For selecting more complex shapes, the best option is the Polygonal Lasso tool.



02 With the Polygonal Lasso, you click around the edge of the area you want to select. When you complete the loop, or double-click, the selection is completed and you'll see the "marching ants" border.

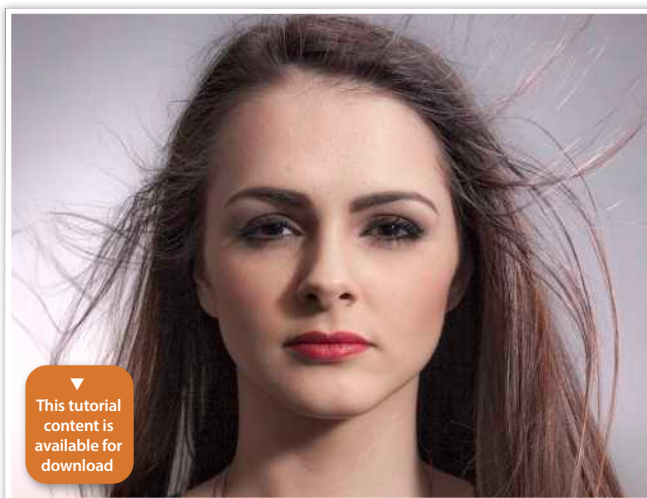


03 A Polygonal Lasso selection is ideal if you want to cut or copy a complex shape out of a background, for example to make it part of another picture.

Modifying Selections

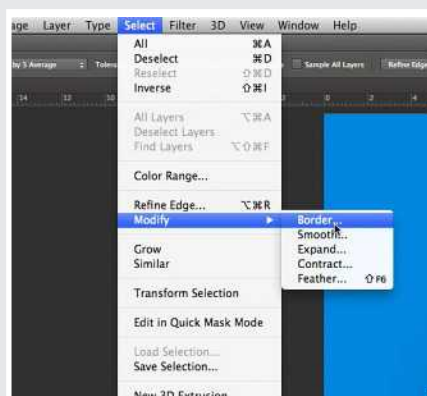
Photoshop has sophisticated tools to refine selections

Photoshop's standard selection tools, the Marquee, Lasso and Magic Wand, are fine for making basic selections of regular, well defined shapes, but they're not so good at picking out soft-edged or very fine shapes. One thing in particular that has always been a problem is the edge of fine or untidy hair. Take this photo for example:



This model has been photographed in a typical studio setting, with good lighting and against a plain light grey background. Photos like this are used all the time for catalogues, advertising posters and the like. However, in order to fit these needs the model will have to be separated from the background. With a plain background like this, it would be tempting to use a normal selection tool such as the Magic Wand. However if we try it, what we end up with is something like this:

Modify Selection

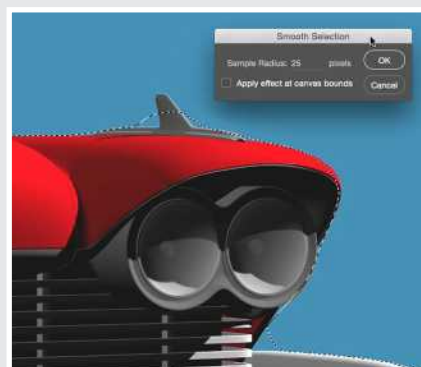


Photoshop has other tools to modify a selection which you'll find, appropriately enough, in the Select menu, under Modify. The options include Border, Smooth, Expand, Contract and Feather. They're all relatively simple, but useful nonetheless.



Border

Border converts the single-line selection into a border of the specified width. You can use this selection to create a border around your selection by using the Paint Bucket tool.



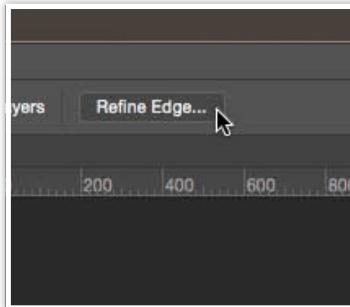
Smooth

Smooth removes the kinks and wrinkles from the line of your selection. It's useful when you're selecting smooth-edged objects, but it will round off the corners of any irregular shapes.



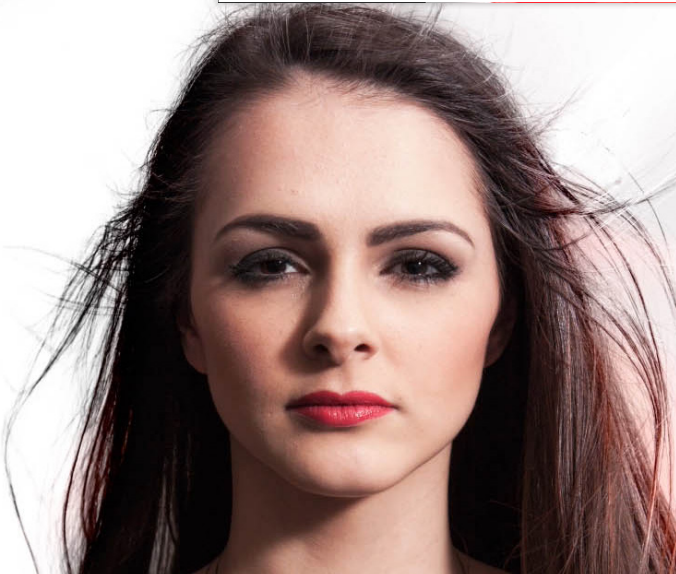
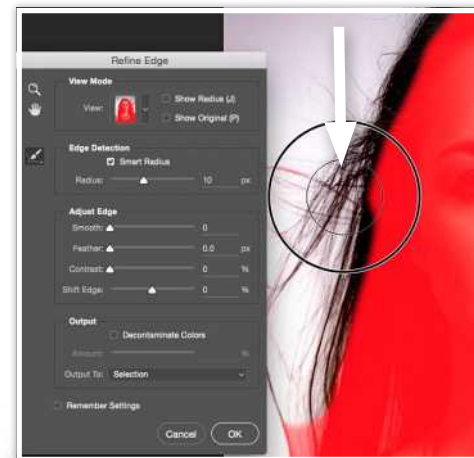
As you can see, the edge around the model's hair looks terrible. The automatic Magic Wand selection has produced a very jagged edge, because it can't distinguish between the fine edge of the hair and the background. Fortunately the latest version of Photoshop has

a feature called Refine Edge, which is capable of making much finer distinctions.



Refine Edge is very easy to use. Starting with a Magic Wand or Polygonal Lasso selection as close as possible to the edge of the hair or any other soft edge, click on the Refine Edge button on the tool options bar. In the dialog window that opens, in Edge Definition, check the box marked Smart Radius, and use the square brackets keys to set the brush size so that it's large enough to cover the hazy edge area around the hair. Then simply paint around the edge, overlapping both the model and the background.

When you've been around all the edge area that you want to refine, click OK, and then wait a few seconds while the program recalculates the edge. As you can see here, the result is a good improvement over the first attempt.



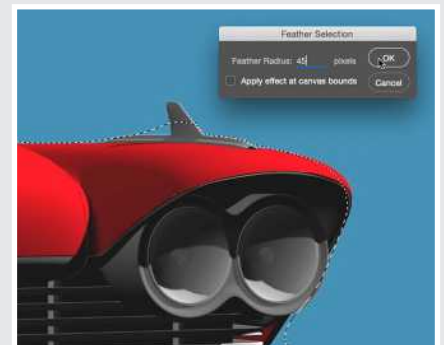
Expand

Expand, as the name suggests, expands the size of the selection by the specified number of pixels.



Contract

Contract is the opposite of Expand. It shrinks the size of the selection by the specified number of pixels.



Feather

We've looked at Feather before. It softens the edge of the selection by the radius set in the dialog box. It's perhaps the most useful option here, particularly if you're trying to copy and paste the selection into a background.

Using Layers

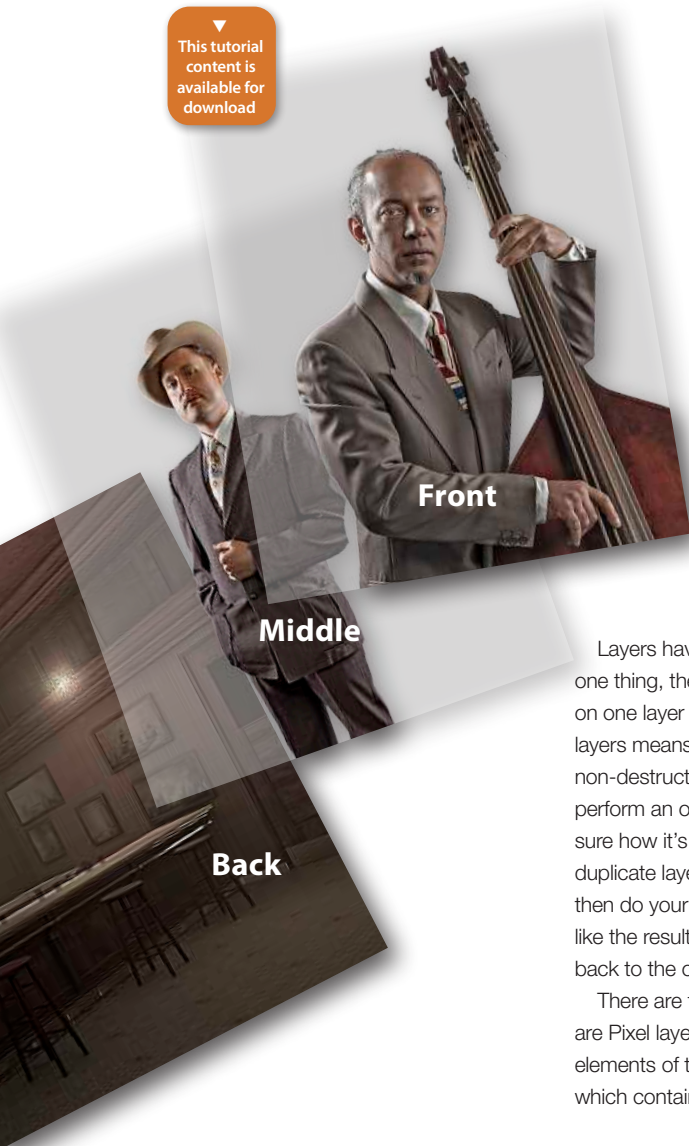
Understanding layers is fundamental to Photoshop editing

The concept of Layers was first introduced with Photoshop 3.0 in 1994, and has become the very core of Photoshop image editing, as well as being imitated by every other image editing program on the market. Layers are exactly what they sound like; the elements of the image are stacked up and displayed in

descending order. Since layers can include transparency, lower layers can be visible through higher layers. Effects, adjustments and operations can be applied to individual layers, or to all the layers at once. You can move layers around relative to one another, change the order of layers in the stack, turn layers on or

off, and delete layers without affecting the others. Some people seem to have a hard time getting their head around the concept of layers, so the best way to think of them is as a pile of glass panels with the elements that make up the image painted onto them, with you looking down on them from above.

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Layers have a number of advantages. For one thing, the ability to change one element on one layer without affecting the other layers means that you can edit your image non-destructively. For example if you want to perform an operation on a layer but you're not sure how it's going to turn out, just make a duplicate layer, set the original to be invisible, then do your editing on the copy. If you don't like the result, you can simply delete it and go back to the original.

There are four main types of layer. There are Pixel layers, which contain the graphical elements of the image. There are Text layers, which contain text information which can be

edited and resized. There are Vector layers, which contain vector information such as shapes and work paths, and then there are Adjustment layers, which contain embedded commands that affect the layer immediately below. We'll look at Adjustment layers in more detail on the next page.

There is a downside to using layers, and that is the file size. Adding layers and the information that goes along with them massively increases the size of the file, so when you've finished editing and you want to save the picture you've created, it's usually a good idea to Flatten the image, which merges all the layers together into a single image.

The Layer Palette

Knowing your way around the Layer palette is vital if you want to make the best use of this feature

Useful Tip

Click on a layer, press and hold the **Shift** key on your keyboard and click on another layer to multi-select a number of layers.

Blend Mode

Determines how the layer interacts with the layer below it. Can be changed for every layer one by one, or for a group.

Opacity

Controls how transparent the layer is, and how much of the layer below will show through.

Layer Filters

By clicking on these buttons you can choose to display only one type of layer, or all of them, and by selecting from the drop-down you can choose what order to show them in.

Fill

Similar to Opacity, but only works on pixel information, ignoring blending options and layer effects.

Layer Locks

By clicking on these buttons you can lock the layer from any further activity. Transparency, image pixels and position can be locked independently.

Text Layer

There are several different types of layer. Text layers, not surprisingly, contain text characters.

Background

The Background layer is the default bottom layer, and always starts off locked.

Link Layers

Highlight a few layers and then click this button to link the layers. Transform and Move commands will affect all linked layers.

Layer Mask

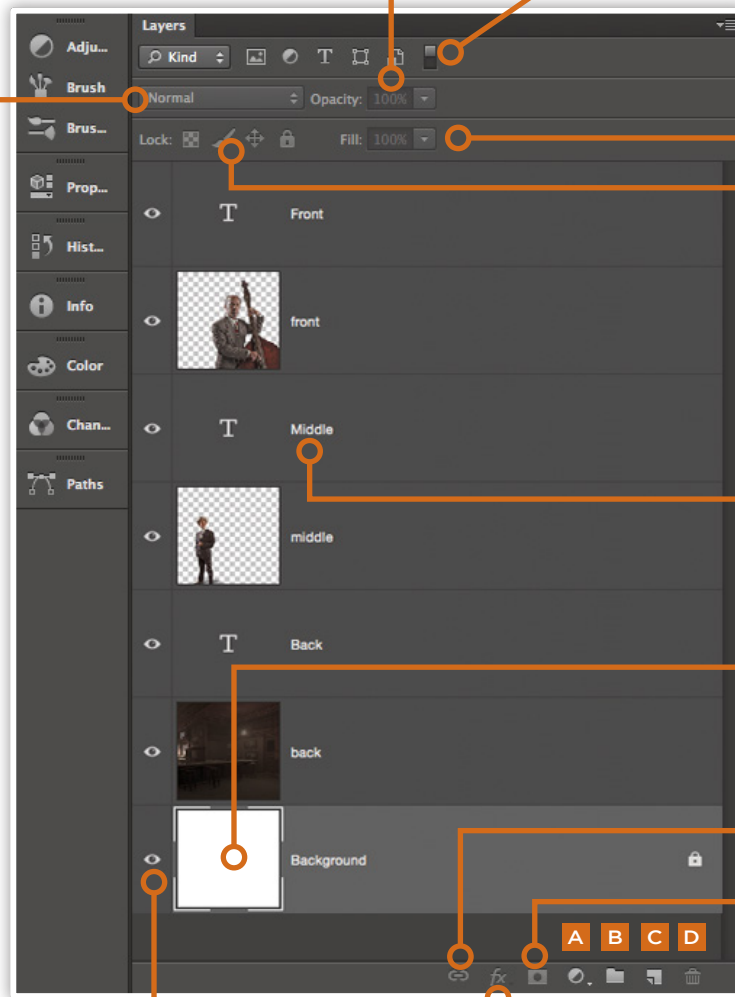
Add a mask to a pixel-based layer to reveal or conceal information using a black or white brush.

Visibility

Clicking on the eyeball simply renders the layer and all its effects invisible.

Layer Styles

Add effects such as drop shadow, bevelled edges, inner glow and more.



A Adjustment Layer

An alternative to the main layer menu, you can add all the adjustment effects here too.

B New Group

Creates a new layer group, into which you can drag and drop layers, which helps you to organise layers in a big complicated composition.

C New Layer

Creates a new blank layer directly above the currently active layer.

D Delete Layer

Does exactly what you'd expect it to do. Click to delete the currently active layer, or drag a layer onto the button to delete it.

Adjustment Layers

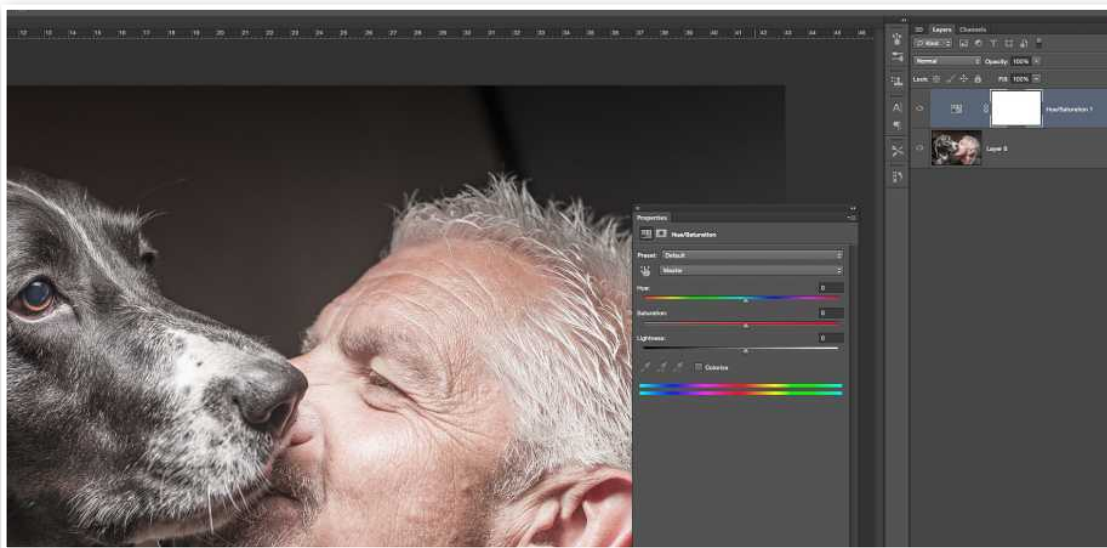
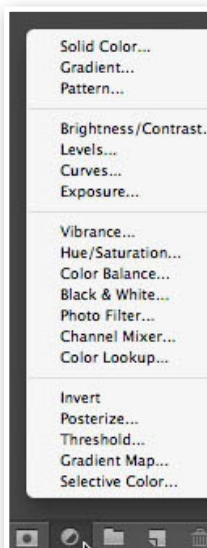
A great way to edit your images without damaging them

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Although there are many editing options in the **Image > Adjustment** menu, they all have one thing in common. When you apply them to an image the effect they have is destructive, because they discard information from the original image. For example, if you apply Curves,

the Hue/Saturation, then add a Photo Filter effect, that's three operations that have discarded information, each one degrading your image quality. If you apply an operation repeatedly, such as multiple Curves corrections, you'll actually be able to see the degradation. The only

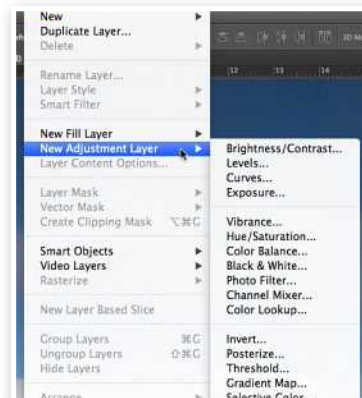
way to undo the damage done by these modifications is to revert to an earlier version by using undo or the History palette, but that also undoes all your subsequent editing as well. This degradation is much worse with 8-bit than with 16-bit images, since there's less information to start with.



It's impossible to avoid this image degradation altogether, but by using Adjustment Layers we can reduce it as much as possible. Adjustment Layers sit above the pixel layer in the stack, and their effects are applied in real time as the layers are displayed. That way if you change your mind about an effect, or wish to change it after it has been applied, your alteration doesn't have any further effect on the layer below it, and the image degradation isn't applied until the layers

are merged when flattening the image.

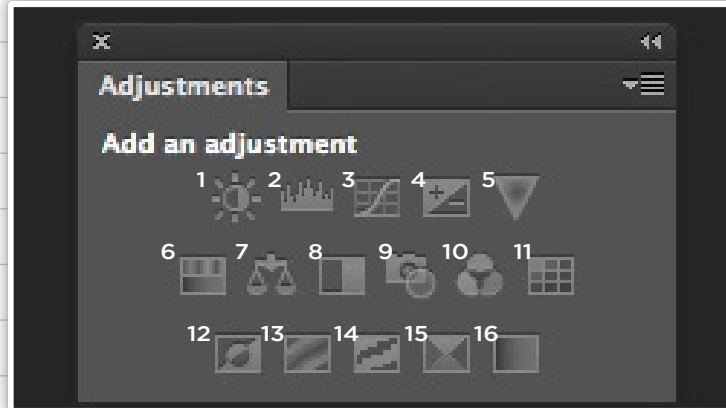
You can apply Adjustment Layers in several ways. First, you'll find a list of available layers in the **Layer > New Adjustment Layer** menu. Second, if you have the Adjustments palette open (it's open in the default interface workspace) you can click on the button for the layer you want to apply. Third, you can click on the middle button at the bottom of the Layer Palette. All of these offer exactly the same list of options and produce the same results.



The Adjustment Layer Palette

Click on any of these buttons to instantly create a new adjustment layer

- 1 Brightness/Contrast
- 2 Levels
- 3 Curves
- 4 Exposure
- 5 Vibrance
- 6 Hue/Saturation
- 7 Colour Balance
- 8 Black and White



- 9 Photo Filter
- 10 Channel Mixer
- 11 Colour Lookup
- 12 Invert
- 13 Posterize
- 14 Threshold
- 15 Selective Colour
- 16 Gradient Map



Before and After

This portrait photo was taken on a Canon 1DSMk3 under a bare bulb light source, so we have to be careful when adjusting it not to make matters even worse. By applying the adjustments to the image using Adjustment Layers, degradation of the image and the resulting increase in noise is kept to a minimum.

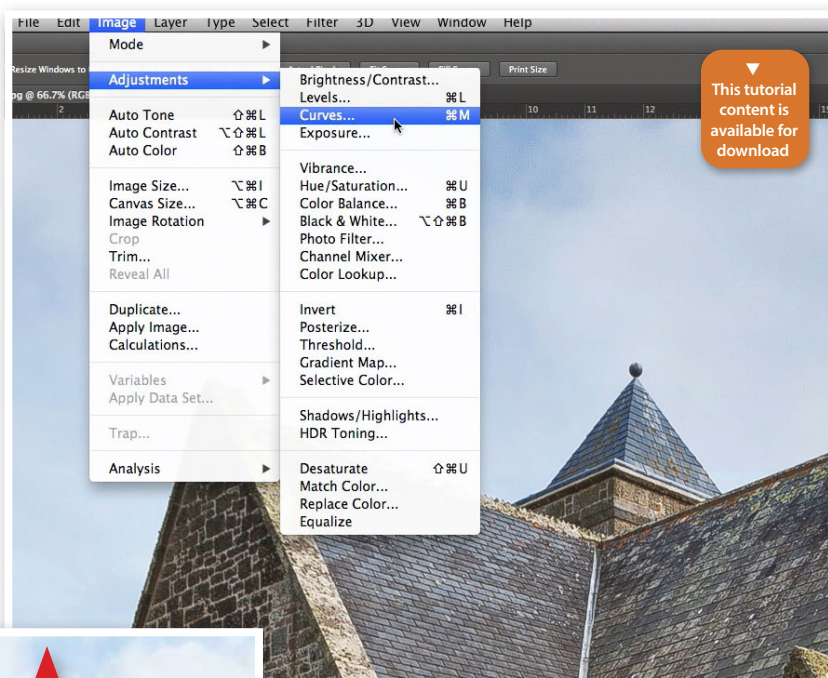


Curves and Levels

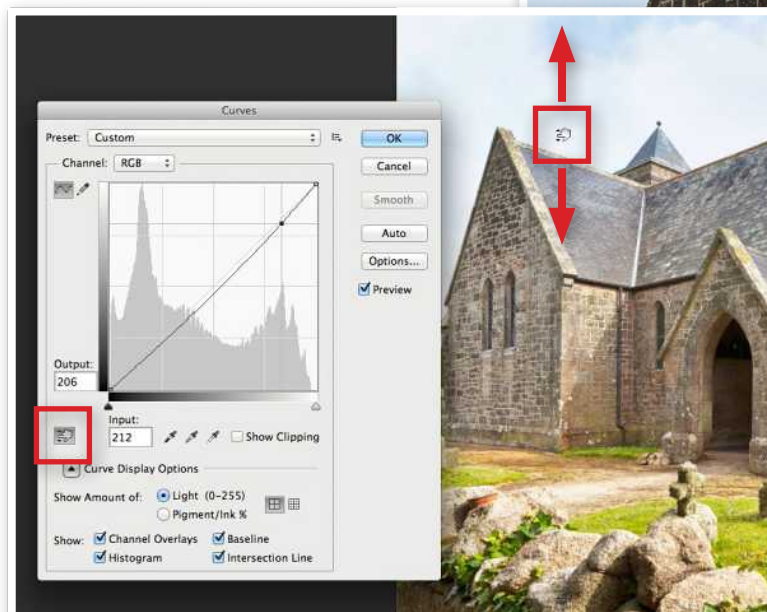
The most versatile way to adjust tone and colour balance in your digital images

You'll find the Curves function in the Image > Adjustments menu, or use the keyboard shortcut Cmd+M. The Curves dialog looks a bit daunting at first; a graph with a diagonal line running up the middle of it, like a difficult piece of maths homework. It's nothing to be scared of though, and is in fact the most useful and versatile tool for making adjustments to the exposure and tonal balance of your images. As a starting image we'll use this picture of a country church. What we want to do first is crop it down so we just have the main part of the church in the picture with some sky and grass.

The Curves graph is a histogram showing the relative strengths of different tones within the image. It shows the input distribution along the bottom of the graph, and the output up the vertical axis. The straight diagonal line from corner to



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corner indicates that there is a 1:1 ratio between input and output at all tones; the output is exactly the same as the input, as you'd expect. It is by adjusting the line and altering the ratio of input tones to output tones, that we can achieve a number of effects. The left-hand end of the horizontal axis represents the darker tones, while the right-hand end represents the highlights.

The Curves graph can be manipulated in several ways. You can move the line directly, by clicking on it to place new anchor points and then dragging these points into new positions. You can also use the arrow keys to nudge a selected point up, down, left or right. There's no limit to where the line can start or finish, or where it goes in between, which can lead to some extraordinary results.

In later versions of Photoshop there's an even more useful way to use Curves. Just to the lower left of the histogram you'll see a button with a hand and two

arrows on it. If you click this button and then move the cursor over the image you'll notice a point on the line move up and down as the cursor passes over lighter and darker areas. Pick a spot that you want to lighten, click on it and drag upward, and you'll see the tone curve move to match. Using this awesome feature you can selectively lighten or darken pretty much every tone in the image.

Boosting Contrast

Add two anchor points to the tone curve roughly one-third of the way from either end. Drag the shape of the line into a narrow S-shaped curve, slightly raising the upper half of the curve and lowering the lower half of it, leaving the mid-point and both ends in the same positions. This will brighten the lighter areas of the image, while darkening the darker areas, increasing the contrast while maintaining the same overall exposure. It's an excellent way to make very precise adjustments to contrast. Mid-tone lightness can be adjusted by moving the mid-point on the curve up or down.



Emphasising Highlights

To boost the highlights of an image move the highest point leftwards along the top horizontal axis. This increases the brightness of the lighter pixels, and may cause the brighter highlights to be burned out, but the result can be quite pleasing for the right kind of image. This technique works well in monochrome, producing an ethereal high-key image.



Emphasising Shadows

Moving the lowest point on the curve to the right will darken the shadows, but this will lose both shadow and mid-tone detail. This can be alleviated by moving the mid-point of the curve upwards slightly, flattening the upper part of the curve and brightening the mid-tones.



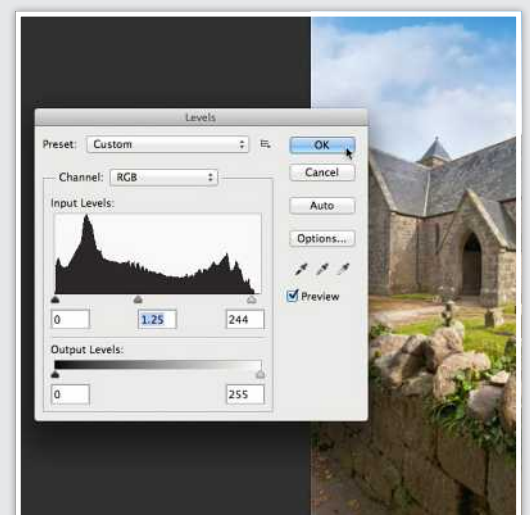
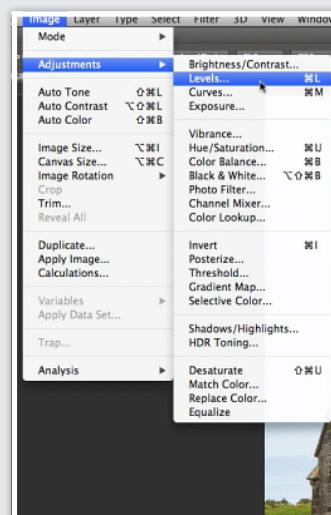
Brightening Mid-tones

For images with very high contrast sometimes it is necessary to boost the mid-tones to balance the image. To do this, set three points on the tone curve at roughly equal positions along the curve, and then move the middle one upwards to achieve the effect. The other two points act as anchors, keeping the shadows and highlights unchanged. Moving the mid-point downwards has the opposite effect.

Levels

A quick, easy and accurate way to adjust brightness and contrast

Also in the Image > Adjustments menu you'll find Levels, keyboard shortcut Cmd+L. The Levels function is easier to use than Curves, and lets you quickly adjust the black and white points and overall brightness of your image. It's particularly useful for images that contain a lot of light or dark areas, such as dark objects on a light background, because it provides a method for fixing the lightest and darkest areas of the image, while leaving the mid-tones free to be adjusted upward or downward.



Cropping and Resizing

Changing the size of a digital photograph

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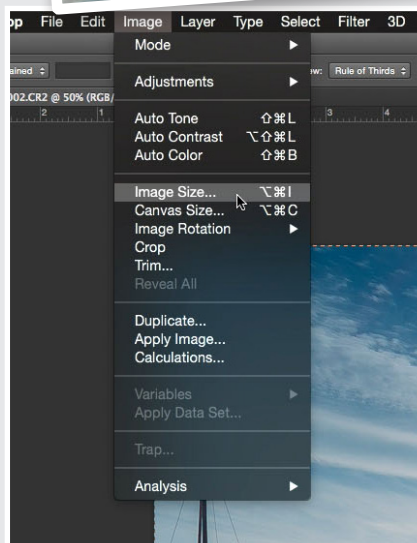
Sometimes a digital photograph can be the wrong size. Maybe you've got too much of the surroundings in the picture, when you wanted to concentrate on just the main subject, or maybe the whole image is too big, and you need to make it smaller to send via email or publish on a website. Doing both of these things is very quick and simple in Photoshop.

As a starting image we'll use this harbour picture. What we want to do first is crop it down so we just have the jetty and boats on the left of frame.



01 The best tool for the job is, not surprisingly, the Crop tool. You'll find it in the tool palette, fourth down from the top. It looks a bit like two set-squares.

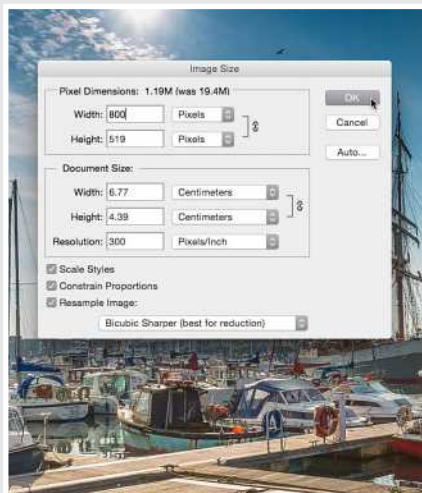
02 The crop tool is very easy to use. Simply click near one corner and then drag a box around the area you want to crop. Don't worry if you don't get the size exactly right first time, because you can adjust the size of the box by using the drag-handles on each side and corner. Press Enter to perform the crop.



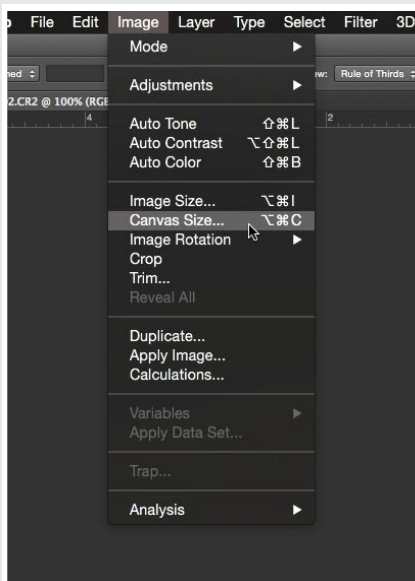
03 Next we'll resize the image. To do this you'll need to get to the Image menu and select Image Size, or use the keyboard shortcut Cmd + Alt + I.



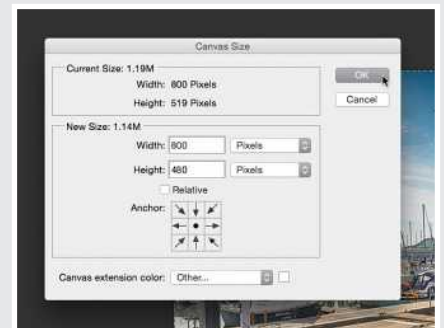
04 In the Image Size dialog box, check the box marked Resample Image, and open the drop-down option panel below it. We're reducing the size of this picture, so select Bicubic Sharper.



05 In the Pixel Dimensions panel, enter the width that you want your image to appear. If we were preparing this picture for a website, a width of 800 pixels would be ideal. The height will change automatically to keep the aspect ratio the same. Press OK to resize the picture.



06 Next, go back to the Image menu, but this time choose Canvas Size, or use the keyboard shortcut Cmd + Alt + C.



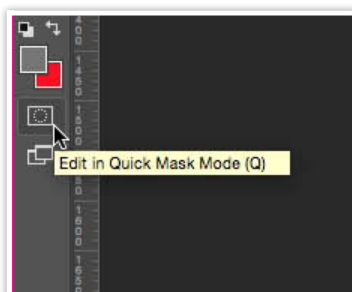
07 You'll see the current size in pixels at the top of the panel, with the width as 800 pixels. In the lower window put in a height of 480 pixels. If your main subject is not in the centre of the frame, you can alter the anchor point by clicking on the arrows surrounding the box below. Click OK to perform the resize. You'll get a warning that you're about to chop off part of the image, but just ignore it.

Now we've resized the image to 800 x 480, a common size for display on many mobile devices, and ideal for uploading to a website or sending via email.

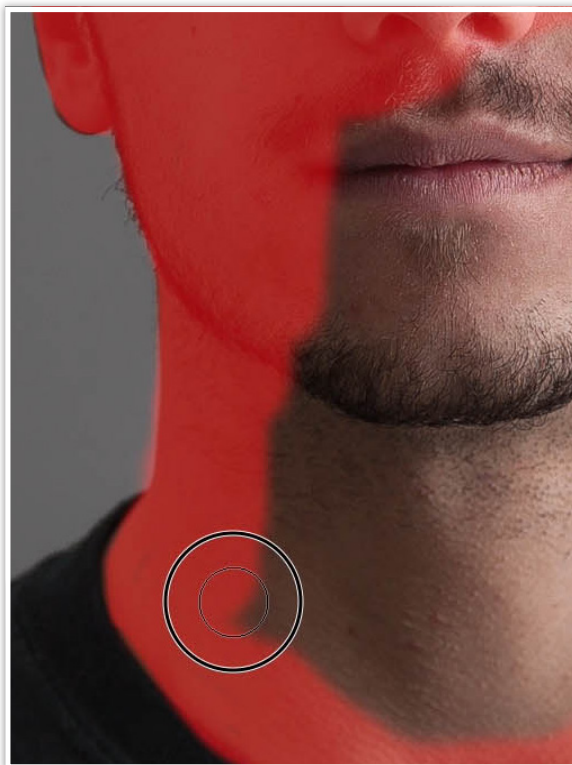
Quick Mask Mode

There's a quicker way of editing selections and masks

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Often when editing in Photoshop it's useful to be able to block off certain areas that we don't want to be affected. For that we use masks, and there are several ways of creating them, but by far the easiest is Quick Mask, a fantastically useful feature that was first introduced in Photoshop 7. Quick Mask lets you create and edit masks and selections quickly and easily using any of Photoshop's pixel painting tools. It's extremely simple to use, but it can produce a wide and varied range of results. You'll find the Quick Mask mode button near the bottom of the Tool Palette. Clicking it will toggle Quick Mask mode on or off.



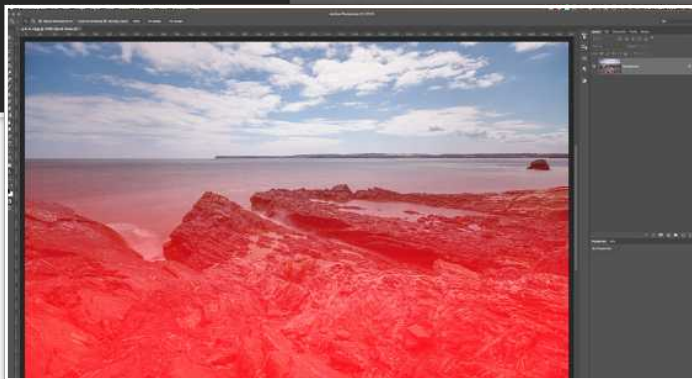
The most basic way that Quick Mask is used is with the brush tool. When you switch on Quick Mask, you'll notice that the foreground and background colours change to

black and white. Select a normal paint brush and start painting in black. You'll see that instead of black, the colour is a translucent red. Paint this colour over the

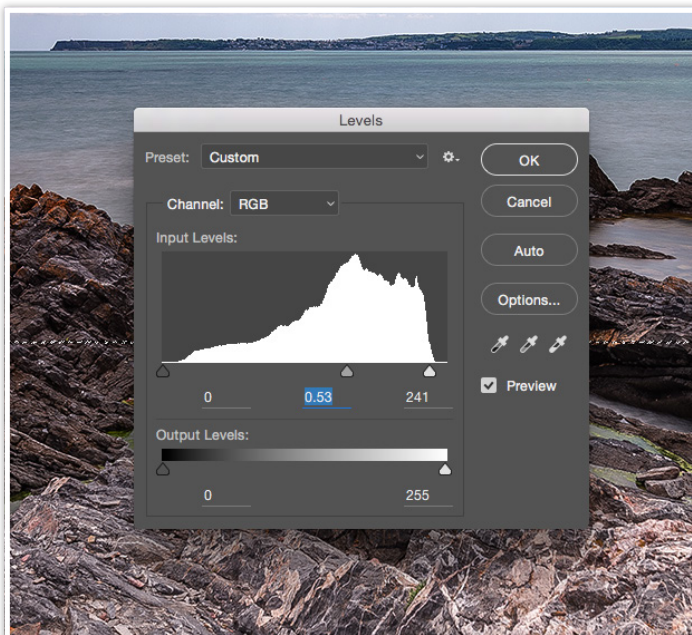
area you want to mask.

If you make a mistake and overlap your area, simply switch to the white background colour. Painting white will erase the mask.

By using a combination of the two you can mask out even quite complex shapes. If you then toggle out of Quick Mask mode, you'll find that all but the area you've masked will be selected. You can now alter very specific areas of your image, such as just the skin areas on this portrait.



There are other ways to apply Quick Mask. For example it can be used with the Gradient Tool to produce gradual mask effects. Simply enter Quick Mask mode, then select the Gradient Tool. Drag a gradient fill over the area you wish to affect, and when you release the mouse button you'll see that the gradient effect is in translucent red, like the painted Quick Mask.



You can now use this gradient mask to produce graduated effects on the image. For instance, on this picture we can darken the sky and leave the foreground as it is by using a graduated Levels function. The gradient mask ensures a smooth transition from the full effect at the upper edge to zero effect at the lower edge of the picture.

Useful Tip

By varying the transparency of the Quick Mask selection you can alter the effect of the edit you want to perform.

Using Layer Masks

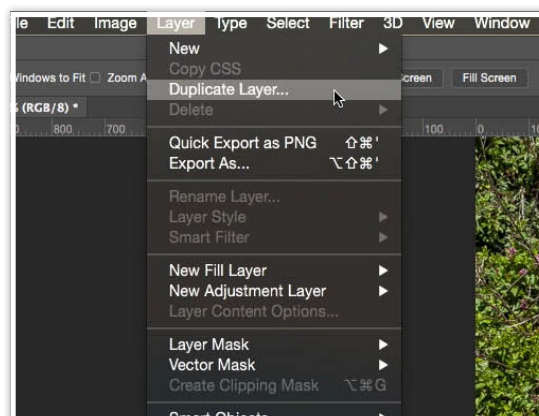
Add effects to your images non-destructively with Layer Masks

While the Quick Mask function is an easy way to selectively edit your pictures, the more traditional method is to use Layer Masks. The advantage to this method is that it is non-destructive, so if you don't like the results you can just go back and start again. It is also repeatable, because you can use the same mask for multiple effects, saving you time and effort. For this quick tutorial we'll use a Layer Mask to apply a selective monochrome or colour extraction effect. We'll start with this bright image of a beach hut. The woodwork will remain in colour while the rest of the picture will be changed to black and white.

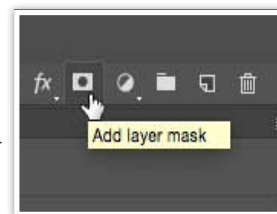
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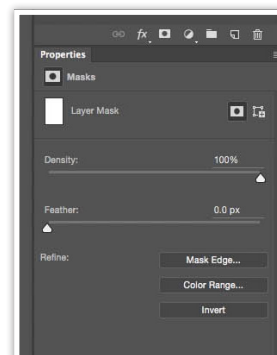
01 To start with, right-click on the thumbnail of the photo in the layer palette and select Duplicate Layer from the menu. Alternatively click and drag the layer thumbnail in the palette onto the New Layer button at the bottom of the palette, which will also duplicate the layer.



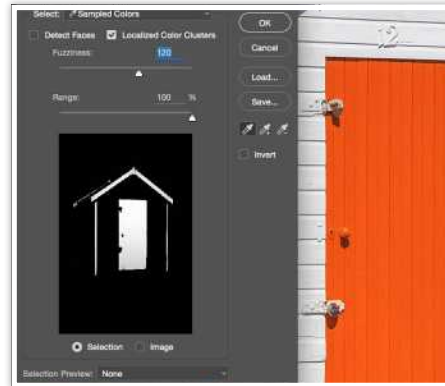
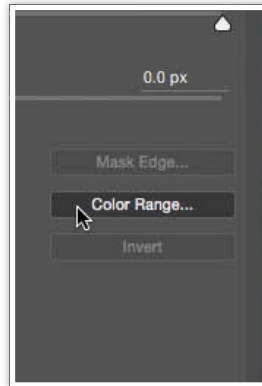
02 Next, activate the new layer by clicking on it in the palette, and then click on the Add Layer Mask button at the bottom of the palette.



03 A white square will appear in the layer palette representing the new mask. Double-click on this and the Layer Mask palette will fly out. This palette lets you configure the mask in a variety of ways.



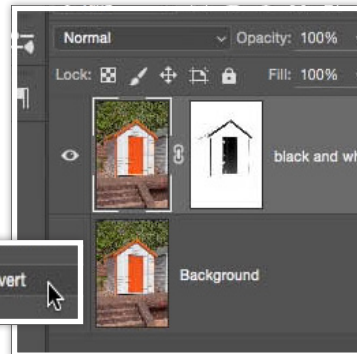
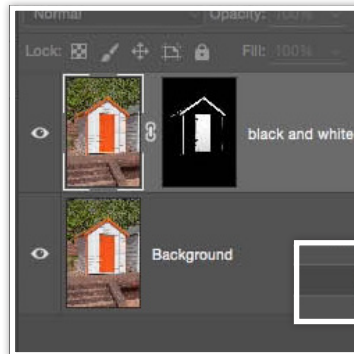
04 Click on the Color Range button and you'll see a new window appear with a colour range picker, and the cursor will change to an eyedropper tool. Click on the orange of the woodwork, and adjust the sliders so that as much of the wood as possible is selected, but none of the background. Click OK when you're happy.



Useful Tip

Always remember that layer masks do not erase any of a layer's detail, it just makes certain details invisible without deleting them.

05 Now we've got a mask that covers the shape of the door, but what we need is a mask that leaves the woodwork, but covers everything else, so click on the Invert button which swaps the mask and the background. This effectively creates a hole in the layer through which the background layer will be visible.



06 Next we can apply the effect to the top layer. For this one we'll use the Black and White menu option, since it's a quick and easy effect. You'll find it in the Image > Adjustments menu.



07 You can adjust the parameters of the Black and White effect with the sliders on the window that appears. The results are a matter of personal taste, so adjust the parameters until you're happy.



The Layer Mask can be used to produce any kind of selective effect like this, and the great part of it is that the original image is still intact in the background layer, so if you're unhappy with the finished result you can just delete the effect layer and start again. However as you can see, the effect is pretty much perfect.



Content-Aware Fill and Scale

Photoshop contains image processing technology so advanced it looks like magic

Content-Aware Scaling

Photoshop CS4 introduced the world to an amazing new technology called Content-Aware Scaling, which can resize an image while preserving the proportions of important image elements. It works by analysing the image and removing lines of pixels that contain relatively little

information, so that a plain background will be affected before the main subject. The best way to illustrate the effect is with examples, such as this picture of a mountain scene.

BEFORE

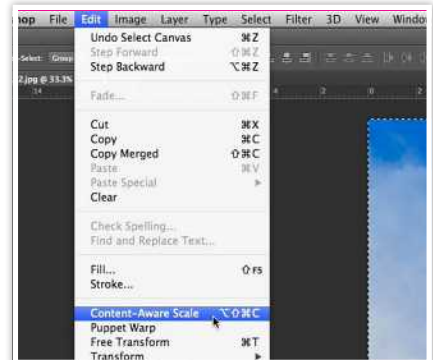
01 If we resize the image vertically by 75 percent using the standard Photoshop Image Size menu option, the people will end up looking flattened and out of proportion, since their height has also been reduced by 75 percent.



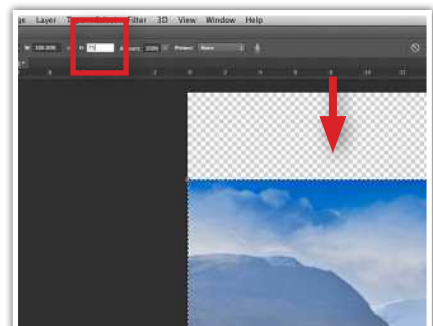
02 However if we use Content-Aware Scaling, the clever algorithm detects that the areas that are just sky contain relatively little information, and so this time when we re-scale the image it deletes those pixels first, preserving the more information-rich pixels that hold the details including the people. As a result a 75 percent height reduction leaves the scene looking relatively unchanged, although the area of blue sky has been reduced.



03 You'll find Content-Aware Scaling in the Edit menu, but it will be greyed out unless you've converted the image into a layer.



04 You use Content-Aware Scaling in just the same way as the normal Image Size option. Either drag the handles on each edge in the direction you want, or directly enter the proportions into the text boxes on the tool options bar. Content-Aware Scaling works for both height and width, and can also be used to enlarge an image.



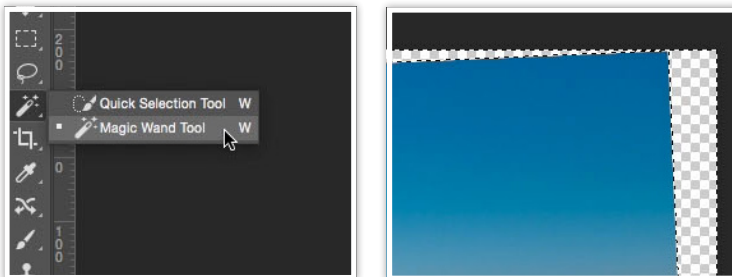
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Content-Aware Fill and Move

Photoshop CS5 took the content-aware technology further with the introduction of Content-Aware Fill. This extremely useful function can fill in blank areas of an image with an approximation of the surrounding area, which makes it particularly handy for filling those triangular edges that are left after rotating an image, for example when levelling the horizon line. Again it's relatively easy to use.

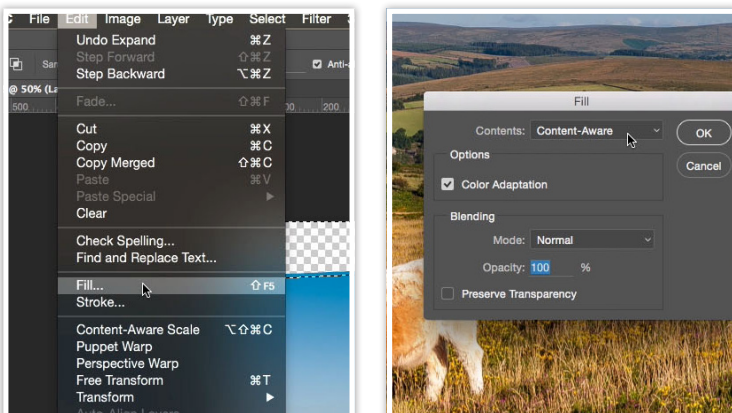
- 01** Starting with an image that has just been rotated, leaving those empty triangles, take the Magic Wand tool and select the plain areas.



- 02** Next, go to the Select menu and click on Modify > Expand. Increase the selection area by a decent amount; for this picture 10 pixels should do nicely.



- 03** You'll find Fill in the Edit menu. Click on it and you'll see the Fill options window appear. Content-Aware should be selected by default, but if not choose it from the drop-down menu.

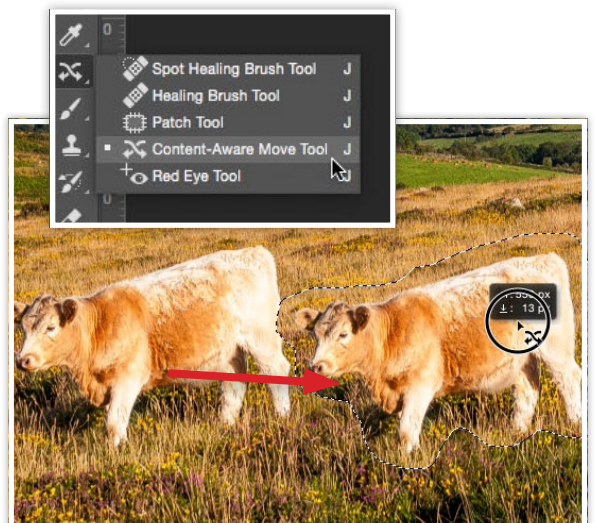


- 04** There will be a short pause while Photoshop analyses the image, but then it will fill in the blank areas with a texture derived from the content of the immediately surrounding area.



- 05** Content-Aware Move is a new feature introduced with Photoshop CS6, and uses the same technology as Content-Aware Fill. The idea is that you can select an object on a background and move it to a new area of the image. The Content-Aware algorithm should automatically fill in the area that you moved from and also blend in the moved object.

In practice it's not actually much use unless the object to be moved is on a virtually plain background, in which case it's often simpler to use the Clone Stamp anyway, but some people may find it useful.





Building Your Photo Editing Skills

Apply the techniques we've learned in the last section to the art of photographic manipulation

Although it's become a firm favourite of artists and graphic designers, Photoshop's main business is photographic editing; the clue's in the name! In this next section we'll apply the techniques we've learned over the last thirty-odd pages to the art of photographic manipulation. From simple techniques like correcting exposure and white balance to more complex operations like stitching panoramas or replacing one colour with another, Adobe Photoshop has the tools to help you get the most out of your photographs, and turn simple snapshots into works of art.



BEFORE

Although it looks like a normal portrait shot, this scene has had half a dozen editing operations carried out on it. Including enhancing the hue and saturation, levels adjustment, general sharpening to bring out detail in her face and clothes, lens distortion correction and finally being cropped to fit the page. Let your creativity out to play!

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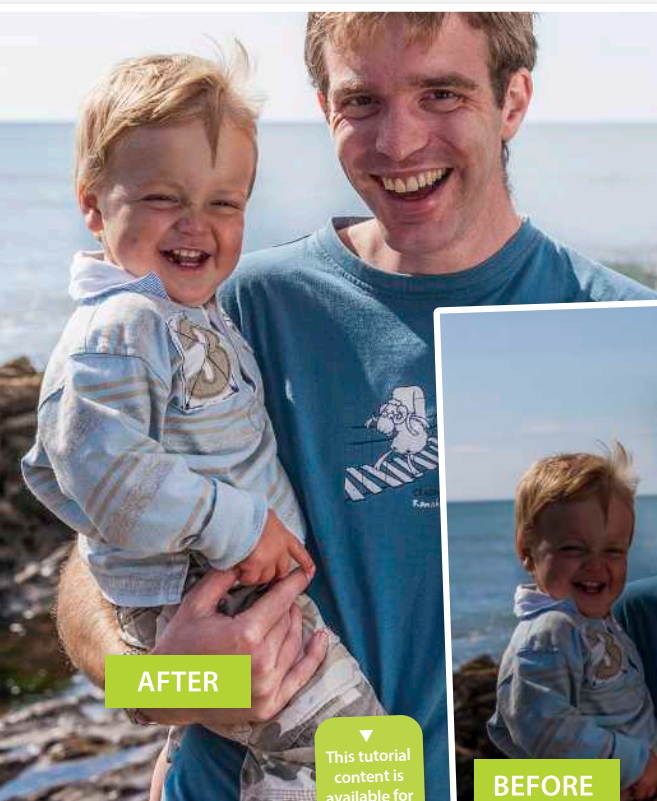
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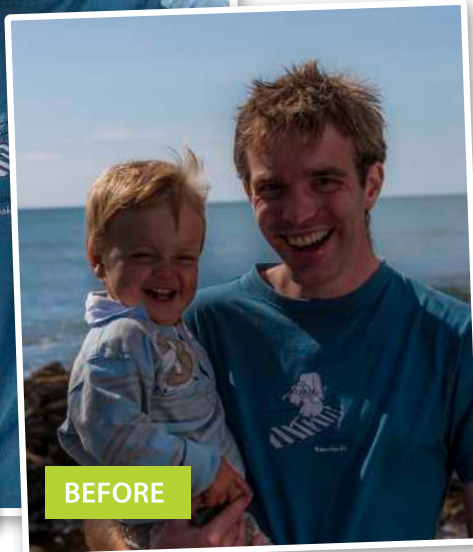
Adjusting Exposure

Correcting your exposure mistakes is easier with Photoshop



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BEFORE

Even with the sophisticated technology found in the light metering systems of modern digital cameras, they are not infallible. Some lighting conditions can confuse them, resulting in pictures that are over or under-exposed.

All cameras have a limited dynamic range, levels of illumination at which they record featureless pure white or featureless pure black. The tonal variation available between those two extremes depends on the quality of the lens, sensor and image processor that captured it, and the bit-depth of the file type used to record it. For maximum bit-depth it's always best to use Raw mode, since this will usually store images in 42-bit or even 48-bit form, capturing greater dynamic range. We'll look at improving the exposure of the more common JPEG images from a compact camera. JPEG images are usually only 24-bit, so have less latitude for exposure recovery.

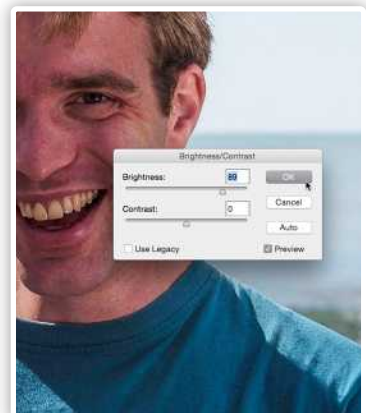
Over-exposure tends to be more of a problem than under-exposure, since burned-out highlights contain no detail, but the JPEG format is surprisingly good at capturing detail in areas that might initially look like featureless black. As a result it's often possible to rescue shots that are quite badly under-exposed, although this will also amplify any noise in the image, so there is a trade-off for image quality.

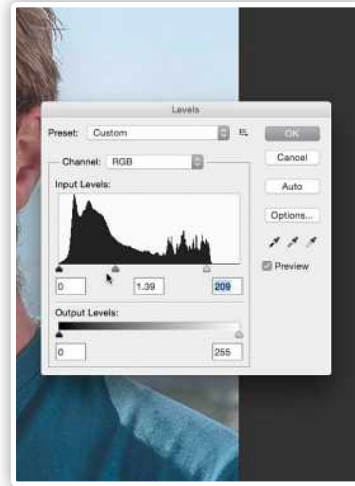
Take a look at this shot. It was taken using centre-weighted metering against quite strong backlighting, and as a result the subjects are in dark shadow and very under-exposed. It would have been a better idea to use spot metering, but we can still rescue this photo using an image editing program.

Brightness/Contrast

The quickest and easiest way to brighten the photo is to simply turn up the brightness. You'll find Brightness/Contrast as an adjustment layer in the palette on the right, or in the Image > Adjustment menu. The Brightness/Contrast function in Photoshop CS6 has been changed to improve contrast and tonal balance when adjusting brightness.

By moving the Brightness slider to the right, the overall brightness of the entire photo is increased, but the new algorithm retains a reasonable balance in shadow tones. You can tweak the effect with the Contrast slider, the result is reasonably acceptable.





Levels

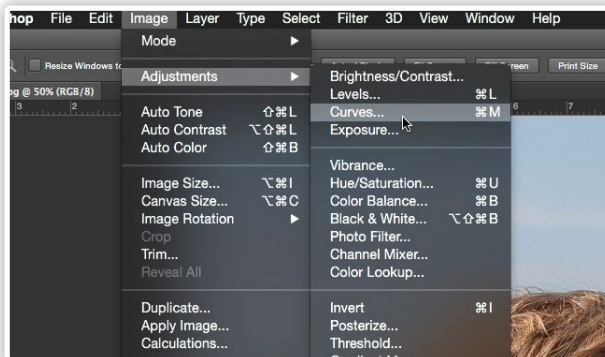
Photoshop offers another way of altering brightness and contrast, but this time with more subtlety and control, by adjusting the Levels histogram. You'll find Levels in the same Image > Adjustment sub-menu as Brightness/Contrast, and as an adjustment layer option.

The Levels histogram is basically a graph showing the proportion of pixels in the image at each colour intensity. The far left-hand end of the graph represents black, and the right-

hand end is white, with every tone in between represented by a spike on the graph. On the bottom axis of the graph are three points, the left representing the black cut-off point, the right the white cut-off point, and the one in the middle representing the mid-tone point.

As you can see from the graph our image is mostly shadows, with very little in the highlight range, so we need to brighten some of those shadows into mid-tones. The way

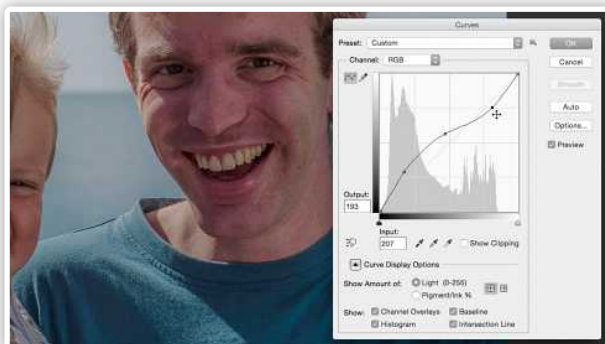
we do this is by moving the mid-tone point left towards the shadows. This has the effect of bringing out a lot of the detail from the shadow areas without burning out any more highlights. It also leaves the deeper shadow areas intact. It is a far better way of adjusting the exposure of a photograph than simply altering the Brightness/Contrast, however it isn't quite the best way. Adjusting the Levels mid-point is still strictly linear in its adjustment.



Curves

The Curves adjustment option, again found in the Image > Adjustment menu and as an adjustment layer option, is a method of changing the relative brightness of specific tones and ranges of tones within an image, giving precise control over exposure. Learning to use it properly is a core skill in image editing, and will enable you to make precise and subtle changes to brightness and relative contrast not just of the image as a whole, but also of individual colour channels.

You can drag the Curves output line around by clicking at any point, then moving the handle that appears. To improve this picture we need to brighten the shadows and mid-tones, while simultaneously darkening the highlights, so we should drag the lower side of the curve upwards, and the upper part of the curve downwards, creating a slim S-shaped curve. As with many Photoshop techniques, the key here is subtlety. Push the curve too far and you'll ruin the picture, but get it just right and you can rescue even quite badly under-exposed pictures.



Useful Tip

As with most Photoshop editing techniques, subtlety is the key. If you push the curves too far you'll lose detail.

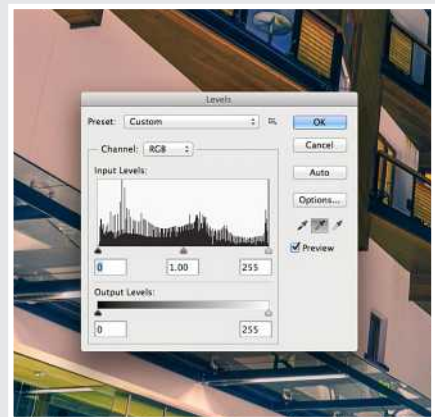
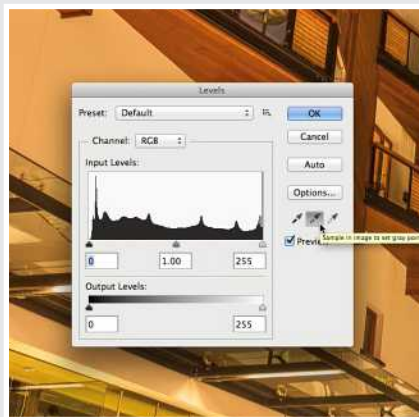
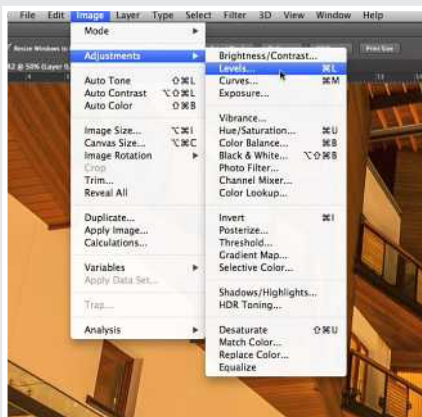
Colour Correction

Correcting colour casts and white balance problems



Almost all digital cameras have some sort of white balance selection, but it's a feature that most people seem to ignore. In most cases this isn't a problem, because the default automatic white balance feature handles most everyday lighting situations perfectly well. However sometimes, usually when shooting without the flash in artificial light, your pictures may show a strong colour tint, caused by incorrect white balance setting. Using the pre-set white balance options in your camera's menu will normally

prevent this problem, but it is also possible to correct colour tints later using photo editing software. There are several ways to do this. This photograph is illuminated by a combination of sodium vapour street lighting, fluorescent light and coloured tungsten lighting, using automatic white balance, and as you can see the camera has got a bit confused, resulting in a heavy colour cast. However by adjusting the colour balance in Photoshop I have been able to largely correct this fault, resulting in a much better picture.



01 There are several ways to correct a colour balance problem using Photoshop. One of the quickest and most effective is to use the Levels function. You'll find this in the Image menu under Adjustments, or by using the keyboard shortcut **Cmd + L**.

02 Levels is used to adjust the relative brightness and output levels of the various tones in the image, and can also be used to set particular points on the histogram. The one we're interested in is the grey point, the middle one of three buttons on the right of the dialog panel.

03 Click on the grey point button, and move the cursor off the dialog panel. You'll see that the cursor has changed into an eye-dropper tool. Click this on any part of the image that should be a mid-tone grey, in this case the lower part of the blackboard on the right. The colour balance of the image will immediately change to make this point the new grey, which will help correct the colour cast.

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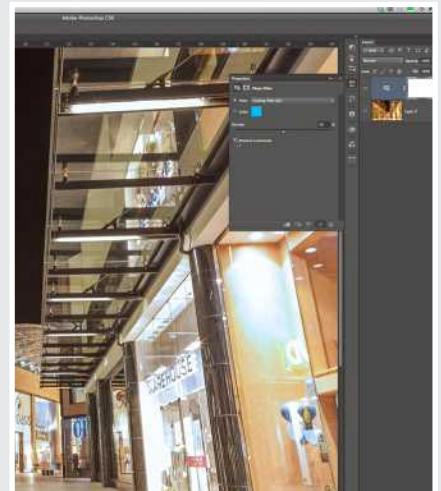
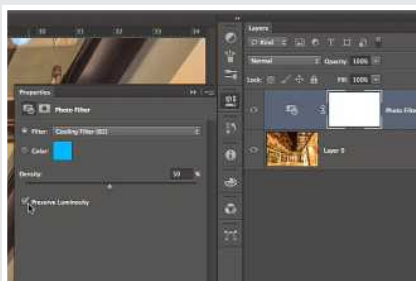
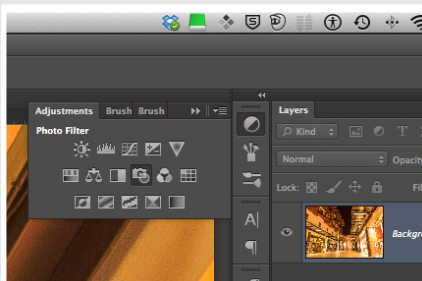
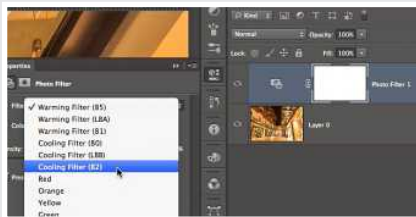


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04 Another way of correcting the image is the Variations function. You'll also find this in the Image menu, under Adjustments. It presents you with a series of colour adjustment pre-sets that you can choose to best suit your image. Please note: Variations is no longer available for Photoshop CS6.



05 A quick alternative if you are using CS6 is to select the Photo Filter option from the Adjustments menu. This behaves as if you had actually applied an old-style warm/cool filter to the front of your camera to balance the tones.

06 Adding the Photo Filter layer above your image now gives you the ability to apply a colour filter that can counteract the colour cast in your shot. In this case, the warm orange hues of this street are offset by the cool blue tint of the Photo Filter.

07 You can alter the colour you are applying to the image as well as the opacity. You can keep clicking until you've got something that looks acceptable. It's not precise, but with some lighting conditions it may not be possible to obtain a perfect result. Sometimes "good enough" is all you can do.

Contrast and Saturation

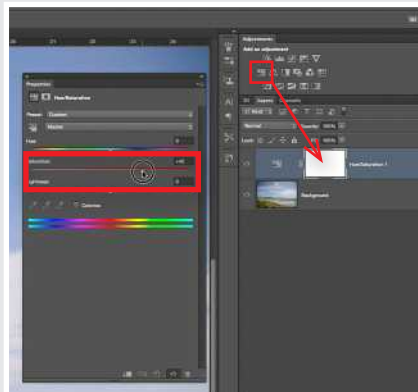
Using curves and blend modes to improve colour saturation and contrast in your digital photos



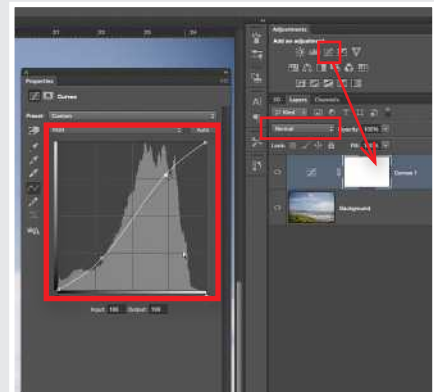
When you take a digital photo of a scene, you are relying on your camera to be able to capture all the colours and tones that you see. Unfortunately most digital cameras simply aren't capable of recording the full range of colours and shades that the human eye can see, so your photo of what was a bright and colourful scene may prove to be a bit of a disappointment when you see it on your monitor. Fortunately there are many different ways to improve both contrast and colour saturation, which might help to restore some of the sparkle to your photos. Let's take a look at some of the alternatives.



01 As an example we'll use this snapshot of the coast by Burgh Island. In reality the colour of the scene is much more intense than it looks here, but the older digital camera that was used to take the photo didn't do a particularly good job of capturing the colour, leaving it looking pale and washed out.



02 The simplest way to improve the saturation is by adding a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Like many other parts of the program, Hue/Saturation has been improved in Photoshop, producing a smoother result than previous versions. Boosting the saturation slider by about +30 helps to restore some of the missing colour, but it's a scattergun approach and doesn't offer much fine control. It can also increase noise in shadow areas in JPEG images.

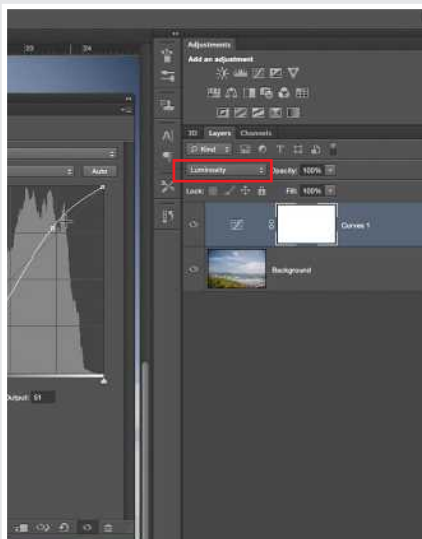


03 A much more controllable way to adjust both saturation and contrast is to use a Curves adjustment layer. We've already looked at Curves in the section on correction exposure, but by using Blend Modes we can also use Curves to enhance saturation. In Normal blend mode the curve will change both contrast and saturation. We're using the same S-shaped curve, which boosts brightness at the upper end of the scale and darkens shadows at the lower end.

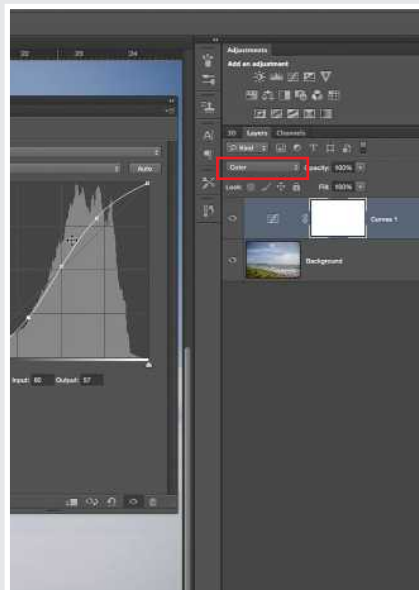
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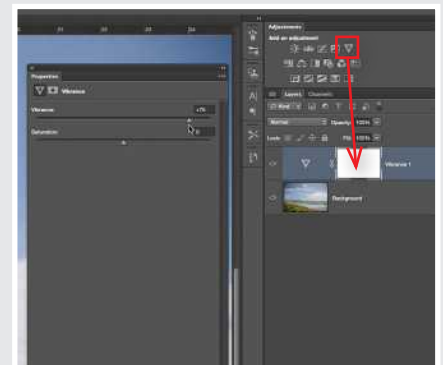
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04 By changing the blend mode to Luminosity, the curve will only affect brightness, so the same S-shaped enhancement curve will improve contrast, lightening highlights and darkening shadows without affecting colour saturation.



05 Conversely, by using a Color blend mode, the S-shaped curve will alter colour saturation without affecting brightness, so shadows and highlights are unaffected.



06 Another way to improve saturation is a Photoshop function called Vibrance, which can also be applied as an adjustment layer. Vibrance is a difficult thing to quantify. It is a saturation function, but it works on a graph, affecting the least saturated areas most, and the most saturated areas least. On a picture like this it can help, but it has to be used with contrast enhancement for best effect, which may again cause an increase in noise. Vibrance is best used when processing a Raw image file.

Adding a Graduated Filter

Graduated filters can improve photos by bringing out the detail in the sky



Photographers use graduated filters placed in front of the camera lens to selectively change the exposure and sometimes the colour of part of a picture, usually to darken the sky to bring out details in the clouds and balance the exposure with the landscape in the foreground. They come in many different shapes, sizes and colours to fit all types of camera system.

As with most photographic techniques, it's possible to duplicate the effect of graduated filters using Adobe Photoshop, and as usual there are several ways to accomplish this. For this example we'll use an image of the Royal William Yard in Plymouth taken on a sunny, but slightly misty day with a pale blue sky.



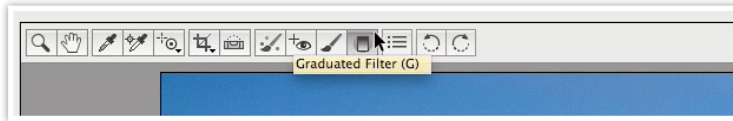
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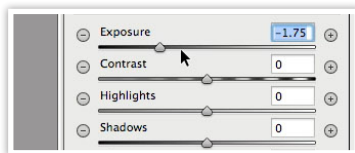
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Graduated Filter in Camera Raw

Since this photo was taken using Raw mode, we can use the Graduated Filter tool in Adobe Camera Raw (ACR). ACR is the Raw processing application supplied with each version of Photoshop, and allows you to add the effect during processing. This is by far the best way to do it, since it preserves the maximum amount of detail in the photograph.

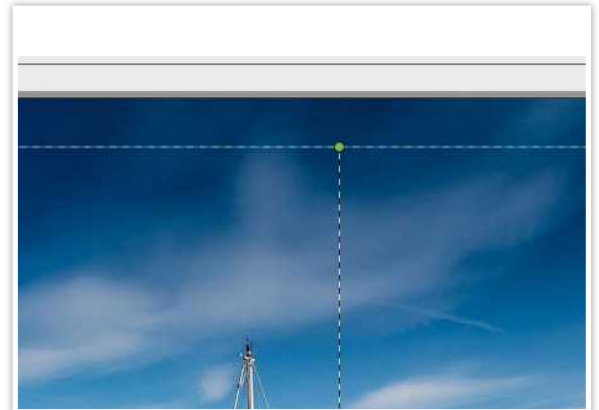


01 When you open the image in Adobe Camera Raw, you'll see a row of tool icons across the top of the main image window. The Graduated Filter icon is to the right.



02 When you click on the Graduated Filter icon, you'll see the control panel on the right of the screen change. The filter can apply many different effects, but the one we want to use is a reduction in exposure. A setting of -1.75 should produce a suitable effect for this picture.

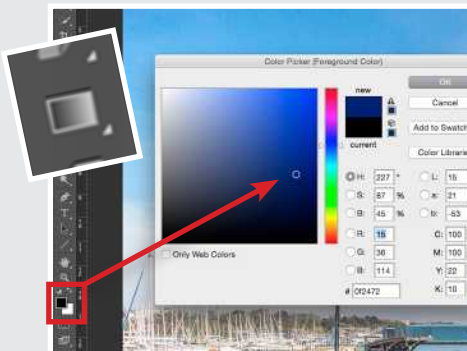
03 To apply the filter, drag a line down from the top of the screen to the horizon line. You'll see a horizontal and vertical dotted line like an inverted T. You'll also notice that you can change the angle of the line by moving the cursor left and right. To constrain the line to the vertical, hold down the Shift key while dragging.



04 The red dotted line marks the lower, least saturated edge of the gradient effect, but there is also a green line at the top of the frame. This marks the top or most saturated edge of the effect, with a smooth gradient between the two lines. If you drag this green line down, more of the image will be at maximum effect and the gradient will be shorter.



Graduated Filter in Photoshop



01 If your photo wasn't taken in Raw mode, you can apply a graduated filter using the Gradient Tool. To set up the graduated filter, first select the Gradient Tool, then set the foreground colour to blue by clicking on the foreground square and then using the colour picker.



02 Next, in the tool options bar, click on the gradient editor and select Foreground to Transparent, click on the button for Linear Gradient, set the Blending mode to Multiply, and the Opacity to 75 percent. Make sure the boxes for Dither and Transparency are checked.



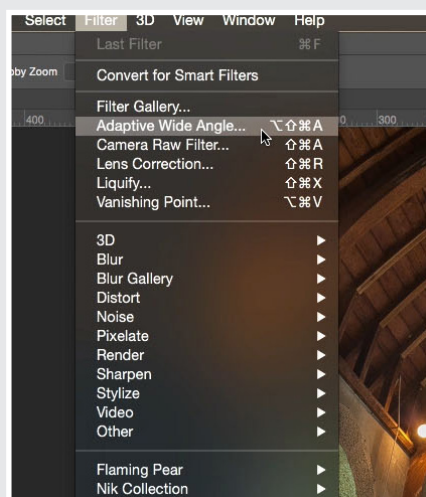
03 To apply the gradient to the picture, start at the top of the frame, click and drag down to the horizon line. If you hold down the shift key it will constrain the line to the vertical. The result should look something like the image opposite.

Correcting Lens Distortion

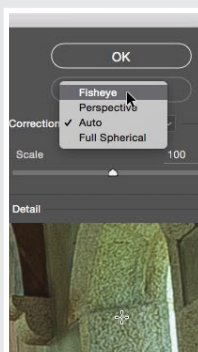
Correct the optical distortion of ultra-wide lenses with Photoshop's Adaptive Wide Angle



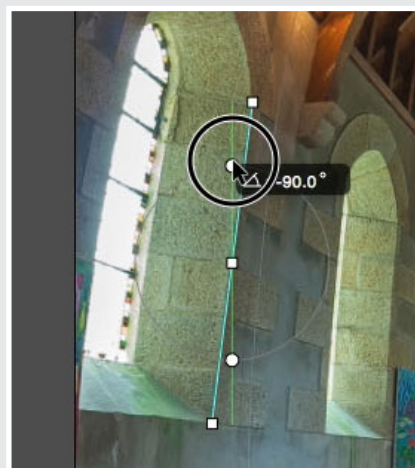
One of the new features introduced with Photoshop CS6 is called Adaptive Wide Angle, which can warp and bend an image to undo the optical distortion common to all very wide angle lenses. We've all seen photographs taken with "fish-eye" lenses. These lenses are called ultra-wide-angle, because the angle of view that they can capture can be as much as 180 degrees. Naturally the ability to squeeze half a room into the same shot comes at a price, and that is extreme optical distortion. Straight and parallel lines appear to be bent, perspective is massively shortened and familiar objects take on almost unrecognisable proportions. In the photo opposite, the straight uprights of the stonework and bench seats seem to curve inwards, the walls seems to bulge outwards and the whole effect is quite disconcerting.



01 Adaptive Wide Angle attempts to correct at least some of these problems, and can warp the picture to undo most of the optical distortion. Remarkably it can do all this while still preserving most of the detail in the picture. You'll find Adaptive Wide Angle in the Filters menu.



02 In the Adaptive Wide Angle interface, first select the Constraint tool from the panel on the upper left of the main screen, and select Fisheye from the Correction drop-down menu. Pick one of the vertical lines, in this case one of the stone windows on the left wall, click near the top of it and drag a line down the length of it. You should find that the line will automatically curve to follow the line, but you can drag the control handle in the mid-point of the line to match it up to the curvature.



03 The line will automatically warp the picture to make the curved line straight. You'll see that there is a circle overlaid on the line, with two more control handles where they intersect. You can drag these handles, rotating the line to bring it into a vertical position. If you hold down the shift key it will automatically snap to vertical right away.

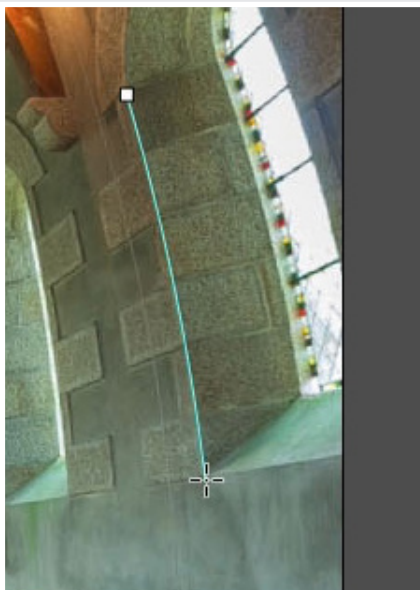


BEFORE



AFTER

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04 Pick a line on the opposite side of the picture and repeat the process, dragging a line down the upright of the column. This too will automatically straighten.



05 Again, drag the handle on the circular line to move the upright into a vertical position. If you've done it right the vertical curvature distortion of the image should now be pretty much corrected. You may notice that the correction isn't quite perfect; there may still be some slight curvature of the various uprights, but it's certainly a great improvement, and the vertical structures are much straighter. You can carry on and try to correct more of the curvature, but be aware of how much warping is being applied to the image to straighten everything out. Click OK when you're done to finalise the correction.



06 The process will have left some empty spaces at the edges of the image, so it'll be necessary to crop the image to remove these. This does mean losing some of the original photograph, but the result is much less distorted than it was at the start.

Panorama Stitching

Get the whole of the landscape into one ultra-wide picture

Many digital cameras have a feature known as “Panorama Stitching” or “Panorama Assist” mode. It’s there to help with a particular type of photograph, or rather series of photographs, in which successive shots are taken as the camera is panned across a scene. After you take the first shot, the camera shows the edge of that shot superimposed on the monitor so you can match up the position of features in successive shots, producing a long continuous photo showing an entire panoramic scene. When it’s done well the results can be breathtaking, but getting a satisfactory result isn’t as easy as it looks.

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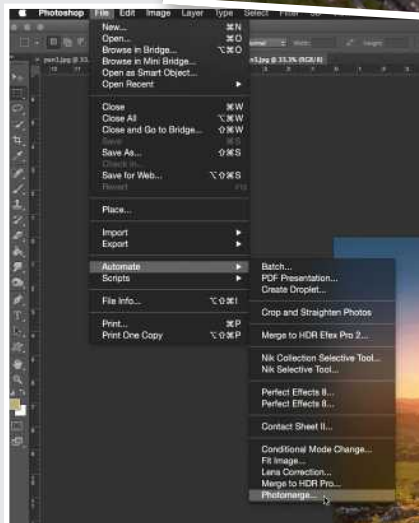
BEFORE

For the purposes of this tutorial we’ll use this specially-shot example of Hound Tor on Dartmoor.

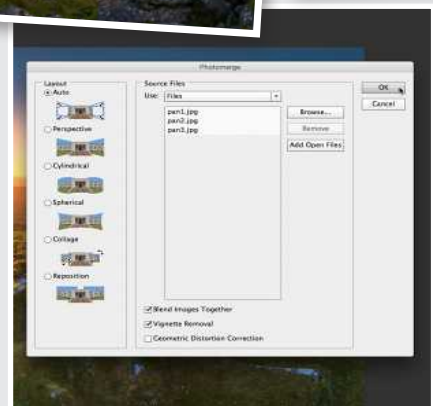
AFTER



01 Having downloaded our panorama pictures from the camera into a folder on the PC, it’s time to fire up Photoshop and stitch them together into a panorama. Locate the files on your hard drive and open all three in Photoshop. If you go to the Window > Arrange menu you can view them all at once in 3-up Vertical mode. Not essential, but it gives you a chance to make a last-minute exposure check.



02 In Photoshop you’ll find Photomerge in the File menu under Automate, along with several other automatic processes.



03 The Photomerge window offers a number of options for how to arrange your panoramic shots, but for a simple landscape panorama like this the Auto option should work fine. Click on the Add Open Files button to add the three shots to the Photomerge list, and check all three option boxes.



When it's done well the results can be breathtaking, but getting a satisfactory result isn't as easy as it looks.



04 Once you click OK the merging process starts, and it is completely automatic. It will take a while to complete, possibly quite a long while if you have a slow computer and/or very large image files.



05 Once the Panorama has been rendered, you'll see that there are large blank borders where the program has had to warp the pictures to correct for perspective. You can attempt to use Content Aware Fill to add something that looks a bit like sky and sea to these, but for this type of shot it'll look a lot better if you just crop these off.



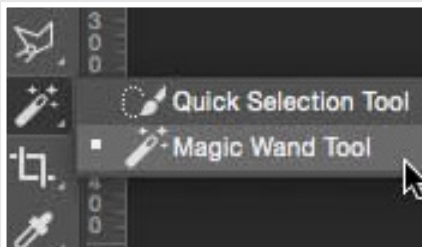
06 You can also use the crop tool to straighten out any slight tilt in your horizon, but hopefully you won't need it. The finished result should look something like this.

Colour Replacement

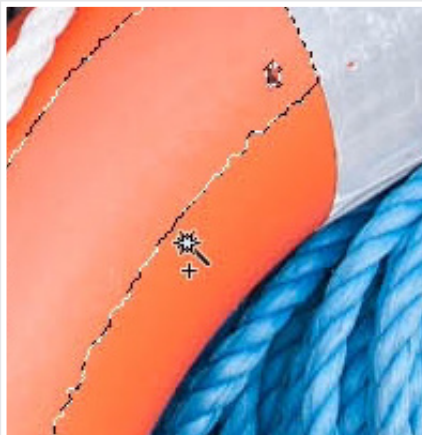
Swapping one colour for another

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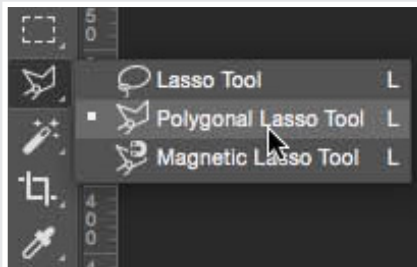
One relatively simple operation that you can do in Photoshop is to replace one colour with another. By using some of the selection tools we looked at earlier, along with the Hue/Saturation controls, we can change the colour of individual objects in our photos, such as replacing the colour of this life buoy.



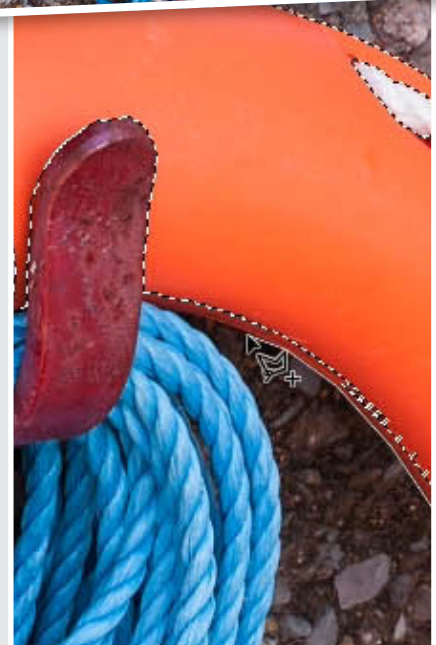
01 Selecting large areas of the same colour is one of those few occasions where the Magic Wand tool is actually useful, so we'll use it as a starting point here. With a tolerance setting of 20 it should be able to pick out the buoy ring without too much trouble.



02 With the Magic Wand, it's best to add a bit at a time. Click on an area that's a mid-tone for the total area you want to select, and you'll find that the wand tool will select an area around it. The size of the selection will depend on the tolerance setting. By holding down the Shift key and carefully clicking on areas around your starting selection, you can add more areas. If the wand selects part of the background, use Cmd+Z to undo that step, and try again more carefully, possibly adjusting the tolerance downwards if it keeps happening.



03 When you've reached the limit of what you can usefully select using the Magic Wand tool, you can finish your selection using the Polygonal Lasso tool. By setting the Feather to zero you can produce a sharp-edges selection. Alternatively, use the Selection Brush tool.

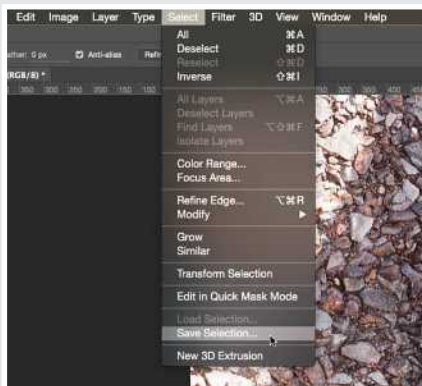
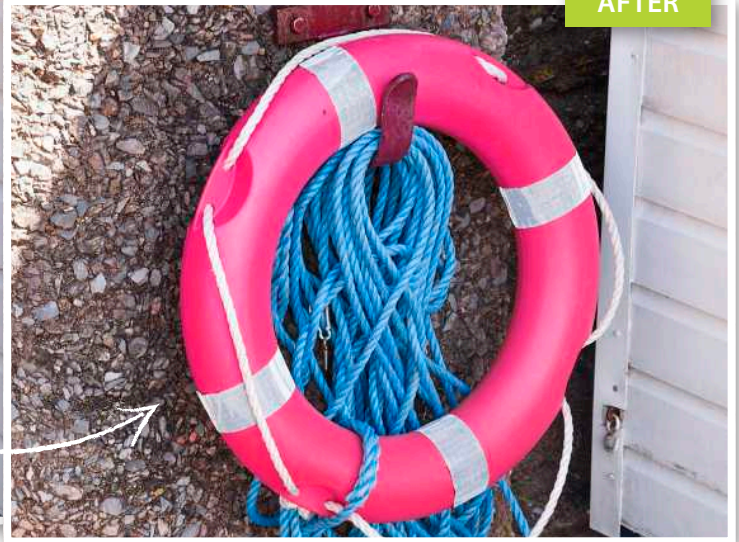


04 Again hold down the Shift key to add more areas to your selection. If you need to remove any areas from the selection, such as the rope and metal hook, you can subtract by holding down the Alt key and going around them with the Lasso.

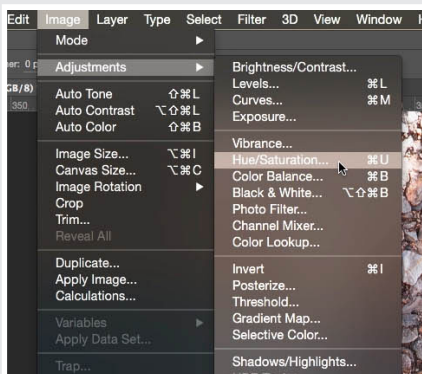
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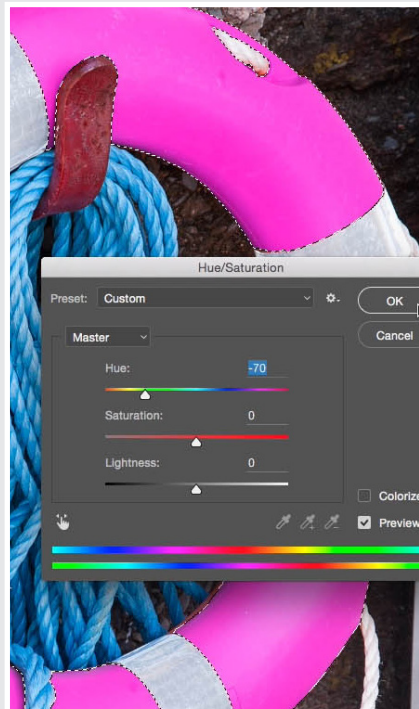
AFTER



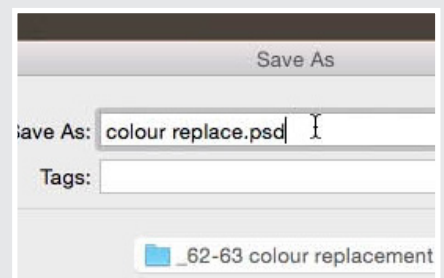
05 When you've selected all the bits you want to repaint, you can save the selection for later use, to save you doing all that work again if you change your mind.



06 Although there are several filters we could use at this point, the most versatile way to change the colour of the selected area is the Hue/Saturation/Lightness option. This is common to most editing programs. In Elements you'll find it in the Enhance menu.



07 You have three options under the Hue/Saturation setting. Leave the Lightness slider in the middle position to preserve the overall brightness of the object, but you can experiment by moving the Saturation and Hue sliders around. As you move the Hue slider, the colour will start to shift through the spectrum of colours, or you can produce subtle colour changes with lower saturation settings, or say to hell with subtlety and go for broke with full saturation.



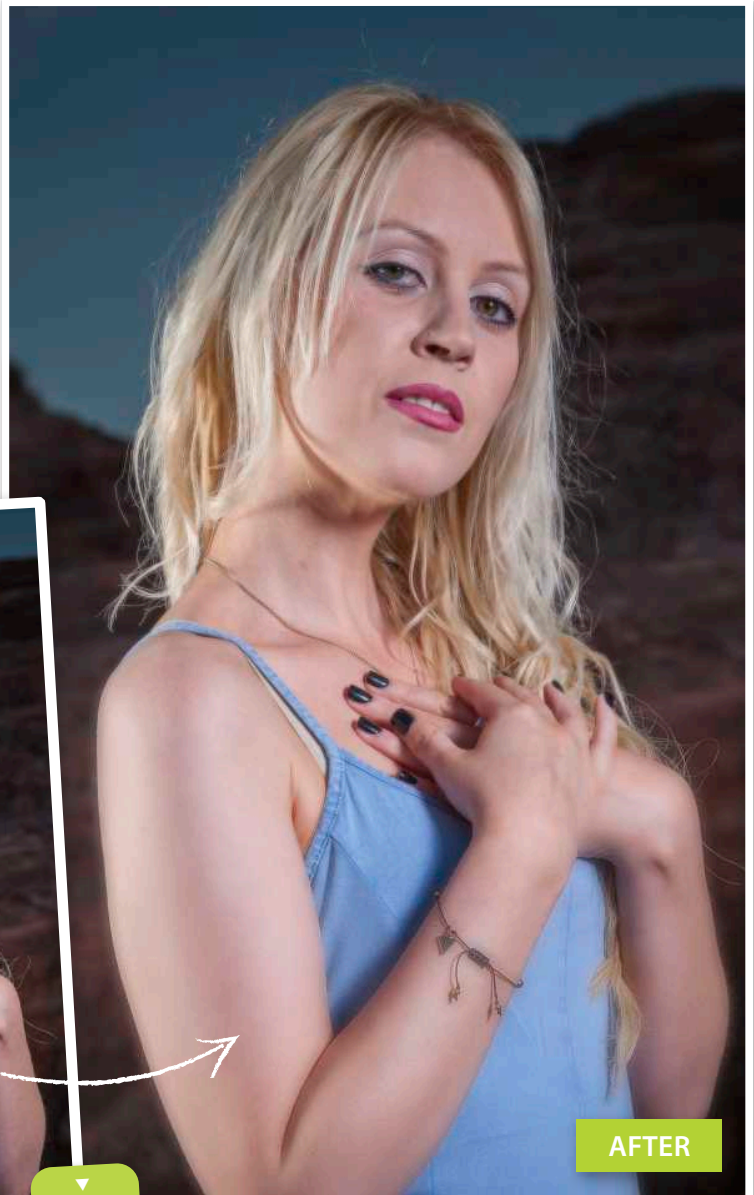
08 When you're happy with the result, or when your eyes start bleeding, you can clear the selection by using the keyboard shortcut Cmd+D, and then save the result. When you save the final image as a .PSD file in Photoshop or Elements, the selections are saved as well, embedded in the file.

Soft Focus Technique

Adding a soft focus effect gives your portraits a romantic feel

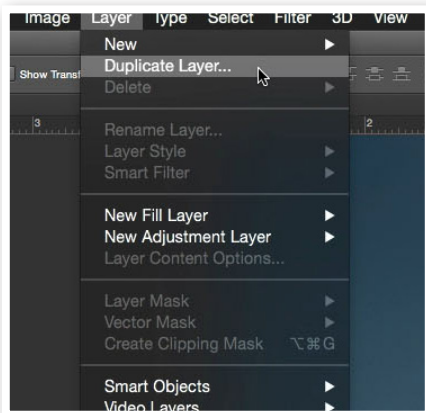
Soft-focus is an effect used widely in television and in the movies, as well as in many commercial and advertising photographs, for producing a dreamy romantic look. It's also a big favourite with wedding photographers. In traditional photography the effect is achieved with a special filter fitted over the camera lens. Many digital cameras now include soft-focus as a digital effect, but we can produce the same results in Photoshop with ease using Gaussian blur and layer transparency.

BEFORE



AFTER

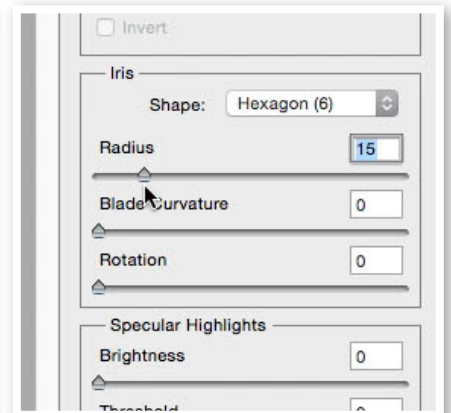
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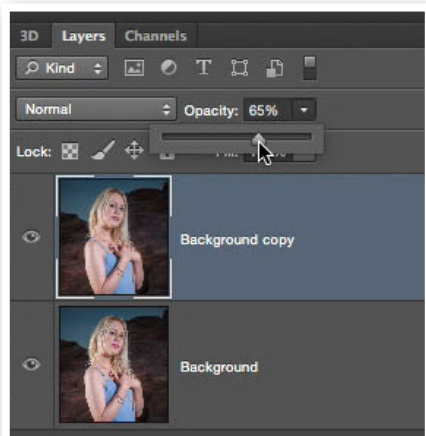
01 The first step is to turn the picture into two identical layers. To do this, go to the Layer menu, and select Duplicate Layer. Don't worry about naming this layer, it's the only one we're going to make.



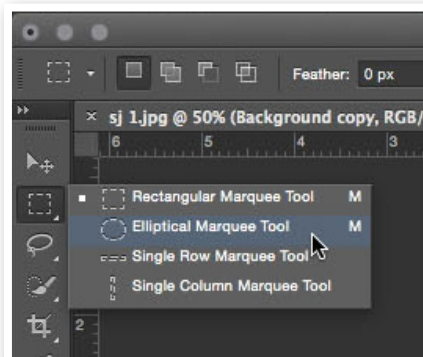
02 Next, go to the Filter menu, move down to Blur, and select Lens Blur. This is a special type of blurring that can be adjusted to produce certain effects.



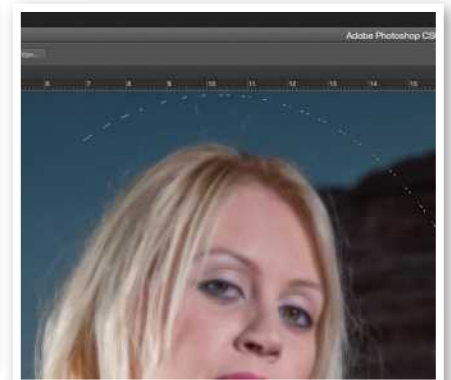
03 We don't need very much blurring to produce the soft-focus effect, so for this portrait shot, set a radius of 15 pixels. You may need a smaller radius for smaller images, but keep it subtle.



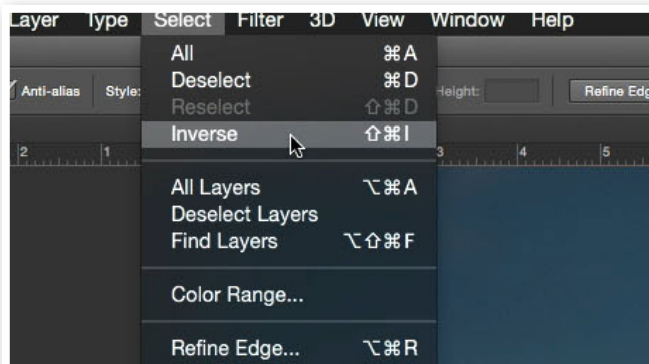
04 In the Layers palette, set the transparency of the blurred layer to around 65 percent. This lets the still-sharp lower layer to show through, mitigating the effects of the Gaussian blur.



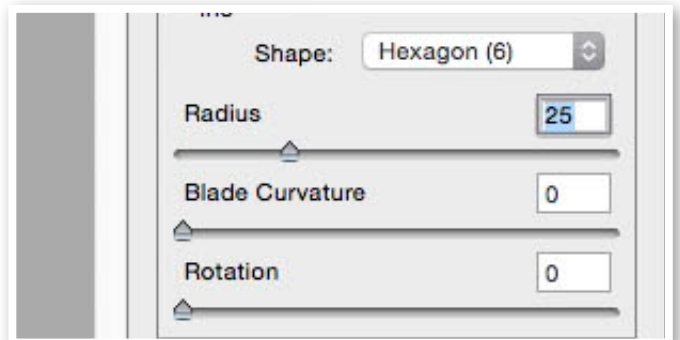
05 We can further enhance the romantic look of the picture by adding an elliptical vignette of further blurring around the subject. This is a technique that portrait photographers have been using almost since the invention of photography. First, select the Elliptical Marquee tool.



06 Drag an elliptical marquee selection around the portrait subject. This may take a few tries to get right, so use Cmd+D to de-select if you get it wrong. When you're happy with it, go to the Select menu and click on Feather. Set a radius of about 15-20 pixels.



07 Next, select Inverse from the Select menu to change the selection so that everything outside the ellipse is selected.



08 Now add a Lens blur filter to the selection, giving it a much bigger radius than before; around 25 pixels should do the job. Now you can crop and flatten your newly romanticised portrait.

What is Raw Mode?

Get the most out of your digital camera with Raw mode

Back in the days when we all used film cameras, one of the joys of photography was developing your own films and making your own prints in a darkroom, something that digital cameras have almost entirely replaced. However if you own a digital SLR, Compact System Camera or advanced compact, you have the option to shoot your photos in something called Raw mode and you'll be glad you did. Raw mode offers several advantages, including better colour rendition, better dynamic range, greater versatility and greater scope for customising exposure, contrast and saturation. Even better, you have to make all those adjustments yourself; in fact it's just like developing films in a darkroom. Suddenly, by using Adobe Camera Raw, photography is fun again!



The immense versatility of Raw mode processing lets you adjust and tweak your photographs. With the extra scope for exposure and colour adjustment, it might actually encourage you to take more and better photos.

Processing Raw Files

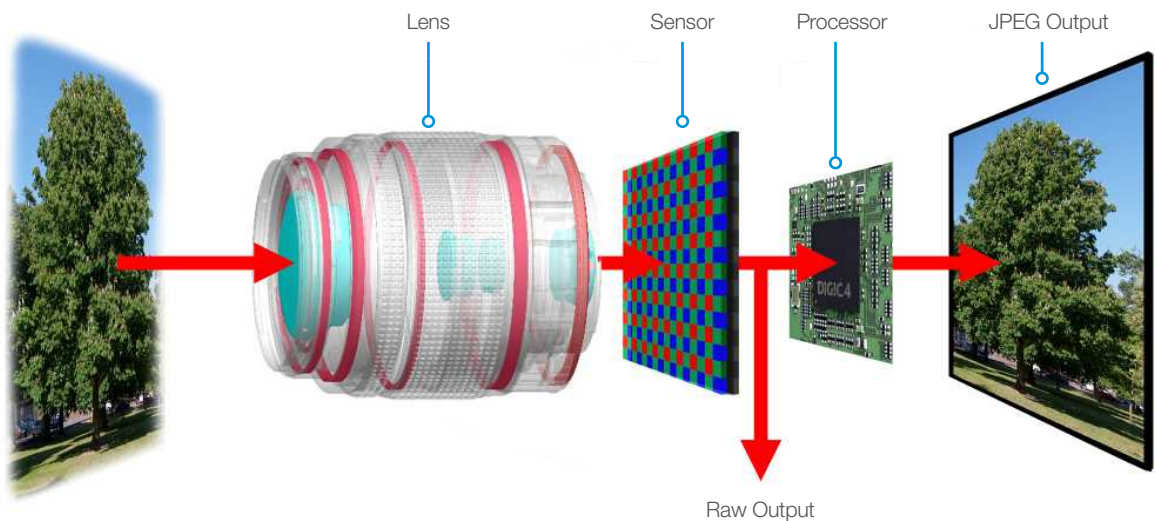
To get the best possible image quality, always shoot in Raw mode

All digital SLRs and Compact System Cameras, and most of the better compact cameras, have a shooting option called Raw mode. You'll usually find it

in the menu as an option under image quality. Raw mode offers greatly improved image quality over the usual JPEG image file format, and is recommended

for all serious photographers. Let's take a closer look at Raw mode, find out how it works and see how it can help you produce better photographs.

What is Raw Mode?



Useful Tip

Modern cameras all come supplied with Raw processing software, although if you have Photoshop, it has Adobe Camera Raw built in as part of the application.

Raw mode is a special image recording option that is available on digital SLRs, Compact System Cameras, and other high-quality digital cameras. If your camera has this option, you have access to much higher image quality than the standard JPEG file format.

First, the name. For some reason Raw is often written as RAW, although nobody seems to know why. It isn't an acronym, so it doesn't need to be written in capitals like that. We'll use the

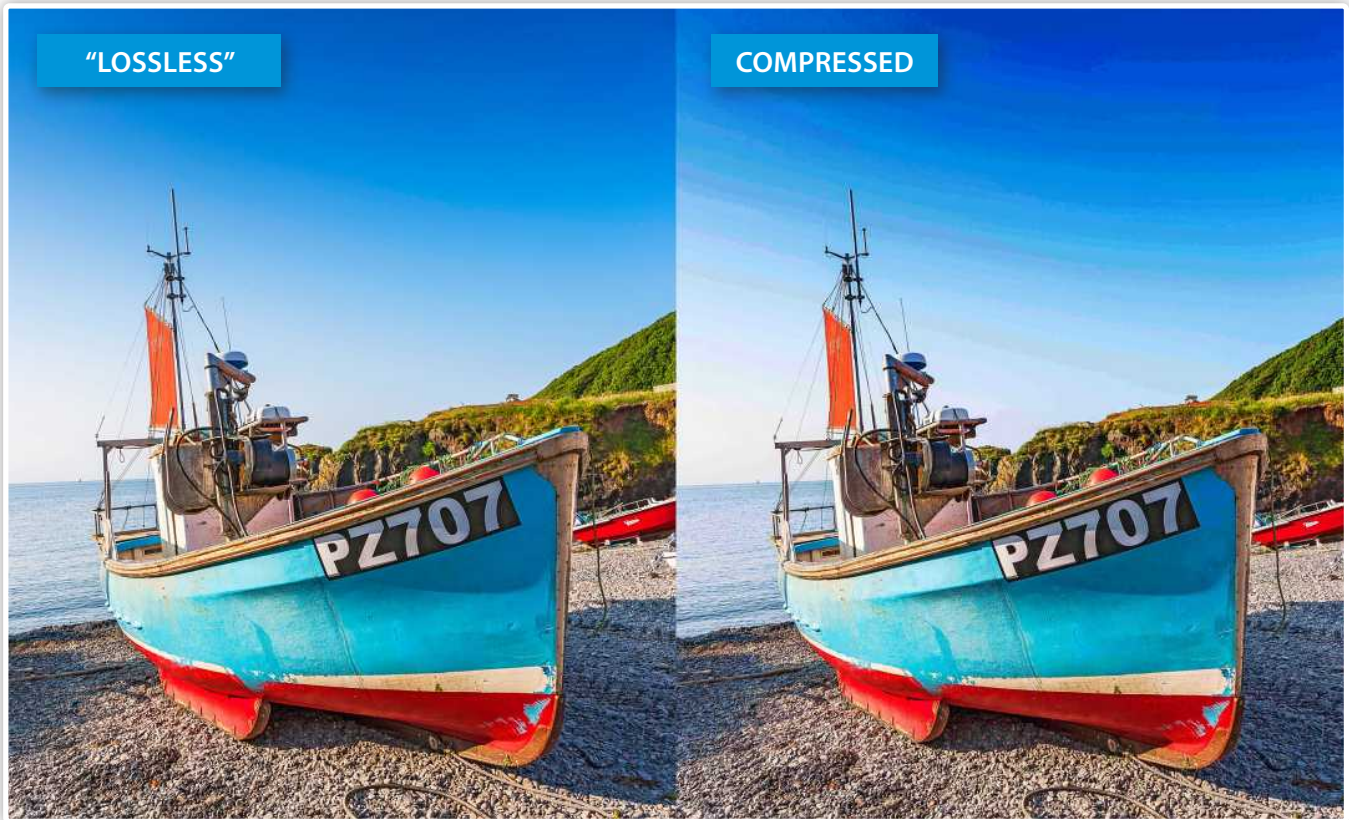
more sensible "Raw" for this article.

Essentially, Raw mode is just what it sounds like. It's the raw data pretty much straight from the camera's sensor. In a digital camera the photographic image is, as I'm sure you're aware, captured by an electronic image sensor. This sensor has millions of tiny photocells that produce a charge when they are exposed to light; the brighter the light, the higher the charge. Digital camera sensors don't record the colour of the light hitting them, just the brightness, so a special mosaic of

coloured filters is placed in front of the sensor, called a Bayer filter.

Naturally, the image generated by the sensor and filter wouldn't make much sense to the unaided eye, so the signal from the sensor feeds into the camera's image processor, a combination of computer electronics and software which turns the brightness data from the sensor, adjusted for the colours in the Bayer filter, into a full colour digital image that you can view and print.

Part of that process includes



reducing the bit-depth of the basic image data (the amount of 1s and 0s used by a computer to describe each pixel), usually from 36-bit (12 bits per channel) or even 48-bit (16 bits per channel) to 24-bit (8 bits per channel), which makes a smaller and more easily processed file, but loses some colour depth because of the smaller palette that can be represented by that many bits. Other adjustments to the colour balance, such as unusual white balance settings, can also reduce image quality, as will heavy noise reduction.

In order to save space on the memory card, produce faster transfers and make it easier to display and print the photograph on a computer, the image is usually converted to a compressed JPEG file. Unfortunately JPEG compression also reduces the image quality, and can introduce artefacts into some areas of the image.

The main advantage of Raw shooting, apart from the improvement in overall image quality, is that it bypasses the in-camera image processing, such as white balance, saturation, sharpness etc. This sounds illogical, but it's not really. The processing that takes place in the camera is pre-set before the shot is taken, and irreversible once the image has been converted to a JPEG file. By shooting in Raw mode, you

can make the processing adjustments after the shot has been taken, and if you need to change them you can do so as long as you have the original Raw file.

The downside to Raw file recording is of course that the saved files are much larger, so they take a lot longer to save to the memory card, and you can fit fewer of them on there. For a typical 16MP DSLR, a high quality JPEG file will be around 8MB, while a Raw file

will be around 25MB, over three times the size.

Many of the more recent DSLRs have the ability to record Raw and JPEG image files simultaneously. This has the advantage of the convenience of JPEG with the versatility and quality of Raw, but takes up even more space on your memory card. Fortunately the price of very large memory cards is falling almost daily, so this needn't be much of a problem.



Adobe Camera Raw Interface

Adobe Camera Raw isn't as difficult as it looks

Photoshop comes with Adobe Camera Raw, widely regarded as the best Raw file processing software currently available. It offers a wide range of processing options that enable you to get the best out of your photographs, including exposure adjustment, sharpening, noise reduction, colour correction and automatic correction for lens distortion. It is regularly updated to maintain compatibility with all the latest cameras and lenses.

Camera Raw is a very complex piece of software, but thanks to a well designed interface that breaks down the processing workflow into easily managed sections, it's not all that difficult to use. Like the rest of Photoshop, it's easy to get started, but mastering the subtleties of its more advanced options takes time and practice. Let's take a look at the interface and see what it has to offer.

When you open a file using Adobe Camera Raw, you'll see the following interface. Here are the main features.

Toolbar

This holds all the main selectable tools, most of which are similar to tools in the main Photoshop interface, including Zoom, Hand, Crop, Straighten, Spot Removal, Red Eye Removal, and a newly-added feature that can add a graduated filter to your picture.

Control Palette

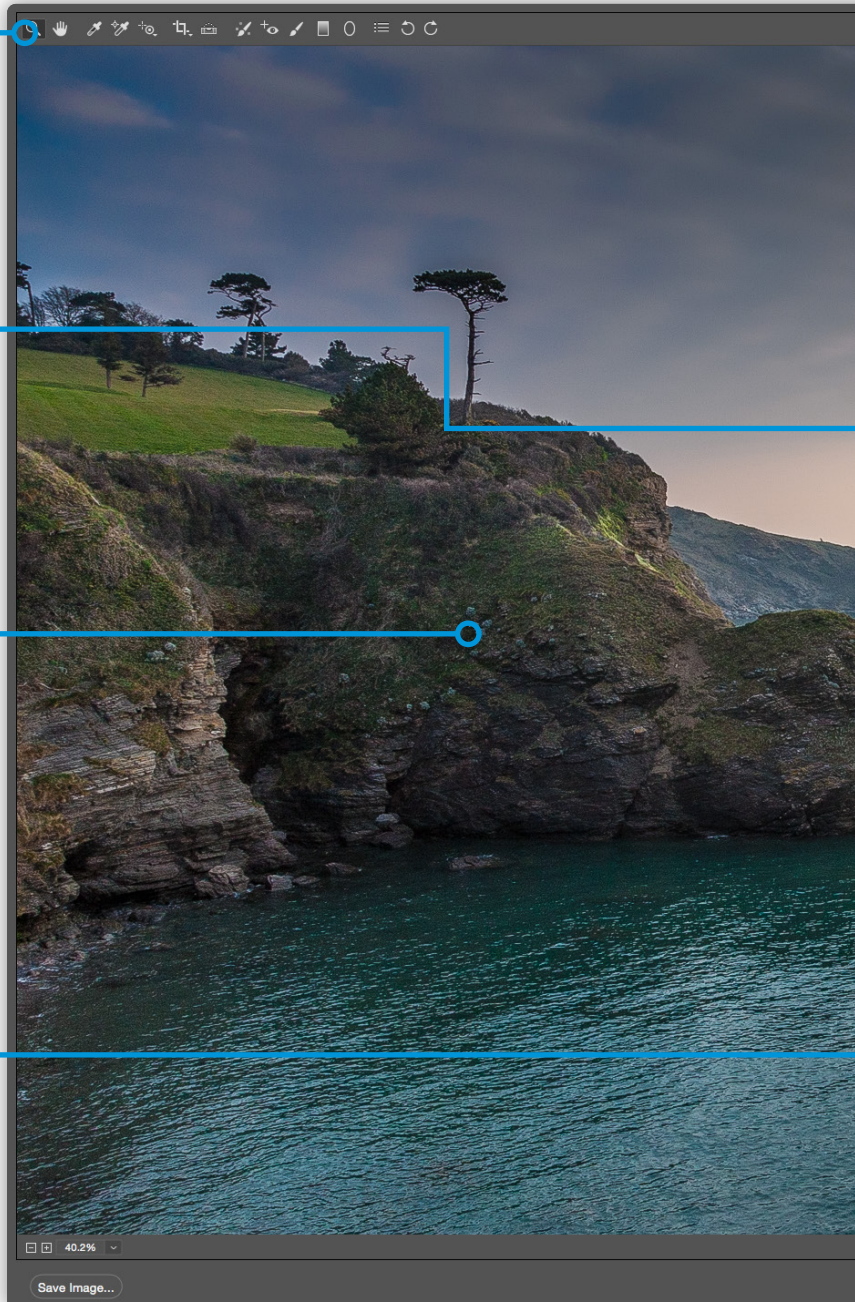
This is the main dialog palette, which contains the controls for each tabbed section. Most of the controls are sliders, and you can see the results of each adjustment both in real-time on the histogram and in the main image window.

Image Window

This is the main window displaying the image you're currently working on. All changes that you make during Raw editing will be visible here. You can zoom into the image using the magnification controls at the bottom left, or use the usual CTRL + and CTRL - shortcuts. You can see what effect your editing has had by checking and unchecking the preview option at the top right.

Output Options

At the bottom of the screen you'll find the controls for when you've finished your editing. If you click on the blue link you'll see a range of output options, since Adobe Camera Raw can process your pictures in a range of sizes. You can also save your edits back into the Raw file to keep them for later.



Control Tabs

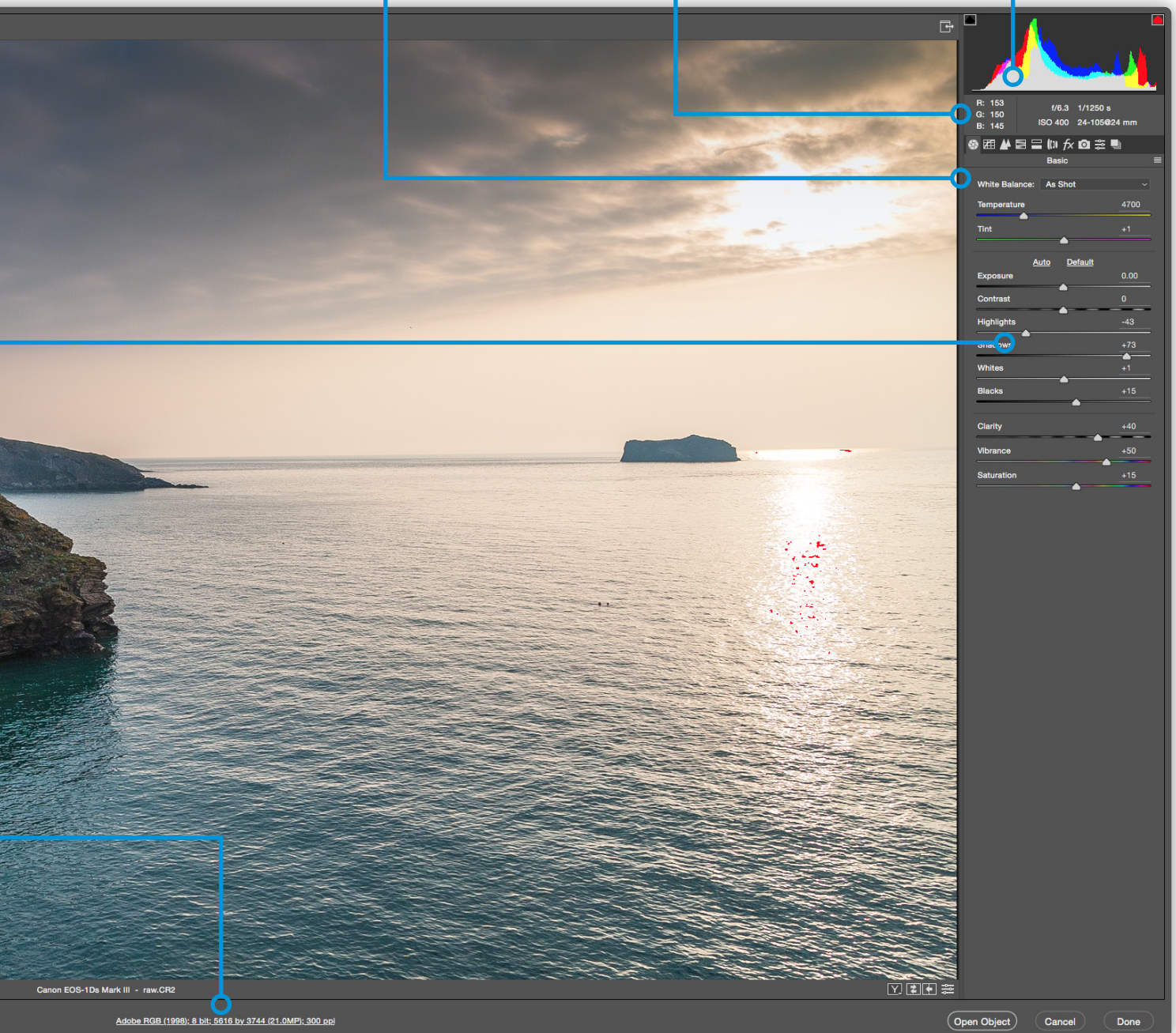
Camera Raw breaks the workflow down into discrete sections, each with its own tabbed palette, and you can switch between them by clicking here. The tabs are, from left to right: Basic, Tone Curve, Detail, HSL/Greyscale, Split Toning, Lens Correction, Effects, Camera Calibration, Presets and Snapshots.

Information Palette

The left side of this panel shows the RGB colour values at the cursor position. The larger right side of the area displays the exposure information for the image, including the aperture, shutter speed, ISO setting and focal length of the lens.

Histogram

The Histogram shows you the number of pixels of each tone in your image in real-time, and changes as you make exposure and colour balance adjustments. The graph represents the colour in digital form, with levels from 0 to 255, with the darkest on the left and the brightest on the right. The white area represents the combined colours, but you can also look at each colour channel individually.



Adobe Camera Raw Workflow

Getting the most out of your Raw files

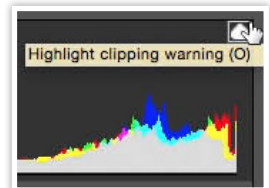
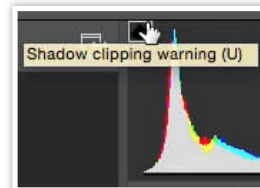
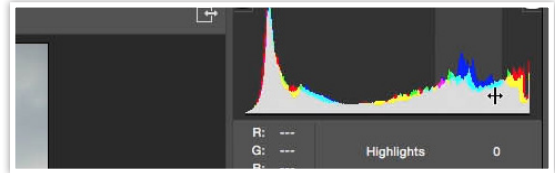
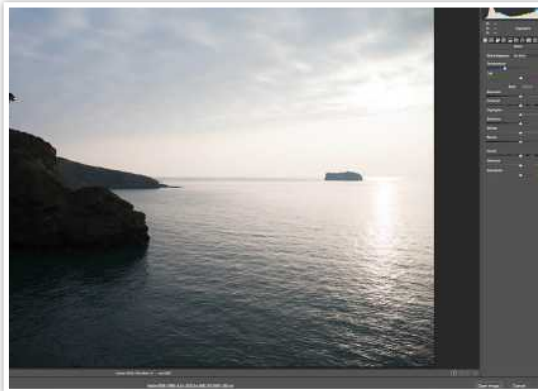
Useful Tip

Any adjustments you make to your image do not directly affect the Raw file. They are added to an XMP file that is used to keep a record of all your image modifications.

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If you ask any five professional photographers about the process they use to create their pictures, you'll get ten different answers. The amount of processing and adjustment used will vary, depending on the job at hand and the type of final image required, as well as the type of camera used to take the photo and the use to

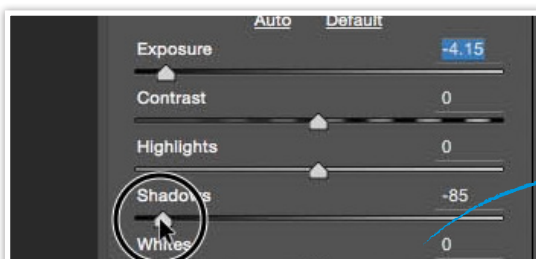
which the photo will be put. However there are certain operations that will be common to most photos that you'll want to process, so we'll take a look at a common general purpose workflow that will be suitable for most types of photo. We'll be using a coastal photo of Devon shot with a Canon 1DSMk3.



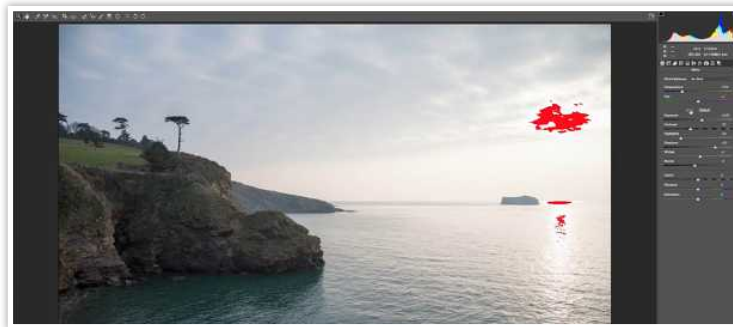
01 If you look at the histogram at the top right of the screen you'll notice that the line at the right (brightest) end of the graph is relatively flat compared to the peaks on the left. Ideally the graph should fill the area between the lightest and darkest ends of the range, so we need to slightly boost the lighter end of the

graph without causing over-exposure. To ensure that we don't lose too much detail to highlight clipping, click on the arrow in the top right corner of the histogram window. This turns on the highlight clipping warning. Any over-exposed areas will turn bright red in the image window. Clicking on the left button turns on the shadow clipping warning.

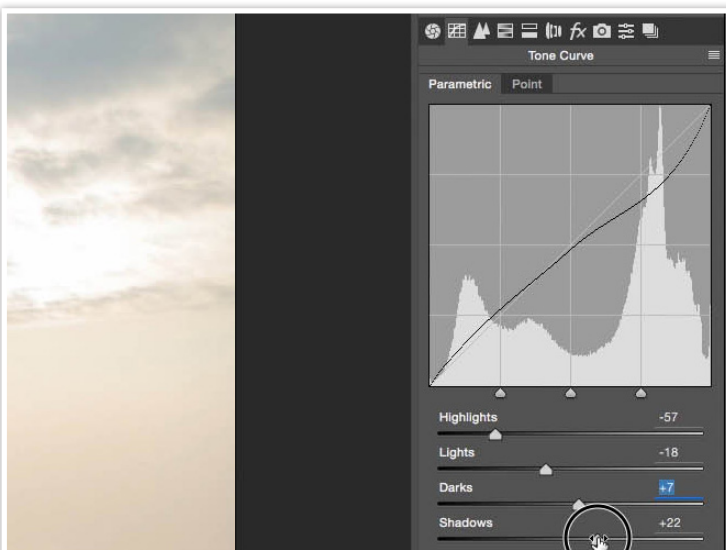
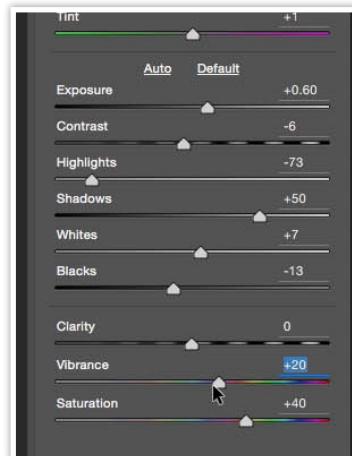
02 While holding down the Alt key (Option on Mac), move the exposure slider to the right. With the key held down, all you'll see will be the over-exposed areas. You can do this with any of the first six sliders, and it's a good way to make adjustments without going too far.



03 We can spend a while carefully adjusting the various sliders by hand to try and equalise the histogram, but the quickest way to get close to the optimum result is to let Camera Raw do the hard work. If you click on Auto the software will automatically adjust the image to produce a good approximation to a perfect exposure. It's probably not going to be ideal, but it'll give us a good starting point. You'll notice that the sun on the horizon and the clouds around it are over-exposed, but that's OK. We're looking for a good spread of tones, and that includes white.



04 The Auto adjustment has made a good job of this particular picture, but for landscape shots a little bit of extra saturation usually looks good, so we'll boost the vibrance by about +20 and the saturation slider by +40 to get the colours of the grass, sea and sky to really pop out.



05 Adobe Camera Raw also provides a second method of adjusting contrast, by altering the tone curve. Although it's no more accurate than using the sliders many people will prefer it because it's nice and simple and gives a good visual representation of what we're doing. It's also a lot harder to burn out the highlights using curves. By boosting the highlights a lot, and then boosting the other sliders in decreasing amounts we can quickly equalise the histogram without losing too much quality.

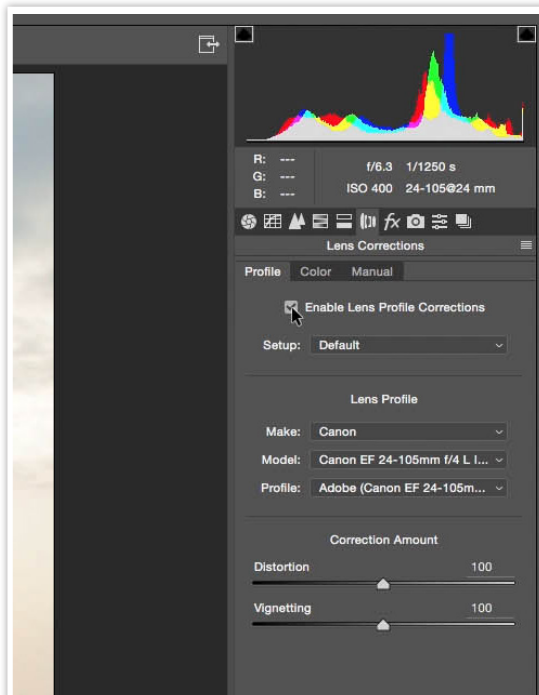
Useful Tip

To preserve as much detail as possible, try saving your photos as TIFF files instead of JPEG, since it uses lossless compression.

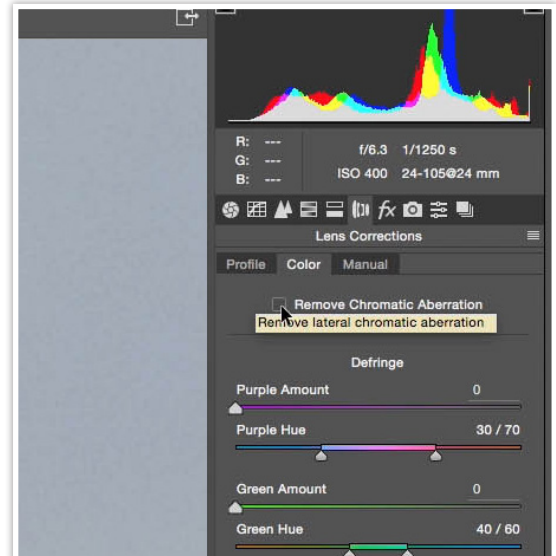
Useful Tip

If you're using an older lens that isn't in Camera Raw's database, you can attempt to use the manual settings to correct it.

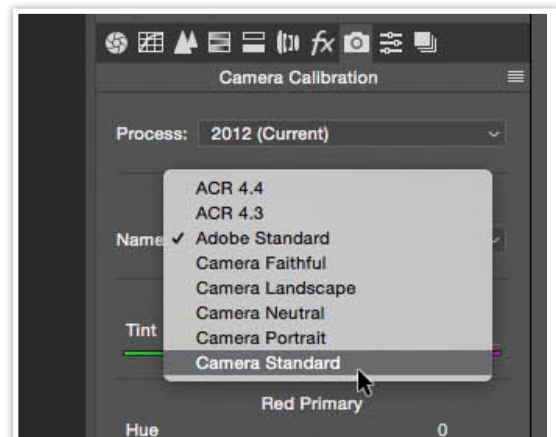
06 One of the best things about Adobe Camera Raw is its lens correction feature. The Canon EF 24-105mm f/4 L series lens used to take this picture is a great bit of glass, but it's not perfect. Although it's hard to see at a glance, this wide-angle shot does suffer from some pincushion distortion and slight chromatic aberration. Fortunately Camera Raw comes pre-loaded with correction profiles for a huge list of popular lenses, including this one. All you need to do to automatically correct the optical distortion caused by the lens is to check the box Enable Lens Profile Corrections. You'll see the change happen to your image immediately.



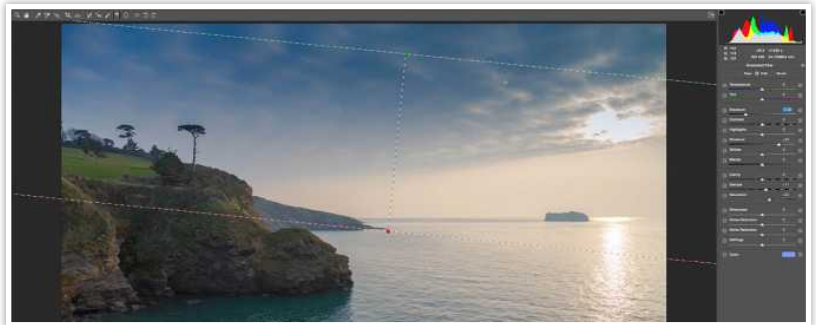
07 The chromatic aberration is just as easy to fix. Click on the Color tab in the Lens Correction palette and simply check the box Remove Chromatic Aberration. You'll need to zoom in a lot near the edge of the frame to see the difference, but you'll notice the effects at once.



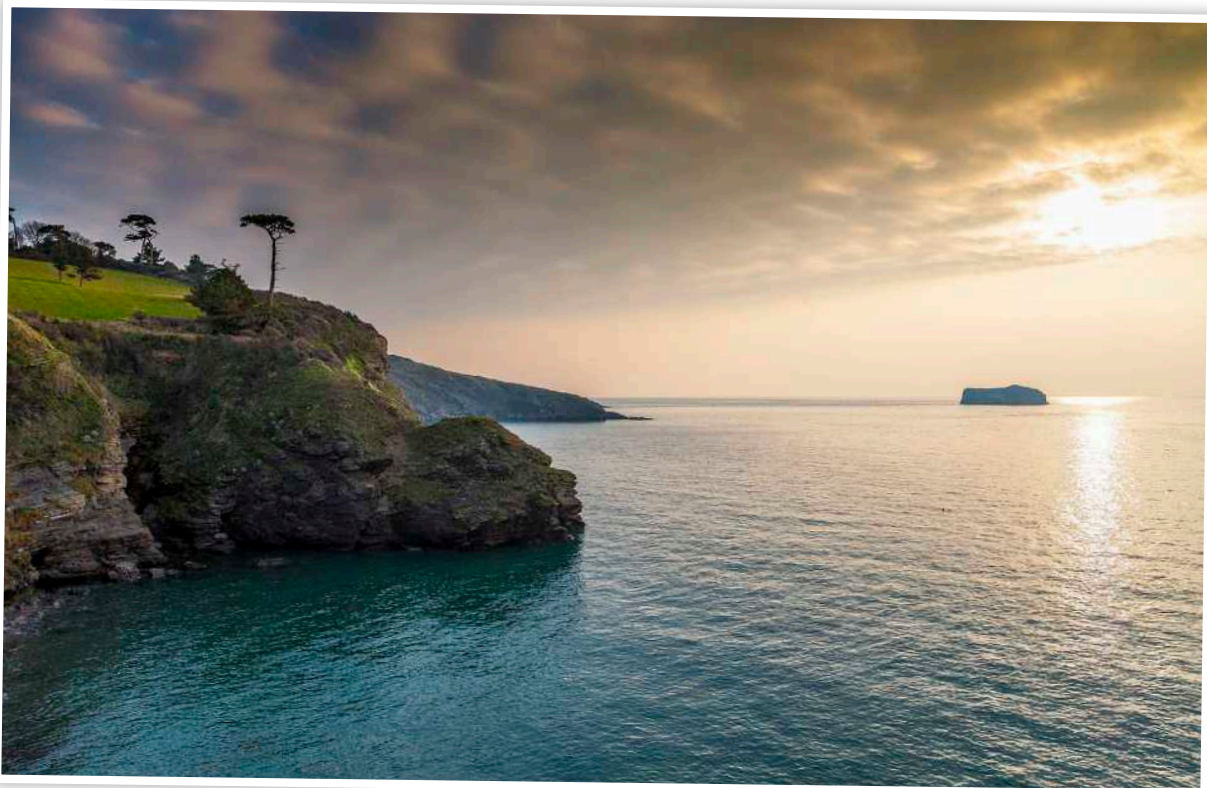
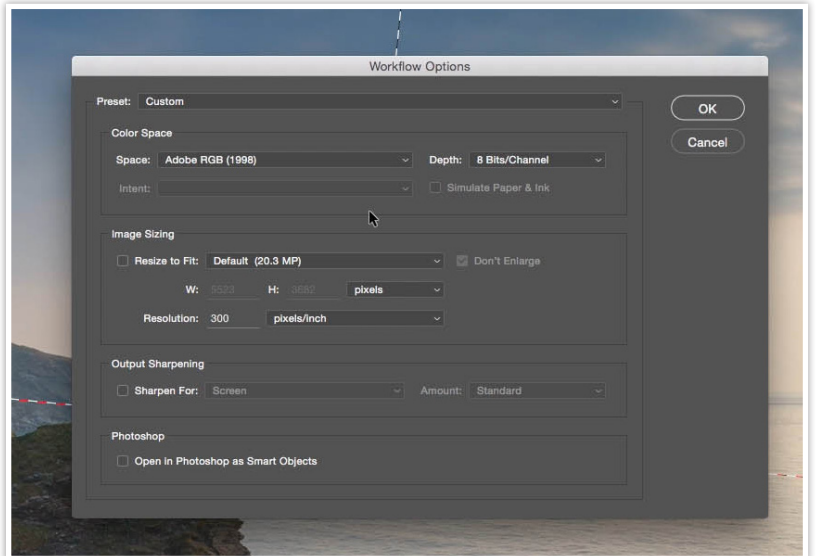
08 The next step is largely a matter of personal taste, but you can also choose to use a camera profile for the colour calibration too. In the Camera Calibration tab, click on the Camera Profile button, and from the drop-down menu select Camera Standard. This sets the colour rendering profile to the embedded profile recorded by the camera. The 1DSMk3 does produce some really great colours, so for this shot we'll use the camera profile.



09 For this particular image, the sky is a bit lighter than it needs to be, but we can easily darken it down a bit by adding a high quality digital graduated filter in Camera Raw. Click on the Graduated Filter button at the top of the screen, and you'll see the filter control palette appear. Set the exposure slider to about -1.5 or -2, then in the image window drag down from the top of the picture to just below the horizon line to apply the filter. If you hold down the shift key while dragging it will stay parallel with the top of the frame.



10 Finally we have the output options. Camera Raw gives you the option to output the processed image in a number of different ways, but which one you use will depend on what you want to do with the finished image. For most purposes the default settings will be ideal, but you may need to select a different colour space, and for maximum colour fidelity you can output in 16-bit format. You can also choose an image size different from the native resolution of your camera, but be aware that choosing a larger size doesn't magically create new pixels; the image will be enlarged using Photoshop's bicubic resampling algorithm. If you're planning to print the picture you might also want to look at the sharpening options. When you're happy with your choice, click OK, and then Open Image. The picture will now open in Photoshop, from where you can either carry out more editing, or save the picture in JPEG or TIFF format.



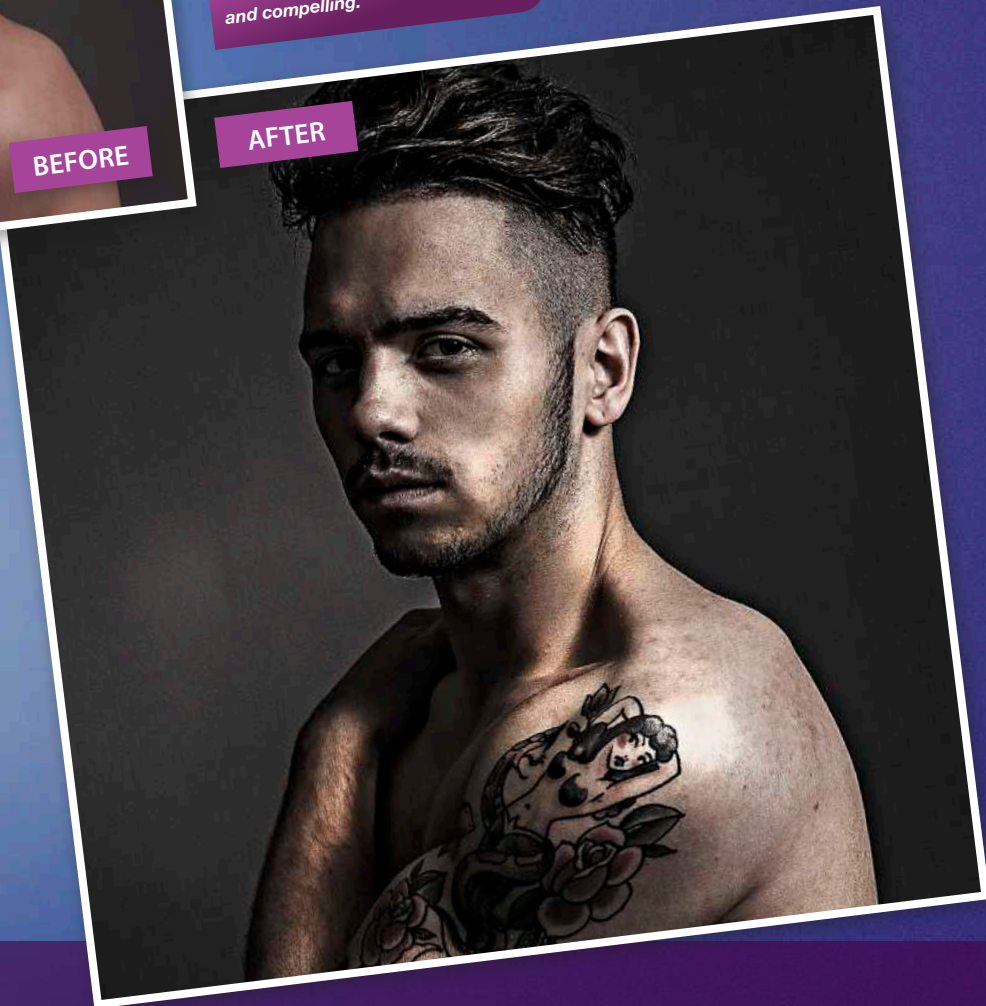
54



BEFORE

Learn about how to apply contrast and saturation to your portrait photos and enrich them with levels of detail to make them moody, gritty and compelling.

94 The Dragan Effect



AFTER

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AFTER

BEFORE

▼
This tutorial
content is
available for
download

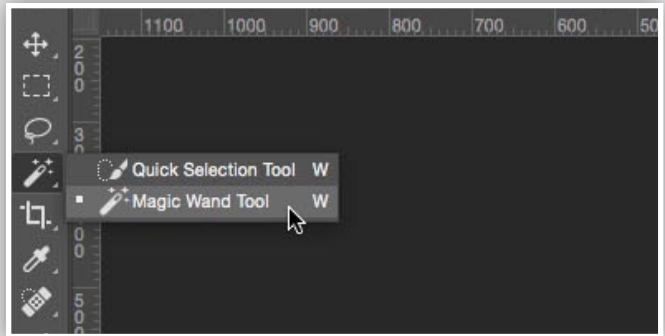
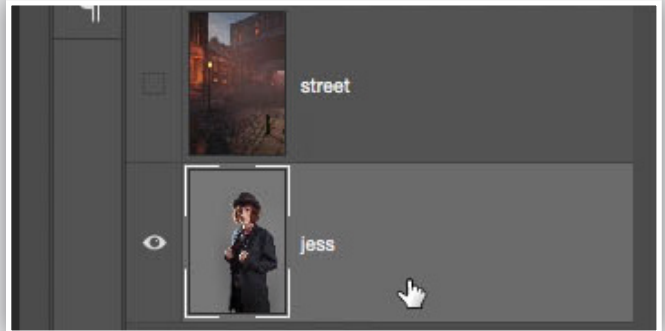
Image Compositing

How to blend two or more images together and create a seamless result

Compositing is the name given to the process where you combine two or more visual elements in order to make them look like they are all part of the same scene. In our tutorial, we will cover the grey-screen composite technique. It is a method preferred by many visual professionals and

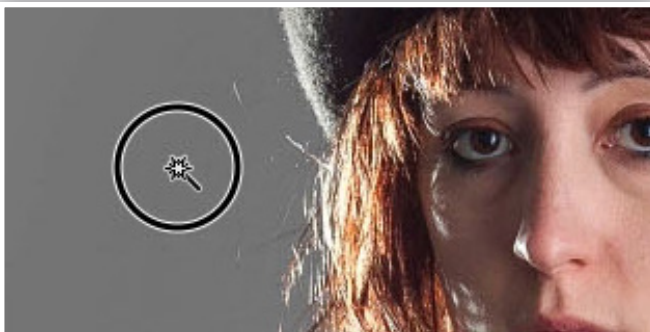
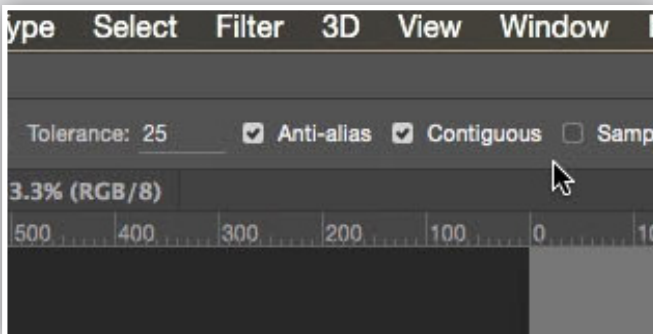
is quite easy to master. A subject photographed next to a flat, evenly lit surface is ideal to create a nice clean edge between your subject and their background which will aid you when you come to mask them out. This composite consists of 2 images. A background image of old London

and our foreground character Jess who modelled this street urchin look for us. We're going for a moody Artful Dodger kind of feel. The images are 2000 pixels wide x 3000 pixels high. Our settings are going to be based on using an image at that size.

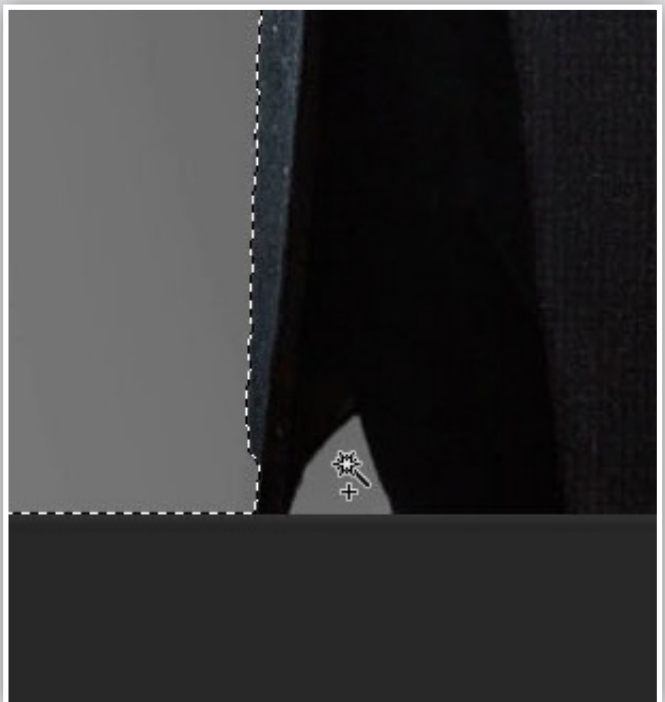


01 The starting point for our composite is to load up both images into layers in a new Photoshop document. Make the bottom layer our subject and name it 'jess'. The layer above will be our background; name that 'street'.

02 For the moment, click on the eye icon on the 'street' layer to make it invisible so we can work on Jess in the layer below. Make sure the 'jess' layer is active. Go to the toolbar and select the Magic Wand Tool (W).



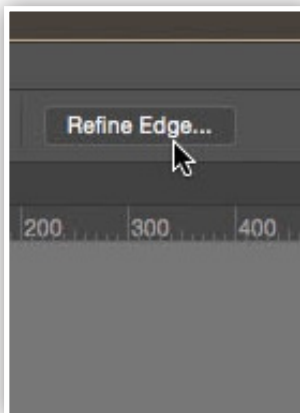
03 In the context menu above, make your Tolerance setting 25 and make sure the Anti -alias and Contiguous boxes are ticked. To select all the grey background, click your Magic Wand Tool anywhere on the grey background.



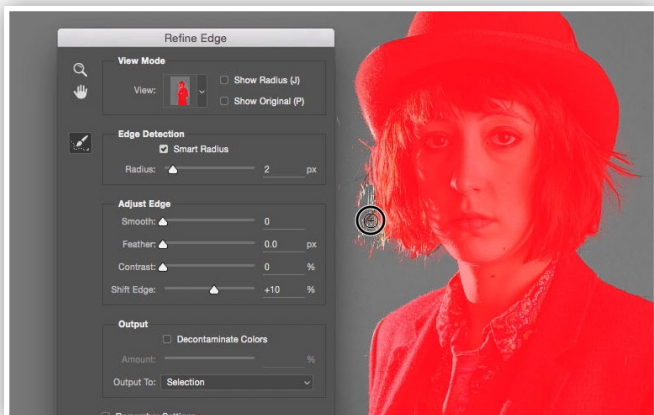
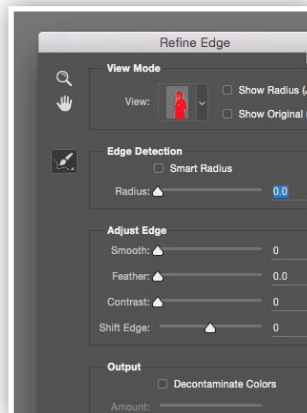
04 If you hold Shift, a small + symbol will appear under your Magic Wand cursor and you can add more to the selection. It doesn't have to be super-accurate. We just need the basic outline of the character.



05 If you find you've gone over an area, you can press Alt on your keyboard, the + symbol will change to a - symbol and you can subtract parts of the selection by clicking on the area in question.



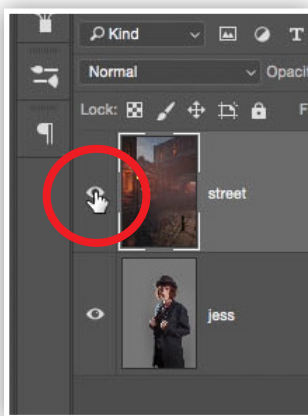
06 When you have the selection ready, click on the Refine Edge button in the top menu panel. This will open the Refine Edge panel where you can improve the selection quality.



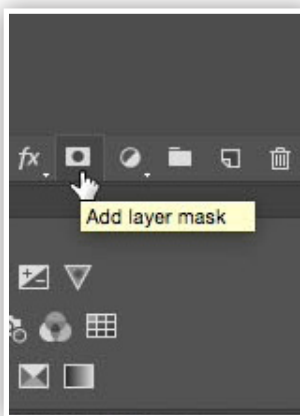
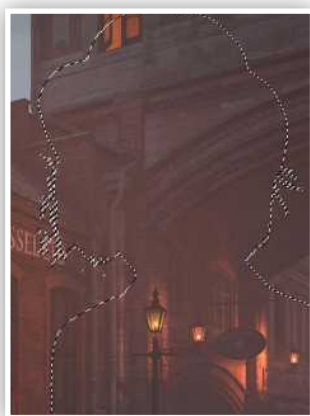
07 Brush around the ill-defined areas such as hair for a more refined edge. A Smart Radius of 2 pixels and a Shift Edge setting of 10% will stop the selection straying too far outside the outline of our character.



08 When you are happy with the adjustments you've made, click OK to continue. You will notice that your 'marching ants' return. This now denotes the newly refined selection. This will be the basis of our masking technique.

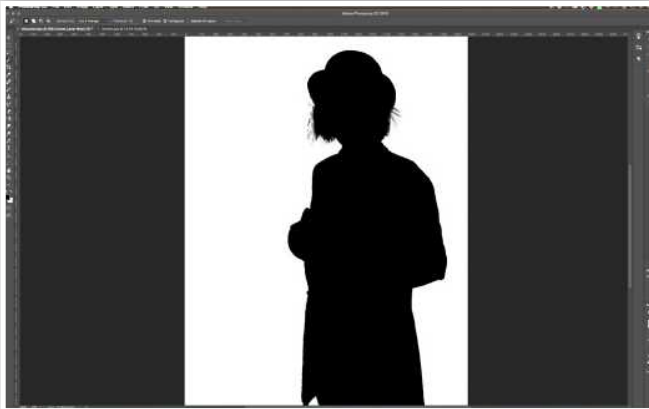


09 With your selection still active, click on your 'street' layer so it becomes active and click on its visibility icon to make it visible again. You'll see 'marching ants' in the shape of Jess, overlaid on the street scene.

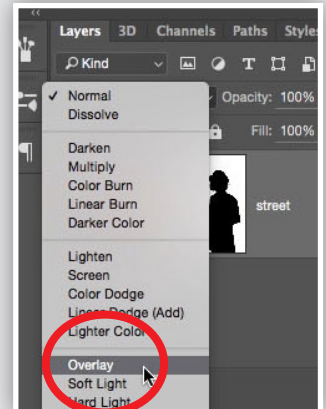
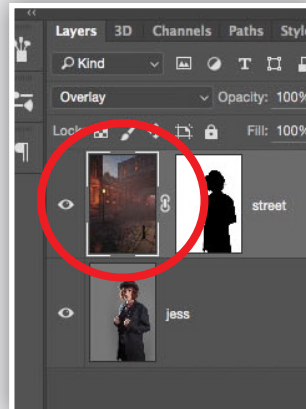


10 Click on the Add Layer Mask icon. A mask will be added to the 'street' layer. The black area cuts a hole in the 'street' layer so the image of Jess shows through.





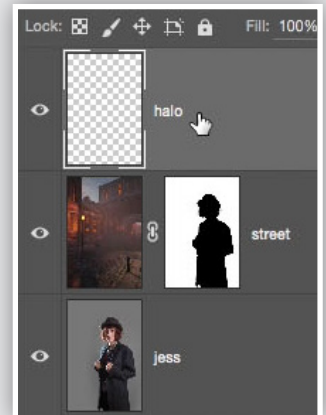
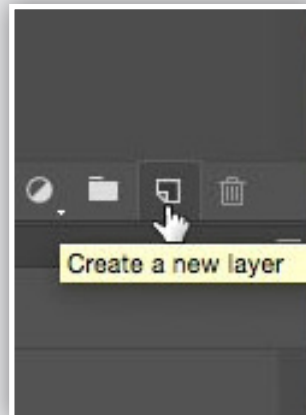
11 If you click on the mask's thumbnail to activate it and then Alt + left-click, you can view the mask on its own. The mask of Jess should be black, and the background should be white. If not, press Cmd + I to invert the colours.



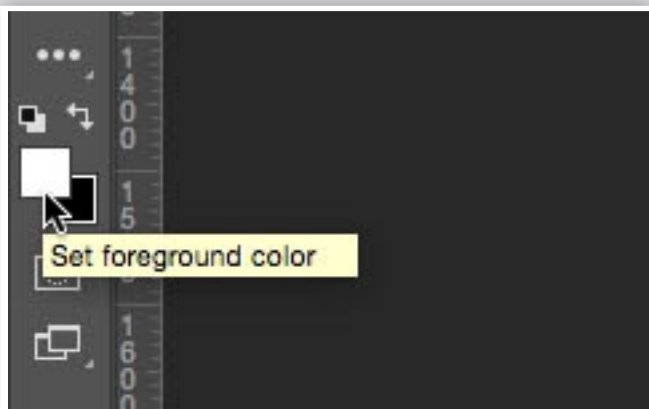
12 Press Alt + left-click again to return to your standard view. Click back on the 'street' thumbnail to activate it and then click on the Blend Mode button just above and set the Blend Mode to Overlay.



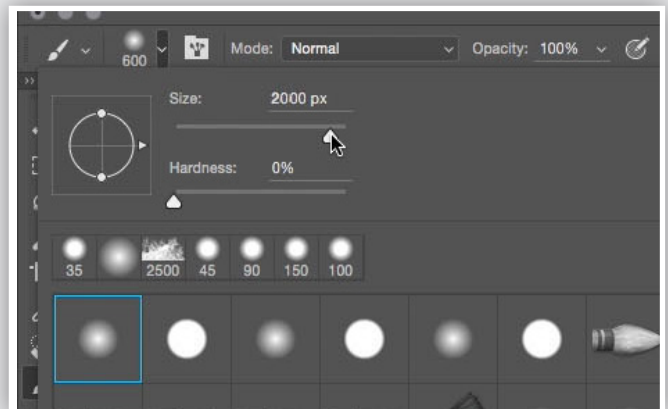
13 This method blends the two layers together in a much more subtle way than trying to cut and paste Jess into the street scene. With this technique, small details like fine hair are maintained.



14 Create a new layer and call this one 'halo'. We are going to add an area of brightness around our character to help her stand out from the background. Make sure the 'halo' layer is active.



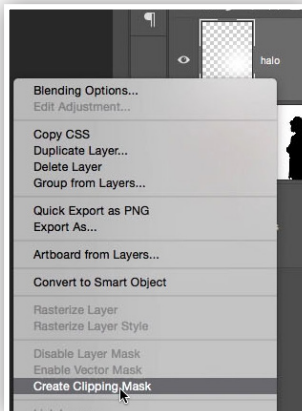
15 Pressing D on your keyboard will set foreground to black and background to white. Press X and you can toggle the default. Press X until the foreground shows white and background shows black.



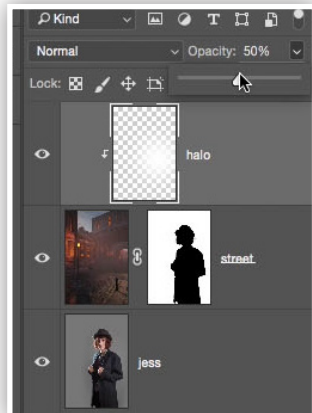
16 Press B to activate your Brush Tool and from the context menu at the top, select a large, soft brush. Our image size requires a brush size of about 2000px. Paint a white halo over our character on the 'halo' layer.



17 The first thing you will notice is that we have painted white over Jess and her background. We need our character to appear in front of the white halo, but we can remedy that next.



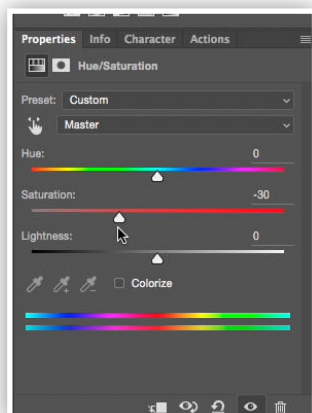
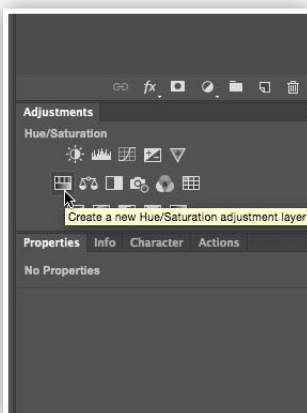
18 With the 'halo' layer active, right-click on its thumbnail and select Create Clipping Mask from the menu. The white halo will appear as if it is now behind our character, even though it is above her layer in our stack.



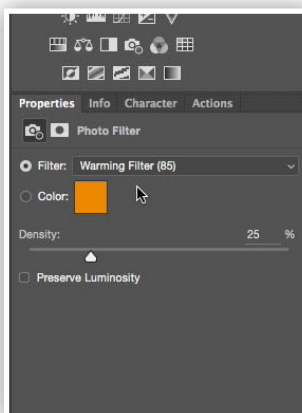
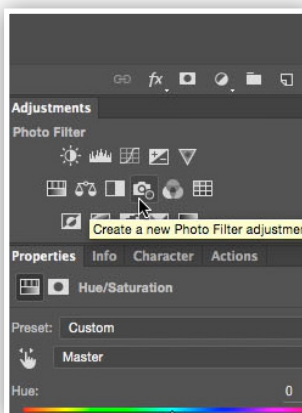
19 The 'halo' layer has used the mask below it to create a hole that lets Jess show through not only the 'street' layer, but also the 'halo' layer above. Decrease its opacity by moving the Opacity slider to about 40-50%.



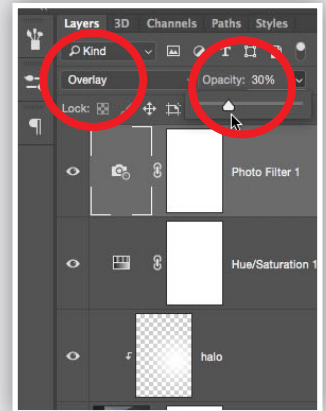
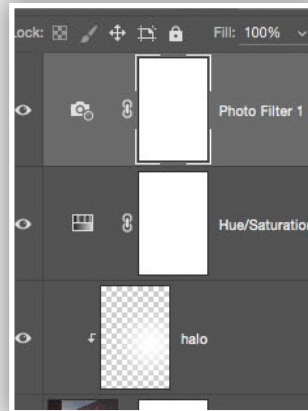
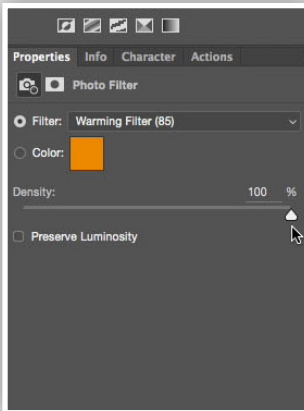
20 We now have the basis of our image. We have our background and our character with a little halo around her to help separate her from the background. Now we can use a couple of effects to add drama.



21 An easy way to get your elements to gel is by clicking on your Adjustments button and adding a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Make sure it is at the top of your layer stack and set the Saturation to about -30% to reduce the vibrance.

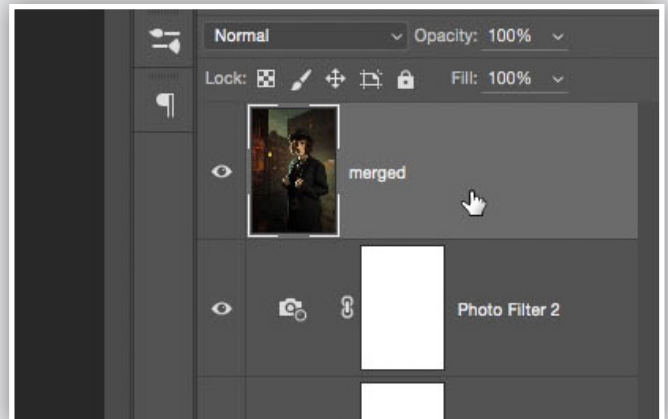
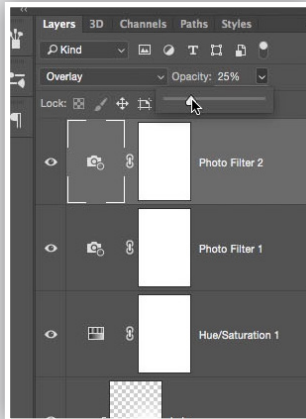
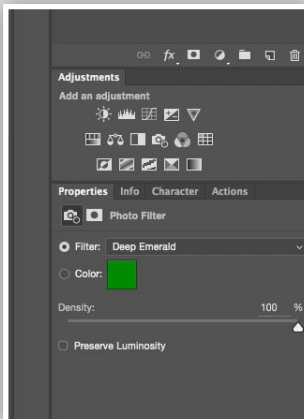


22 Next, go back to your Adjustments panel and click on Photo Filter which will add a Photo Filter adjustment above the Hue/Saturation 1 layer. By default it is set to add a Warming Filter (85) value to the image. This is fine.



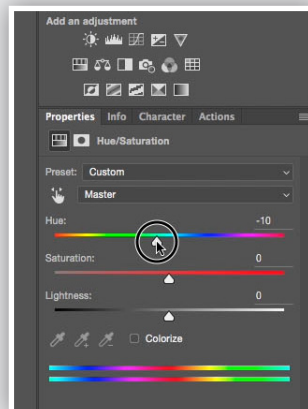
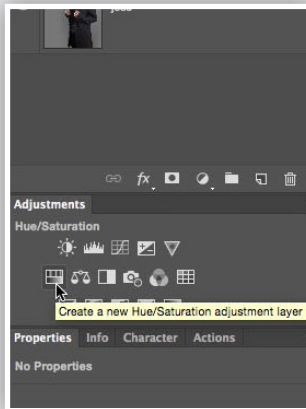
23 You just need to change the Density setting to 100% and make sure Preserve Luminosity is unchecked. The image will take on a heavy orange colour cast, but we will address that next.

24 With Photo Filter 1 layer active, click on the Blend Mode button and choose Overlay from the dropdown menu. Set the layer opacity to about 20-30%. We've added a colour cast and slightly boosted the contrast, but we can take it further.



25 Add another Photo Filter and make the Filter colour Deep Emerald. Make the Density 100% and ensure that Preserve Luminosity is unchecked. Set this layer to Overlay and make its layer Opacity about 20-30%.

26 When you are happy with the balance of the two filters, press Shift + Alt + Cmd + E to create a new layer that is a merged version of all the layers below. Name this layer 'merged'.

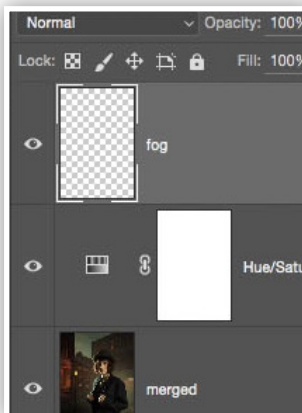


27 Looking at the image at this point, we decided it's a little too yellow. We can alter the hue by clicking on the Adjustments button and adding a new Hue/Saturation layer.

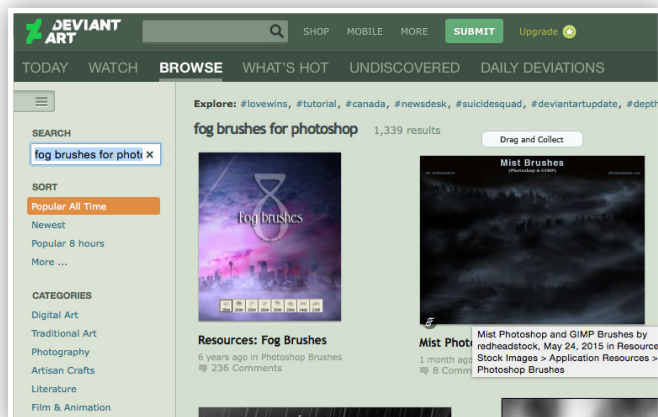
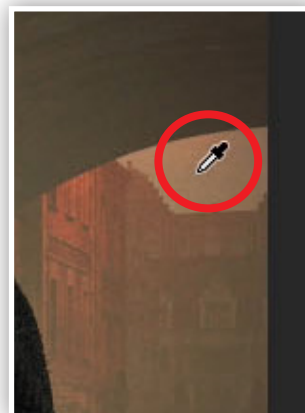
28 Move the Hue slider to the left and you will see the colours alter. We just want to push the colours from yellow/green to red/orange, making the scene a little warmer. A Hue value of -10% should be ample.



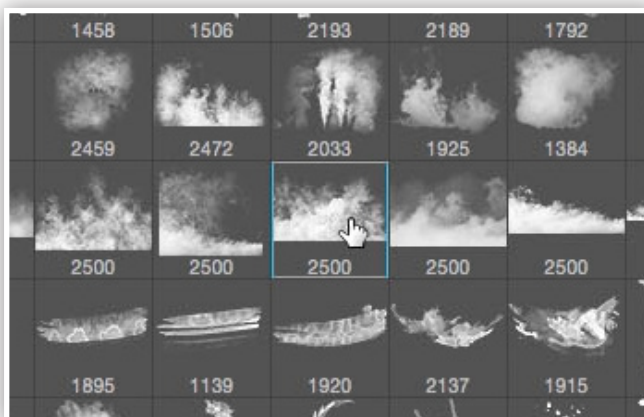
29 Now let's create a little foreground fog to add a little more drama to the proceedings. We just need to make sure it sits well with the colour scheme we have created for this image.



30 Shift + Cmd + N creates a new layer. Name it 'fog'. Press I to activate your Eyedropper Tool and use it to sample the patch of sky through the arches and make it your foreground colour. Press B to activate your Brush Tool.



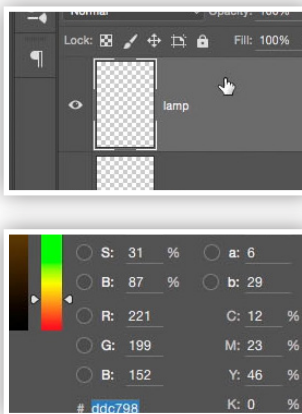
31 You could manually paint daubs of your sample foreground colour to try and emulate mist. The easiest and most effective way to create mist, fog or smoke, is to visit DeviantArt.com and search for 'fog brushes for photoshop'.



32 There are many clever people who have created wonderful brushes that you can download and use for free. Select a preset brush from your context menu and set its size to be large enough to span the width of the foreground.

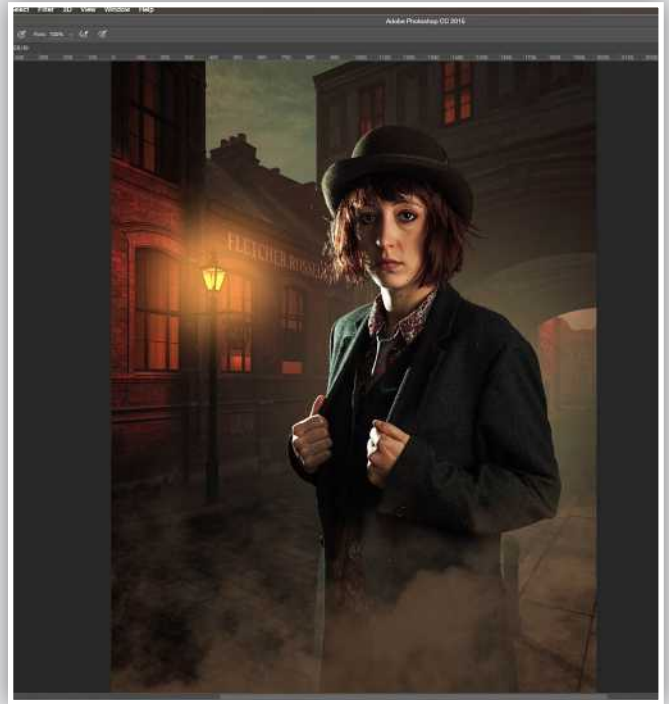
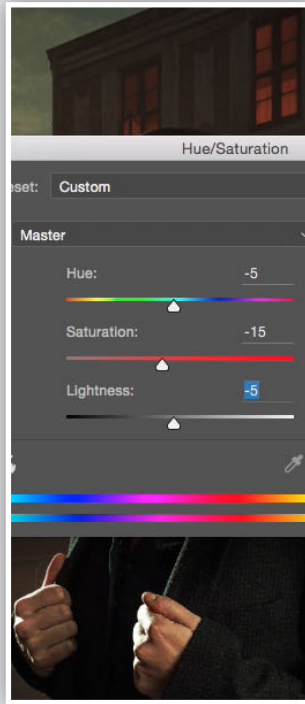
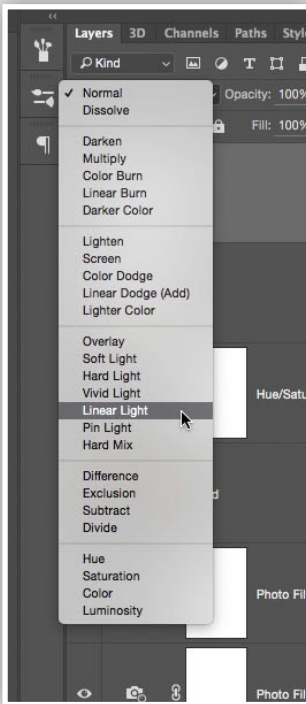


33 Our example requires the brush be about 2500px wide. Use your fog brush to stamp the sampled colour into the foreground, and we have our mist layer. Set the 'fog' layer opacity to about 40-50%.



34 We can also add a light source. Press Shift + Cmd + N to create another new layer and name it 'lamp'. Select a large round, soft brush and make the size about 600px and paint a bright yellow/orange colour over the lamp to the left of the scene.





35 We can simulate a glowing lamp bulb by setting the Blend Mode to Linear Light and changing its Hue/Saturation values. Our example 'lamp' layer has values of Hue -5, Saturation -15 and Lightness -5 to create a yellow/orange glowing lamp bulb.

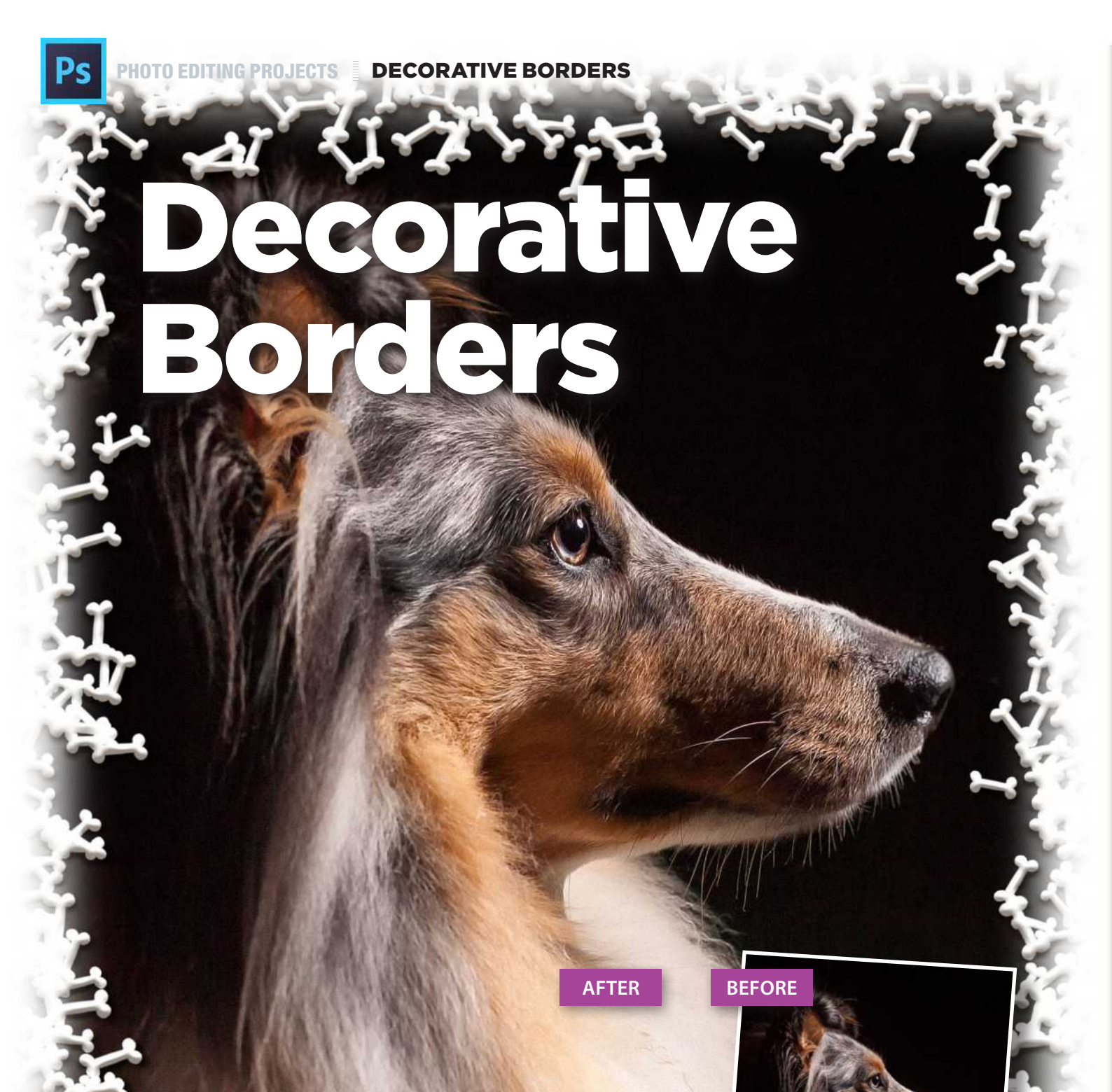
36 That concludes this tutorial. We've created a composite image with added drama that could possibly be a poster for a Sherlock Holmes-style movie set in old London Town.



Creative compositing

Grey screen compositing, the choice of graphic professionals.

Decorative Borders



AFTER

BEFORE

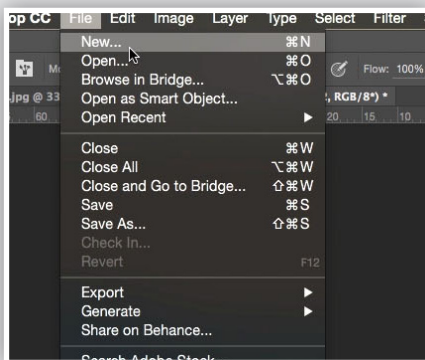


Add a little sparkle to your cherished photos

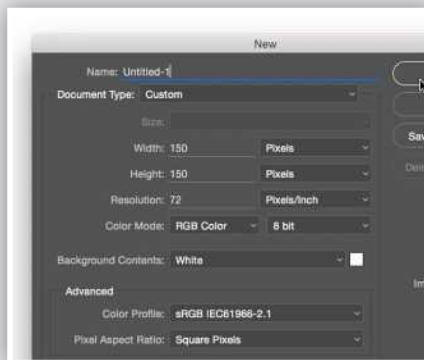
Whether you're making your own Christmas cards using family photos, or you just want to immortalise a beloved pet, adding a fun decorative border to an image lets it stand out from the crowd. This simple tutorial shows you how to

create a custom brush that you can use to adorn your favourite photos and create an arty border that sets off your photo beautifully. We will use this image of a young Sheltie called Willow, and take that idea and add a border that suits the shot.

▼
This tutorial content is available for download



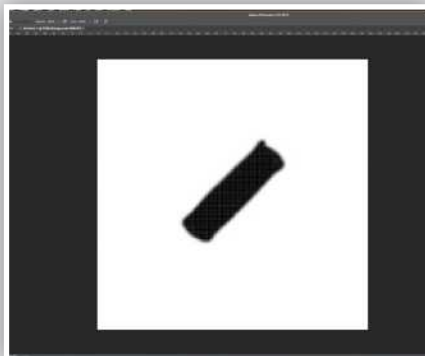
01 We need to start by defining a custom brush rest that we can use on the photograph. Go to File > New (Cmd + N) to create a new document.



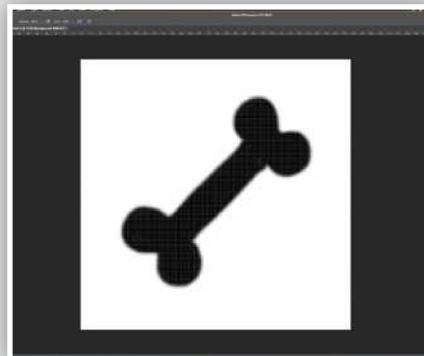
02 Make the new document 150 pixels wide by 150 pixels high. Click OK when you are ready to proceed.



03 Zoom in on your new document. Press Cmd + 0 to fill the screen. Press B to activate your Brush Tool and choose a small 10 pixel brush and make sure the Foreground Colour is black.



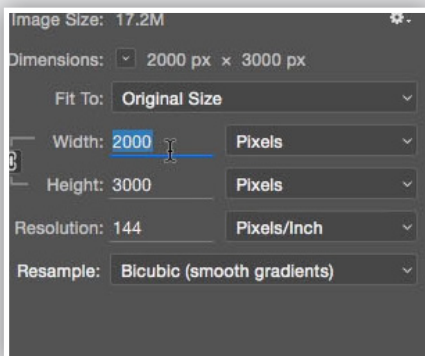
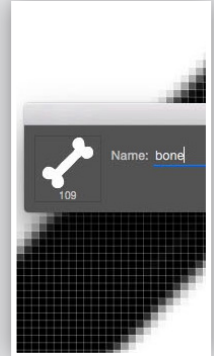
04 Begin to paint a classic dog bone shape. Start with the straight middle section and add the joint shapes like you see here. It doesn't have to be super-accurate, just a stylistic representation of a bone.



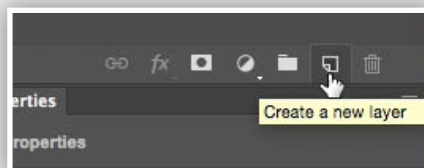
05 Use the [key to decrease the size of your brush if you need to, so you can paint the shapes of the joints that stick out from each end of the bone.



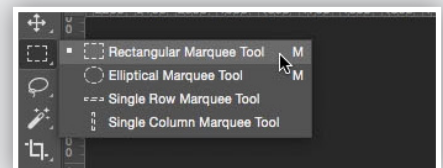
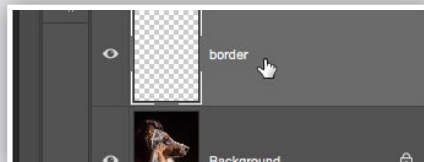
06 Now go to Edit > Define Brush Preset. In the dialog box that appears, name your preset 'bone'. Click OK. You can exit this file without saving if you wish.



07 Open up your photo. This example is 2000 pixels wide by 3000 pixels high. We need to select an area that will become the border of the image.

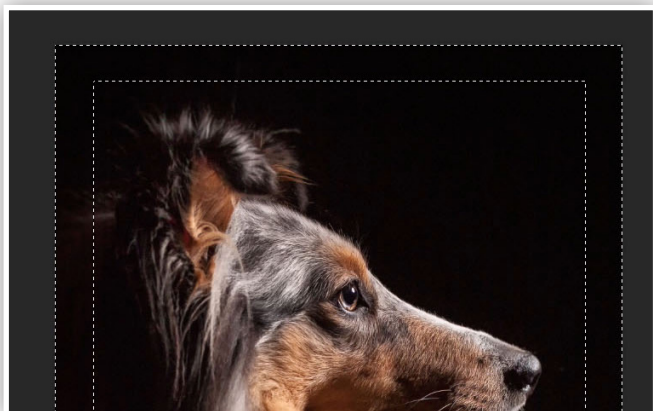


08 Click on the Create a new layer button at the bottom of your layers palette. Name this new layer 'border'.

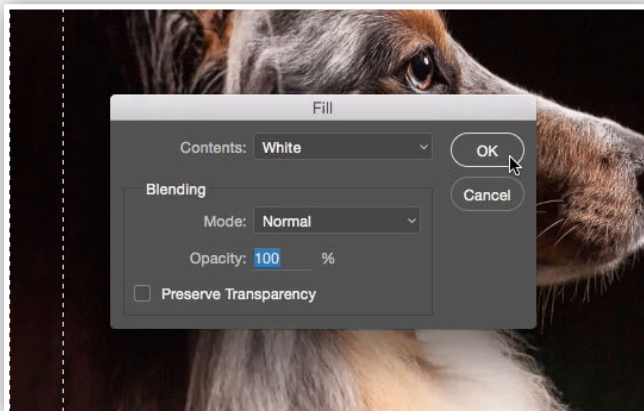


09 Go to your toolbar and select the Rectangular Marquee Tool (M). Click and drag a marquee within the image that describes the inner edge of the border.

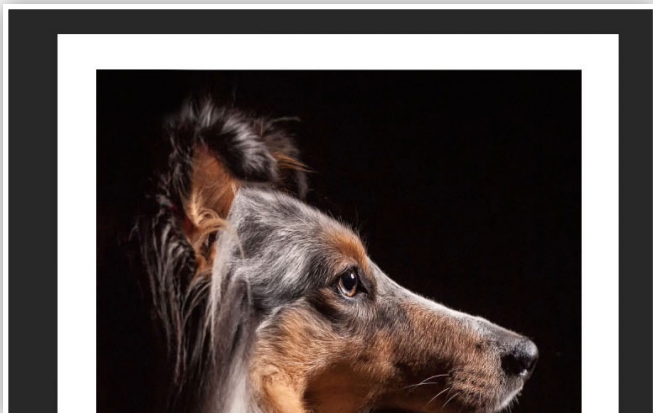




10 Press **Cmd + Shift + I** to invert the selection. Your selection should now appear to mark out a border that runs around the outside of the image.



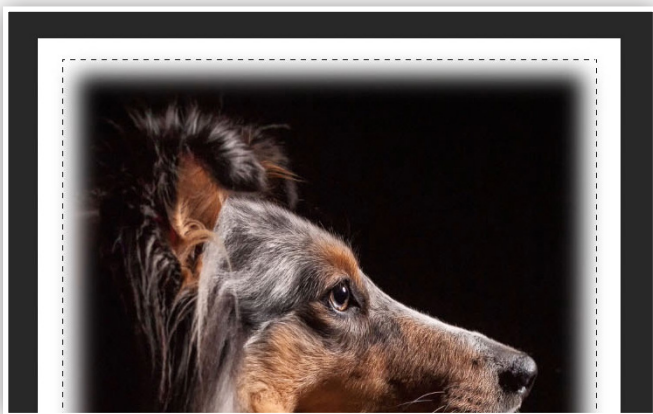
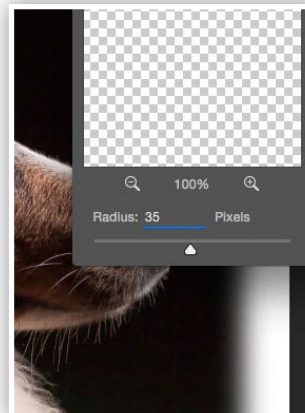
11 Go to **Edit > Fill** (**Shift + F5**) and make the Contents colour white. Click **OK** when you are ready to fill the marquee selection with white.



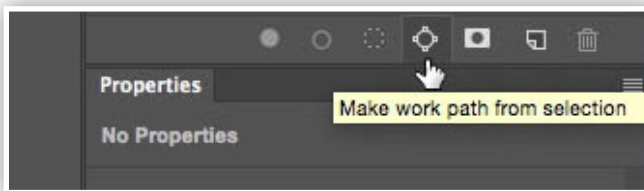
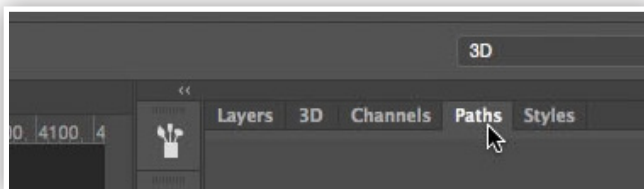
12 The 'border' layer is now filled with white and you have the basic shape of the border. Press **Cmd + D** to clear the selection.



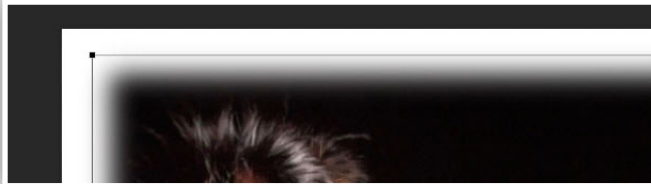
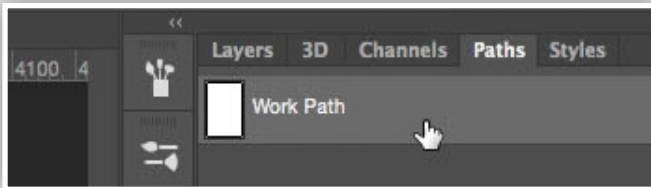
13 Next, go to **Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur** and choose a Radius of about 25 pixels in the dialog box that appears. Click **OK** when ready to blur the border.



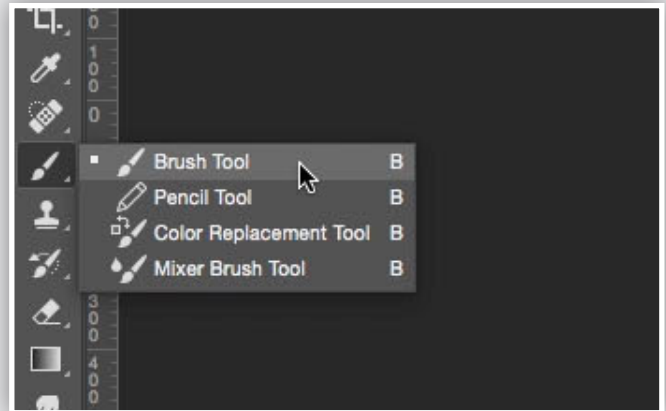
14 Select your **Rectangular Marquee Tool (M)** again and click and drag a marquee that sits halfway between the inner and outer edge of the white border.



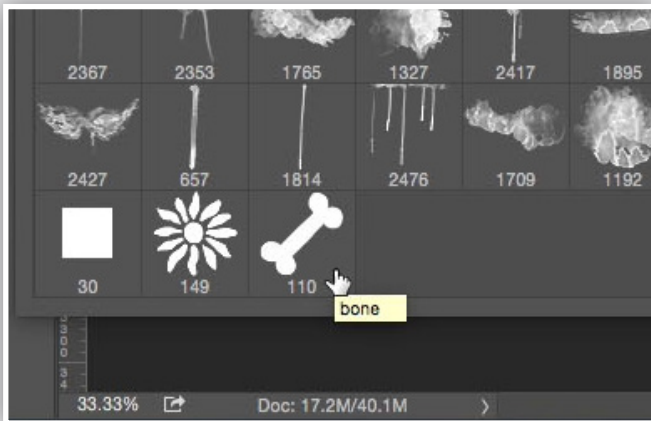
15 With the selection still active, click the **Path** tab on your Layers Palette and then click on the **Make work path from selection** button.



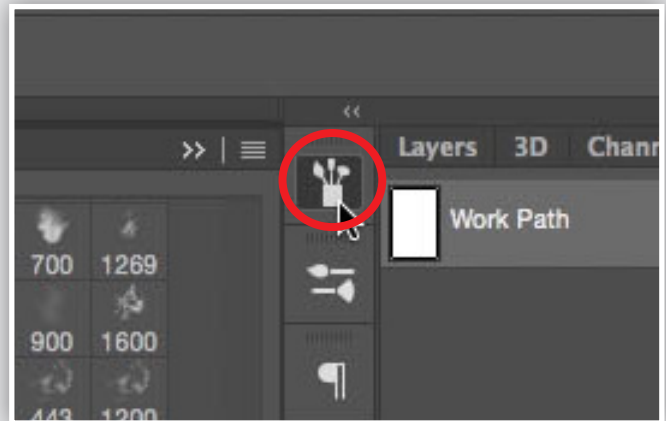
16 A Work Path layer will appear in the Path palette. This is a temporary layer that defines a shape. In this case, a rectangle.



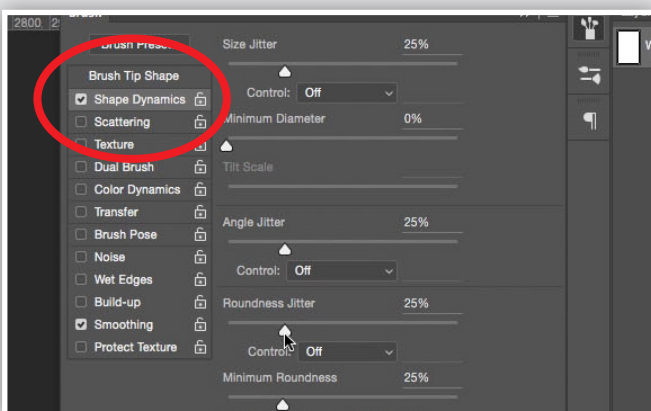
17 With the Work Path still active go to your toolbar and select your Brush Tool (B).



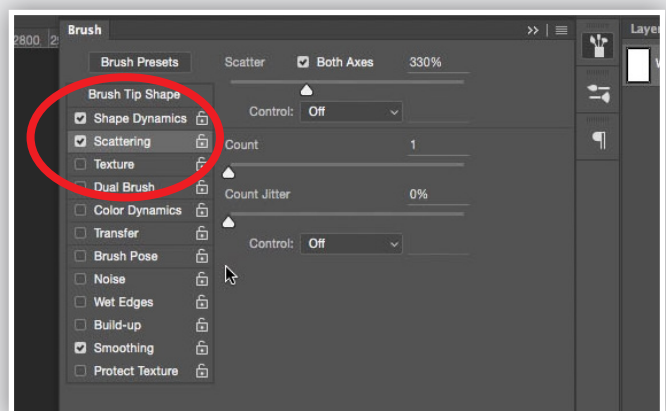
18 In the brush menu at the top of the screen, select your brush preset 'bone', that you defined earlier, from the drop down list.



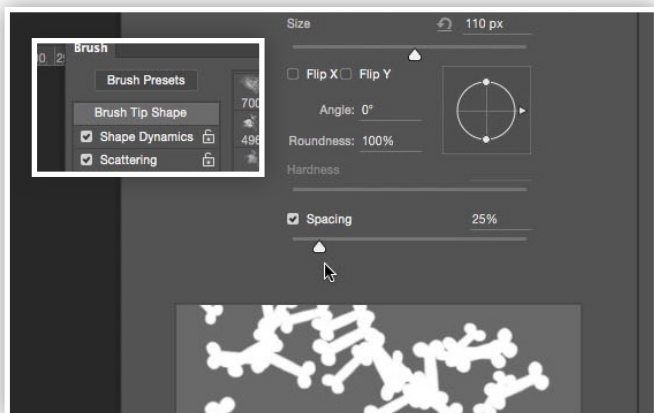
19 We need to add a randomness to the application of the bone shape. Click on the Brush panel button to open the properties dialog box.



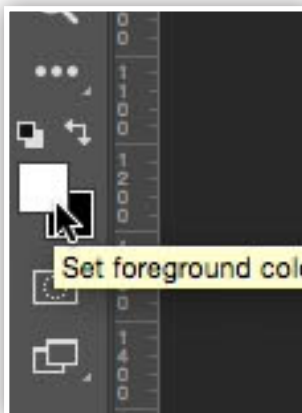
20 Check the Shape Dynamics button and make Size Jitter and Angle Jitter both 25%. Make the Roundness Jitter and Minimum Roundness both also about 25%.



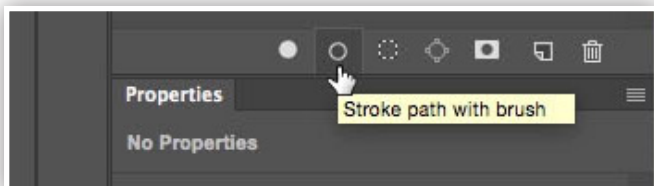
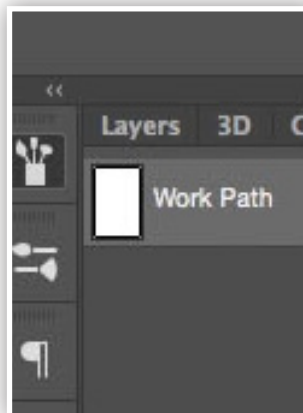
21 Next check the Scattering button. Make Scatter about 330% (Both Axes button checked). Count stays at 1 and Count Jitter at 0%.



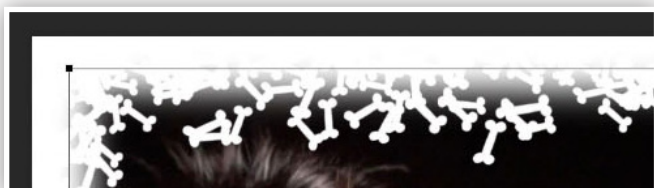
22 Click on the Brush Tip Shape button and adjust the spacing. The preview panel will show you how your bone pattern is looking. Adjust the settings to suit. We've made Spacing about 25%.



23 Make sure that your Foreground colour is set to white. We want our bones to be white in this case. Make sure your Work Path is still active.



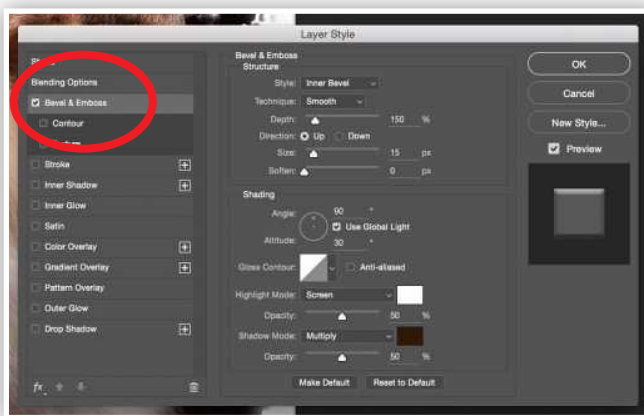
24 At the bottom of the Paths palette, click on the Stroke path with brush button. Your bone brush will be painted along the Work Path outline.



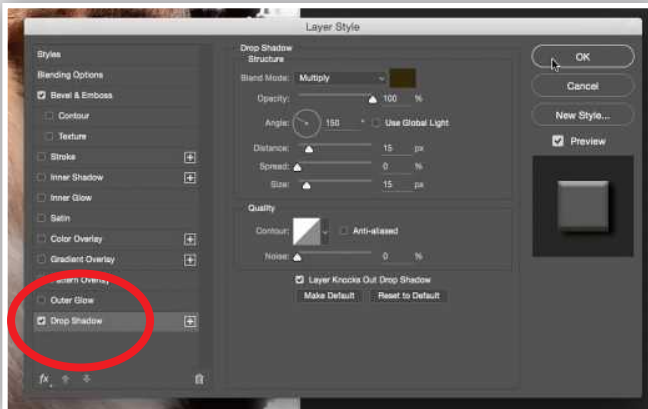
25 If you want, you can click the button again and another set of flowers will be painted along that outline. Press Alt + Cmd + Z to back up and try again with a new random pattern.



26 Back in your Layers Palette, click on the Layers tab. Double-click the 'border' layer to activate the Layer Style panel.



27 Click Bevel and Emboss. Choose Inner Bevel and make the Depth 150% and the Size value about 15 px. Make the Shadow Mode colour a nice complimentary dark orange/brown.



28 Also click on the Drop Shadow button and make the Distance about 15 px and the Size can be 15 px. Set the Blend Mode to Multiply and choose another brown shade as its colour.



29 So, this pet portrait with a scattering of yummy bones means our decorative border is complete.



Time to get arty

Add some cool and fun borders to your favourite photos.

The Dragan Effect

Give the people in your shots a dramatic makeover

The Dragan effect is named after Andrzej Dragan. He is actually a Polish physics teacher in Warsaw, but he does also have a widely praised reputation for producing surreal and compelling portraits. He employs high contrast and saturation in his images, along with rich detail that gives his subjects a highly

emphasised look; some would say, an almost pseudo HDR appearance. It is a technique that is used to great effect on male portraits in particular, where the extra detail is not considered detrimental to the subject. Our tutorial will take you through some easy steps that can give your images a dramatic twist.

AFTER

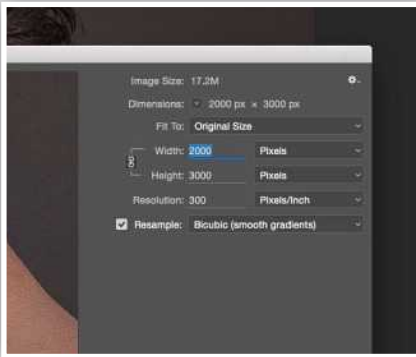
BEFORE



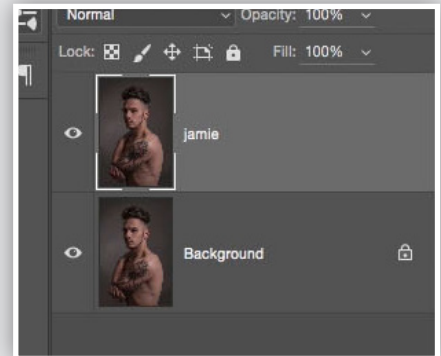
▼
This tutorial
content is
available for
download



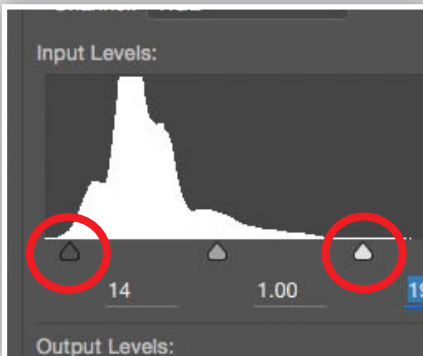
01 Choose a relevant image and open it in Photoshop. We have an image of a model called Jamie. For your reference, the image size we are working at is 2700px wide x 3700px high.



02 Any effects we add are based on this size. If you have a different size image, just be aware that your values may need to change to suit the dimensions you are working with.



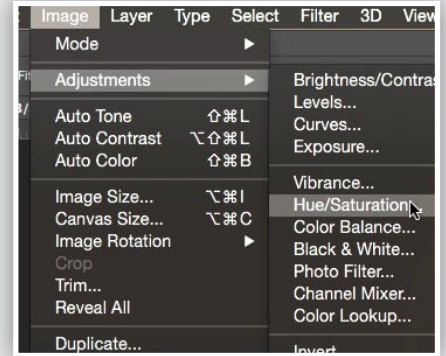
03 To start, we need to create a duplicate of our original image, just so we have an original to go back to if needed. Press **Cmd + J** and rename this layer 'jamie'.



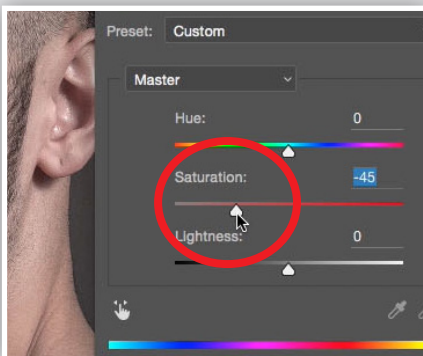
04 Next, we need to boost contrast. Press **Cmd + L** to bring up the Levels dialog box. Move the left-most slider to the right to deepen the shadows and the right-most slider to the left to brighten the highlight areas.



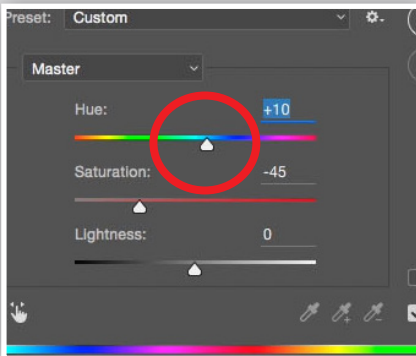
05 Additional adjustments will be made afterwards, so try not to be too heavy-handed. Click OK to apply the Levels adjustment.



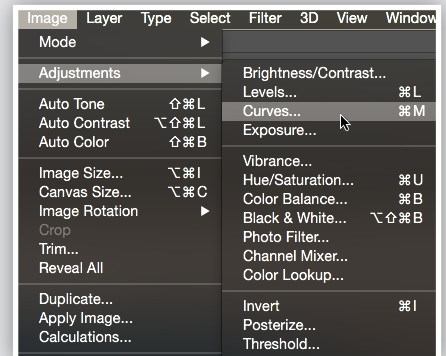
06 With your 'jamie' layer still active, go to the top menu and select **Image > Adjustments > Hue/Saturation** (**Cmd + U**). This will bring up the Hue/Saturation panel.



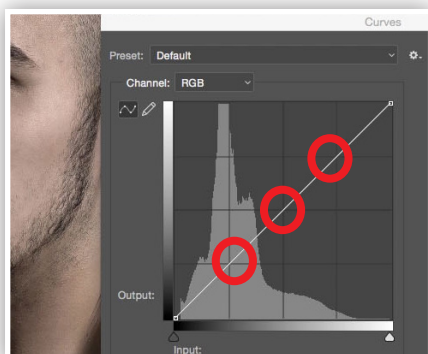
07 Move the Saturation slider to the left to desaturate the image slightly. A value in our example of -45 is enough to take the edge off the vibrance of the original.



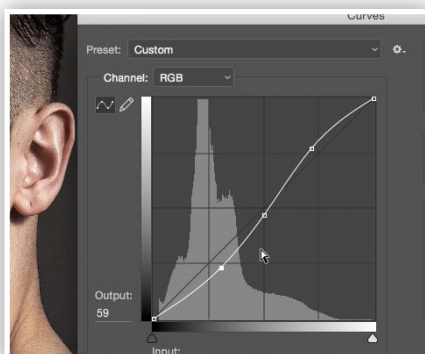
08 Now move the Hue slider a small amount to the right (+10 in our example). This will shift the image colours to make it slightly more yellow. Click OK when you are happy with your choice.



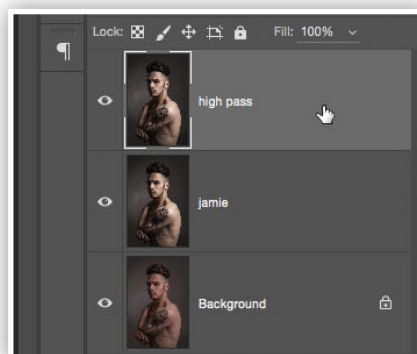
09 Now we are going to add more contrast by using a basic 'S' curve. With the 'jamie' layer still active, go to the top menu and select **Image > Adjustments > Curves** (**Cmd + M**) to bring up the Curves panel.



10 Click on the curve line 3 times to add anchor points, one in the middle and one equidistant on each side in the shadow and highlight areas. Drag the anchor points and adjust the contrast and brightness.



11 What you are looking for is what resembles a flattened 'S' shape. This classic curve boosts overall contrast. Don't make the shadow areas too black. Click OK when you are happy with the result.



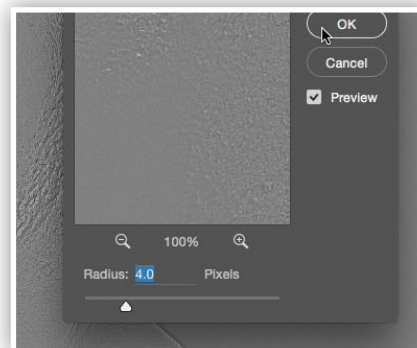
12 Next, press Cmd + J to create a duplicate of the newly adjusted 'jamie' layer. Name this copy 'high pass'. Make it the topmost active layer. We are going to use this layer to bring out much greater detail.



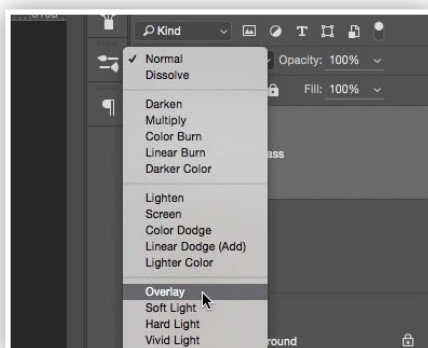
13 From the top menu, select Filter > Other > High Pass. The High Pass panel will appear and you can set the amount of filtering applied to that layer by changing the Radius value.



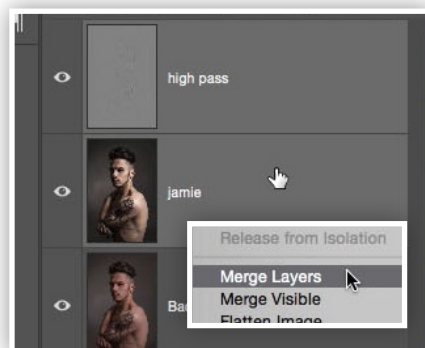
14 Smaller values produce less sharpness, but keep the image clean, whereas higher values create sharper images at the expense of halo artefacts.



15 In this example, a value of about 4 pixels produces a clean, sharp image. When you hit OK, the 'high pass' layer will now look somewhat like a greyscale image.



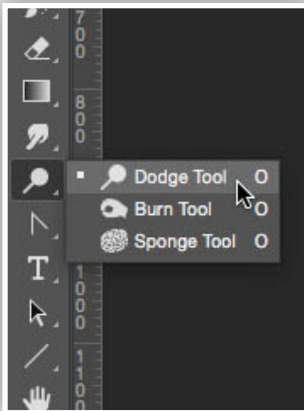
16 With the 'high pass' layer active, go to the Blend Mode button at the top of your Layers Palette and select Overlay. The layer is blended into the 'jamie' layer below and the sharpness is boosted.



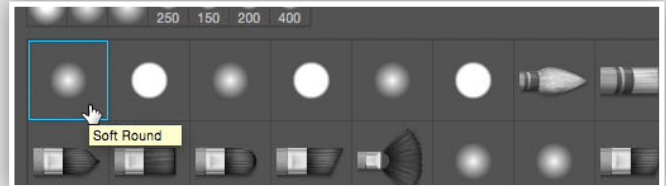
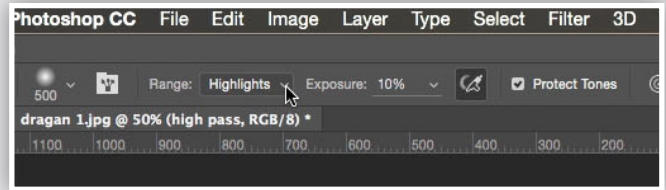
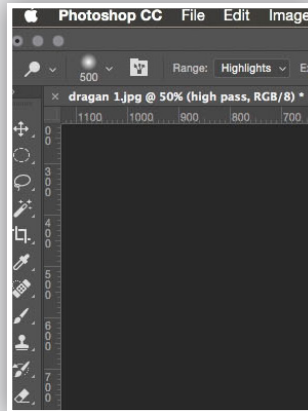
17 Press Shift + left-click on both the 'high pass' and 'jamie' layers. Select them both and then right-click on them to call up the context menu and select Merge Layers and combine the two layers into one.



18 Now to add drama to this portrait by using the Dodge and Burn Tool to enhance detail. This means selectively altering certain areas of light and shadow to emphasise the image even further.



19 Click and hold on the Dodge and Burn icon where you can choose either Dodge or Burn. Click on the Dodge Tool icon. In the top menu area, a context menu lets you choose the Range you will affect when using the Dodge Tool.



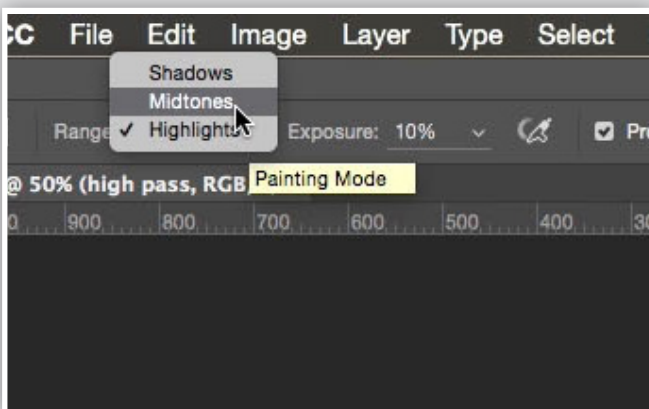
20 We are going to lighten just the Highlights. Set the exposure to about 10% and make sure Protect Tones is checked. Choose a medium sized, soft-edged brush and begin 'painting' where you want to amplify areas of white (or near-white) tones.



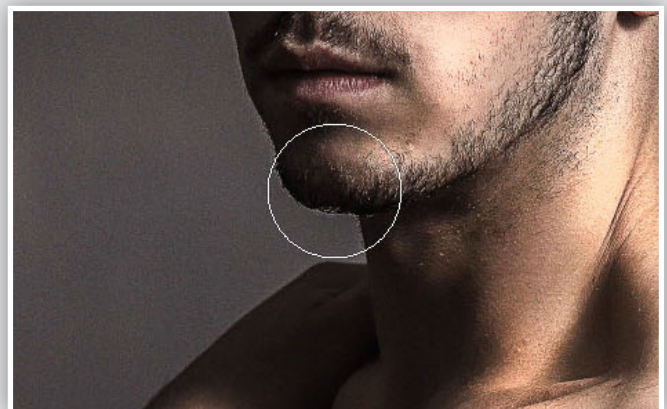
21 Because we've selected the affected range as Highlights, none of the other darker tones will be modified by this action.



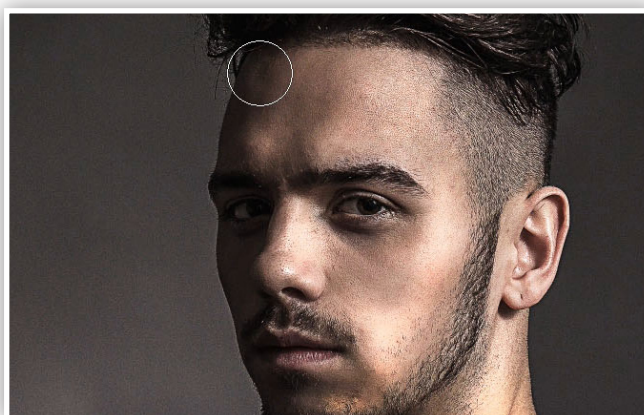
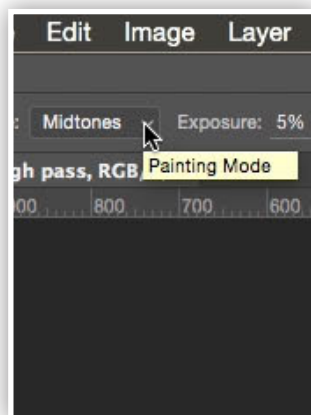
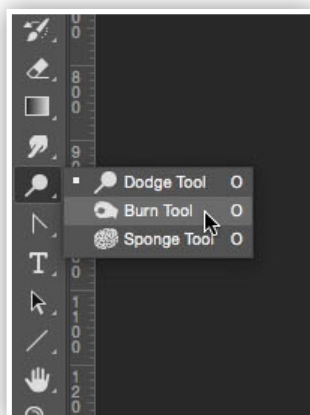
22 Brushing over the hands, eyes, hair and facial features will bring up the brightness of just the areas closest to white. Take your time and try not to be too heavy-handed and destroy any detail.



23 If you overdo it, you can always press Alt + Cmd + Z to step back through your actions. When you are happy with the Highlight areas, go back and click on the Range button in the top context menu and select Midtones.



24 We will now affect the Midtones and gradually begin working on the facial areas and hands once more as we emphasise the tone and detail of our subject.

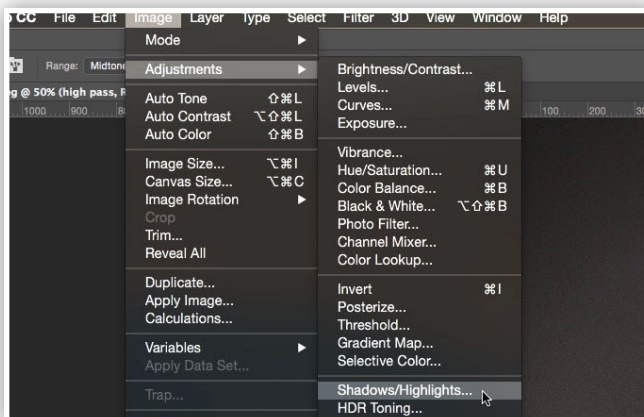


25 The next step is to select the Burn Tool, set the range to Midtones and, using the same soft medium-sized brush, paint over mid-tone and darker areas of the face and hands to emphasise those areas.

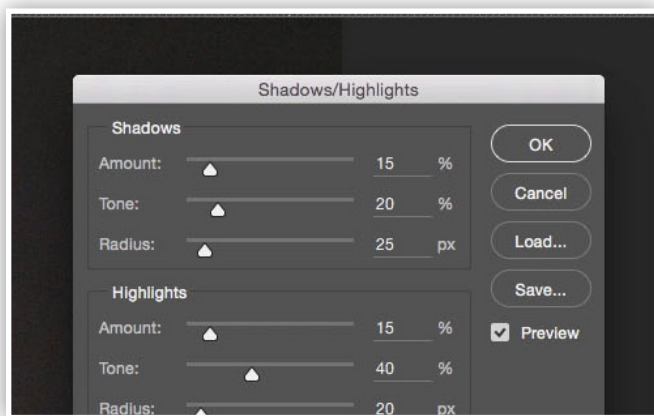
26 The areas around the eyes, facial stubble and the pores of the skin become quite strongly defined. When you are happy with the work you've done, we can move on to the final stages.



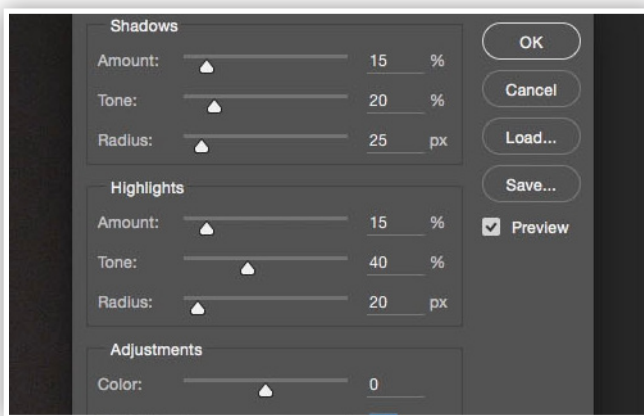
27 There is an additional step we've added that is not necessarily part of the standard Dragan Effect procedure, but we feel it is useful for further enhancement of the look we've established.



28 With your 'high pass' layer active, go to Image > Adjustments > Shadows/Highlights. Here you can fine-tune the effect of shadow and highlight areas on your image.



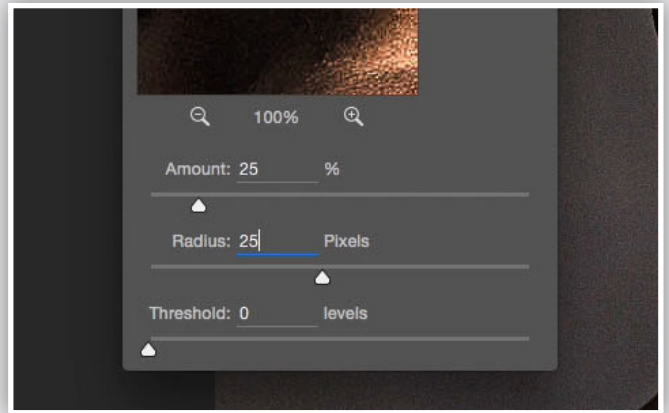
29 In the Shadows panel, a small 15% Amount value will lift shadows, making sure they are not solid black and lacking in detail. Tonal Width is 20% and Radius is 25 px.



30 An Amount of 15% in the Highlights panel will try to pull any highlights down from bright white, bringing detail back into the brightest areas, providing the highlights aren't completely blown out. Tonal Width is 40% and Radius is 20 px.



31 There is always room for a few more tweaks. Go to Filter > Sharpen > Unsharp Mask, where you can add extra sharpness to the image and also boost the Dodge and Burn effect you started in step 18.



32 An Amount of 25% and Radius of 25 pixels and Threshold of 0% will suffice. Go to Image > Adjustments > Vibrance and set the Vibrance to -55 and Saturation at 0% to bring the overall vibrancy down still further. Your Dragan effect is complete.



Eye-catching portraits

Creative effects for dramatic photos.

Exposure Stacking

▼
This tutorial
content is
available for
download

BEFORE

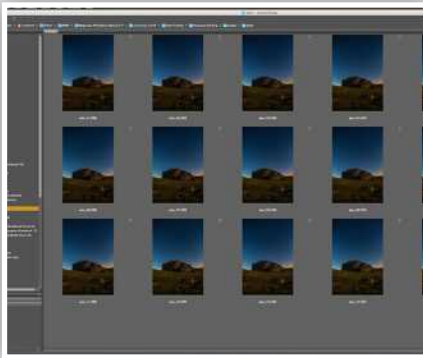
AFTER

Using Photoshop to create amazing star trails

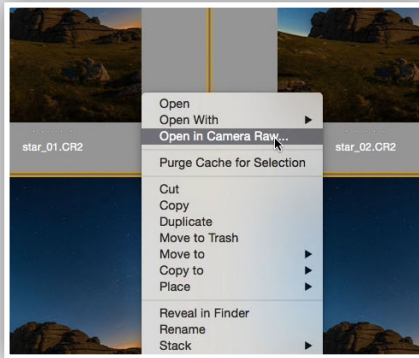
Photographing the night sky can be fun and relaxing all at the same time. The results can of course vary though, depending on your location and how much light pollution is affecting the shots. The technique for capturing star trails is fairly straightforward. Once you have worked out your settings to get a

good capture of the night sky, it's just a case of taking a sequence of exposures over time that allows you to capture the imperceptible movement of the stars. In our example here, the camera was set at an aperture of f/3.2, a bulb mode exposure of 60 seconds with an ISO setting of 400 to give a good capture of

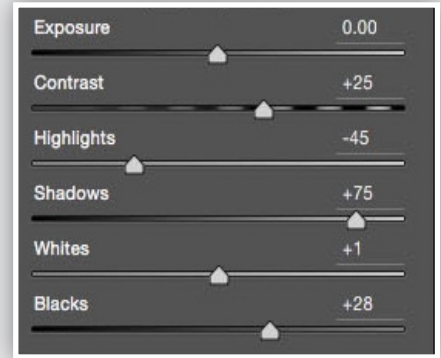
the sky. A remote timer captured the sequence of 15 images at these settings. So how do you transform these separate images into the final star trail you see here? Photoshop is here to help if you are new to the process and want to try this technique out.



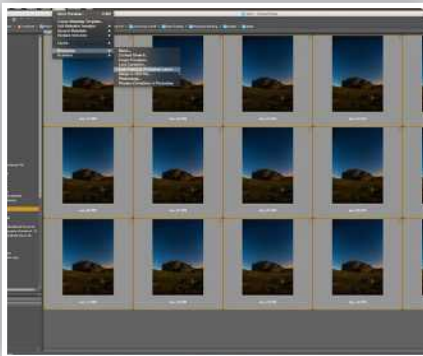
01 Our 15 Raw files from that evening are opened in Adobe Bridge and named in a logical sequence.



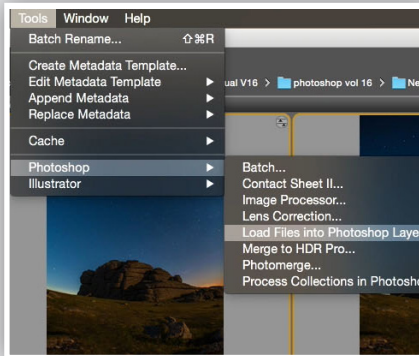
02 Select all your image files and right-click on them to open the context menu where you can choose Open in Camera Raw. The files will be opened in Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) where you can edit them.



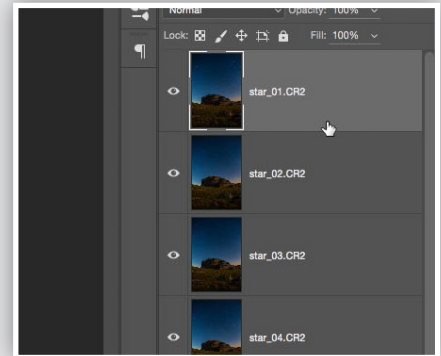
03 Select all your images and process them all with the same settings. Try not to over-process the images. Just try to get the stars as bright and clear as you can.



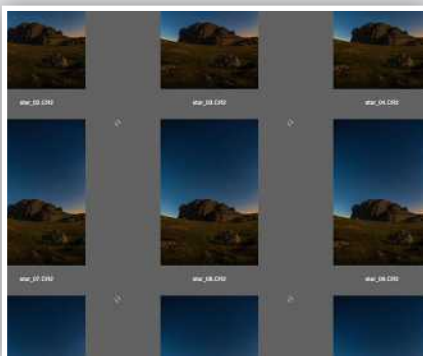
04 Once you are happy with your settings for the entire sequence, you can click Done and return to Adobe Bridge. You don't need to save them out as image files. Photoshop will do that for you in the next part of the sequence.



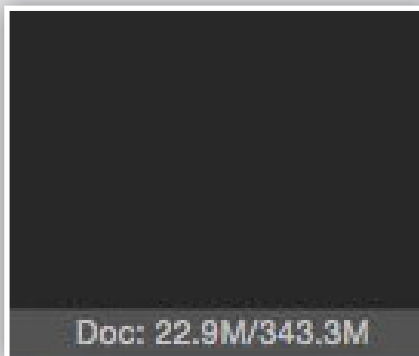
05 Back in Bridge, make sure all the files are highlighted then go to the top menu bar select Tools > Photoshop > Load Files into Photoshop Layers. Photoshop will open and begin to process your image sequence.



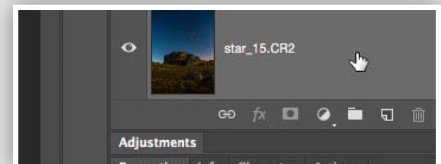
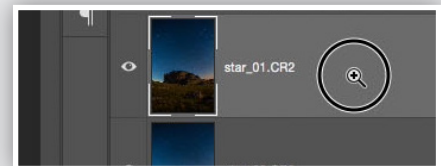
06 A new document will be created and each one of your selected images will be placed on its own layer named after the file. The first image will be at the top and the last will be at the bottom of the layer stack.



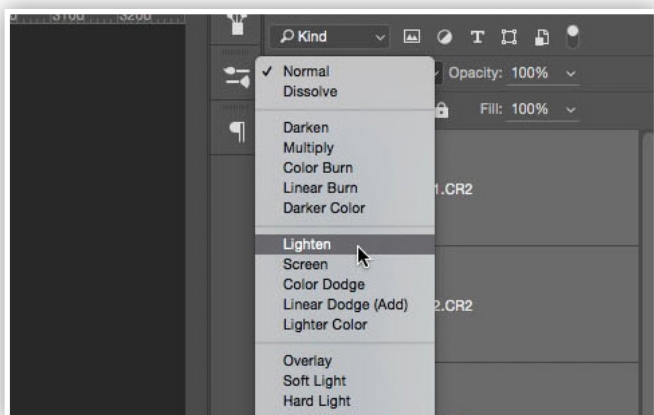
07 For your first attempt, it may be wise to limit the number or size of the images you are working with, as the document can quickly balloon to a very large file size.



08 In this example, once all 15 of the images (at 8 megapixels each) have been placed on layers, the document weighs in at about 340MB. So unless you have a very powerful computer, watch out for those file sizes.



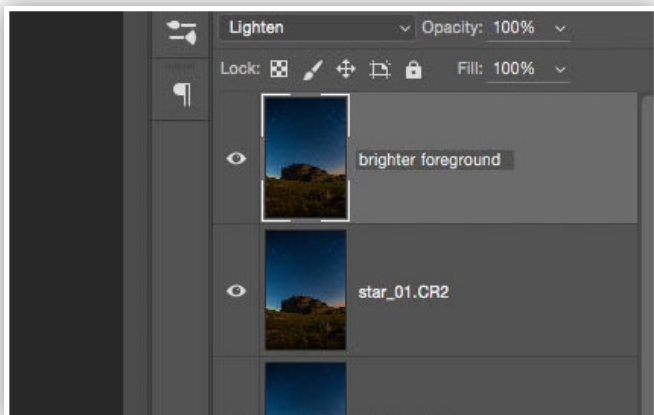
09 At this point you need to make sure all your layers are selected. If you click the top layer and then press Shift + Left Mouse Click on the bottom layer, you can select all the layers at once.



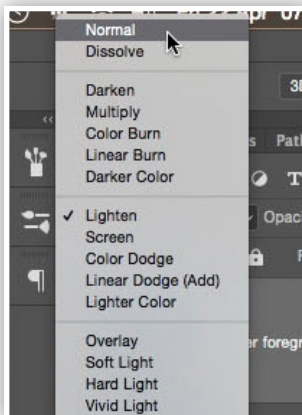
10 Once selected you can go to the Blend Mode button at the top of your layers palette and select Lighten as the blend mode. Because all your layers are selected, this blend will apply to all.



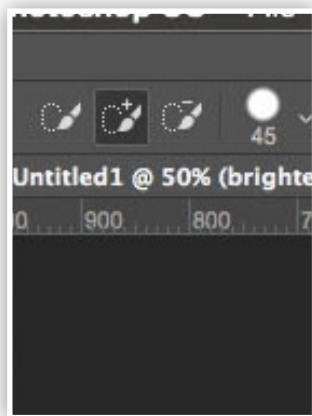
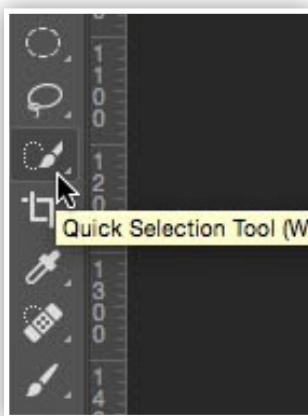
11 Your image should now transform as the blend mode allows all the bright points of each star from each exposure to show through. You can now get a sense of just how far the stars had moved.



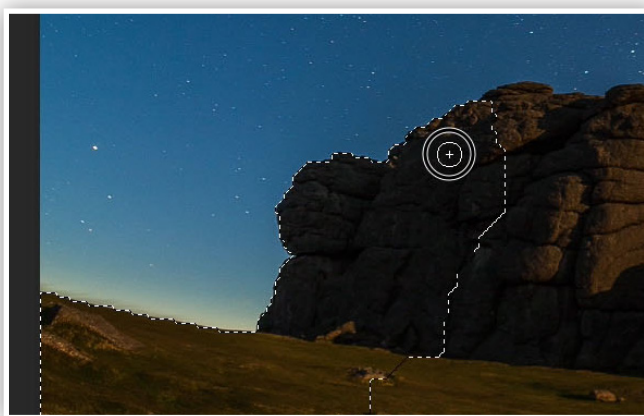
12 We could leave it there, but there some tweaking worth doing as the foreground is a little dark. Select the 'star_01' layer and press Cmd + J to duplicate this layer. We've renamed this new layer 'brighter foreground'.



13 Click on the new layer to make it active and set the blend mode of this layer back to normal. Your star trails will disappear for a moment, but don't worry.



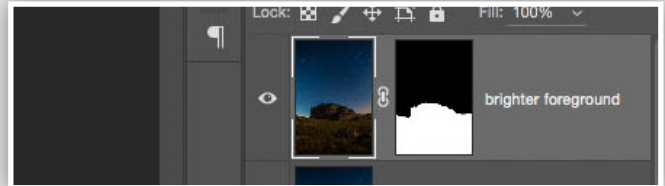
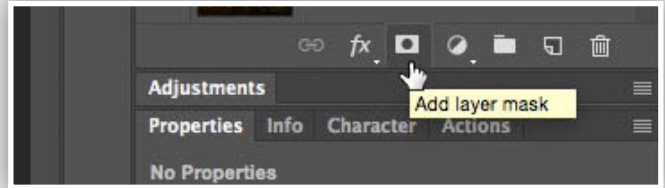
14 With the 'brighter foreground' layer active, go to the toolbar and choose the Quick Selection Tool (W). We want to mask this layer to allow the stars to show though again. Make the selection brush about 35-45 pixels.



15 Left-click your mouse and drag the Quick Selection Tool cursor around the inside edge of the foreground and the granite tor. Because there is enough contrast, the selection should adhere to the foreground elements.



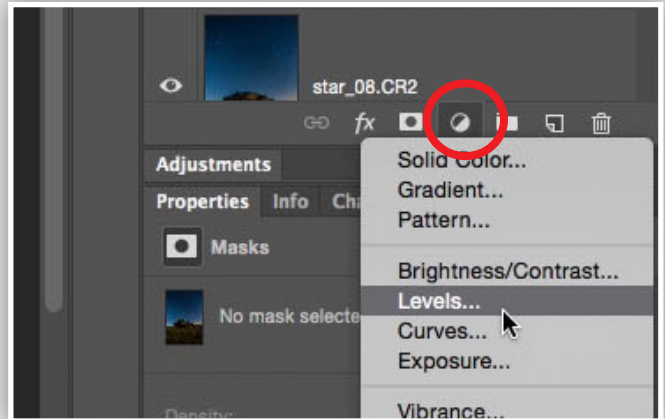
16 Once you have all the foreground selected, you can let your mouse button go and the 'marching ants' will appear to define the outline of the section you just made.



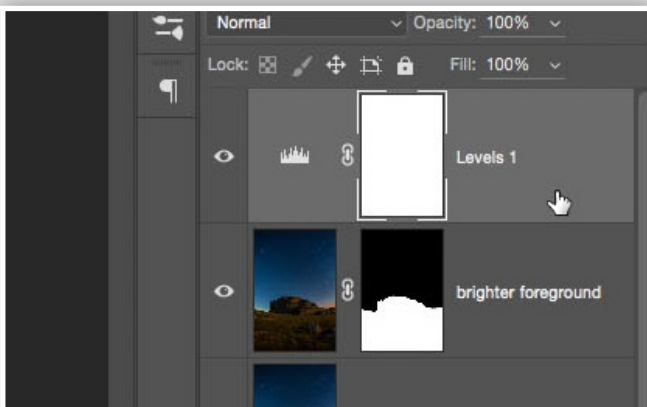
17 With the selection still active, click on the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers Palette. A mask will be applied to the 'brighter foreground' layer in the shape of the selection.



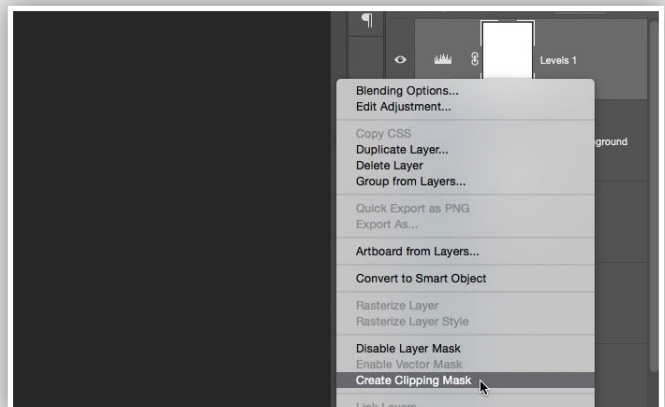
18 The black area of the mask effectively punches a hole in the top layer to allow all the layers below to show through. So now the star trails should reappear.



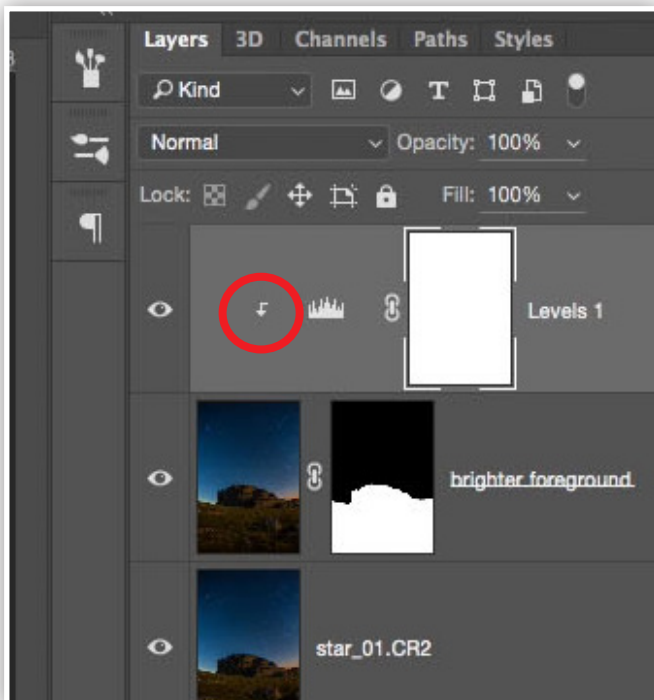
19 Now we need to brighten the foreground. Keep the 'brighter foreground' layer active and click the Create New Adjustment Layer button at the bottom of the Layers Palette and choose Levels from the menu.



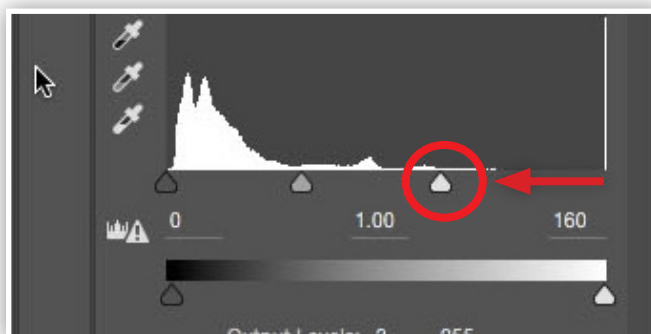
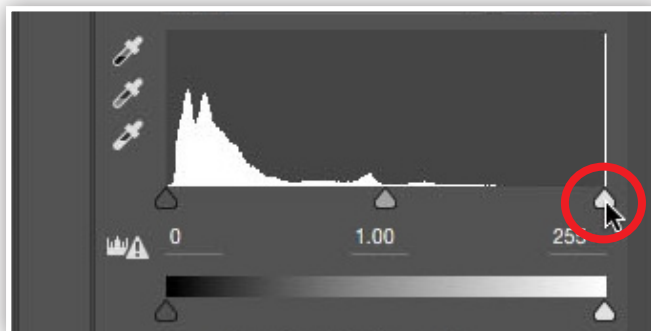
20 The new Levels Adjustment layer will be added. Make sure it is at the top of the layer stack. We can use this to brighten the foreground but at the moment, any adjustments made will affect all the layers.



21 To make sure the adjustment only affects the 'brighter foreground' layer, right-click on the 'Levels 1' layer and choose Create Clipping Mask from the context menu that appears.



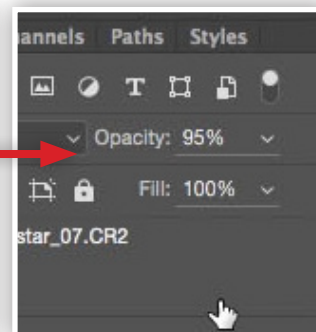
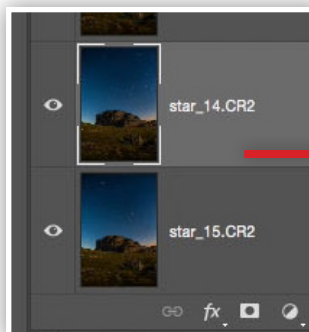
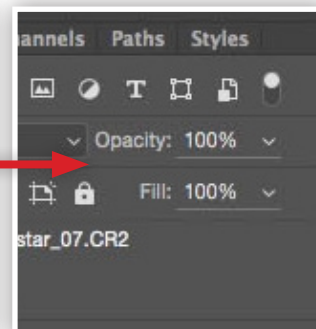
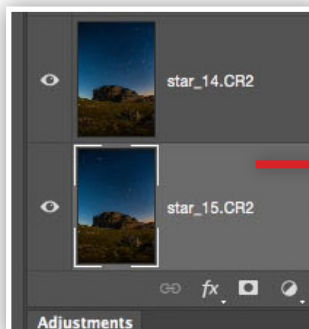
22 The 'Levels 1' layer will now have a small arrow pointing at the 'brighter foreground' layer below. This indicates that the adjustments are only going to affect that layer.



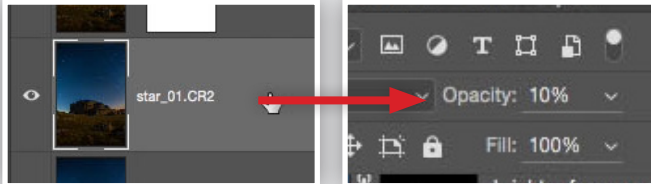
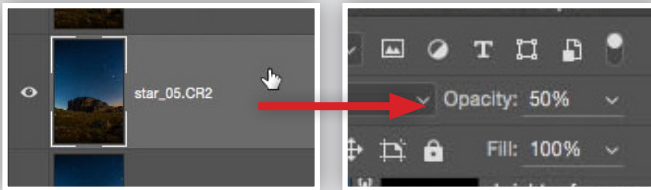
23 Now you can adjust the properties of the Levels Adjustment to make the foreground brighter. Moving the Highlight slider to the left will increase the brightness.



24 There is a neat little effect we can finally add. We are looking at the northern sky, so the stars were turning anti clockwise, but you can't tell. Now we can show the direction of the stars a little better.



25 Starting at layer 'star_15' (the bottom layer in the stack and the last shot taken in that sequence) the Opacity is 100%. Then click on 'star_14' and set its Opacity to 95%. Go to 'star_13' and make the Opacity 90%.



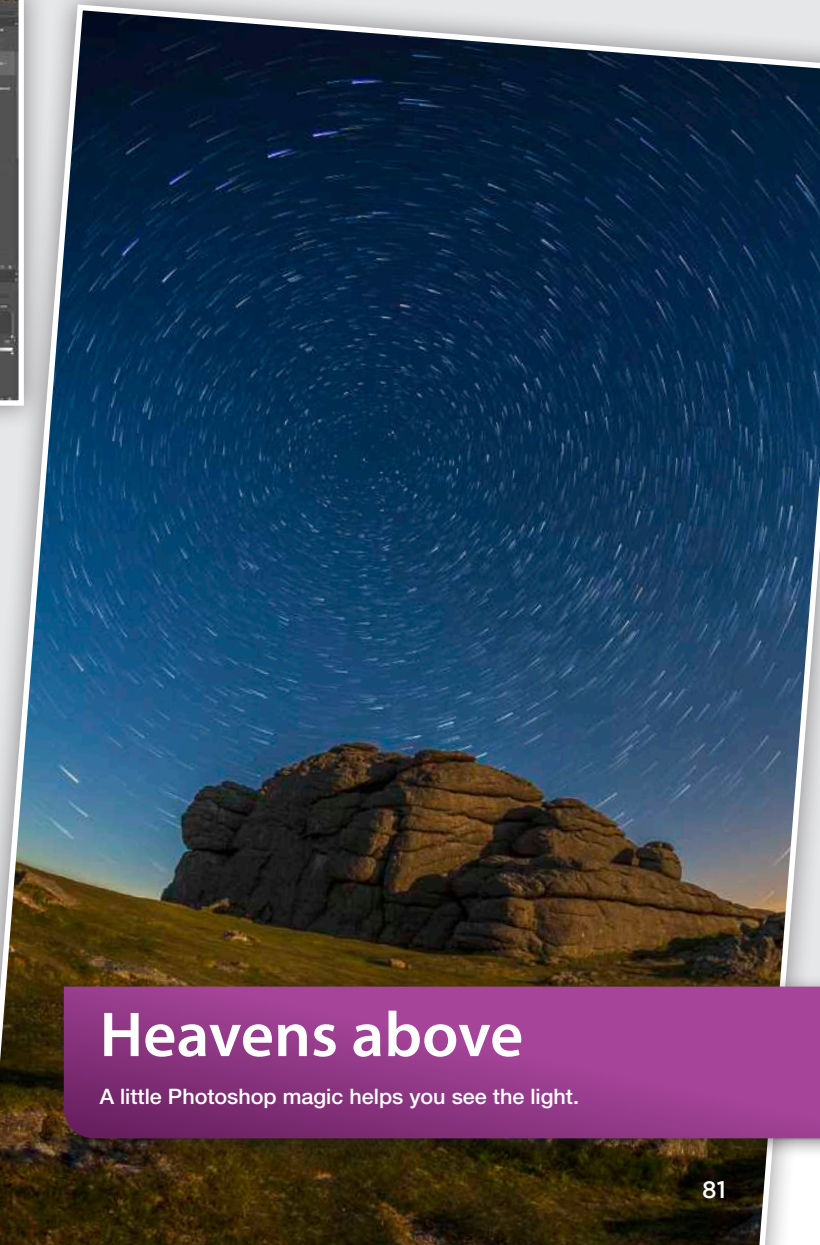
26 Progress up the stack of layers, making the Opacity 5% less than the one below it. When you get to 'star_05', you should be at 50%, 'star_04' can be 40%. Now decrease Opacity by 10% until finally you have 'star_01' at 10%.



27 Now your star trails should have the appearance of little comets streaking in a circle around the polar star. The opacity changes give a nice indication of the direction of travel of your stars.



28 Your amazing night-sky is now full of stars, wheeling above your head and creating an impressive spectacle.



Heavens above

A little Photoshop magic helps you see the light.

Little Planets



AFTER



BEFORE

▼
This tutorial
content is
available for
download

Turn your landscape into a miniature world

Converting your panoramic shots into your very own planet is fun, easy and the end results can be quite mind blowing. At this point it is worth noting that true little planets are actually derived from a 360° x 180° panoramic shot that encompasses a 360° horizontal

panorama that also covers a full 180° on the vertical as well. However to create one of those does require some skill and some specialist equipment. Fear not though, there are ways you can create your own worlds quite easily in Photoshop. You just need to bear a few points in mind. Read on...

01 The shot needs to be a landscape orientation panorama. If it is a 360° pan, then all the better.

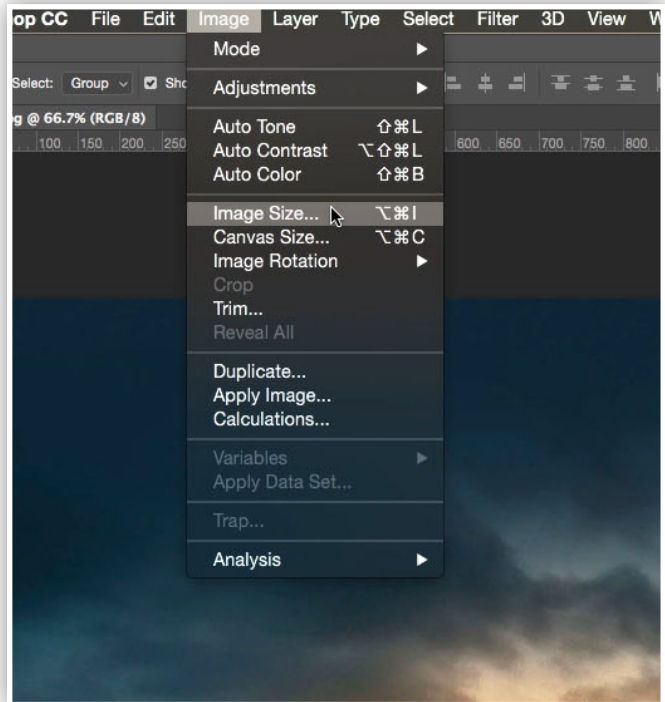
03 The top and bottom of the shot should be very light on detail. Simple things like a calm sea and a blue sky are some good examples.

05 The far left and far right of the shot should match as closely as possible. The left and right edges are joined and if they are very different in content or colour there will be a visible 'crack' running through the centre of your planet.

02 Generally speaking, an image with an aspect ratio of 2:1 or wider works well.

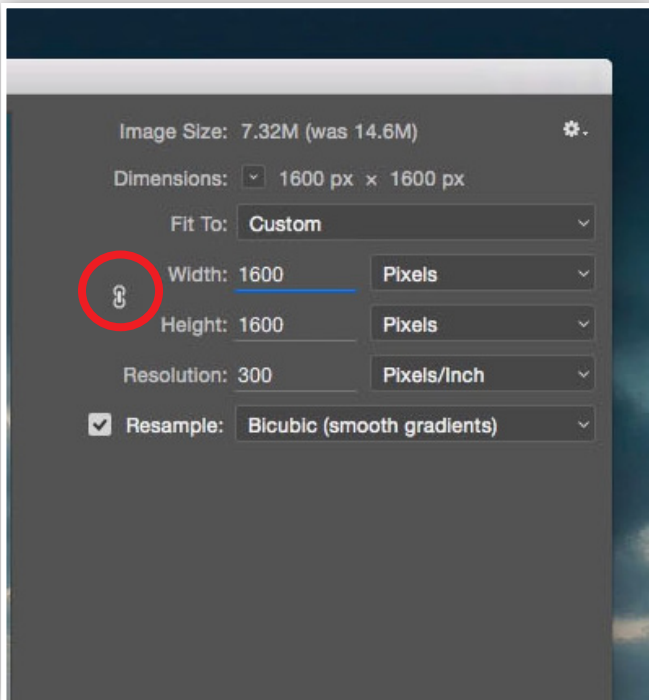
04 The horizon should be completely straight. A slight tilt in the horizon and the two ends of the join will be at different heights.

06 A little trick to use is to select a portion of the far left of the image. Copy it to a new layer and flip it over horizontally and drag it on the far right of your shot. You can blend this into the image below and create more of an even join in the final stitched result.



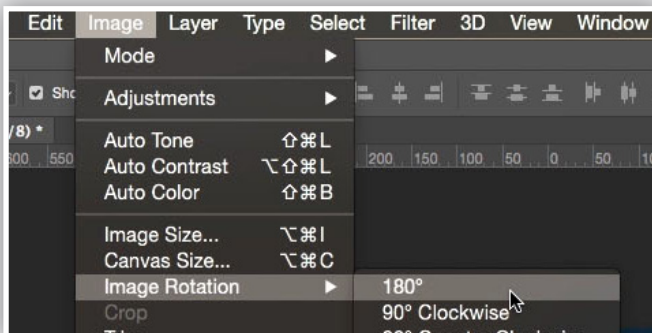
01 First of all we need to load up our landscape that we want to turn into a little planet. Our example here roughly adheres to the checklist outlined previously.

02 Now we need to alter the dimensions of the image. From the top menu select Image > Image Size (Alt + Cmd + I). This will call up the Image Size dialog box.

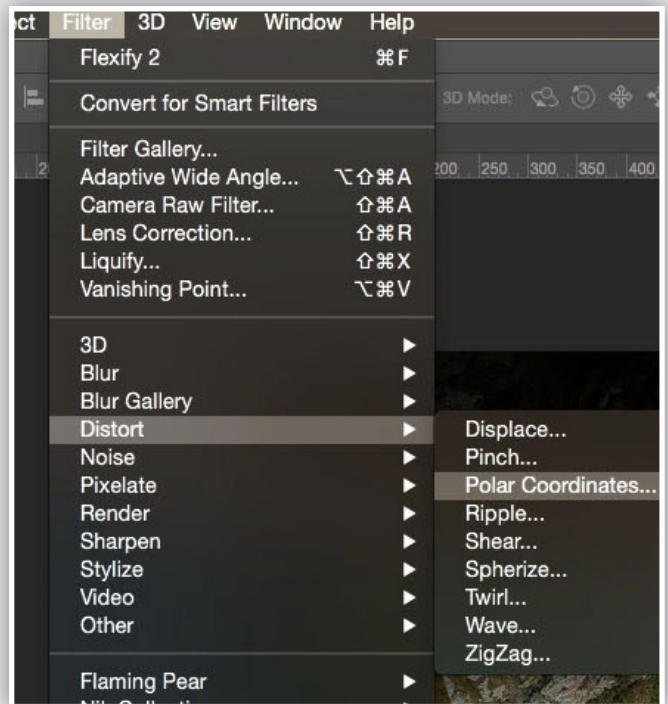


03 At the moment the example image is 3200px wide by 1600px high. In the dialog box, change the width to 1600px and make sure that the Constrain Aspect Ratio checkbox is not selected, otherwise the entire image will scale proportionally.

04 Hit OK and the image will now be a square 2500px on each side. The image will look distorted but that's ok. It will make sure the effect is applied correctly.



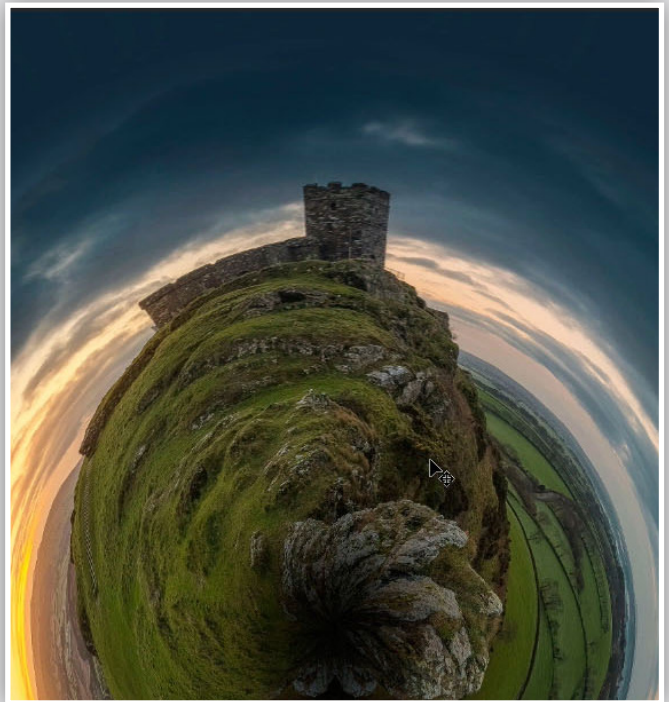
05 The next stage is to rotate the image 180°. From the main menu select Image > Image Rotation > 180°. The image is now upside down. Once again, this is required to make sure the effect will turn out correctly.



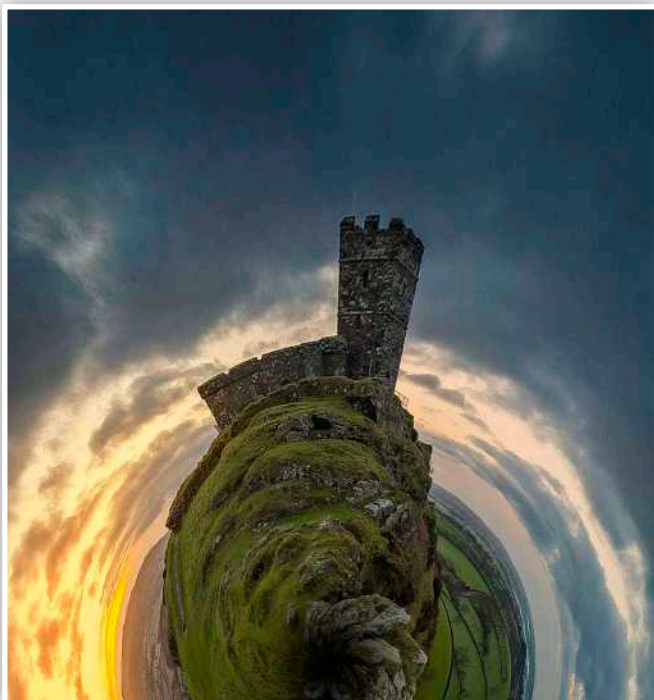
06 It's now time to apply the effect. From the main menu select Filter > Distort > Polar Coordinates. This will call up the Polar Coordinates dialog box.



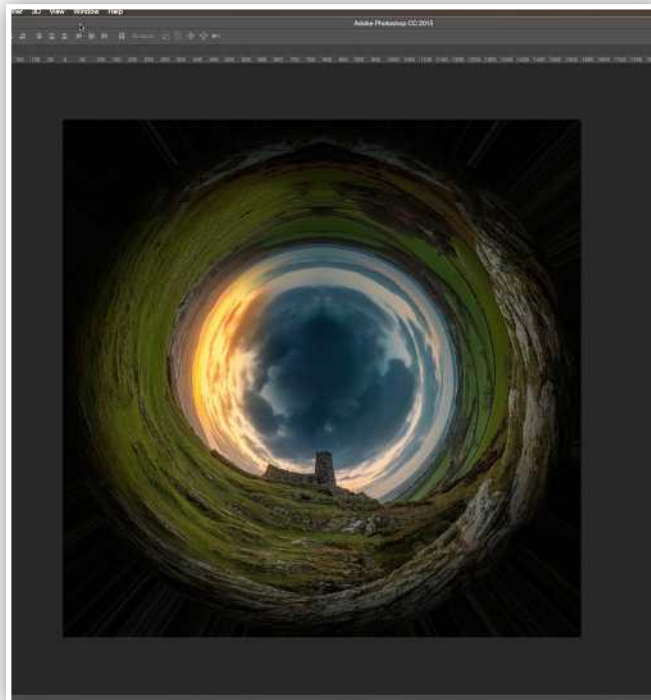
07 Make sure that the Rectangular to Polar option is checked. The dialog box will show you a little preview to confirm your selection.



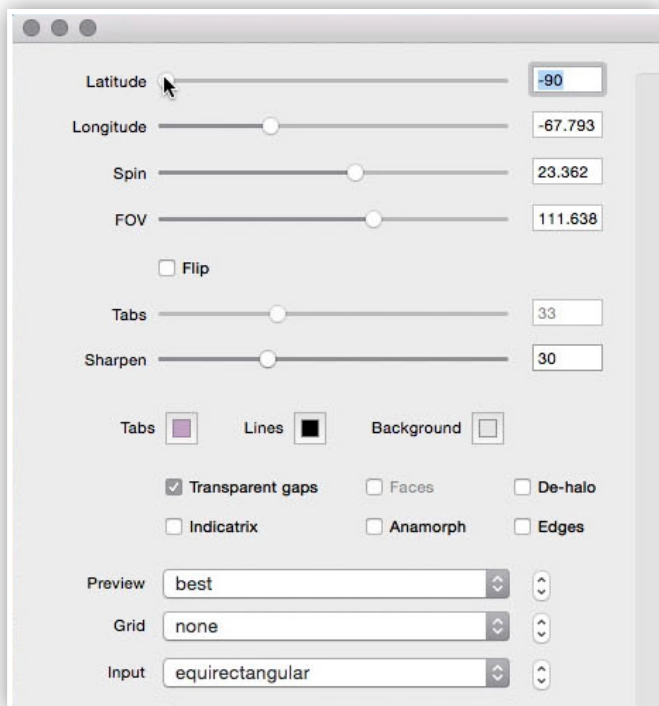
08 Hit the OK button and the image will transform into your own Little Planet! You can rotate the image until you have the orientation you want. This example is rotated by 90° clockwise to have the church at the top.



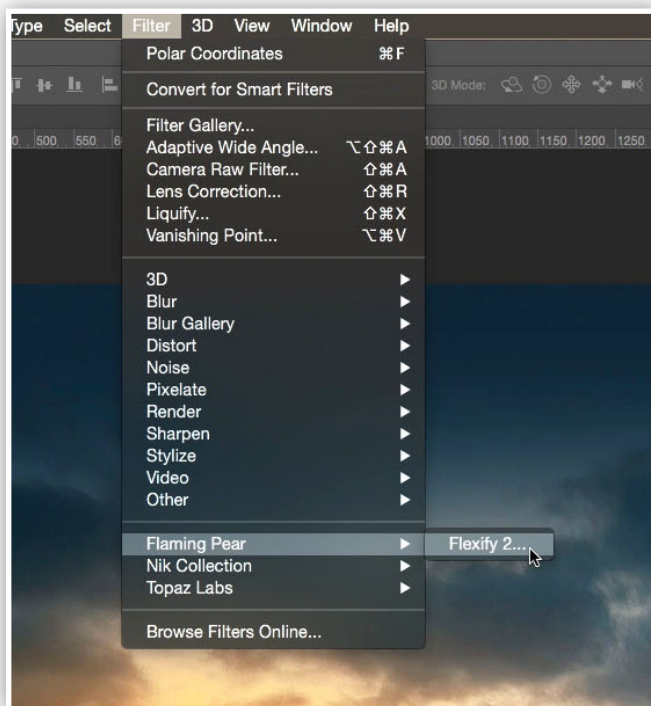
09 You can tidy up any imperfections that show up in the join, crop it and save your finished planet.



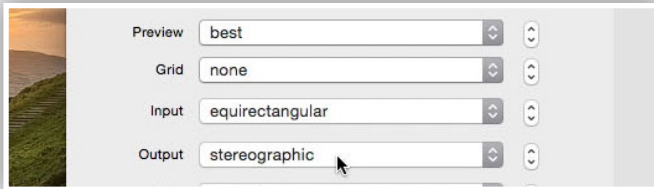
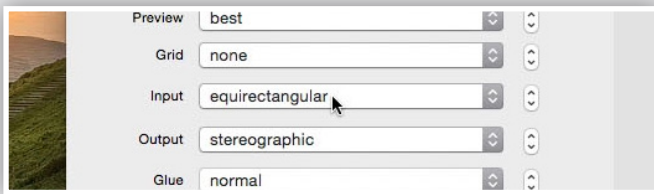
10 To have your little planet inside out, start again with the original image, ignore step 5, and when you get to part 7, select Rectangular to Polar again.



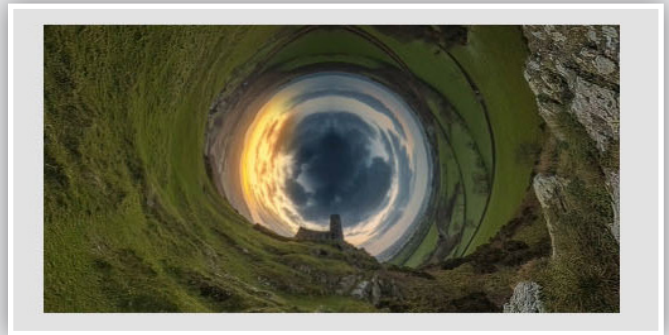
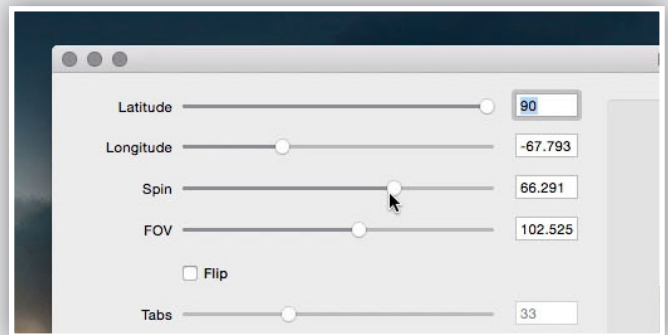
11 There are a number of plugins or applications that can automate the process for you. One such plugin, and a popular choice, is the Flexify 2 plugin by Flaming Pear. It is free to download and trial for 30 days.



12 When you open up your image and select Filter > Flaming Pear > Flexify 2 from your filter list it opens a dialog box with a wide array of options you can employ to distort your image.



13 For our purposes you need to select your Input as equirectangular and Output as stereographic. You can then play with the sliders at the top of the dialog box to alter size, rotation and nature of the effect.



14 Push the longitude slider to the right and you can turn the image inside out so your world would look like it was pasted to the inside of a cylinder.



It's a small world

Time to discover strange new worlds.

The Orton Technique

Add dreamlike watercolour effects to your images

The Orton technique is named after its creator Michael Orton. He developed the technique back in the 80's with slide film, sometimes referred to as an Orton slide sandwich. One shot was taken in perfect sharp focus and the other was completely

out of focus to register only light, dark and colour. Back in the darkroom, when the slides had been processed, the idea was to sandwich one sharp image and one out of focus image, align them, and print both of these at the same time. Of course, these days, this can

be done much more quickly and efficiently with digital files, but the basic idea remains the same. Some professional landscape photographers use this technique in their work today, albeit in a much more refined and subtle way. We will apply this technique to enhance a lovely landscape image.

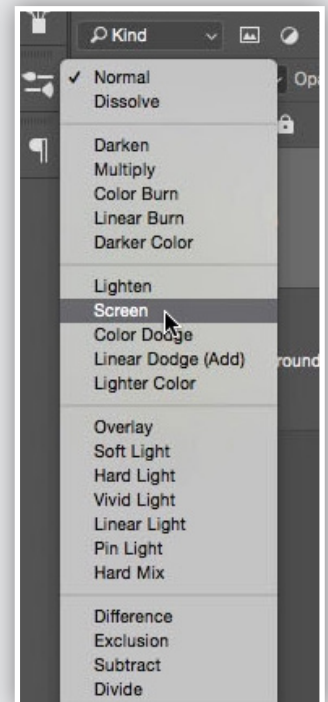
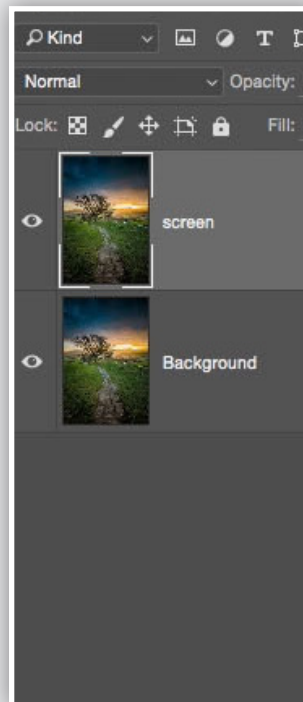
AFTER

BEFORE

▼
This tutorial content is available for download



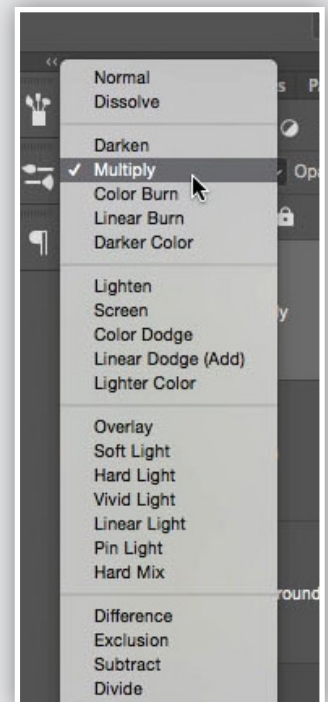
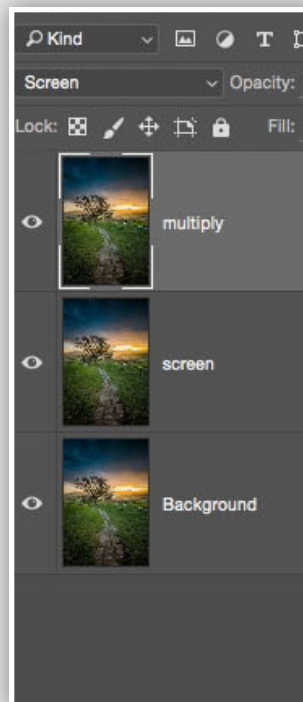
01 The first step is to choose a relevant image that will work well with the Orton effect applied. Scenes with leaves, grass and strong skies work particularly well. For our example we have a sunrise image.



02 Click on its layer thumbnail and press Cmd + J to create a duplicate. Rename this layer 'screen'. Make sure the screen layer is active and click on the Layer Blend Mode button at the top of the Layer Palette menu. Select Screen as your blend mode.



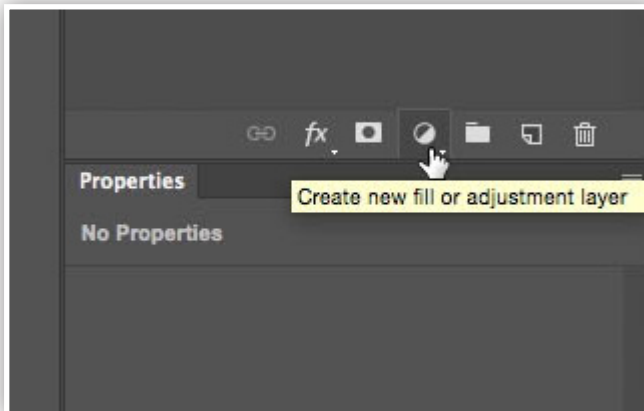
03 The brightness of the screen layer is added to the background layer and now appears very bright. Not to worry as the next steps will take care of this.



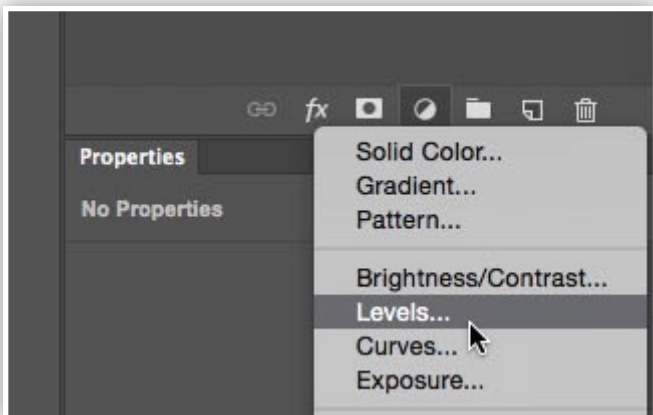
04 With the screen layer active press Cmd + J once again to create another duplicate. Name this layer 'multiply'. Again go to the Layer Blend Mode button, click and select Multiply as your blend mode for this layer.



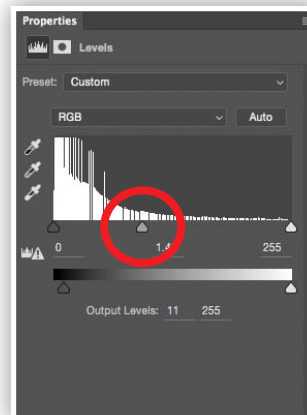
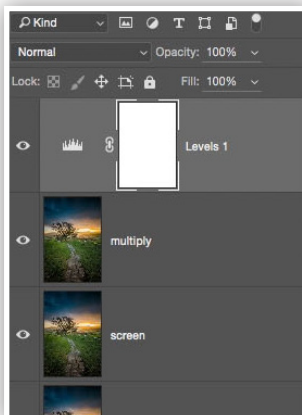
05 Now the image should appear to be very dark. That's ok though, at this point we can adjust the overall image brightness.



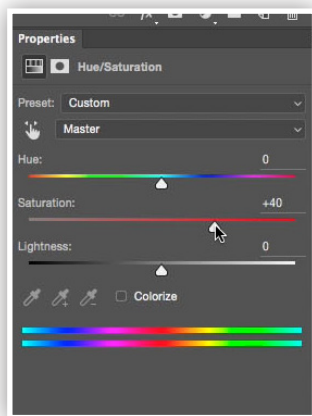
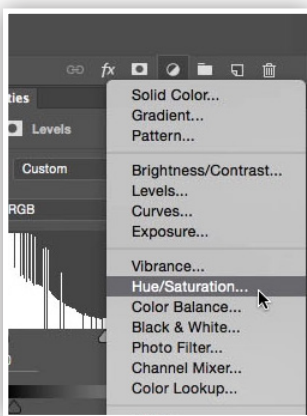
06 We will need to add an adjustment layer to modify the image brightness. Navigate to the Adjustments button at the bottom of the Layers Palette.



07 Click the button to open the Adjustments menu and select Levels.



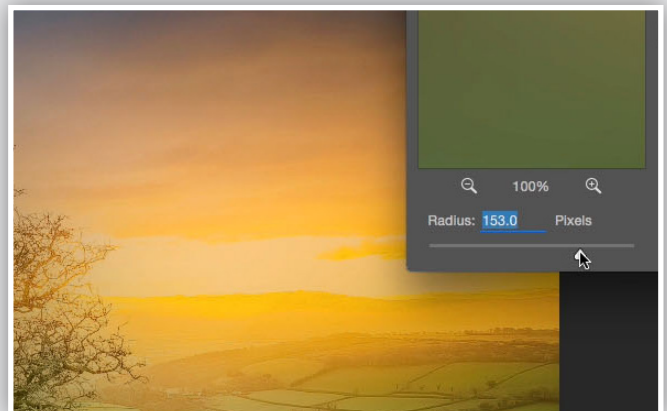
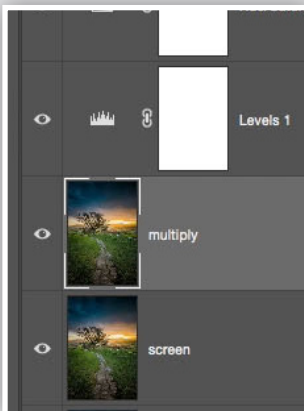
08 An Adjustment layer appears above your three current layers. With the Levels Adjustment active, its Properties tab will open and you can lighten the image by pulling the middle slider to the left. Adjust until it roughly matches the original image's brightness.



09 Click on your Adjustments button again and this time select Hue/Saturation. A Hue/Saturation adjustment layer will appear above your previous Levels adjustment. Increase Saturation until the image is as vivid as you prefer.

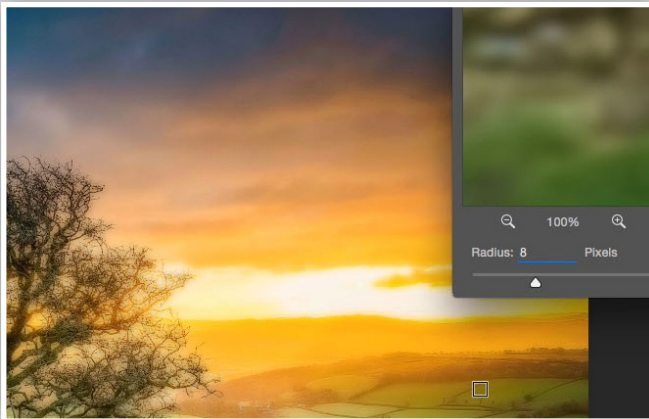


10 As mentioned in the introduction to this piece, the effect is created by one sharp image and one out of focus image. At this point all the layers contain sharp images, so we need to remedy that now.



11 Click on your multiply layer to activate it. Go to the top menu bar and select Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur.

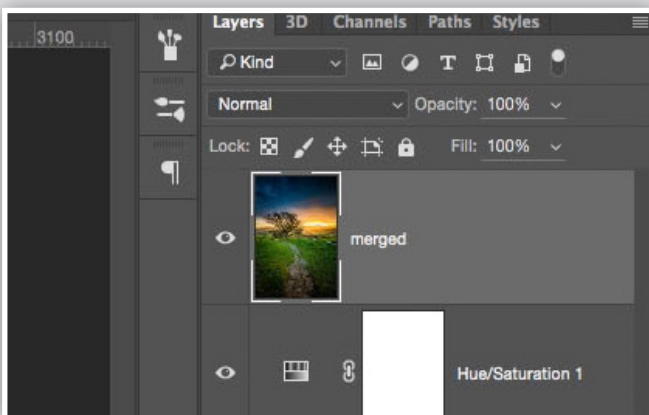
12 The Gaussian Blur dialog box will open and here you can set your blur value. This value is determined by the resolution of your image. Our example is 2100 pixels wide by 3200 pixels high.



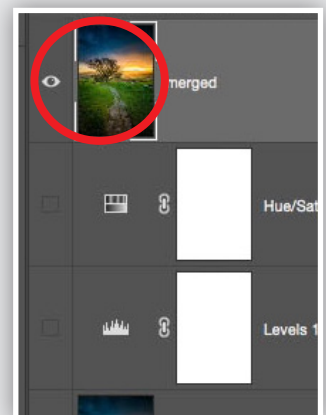
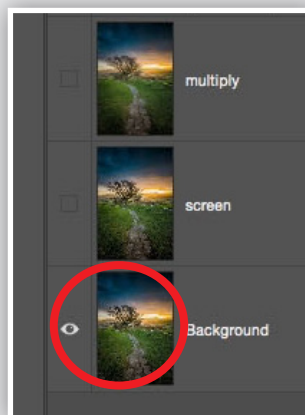
13 Very large values do not work very well at all for this effect. In fact even for an image the size of our example, only 8 pixels was enough to generate the soft, dreamy effect we were after.



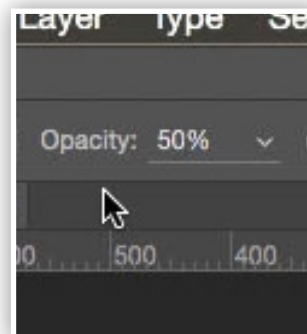
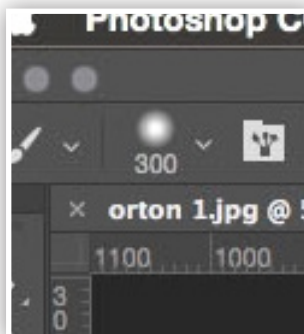
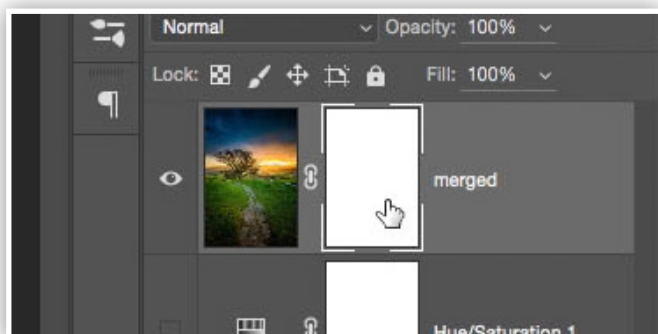
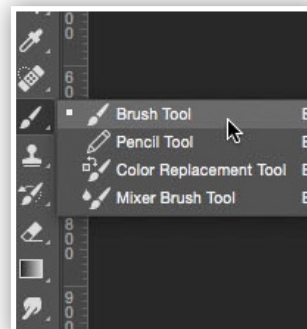
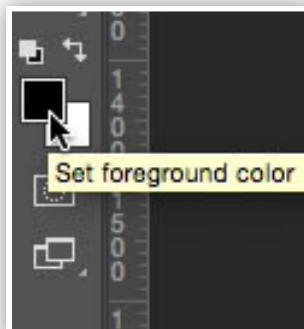
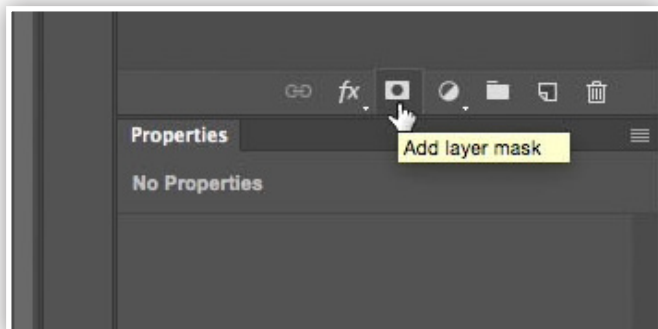
14 Now we have our 'Ortonized' image, we can take this a stage further now and use masking to bring some areas into sharper focus again. Areas like the stone path, rocks and tree can have the effect removed to draw the eye.



15 Click on your topmost layer to activate it then press Shift + Alt + Cmd + E to create a new layer that is the merged version of all current layers. Call this new layer 'merged'.

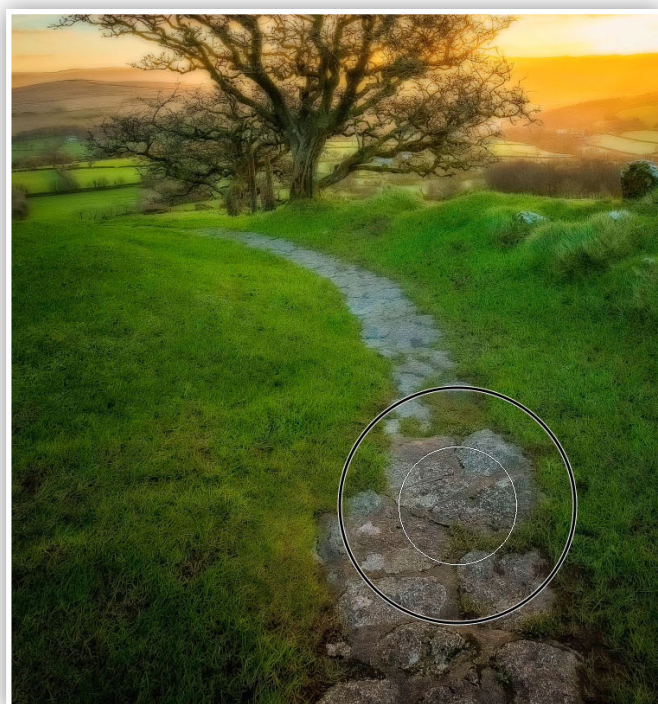


16 Turn off the visibility of all layers except your original 'Background' layer and this new 'merged' layer. These are the only two we need to combine in this next stage.



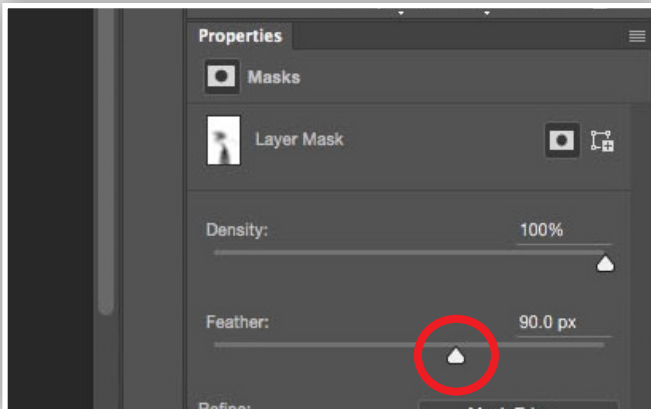
17 Click on the Add Layer Mask button at the bottom of the layers palette to add a mask to the 'merged' layer. Make sure the 'merged' layer mask thumbnail is active.

18 In the toolbar, make sure your Foreground Colour is set to black. Click on the Brush Tool icon (B) and choose a medium sized, soft brush. Set the opacity to about 50% so as not paint at full strength in one go.

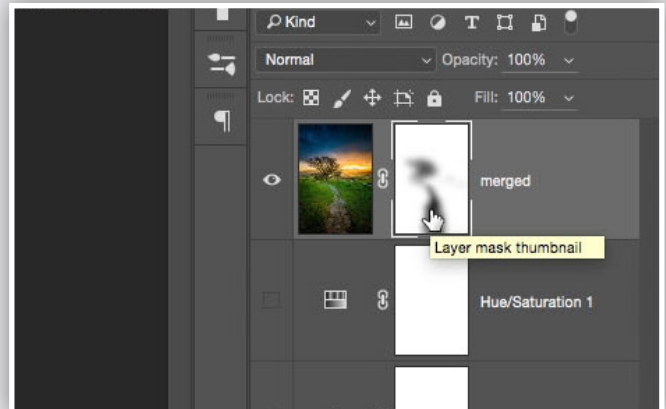


19 Now you can apply the black brush to the 'merged' layer mask (not the image itself) over the path, tree and rocks. As you brush, the dark areas of the mask lets more and more of the sharp 'Background' layer show through.

20 If you Alt + left-click on the layer mask thumbnail, you'll be able to see the results of your brushwork on the mask. Alt + left-click on the layer mask thumbnail again to return to normal view.



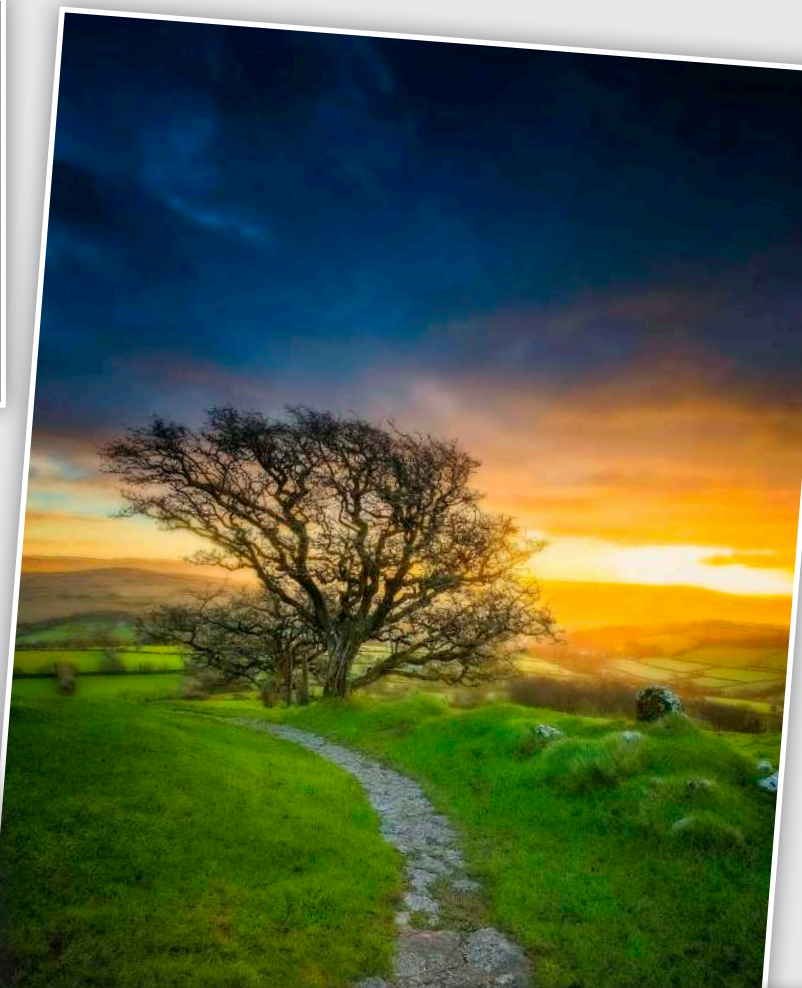
21 You can soften the layer mask by going to the Masks Properties panel and setting a Feather value of about 90 pixels. This adds another level of blur to your brush strokes and softens the blend of the 'merged' and 'Background' layers.



22 Your image now has a soft, ethereal glow in the sky and on the grass in the foreground, but the details of the stone path, tree and rocks are maintained by the mask that allows the background to show through.



23 You have your completed image. Now you can experiment with different strengths and application of this effect and turn your landscapes in dream-like masterpieces.



Dreamy landscapes

Photoshop makes enhancing your photos easy.



Pencil Sketch Effect

AFTER

BEFORE

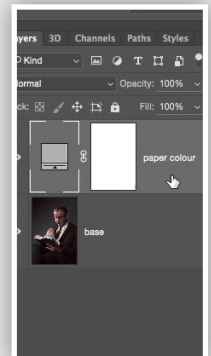
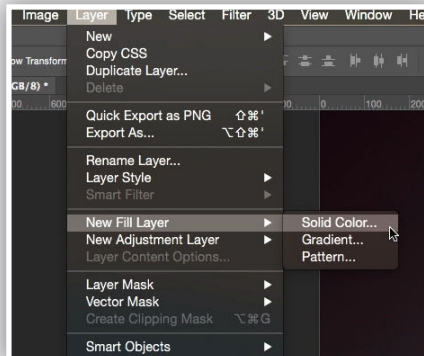


▼
This tutorial content is available for download

Start scribbling and unleash your inner artist

There may have been occasions when you have looked at one of your favourite photographs and wondered, 'what would it look like if it were drawn in pencil instead of being a photo?' Photoshop and all its photo editing counterparts offer various artistic filters that can turn your image into a watercolour or an oil painting. Some of them can be quite effective. However, the

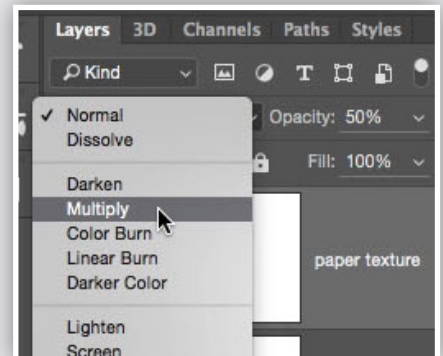
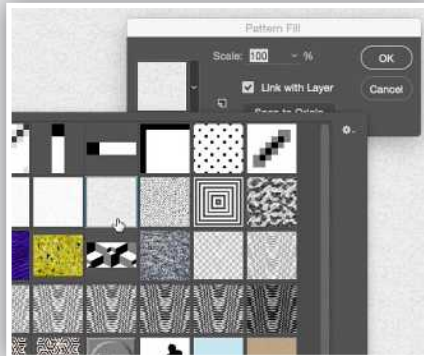
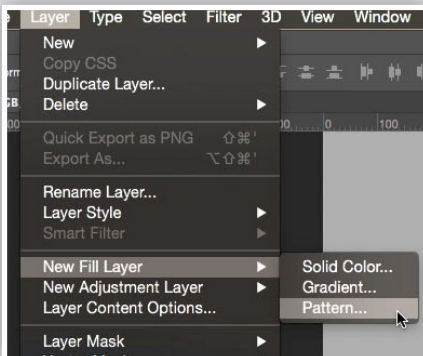
pencil sketch filter offered by Photoshop does not really capture the essence of a hand-drawn image. However, there is an approach in Photoshop that may take you a step closer to being able to create a more realistic pencil sketch effect. It requires your favourite image, a few Photoshop layers and a little patience. You don't need to be Leonardo Da Vinci to create a masterpiece - just the ability to scribble!



01 First things first. Open your image in Photoshop and label that layer 'base'. This is just a bit of housekeeping as we will be creating multiple copies of the base image as we progress.

02 We need to create all the materials that will give us our pencil sketch look. First is a grey layer that will be our paper colour. Click on Layer > New Fill Layer > Solid Color.

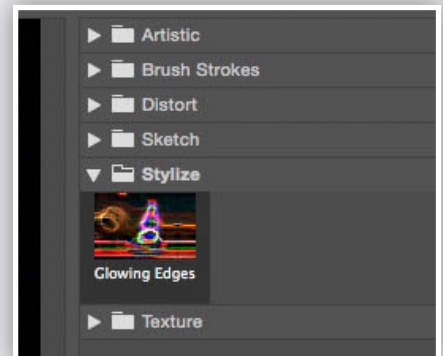
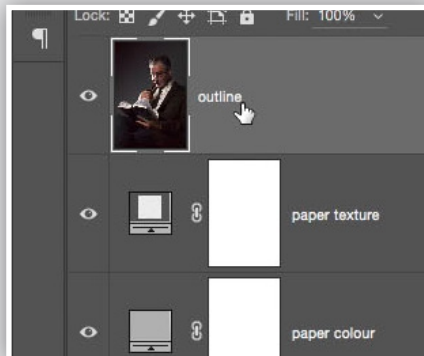
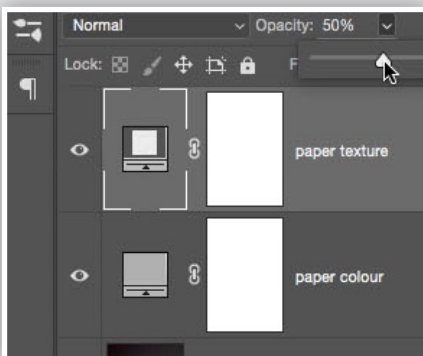
03 Name this new layer 'paper colour' and click OK. Use the colour picker to choose a colour for your paper. Choose a light grey and click OK. A new layer will appear named 'paper colour'.



04 A small amount of texture will add greatly to our sketch. Click on Layer > New Fill Layer > Pattern. Once again, a new dialog box will appear to let you name this new layer. Call it 'paper texture' and click OK.

05 Choose a texture for your paper. Pick something fairly subtle in black and white. Select your preferred texture and click OK. The new 'paper texture' layer will appear above the 'paper colour' layer.

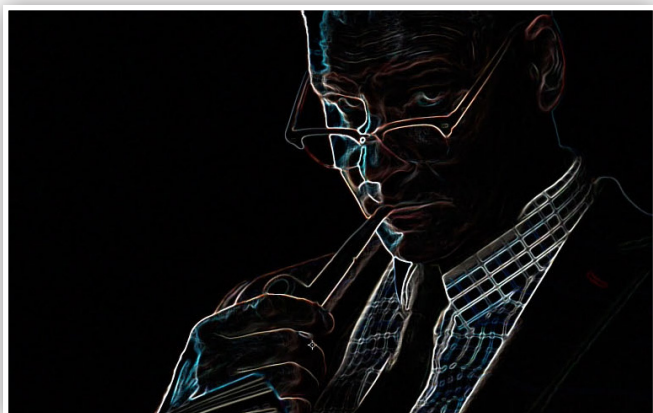
06 Making sure the texture layer is still selected, set its opacity to 50% and click on the Blend Modes button and set the blend mode to Multiply. The texture layer will now blend into the grey paper layer beneath.



07 Both texture and colour layers are kept separate so you can go back to each at any time and modify their values if you want to.

08 Click on your base layer to make it active and go to the top menu and select Layer > New Layer. You can use the shortcut Cmd + J if you prefer. Name this layer 'outline'. Make sure that this new layer is at the top of your layer stack.

09 We need an outline reference for when you start your drawing. Go to Layer > Filter Gallery and select Glowing Edges from the Stylize option panel. The settings you use will be dependent on the resolution of your image.



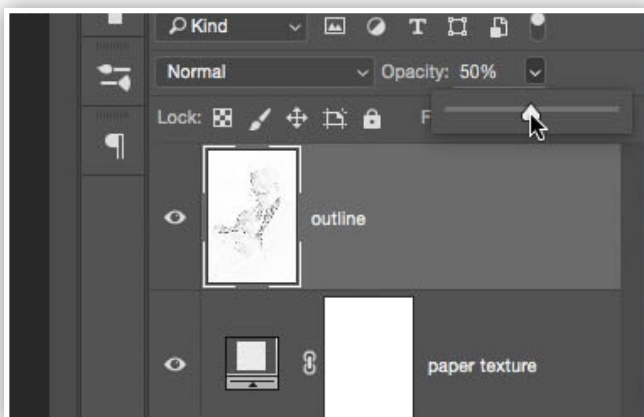
10 What you are looking for is a mostly black image with just the basic features of the face showing. When you are happy with the result, click OK.



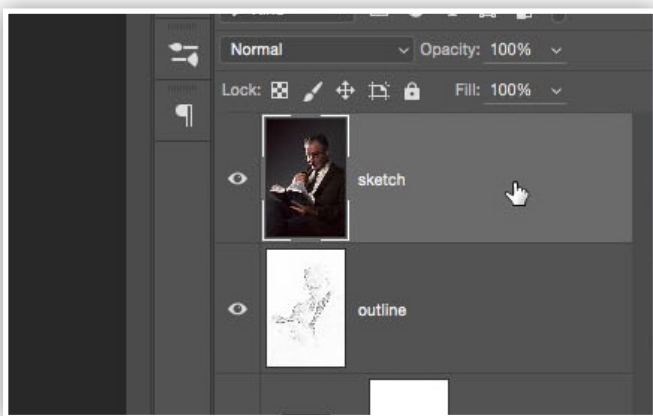
11 At the moment, this outline image is no good to us in its current state of white detail on black. Make sure your 'outline' layer is active and select Image > Adjustments > Invert (Cmd + I).



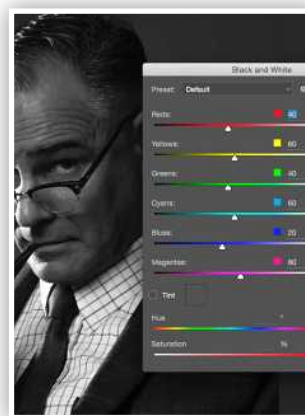
12 Now your image will have dark facial detail on a white background. Go to Image > Adjustments > Desaturate (Shift+Cmd+U) to remove any colour from the image.



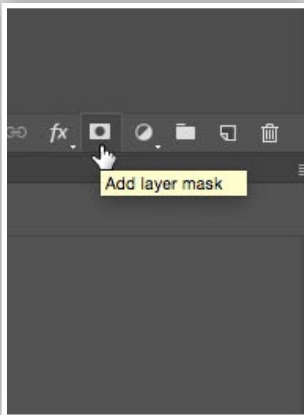
13 From the Layers menu, make the opacity 50% and set the Blend Mode to Multiply. The outline will now be blended into the grey textured paper layer below it in the stack.



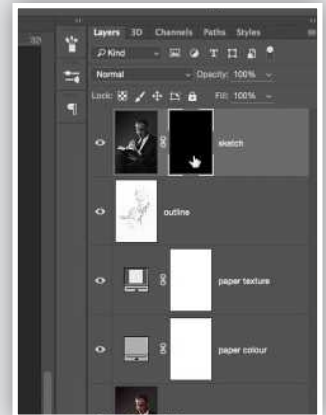
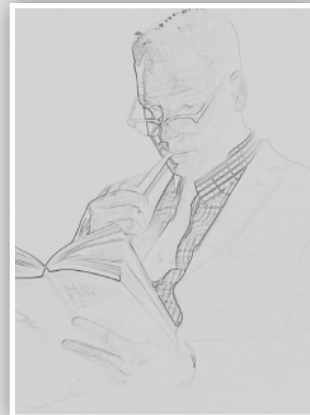
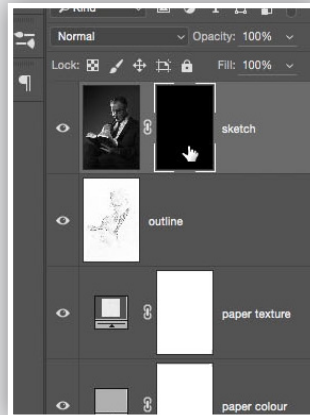
14 As you did in step 8, click your 'base' layer to make it active, duplicate it, name it 'sketch' and drag this new layer to the very top of the stack. We now need to convert this image to black and white.



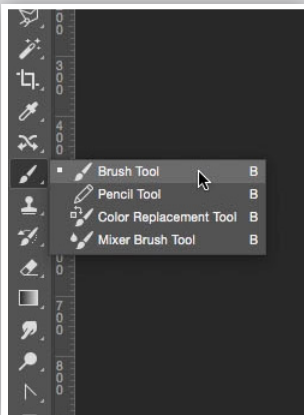
15 Go to Image > Adjustments > Black & White (Alt + Shift + Cmd + B). How you convert to black and white is down to personal taste, but it is a good idea to make the image quite contrasty to help with the sketch effect later.



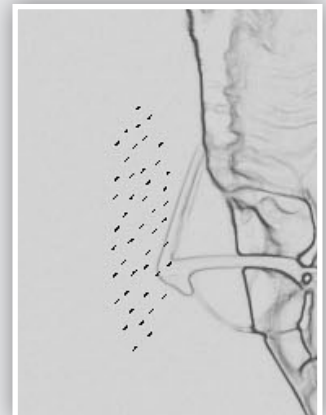
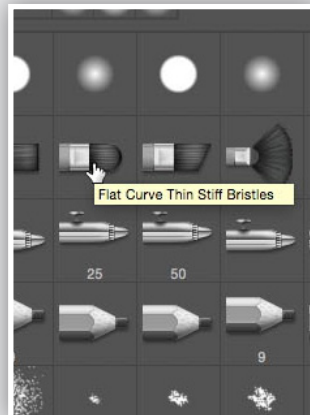
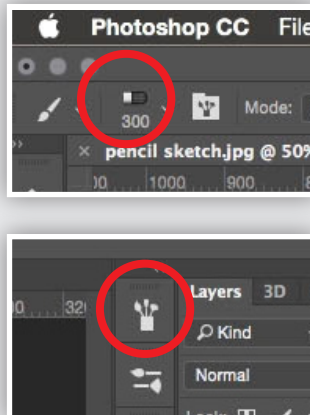
16 Now make sure your black and white 'sketch' layer is active and select Add Layer Mask from the bottom of your layers panel. If your layer mask is white, just hit Cmd + I to invert it so it is black.



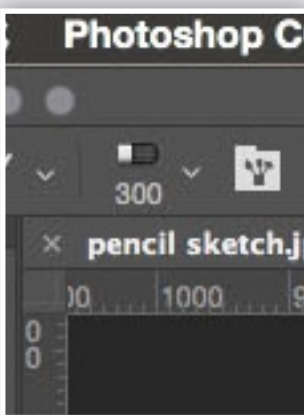
17 When you do this, it will be hidden from view because the mask is now black and preventing the image from showing through, and all you will see is the outline and paper layers below. Now we need something to sketch with.



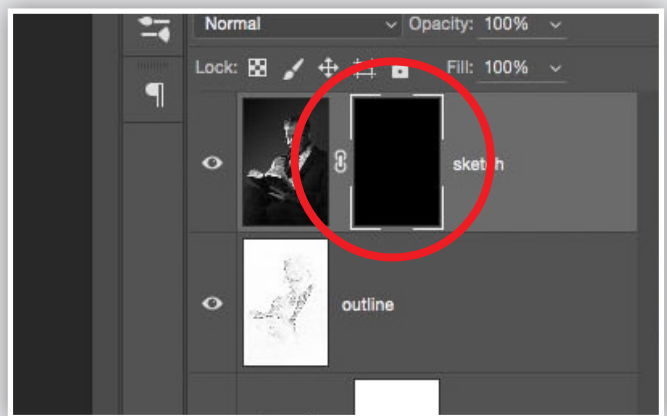
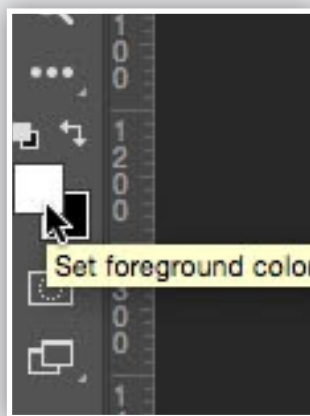
18 Make sure you have the brush tool selected from your toolbox on the left side or just press B. You can either select a brush from the top left options menu or click on the Brush Presets tab pinned to your layer panel on the right.



19 Rather than a pencil, it is actually better to choose a bristle-type brush. The bristles act like multiple pencils and will save you time. The Flat Curve Thin Stiff Bristles brush with its default settings is a good option.



20 The brush size is 300 pixels. Make sure your Foreground Color is white. Pressing D will make sure foreground and background default to black and white. Now you can start your sketch.



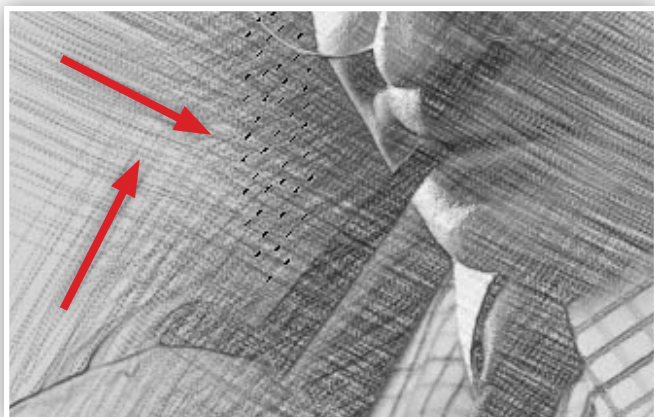
21 With your 'sketch' layer active, click on your layer mask thumbnail to select it. You are going to use your brush on this layer mask, not the image. You have the outline on the layer below as a reference.



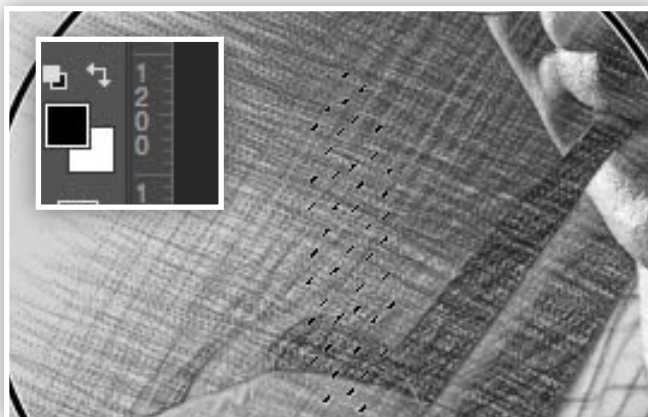
22 Click and hold the left mouse button and drag your brush across the layer mask with broad strokes as if you are brushing paint with a real brush. As you are painting white onto the mask, each stroke gradually starts to reveal more of the black and white image.



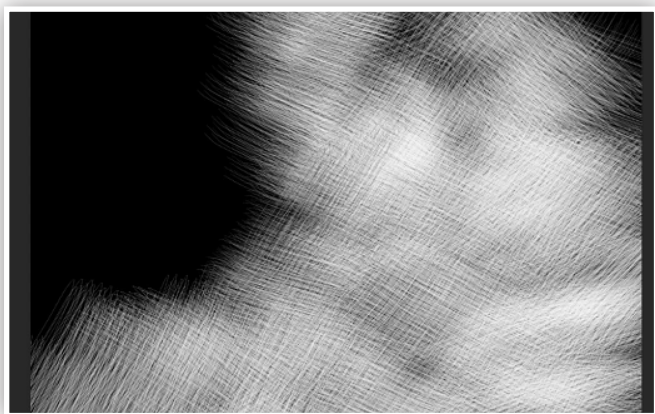
23 Because the image is being revealed through the strokes of the brush, the image appears to have been sketched by a series of cross-hatched pencil strokes.



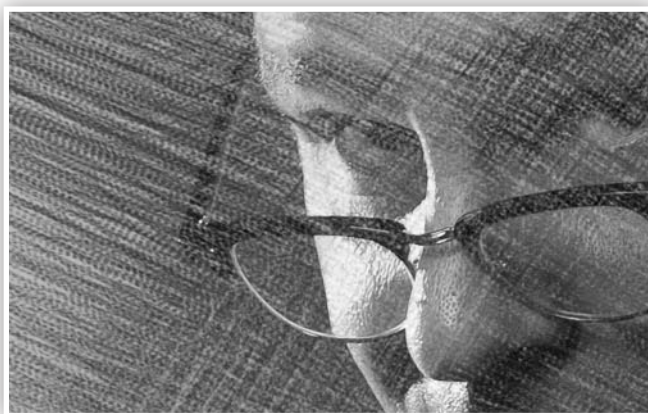
24 Using a mouse to draw in this fashion can be a bit odd, but as you progress you'll find it becomes quite easy. Draw the mouse across the image at opposing angles, building the density of the strokes as you do so.



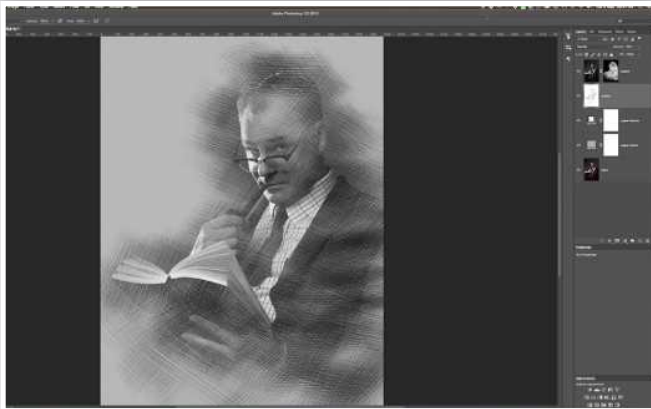
25 It is down to your artistic vision to sketch in a way that pleases you. If at any time you make a mistake, simply press X to toggle your brush to black and paint any brush strokes out. Then press X again and resume drawing with your white brush.



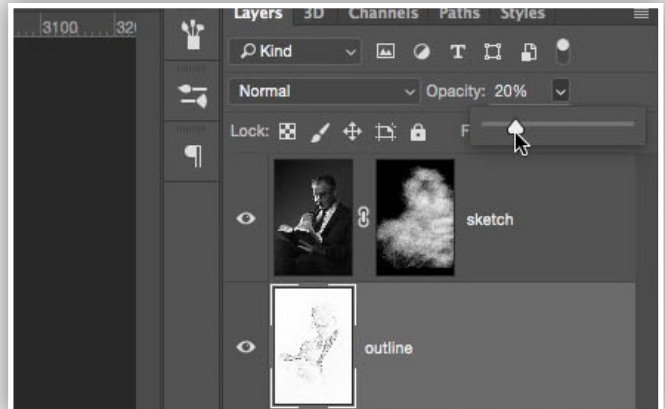
26 If you were to Alt + left click on the layer mask thumbnail you've been working on, you can view the mask on its own. This shows you how all the brush strokes have built up to create the pencil sketch effect.



27 The idea now is to reveal as little or as much of the black and white image as you prefer. Bear in mind that as you build the number of white brush strokes on the mask, they will eventually merge and disappear.



28 The texture of those brush strokes will gradually disappear and you could be left with your original black and white image looking like nothing has been done to it. Just paint away until you have something pleasing to your eye.



29 At this point you can change the opacity of the 'outline' layer to about 20%. This reduces the impact of the hard outlines, enhances the artistic effect and sells the sketched feel. Your sketch is completed.



Digital artistry

Who thought scribbling could be so creative?

Selective Colour Effect

AFTER

BEFORE

Converting to black and white but keeping a little splash of colour

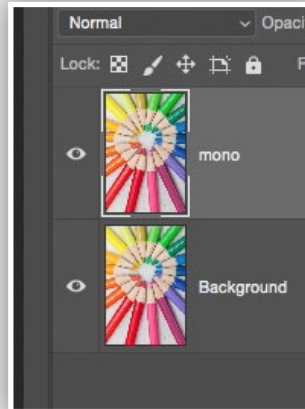
It is quite popular to convert your images to black and white, but then to return part of the image to its original colour. This is done to create a small splash of colour that is instantly picked out of its surroundings to draw the eye to that point. It is a simple and fun way to enhance your black and white images. We show you how it's done in this simple tutorial.



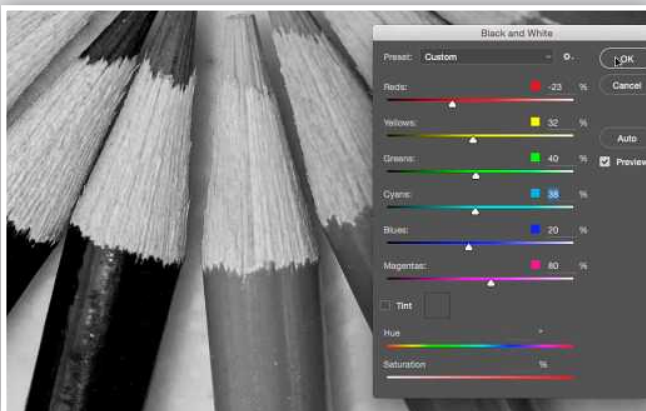
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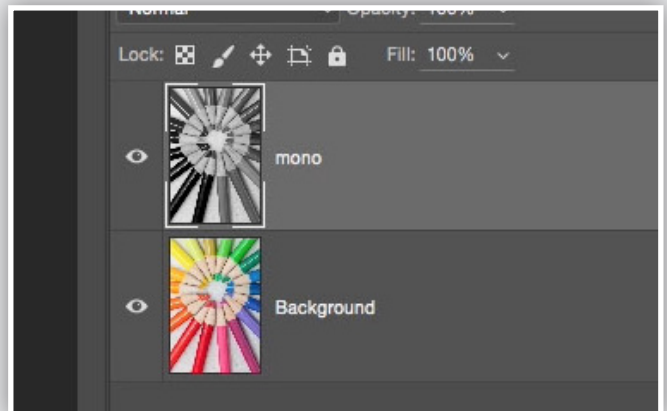
01 First of all, you will need a colour original. We have used a shot of some coloured pencils on a neutral background. We have a great range of colours that should convert to black and white with no issue.



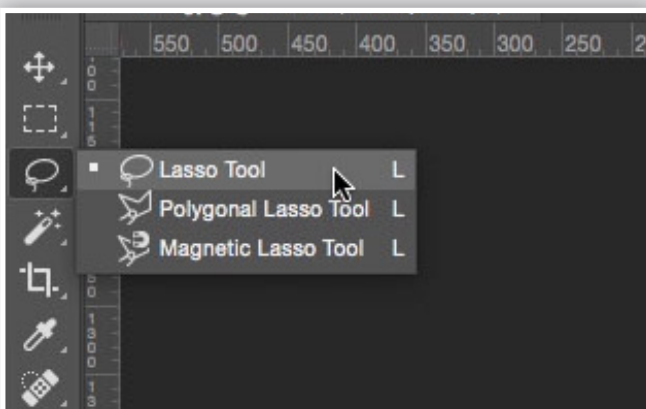
02 Create a duplicate image by pressing Cmd + J and name it 'mono'. Select that duplicate and go to Image > Adjustments > Black & White.



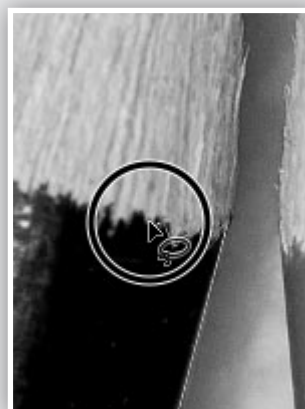
03 We do our conversion to mono. We've brought out a lot of mid-tone detail and added some contrast to make the image quite punchy, but keeping a good range of tones.



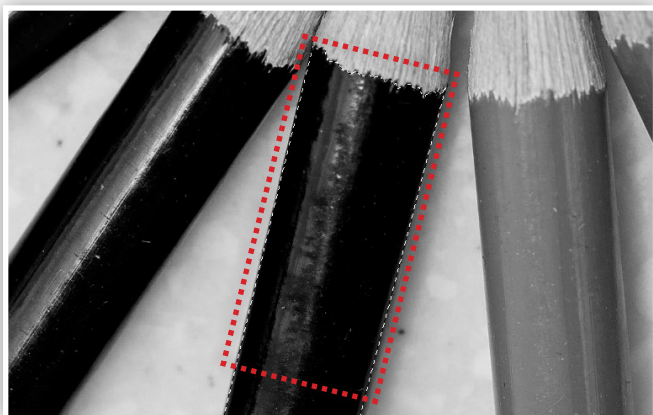
04 You now have the newly created black and white copy 'mono' as your top layer, and your colour original on the layer below.



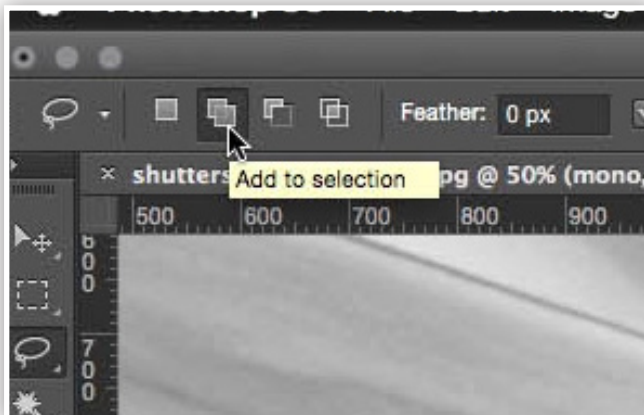
05 Make sure the 'mono' layer is active and go to the toolbar and choose the Lasso Tool (L). We will be using this tool to define an area of the image that will reappear in colour.



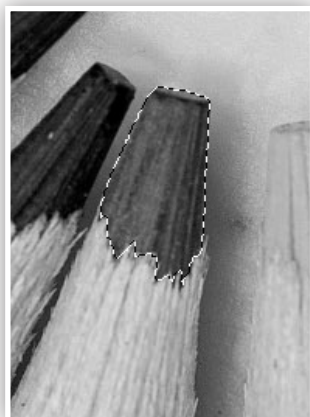
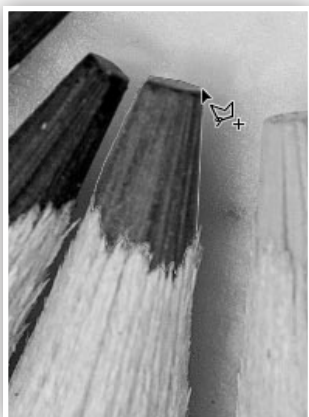
06 You can draw in a free form fashion using the Lasso Tool as if you were drawing with a pencil. If you prefer, you can use the Polygonal Lasso Tool which draws in a series of connected straight lines by clicking on a point-to-point basis.



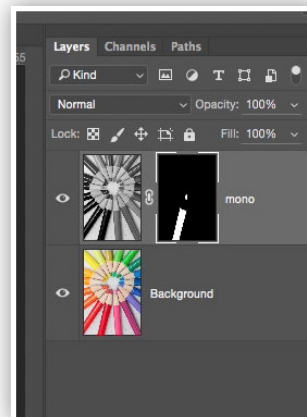
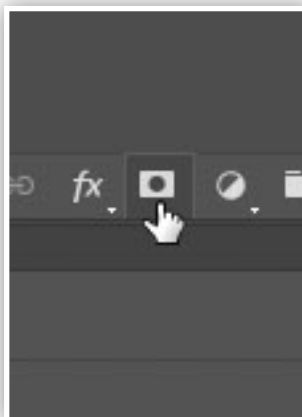
07 Whatever your preferred selection method, select the main body of one pencil. When you have drawn around an area and join up the selection, you will see the marching ants appear.



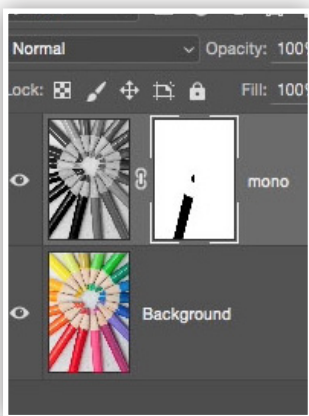
08 Now, Go to the content menu at the top left of the screen and choose Add to selection. Your cursor will now have a small + symbol, indicating it will now be able to add another selection to the one you have already.



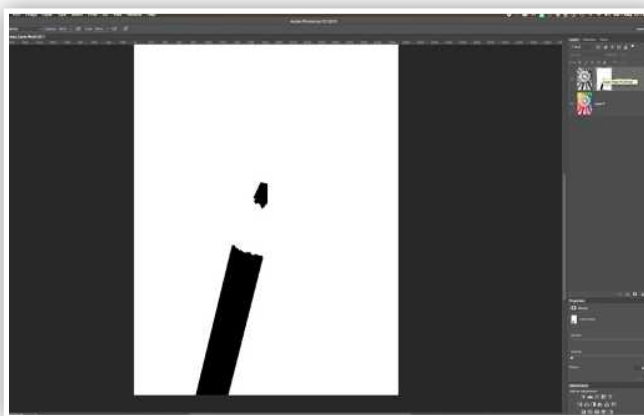
09 Using the method from step 6, add the pencil tip to the selection. Again, when you join up the tip selection, marching ants will show you now have the pencil body and tip selected.



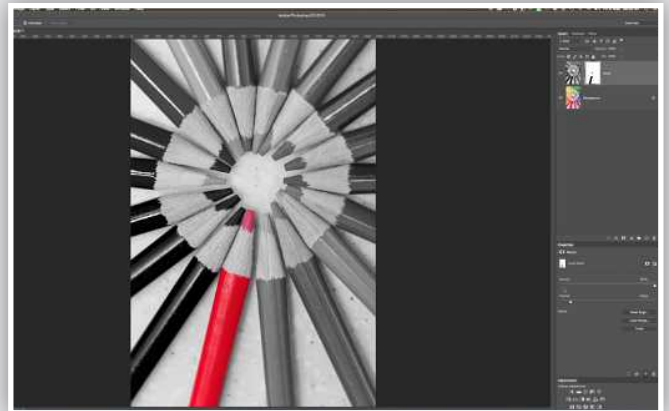
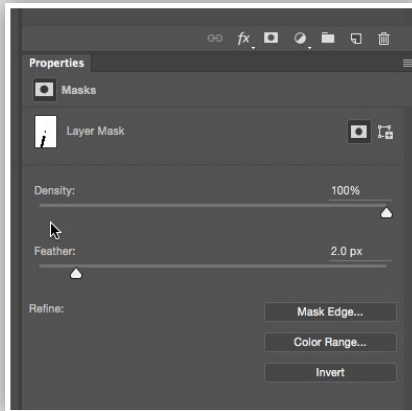
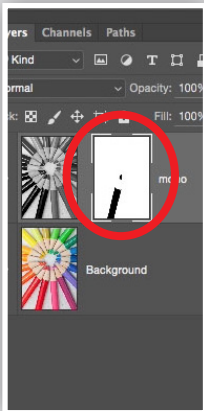
10 Now we can create a mask. With the 'mono' layer still active, go to the bottom of your layers palette and click on the Add layer mask button. A layer mask will be added to the 'mono' layer in the shape of your selection.



11 The mask needs to be white, with the actual selection filled in black. If it is the other way around, just press Cmd + I to invert the colours of the mask. The mask on the 'mono' layer is allowing part of the coloured original to show through.



12 If you Alt + left-click on the layer mask, you can view the mask in isolation. Press Alt + left-click on the mask thumbnail again to go back to your main view.



13 Click on the layer mask thumbnail to make sure it is active and then click on the properties panel and add a small amount of feather to the mask. About 2-3 pixels is enough to soften the hard edges of the mask.

14 There is your black and white image with a splash of colour. Now you know how to do it. How about converting more of your favourite image to mono and finding a cool, colourful, point of interest to 'pop' out of your shot.



Make colour 'pop'

Black and white with a cool splash of colour.

Replace Dull Skies



AFTER

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BEFORE



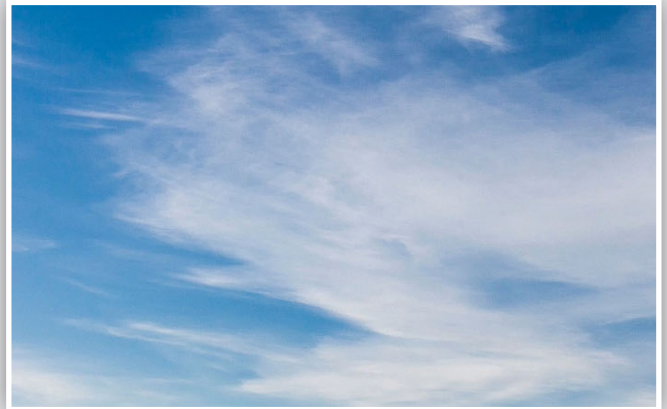
Add drama to a dull sky

In the UK, the weather is neither the most predictable nor the sunniest and let's be fair, it is the butt of many jokes. However the law of averages says that sometimes, just sometimes, it must work in our favour. Suddenly you have a gorgeous clear day and out you go, shooting away without a care in the world. When you get home and review your shots, you realise that the cloudless sky looks too bland. A sky without

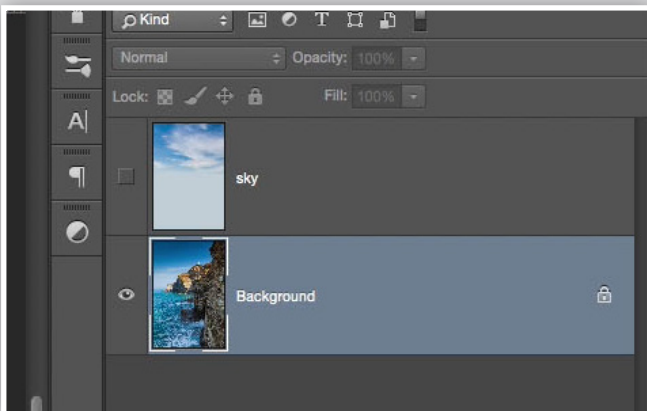
clouds just isn't as exciting to look at. It is ironic though, that the lovely blue sky is very helpful in adding a totally new one! We could go straight for the Refine Edge tool but as is the way in Photoshop, there's more than one way to approach this technique. Here's a nice quick and easy method that works well with blue sky replacement.



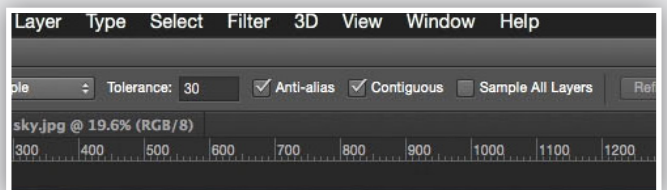
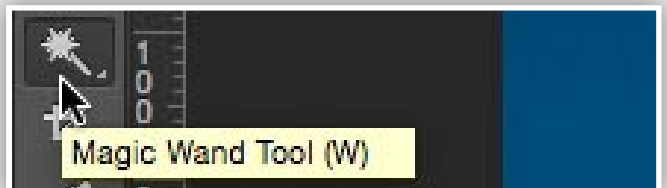
01 We have our original image which was taken on a lovely day but the sky is a little boring, so we can use the blue sky to help us select this area to fill with a new, more interesting sky.



02 You need to choose something that won't look out of place or just plain odd when you drop it into your original image. Try to pick a sky with similar lighting conditions and shot from a similar perspective.



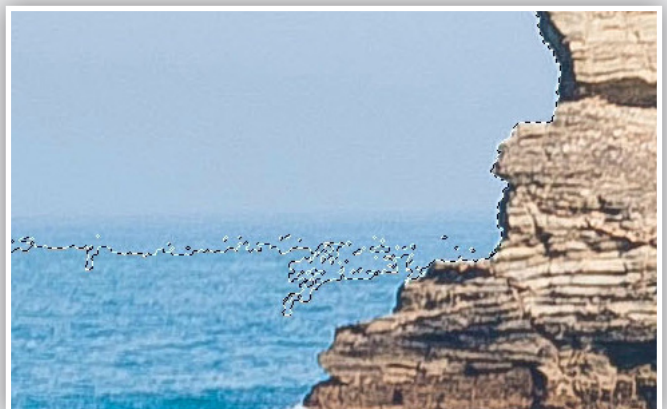
03 Now copy your sky image and paste it into your original scene. You should now have two layers, the base layer and a new layer above it covering the area we want to replace, which we shall name 'sky'. For the moment, make this layer invisible.



04 Make sure the 'Background' layer is active and go to the toolbar and select the Magic Wand Tool (W). Set the Tolerance to about 30 and check both the Anti-alias and Contiguous boxes.



05 Click the cursor in the sky area and a selection will be made. Press the Shift key and a small plus symbol appears by the cursor and you can continue to click and add more areas of the sky to the selection.



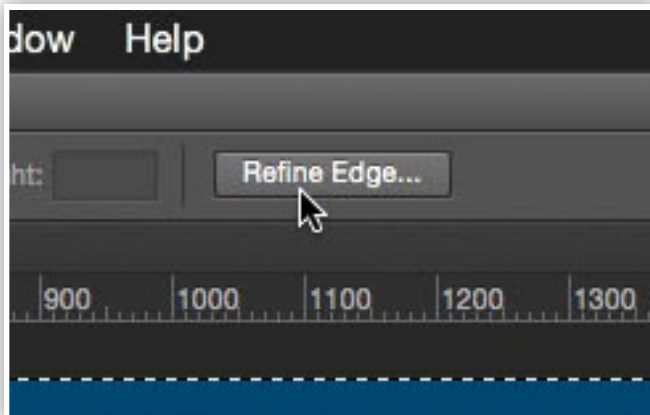
06 Because the neighbouring cliff edge is tonally different, the Magic Wand will only pick up areas of the blue sky. As you get down to the sea, it will have more trouble telling the difference between sky and sea. That's not a problem.



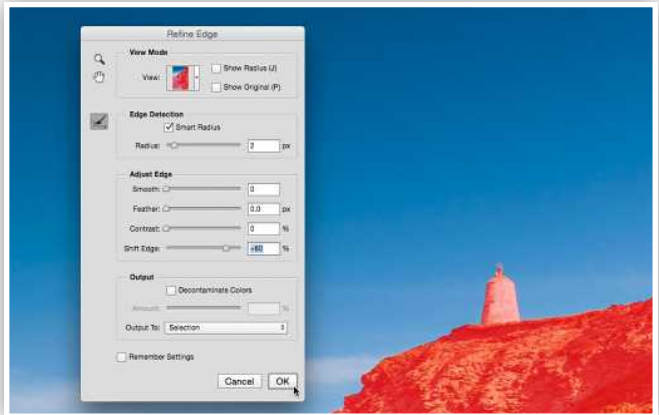
07 Go to the toolbar and select the Rectangular Marquee Tool (M). Press the Alt key and a small minus symbol will appear next to the cursor. Drag a rectangular selection that runs along the horizon and also encompasses any stray selection areas in the sea.



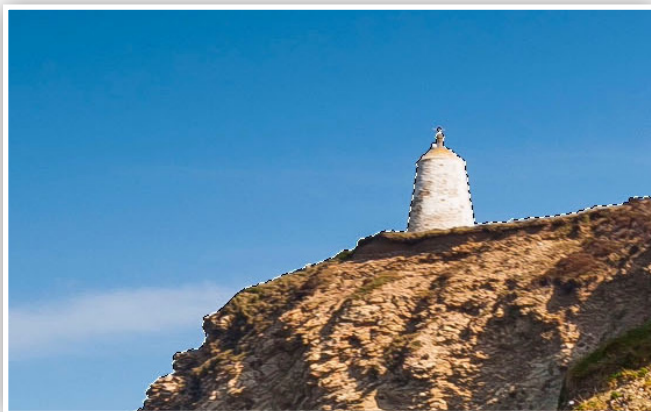
08 When you let the mouse button go, the marquee you just drew will clip the selection and you will have a nice sharp line on the horizon. You now have your basic selection of the sky area, outlined by the 'marching ants'.



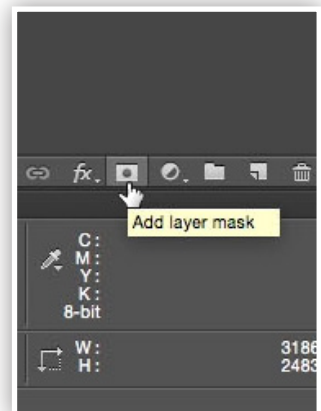
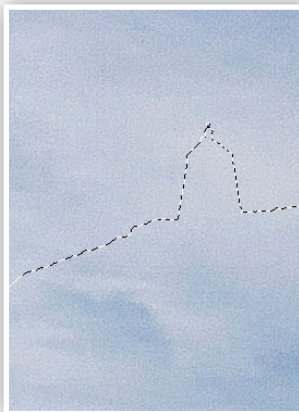
09 With the selection still active, click on the Refine Edge button at the top of the screen. This will open the Refine Edge dialog box.



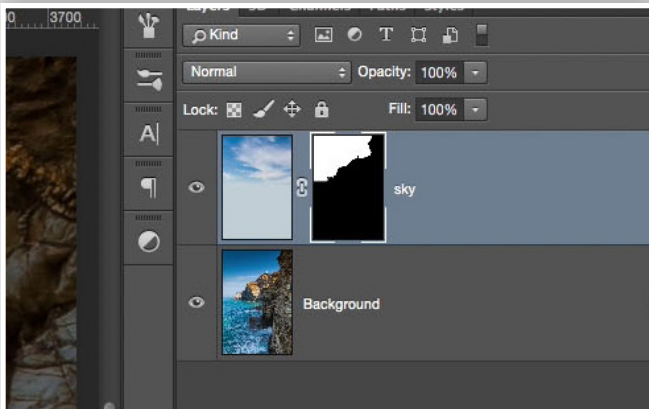
10 Make sure the Smart Radius box is checked and make the Radius about 2px. Make the Shift Edge value about +60% and click OK.



11 A much more accurate selection will be made, more closely following the edge of the cliff edge to give a cleaner line.



12 Click back on the 'sky' layer and make it visible again. You will be able to see your selection outlined against the new sky. Keep the 'sky' layer active and click the Add Layer Mask button at the bottom of the layers palette.



13 The new 'sky' layer will have a mask added to it in the shape of the selection you created. Anything white in the mask allows the new sky to be seen, any part of the mask in black allows the Background layer to show through instead.



14 Your new sky is in place, making the overall picture more interesting. You need never have to worry about a featureless blue sky again.



The sky's the limit

Never suffer a dull sky again.

The Tilt-Shift Effect



AFTER

BEFORE

A fun way to create the illusion of miniature environments

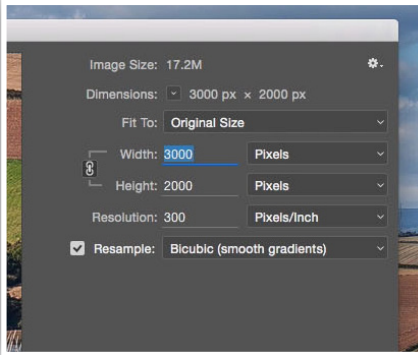
The Tilt-Shift effect is a process in which an image of a life-size location or object is made to look like a miniature or scale model. It employs the use of very shallow depth of field more commonly associated with macro or close-up photography. The shallow depth of field creates the illusion that the scene is much smaller than it really is. The best images to benefit from this effect are often taken with wide angle lenses

from an elevated position and include objects that give the image a sense of scale. Things such as people, cars, trees and buildings are ideal. This enhances the sense of looking down over a miniature world. There is not necessarily any hard and fast rule as to what will work and what won't. Generally, images with lots of detail seem to give good results once the effect is applied.

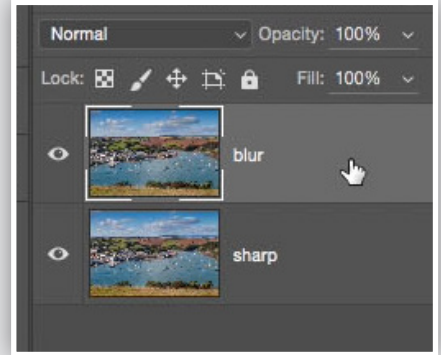
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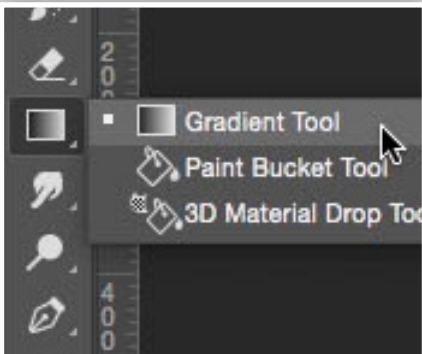
01 Adding the Effect Manually is good practice to learn first because it does offer a little more flexibility when it comes to how and where the effect is applied to the image and it is very simple anyway.



02 For your reference, our sample image is 3000 pixels wide by 2000 pixels high. The effects we apply in this tutorial is based on this image size.



03 Our base layer is named 'sharp'. We're going to keep this and work on a duplicate layer by pressing Cmd + J and naming this new layer 'blur'.



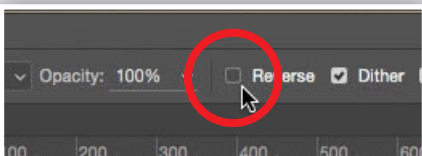
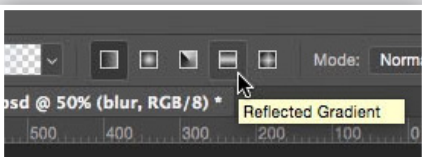
04 Next we need to make sure the Gradient Tool is selected in the toolbar (press G). We now need to specify the kind of gradient we are going to apply.



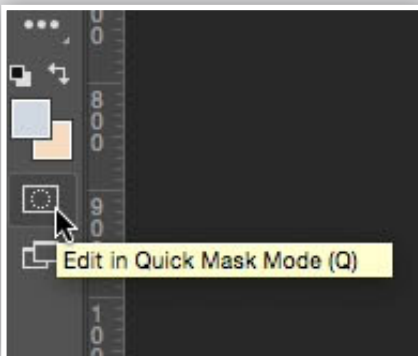
05 Because we are simulating extremely shallow depth of field, we have to have a horizontal area in our image that is sharp and contains the main focus of our image.



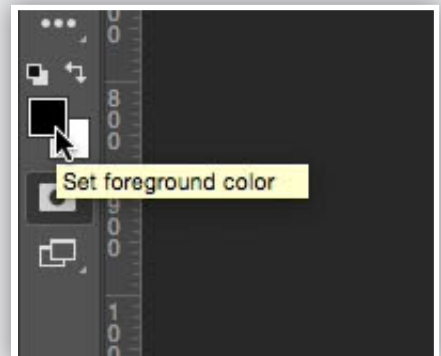
06 Above and below this area, we want an increasing amount of blur to create the look we are after.



07 Go to the top menu bar and select Reflected Gradient as our fill type. You will also need to make sure that the fill option Reverse is not checked. This will give us the gradient type that we need.



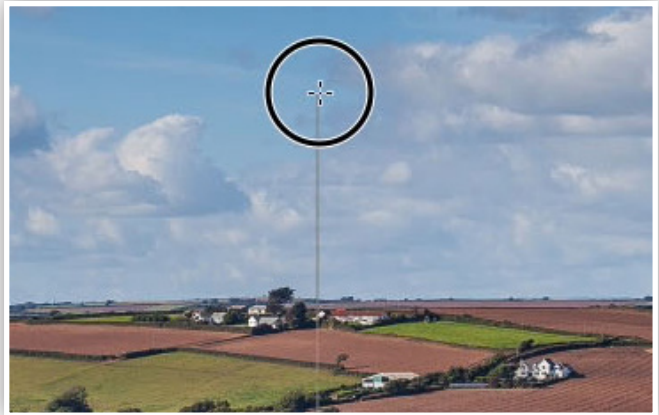
08 The next step is to create a mask that will protect the areas we want to stay sharp and allow the rest of the image to be blurred. From the left toolbar, click the Edit In Quick Mask Mode button (press Q).



09 Quick Mask allows the adding of a mask that, in this case, will be defined by the gradient we are going to apply next. Before you do, make sure your Foreground Colour is set to black.



10 If you click and hold the left mouse button on your image in the place that needs to remain the sharpest, you can draw your cursor line upwards to the point where you want the blur effect to be the strongest.



11 Holding the Shift key while you do this will ensure the cursor is constrained to the vertical to keep your gradient horizontal.



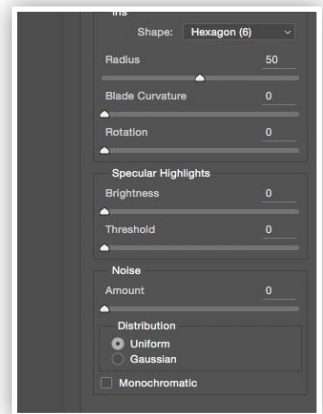
12 When you let the mouse button go, your gradient will be applied. Because the fill type was set as Reflected Gradient, the mask will appear in red both above and below the start point you selected.



13 Clicking back on the Edit in Quick Mask Mode (or pressing Q again) will take you out of masking mode and leave the gradient you created as a selection on the top and bottom of the image.



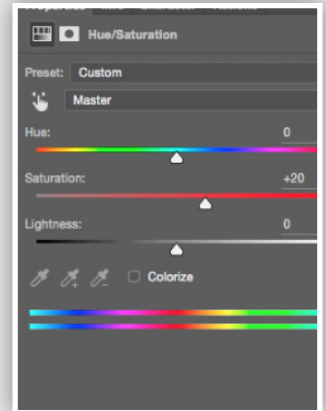
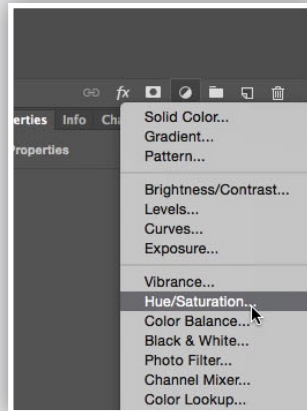
14 If the selection is in the middle only, press Shift+Cmd+I to invert the selection. These are the areas that will be affected by the blurring procedure.



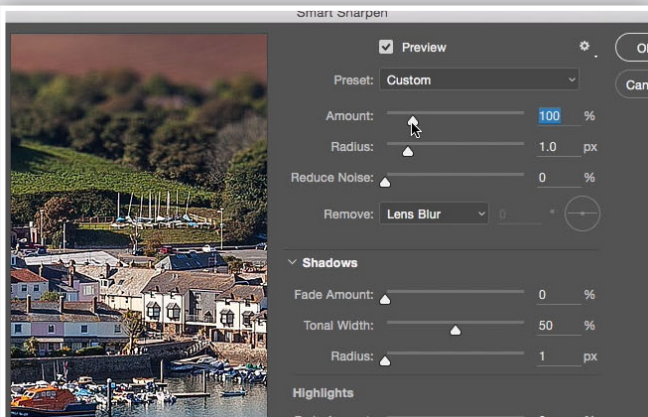
15 If you now go Filter > Blur > Lens Blur it will call up the Lens Blur dialog box where you can apply the effect. It also shows you a preview of the end result so you can judge just how much blur you need.



16 The blur starts to increase gradually both above and below our main subject, but the mask keeps the boats and houses sharp. Hit OK and apply the blur and press Cmd + D to clear the selection.



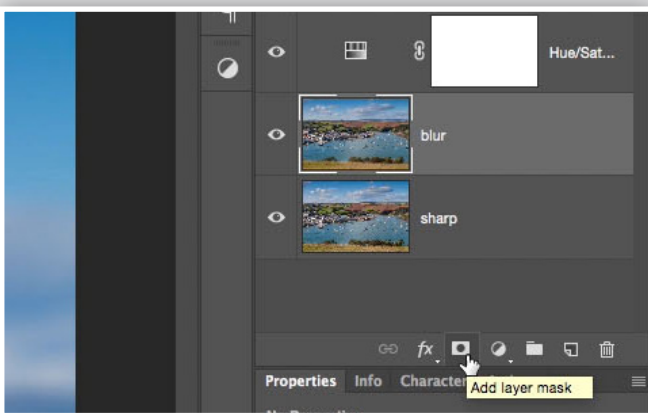
17 Saturation can increase the scale feel. Click on the Create New Adjustment Layer button and select Hue/Saturation to add an adjustment layer to the top of your layer stack and make the Saturation value about +20.



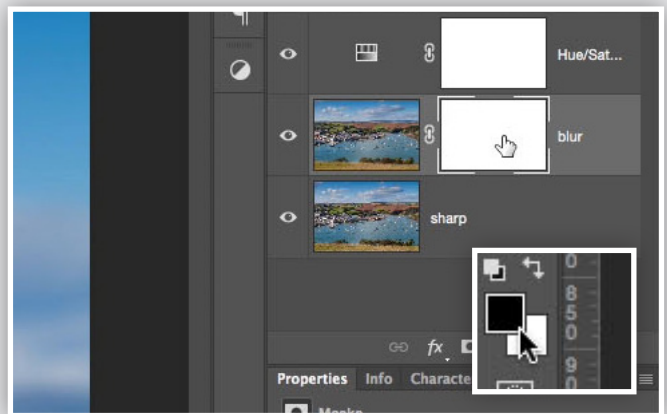
18 With the 'blur' layer active, select Filter > Sharpen > Smart Sharpen and add a level of sharpen. This also adds to the effect and your tilt-shift image is almost complete.



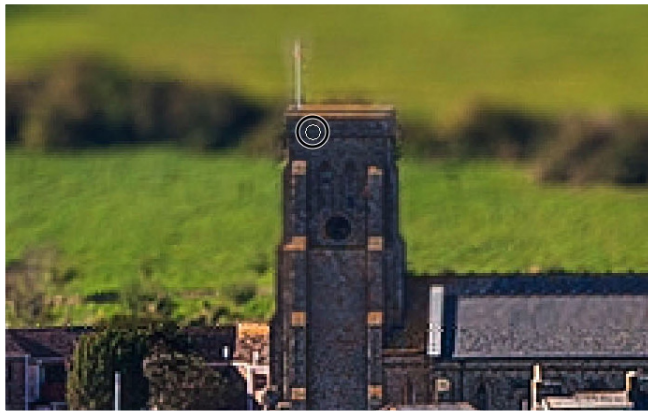
19 You may notice that certain areas are blurred when logically, if this were a scale model, it would be more in focus than what is directly behind it. We can amend that issue next with a simple layer mask.



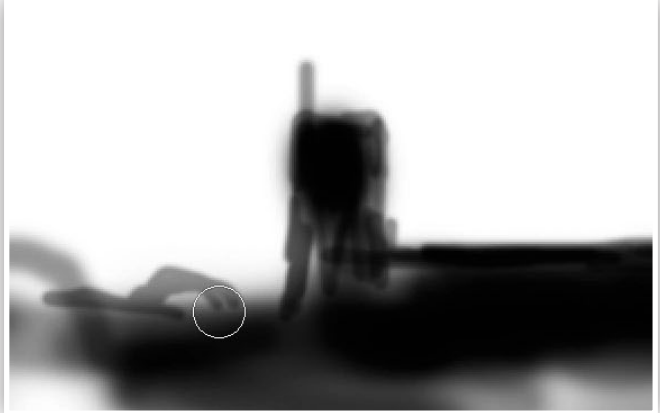
20 Make sure your 'Blur' layer is active and click on the Add Layer Mask button to add a mask to the 'blur' layer. Make sure the 'sharp' layer below is tuned on and visible.



21 We can mask certain areas of this 'bur' layer and reveal some of the sharp original beneath. Click on the layer mask thumbnail to activate it and make sure your Foreground Colour is black.



22 Use a small soft brush and begin to paint black on the layer mask on areas such as the church steeple, houses, and trees that range either side of it to reveal the sharp layer underneath.



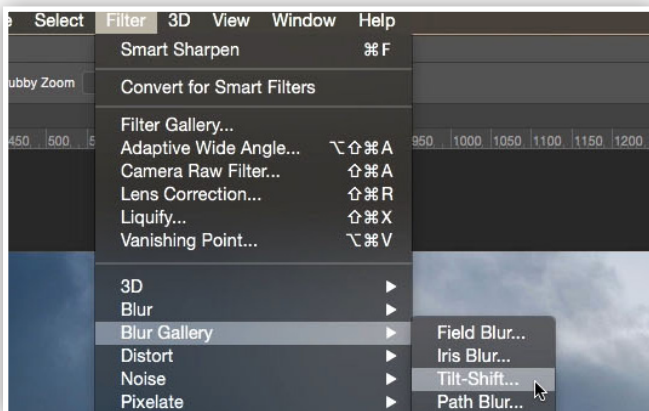
23 If you Alt + left click on the layer mask thumbnail, you can view it in isolation. You won't need too much, just try to create a slightly more defined roofline. Alt + left click again to return to normal view.



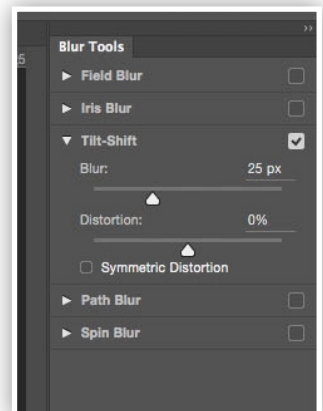
24 Now it looks a little more like the houses and church at the top of the village are more in focus than the fields directly behind them, helping with the scale model effect. Now your image is complete.



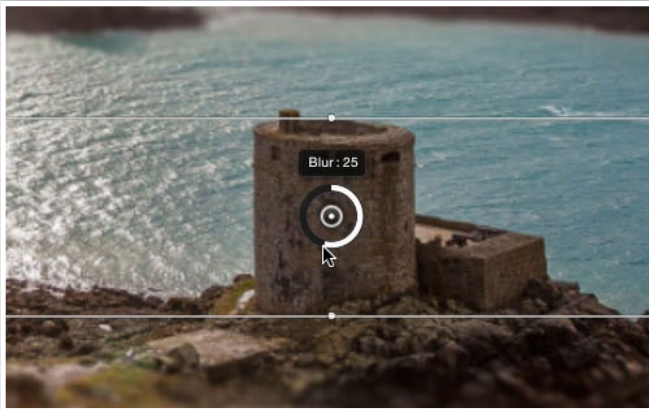
25 Next we can try a new image that measures 3100 pixels wide and 1700 pixels high, and this time we will use the Tilt-Shift tools provided within Photoshop itself to create our miniature world effect.



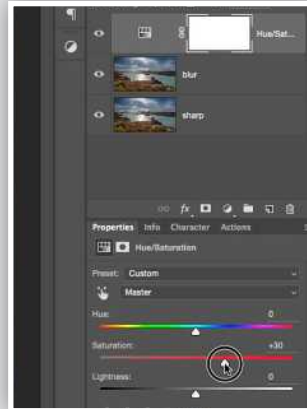
26 Since the introduction of Photoshop CS6, the program now includes a specific Tilt-Shift blur tool. It can be found under Filter > Blur > Tilt-Shift or for Photoshop CC, under Filter > Blur Gallery > Tilt-Shift.



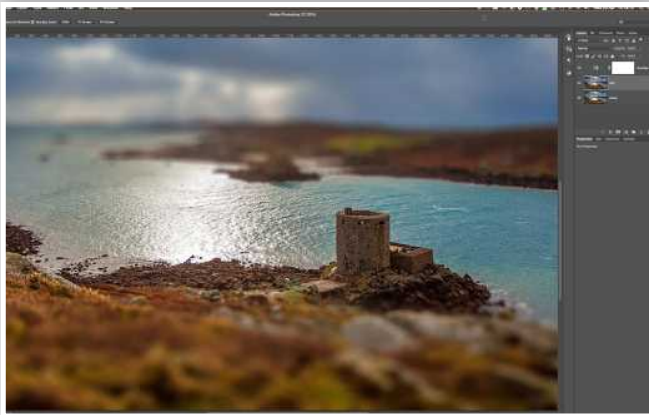
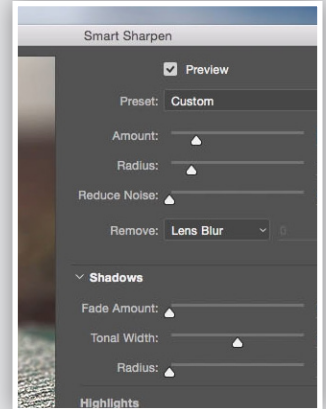
27 The dialog screen is relatively straightforward and lets you define your start point of sharpest focus and the two points at which the blur is at its maximum based on values you can input.



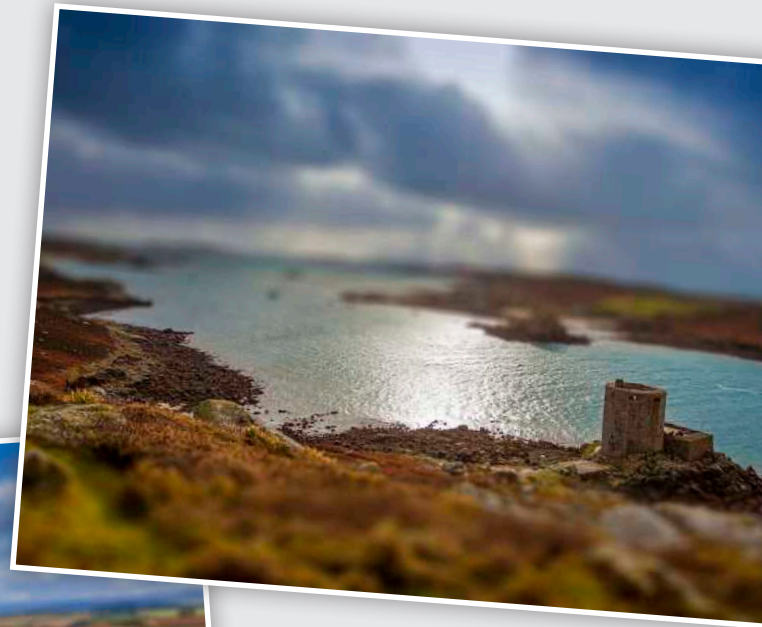
28 You can also rotate the effect to any angle. In many cases it works well. If you do find that you need more fine control over how the blur is applied, you have the manual version to fall back on.



29 As with the manual version, adding a Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer and increasing saturation helps the effect greatly. Also adding a level of sharpening will help too.



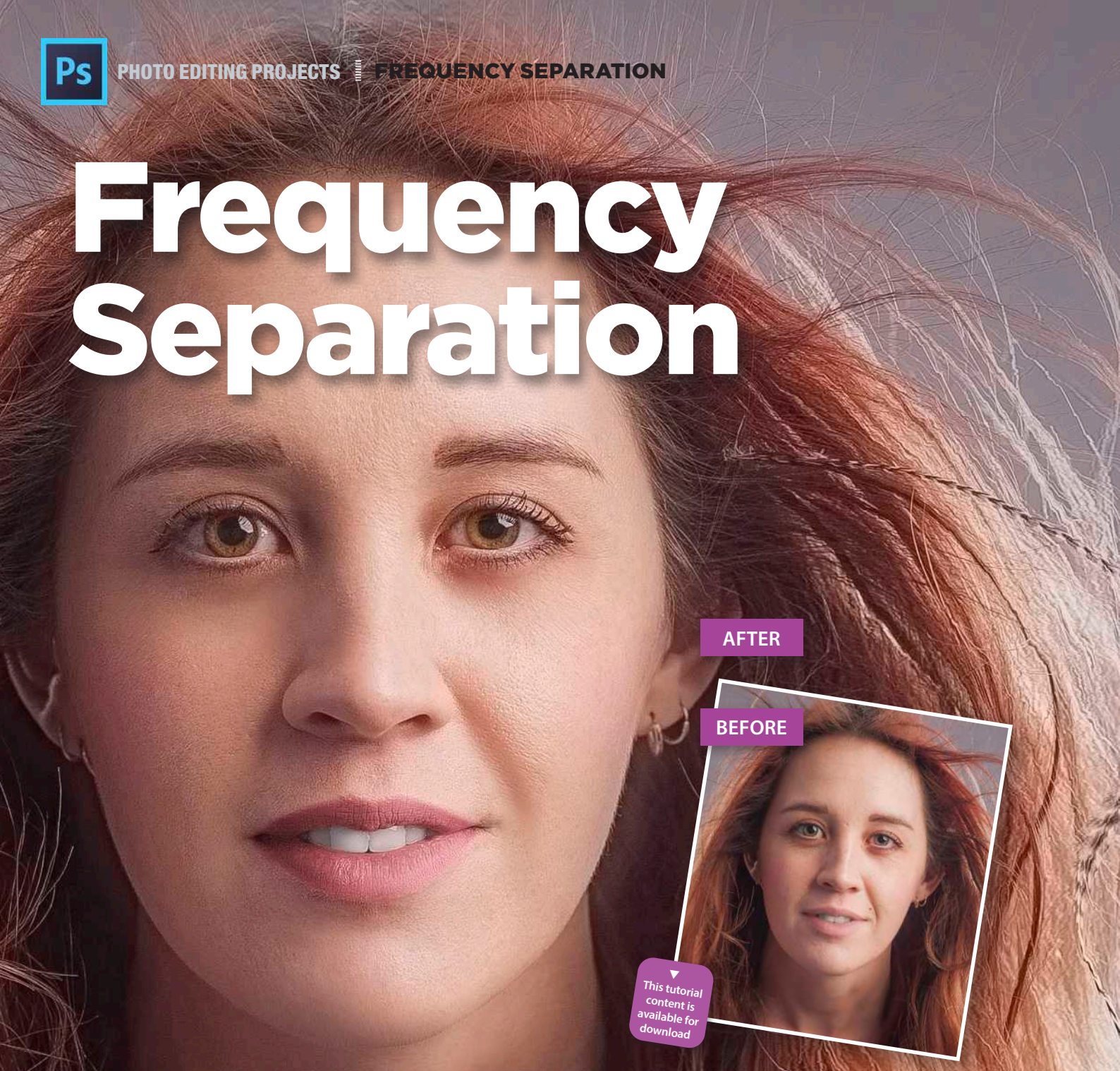
30 So, whether you prefer the manual method, or the Photoshop tool for creating the effect, either way, you can create some mind-bending illusions right there on your computer screen.



Amazing illusions

With this effect, it really is a small world.

Frequency Separation



AFTER

BEFORE

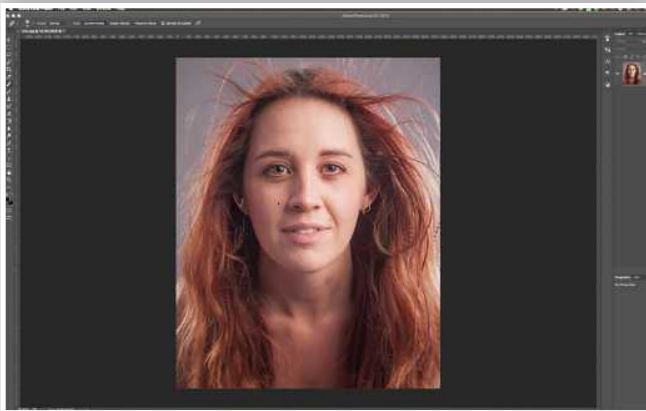
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Beauty retouching workflow for great skin

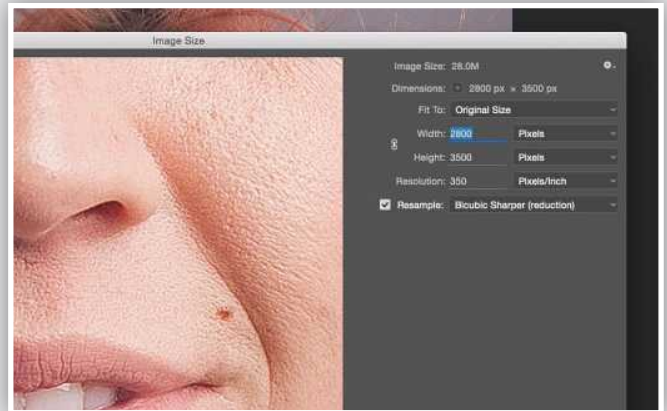
Skin retouching has been around for ever. Before the advent of digital technology, it was the job of the makeup artist to get the skin looking perfect on set or in the studio. Now, thanks to Photoshop you are the makeup artist. You can control exactly how you want your model to look in the final image. As ever, there are numerous ways you can go about retouching skin. Some techniques are

very simple but do not give natural results. Some take it to extremes and end up with their models looking like mannequins. Of course, there has been much debate about the use of retouching and manipulation of body shape. For our purposes, we want to concentrate on the simple task of making skin look great, as if a makeup artist had just weaved their magic on your model. We can also look at how to add makeup

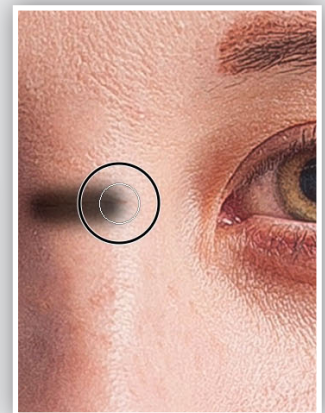
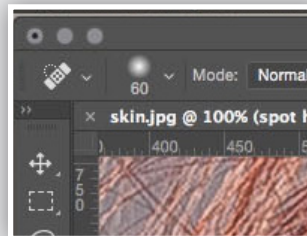
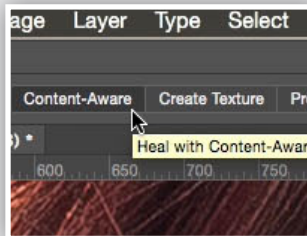
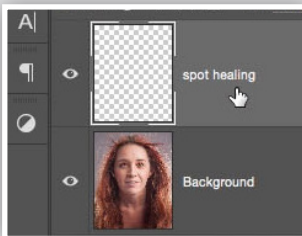
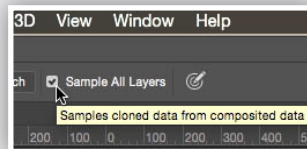
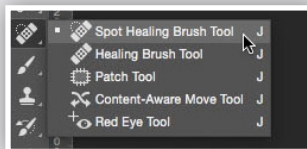
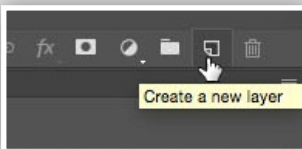
as part of the post process workflow. We are going to use a technique called frequency separation. Simply put, you break the base image down into two components. One layer carries just colour and tonal information, the other layer holds detail and texture. This means you can work on one, without affecting the other. It's a simple and effective method.



01 We start with our base image. It was shot in the studio with our model Gemma who was not wearing any makeup. Our main aim here is not to go overboard with the skin retouch.

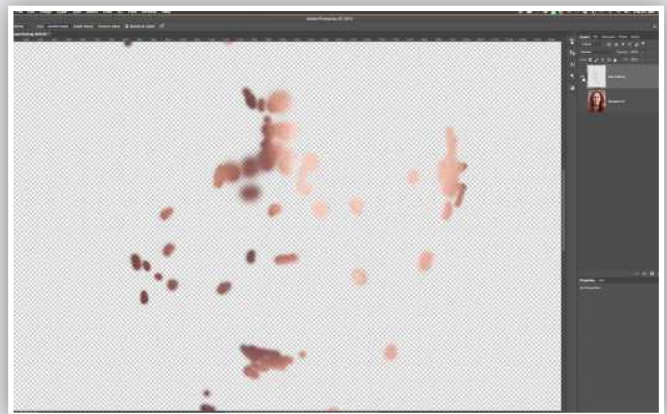
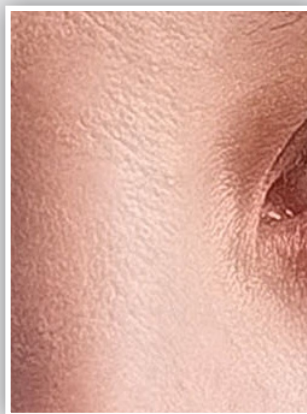


02 Our example image is 2800 pixels wide by 3500 pixels high. The settings and brush sizes are based on an image this size. If you use a smaller image for instance, then your settings will need to alter accordingly.



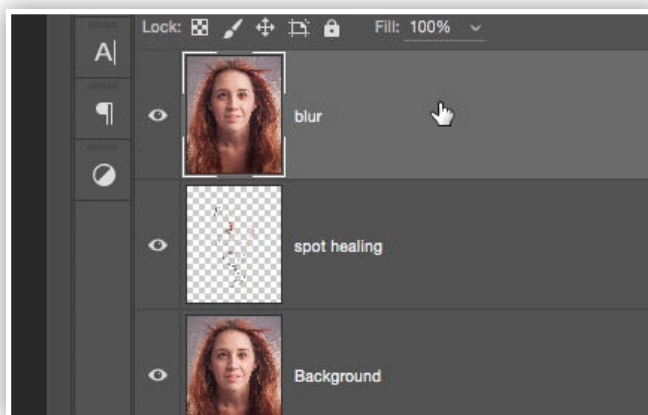
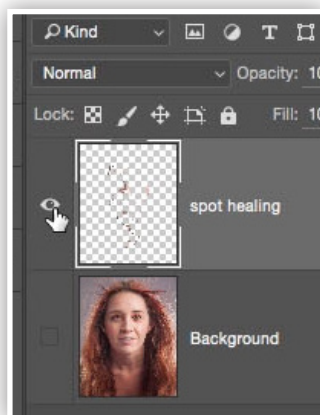
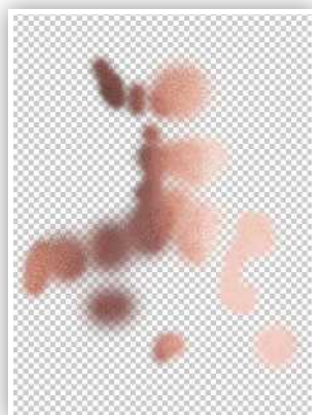
03 We start with a basic skin clean up. Click on the Create New Layer button. Name this layer 'spot healing'. Select the Spot Healing Brush Tool (J) from your toolbar. From the top context menu make sure the Type is set to Content-Aware.

04 You also need to make sure that the Sample All Layers is checked. Now, with your healing brush set to about 60 pixels, start to brush over any flaws, blemishes and imperfections on her skin.



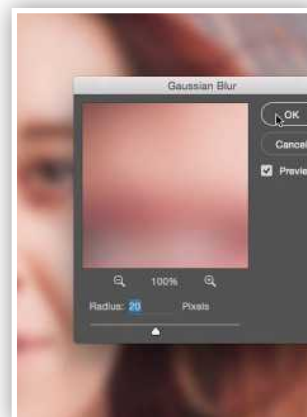
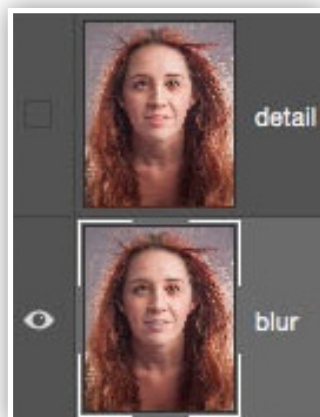
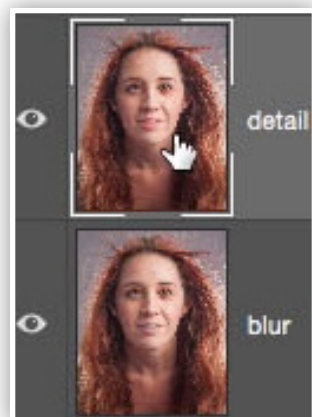
05 As you brush, the areas will be filled in with skin texture from around the brush area that matches, and the blemishes will be removed. Keep working around the face to remove any unwanted imperfections.

06 Note that every time you click the healing tool on her skin, the resulting healed skin is added to the 'spot healing' layer only. This is a great way to keep the original image unaffected by your work.



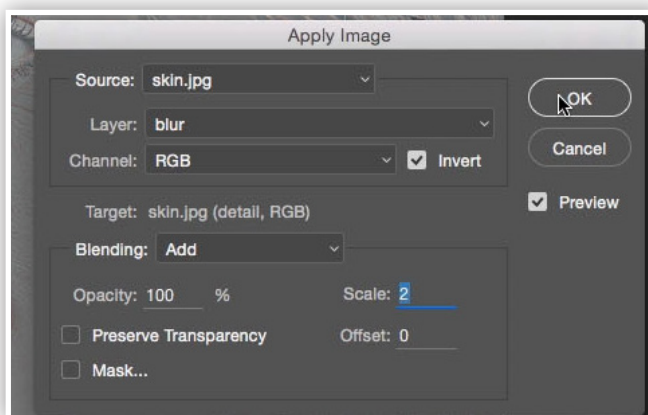
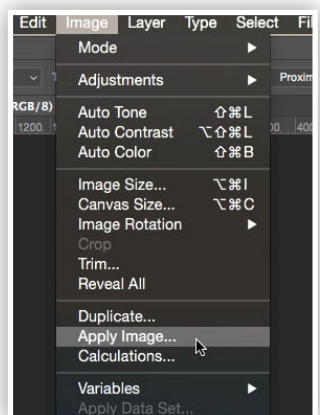
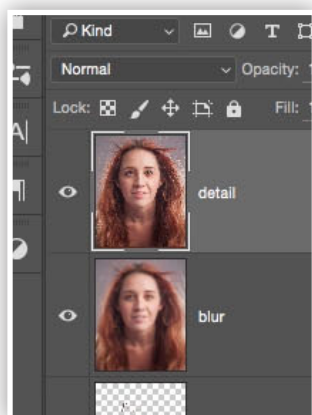
07 If you view the 'spot healing' layer on its own by Alt + left-clicking on that layer's visibility icon, you'll see all your newly healed skin is only on this layer. Alt + left-click again to return to normal view.

08 With the 'spot healing' layer active press Shift + Alt + Cmd + E to create a merged duplicate of both the 'Background' and 'spot healing' layers. Name this new layer 'blur'.



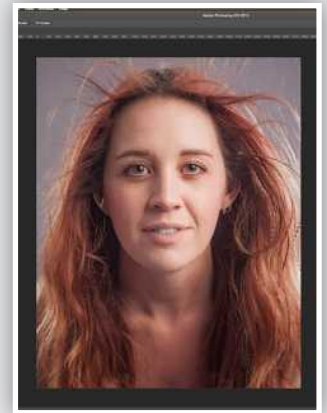
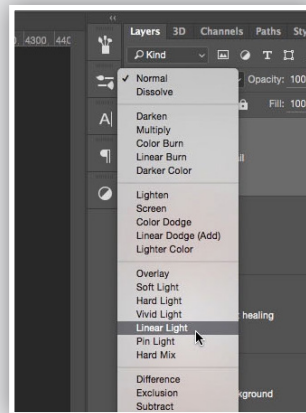
09 Press Cmd + J to duplicate the 'blur' layer. Rename this top layer 'detail'. For the moment click the visibility icon for the 'detail' layer to turn it off. Click the 'blur' layer to make it active.

10 Go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur and make the blur Radius between 15 and 20 pixels. This is enough to remove any strong detail and texture, but keep all the colour information. Click OK to proceed.



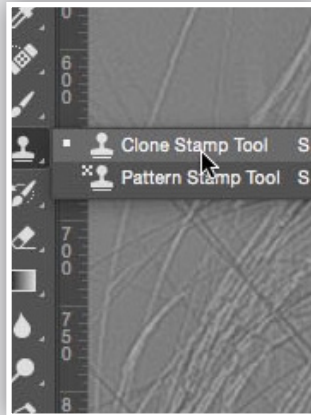
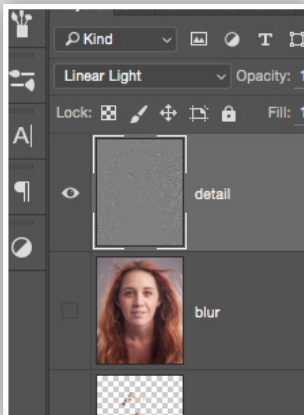
11 Make the 'detail' layer visible again, and while it's active, go to Image > Apply Image. This is the start of creating a layer that has no colour information, just texture and detail.

12 Match the settings as shown above. Layer = blur, Channel = RGB, Invert button is checked. The Blending mode is set to Add. Opacity is 100% and Scale is 2 and Offset is 0. Click OK to proceed.



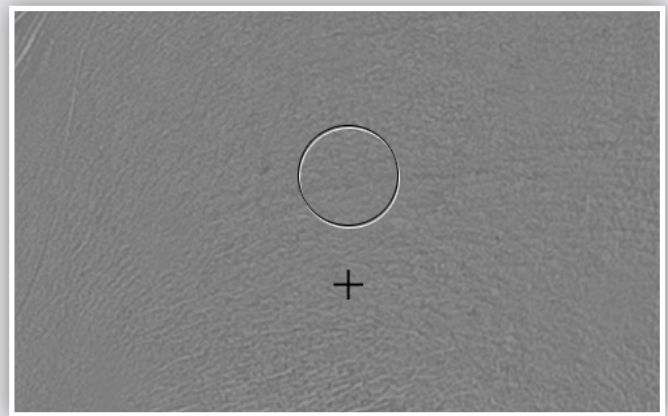
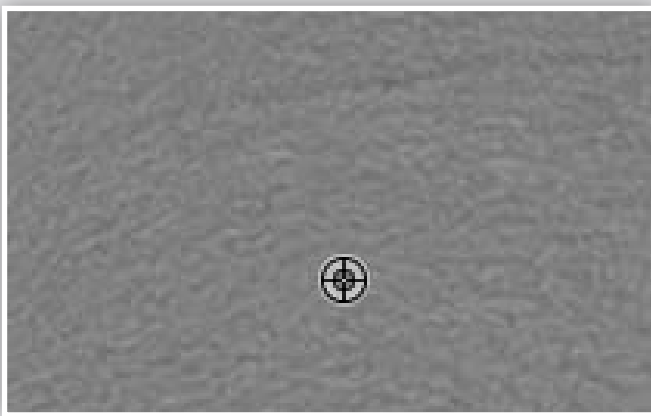
13 The 'detail' layer now looks very grey. At this point go to Image > Adjustments > Hue/Saturation (Cmd + U) and make the Saturation -100 to take out any colour artefacts. Click OK to continue.

14 Now you need to set the 'detail' layer Blend Mode to Linear Light. The portrait will appear to have gone back to normal. This is because the combination of the 'detail' and 'blur' layers blended together creates the illusion.



15 For the moment, turn off all layers except the 'detail' layer which we will work on next. Zoom in close to your image and choose the Clone Stamp Tool from your toolbar (press S).

16 It is important to note that you must now make sure that in the top context menu, Sample is set to Current Layer. Make Opacity 50% and Flow 50% and check the Aligned button. This will let us clone with more control.

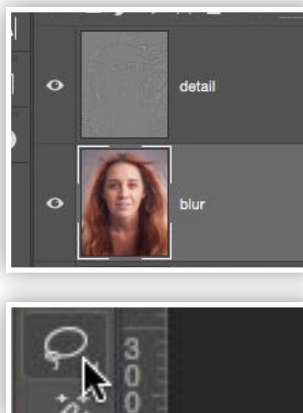


17 Start with the creases on her forehead. Hold the Alt key and your cursor will change to a small crosshair. Choose an area of unblemished skin texture next to the crease and left-click to make that area your clone sample.

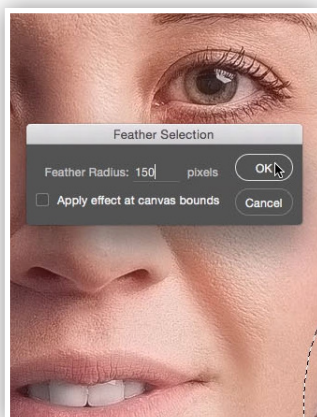
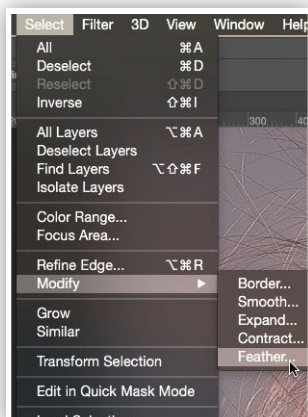
18 Now you can begin to brush this sampled area of clean skin onto the crease on her forehead above. Watch out for cloning repeating patterns. If you need to, sample a new area of clean skin and carry on cloning.



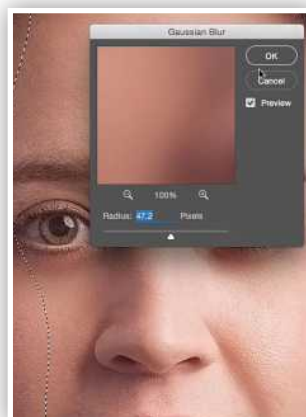
19 Work your way around the face, cloning areas of clean skin onto any wrinkles and imperfections that you want to remove. You can even clone some skin over stray hair around her face to remove it.



20 An optional tweak is to soften some of the darker areas of the image. Make the 'blur' layer visible and select your Lasso Tool from the toolbar (L), click on the 'blur' layer, and draw a rough selection around the darker areas of her head.



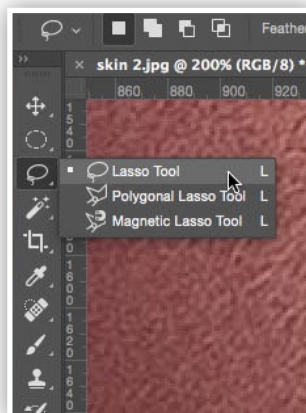
21 Go to Select > Modify > Feather (Shift + F6) and feather the selection by about 150 pixels. Click OK to apply the feather.



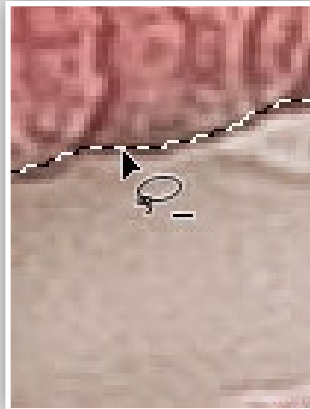
22 Now go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur and set the Radius to about 47 pixels. Click OK to apply the blur. The effect is subtle, and is a good way to remove any remaining harsh shadows or generally soften the image some more.



23 Our skin retouch is complete. The model has had minor blemishes and wrinkles removed and looks as if a makeup artist has given her a great foundation layer. Now we can add a couple of extra cosmetic tweaks.

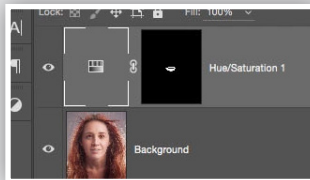
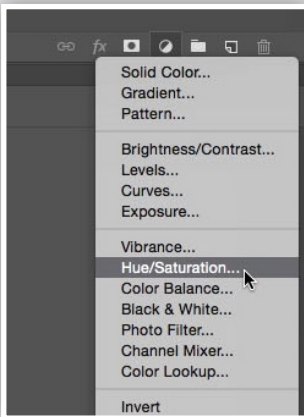


24 We saved the retouched image as a jpeg called 'skin 2' and we start the next section with that image. Zoom in to the mouth and select the Lasso Tool (L) from your toolbar.



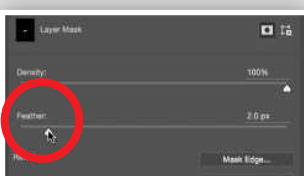
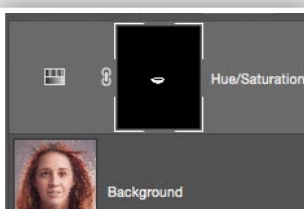
25 Draw a selection around the perimeter of her lips. Then hold the Alt key and a small minus symbol will appear by the cursor. This means you can subtract an area from the selection you just made.

26 While holding the Alt key, left-click and draw another selection around the inside of her lips. When you let go of the mouse button, you will have created a selection that encompasses the lips but not the teeth.

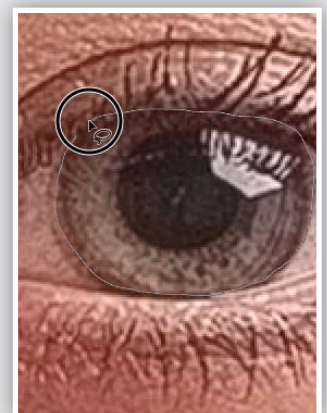
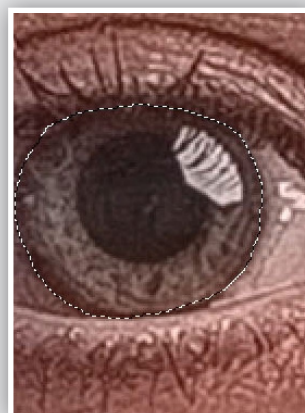


27 With this selection active, click on the Create New Adjustment Layer button and select Hue/Saturation from the menu. A mask, in the shape of the lips will be created as shown above in isolation.

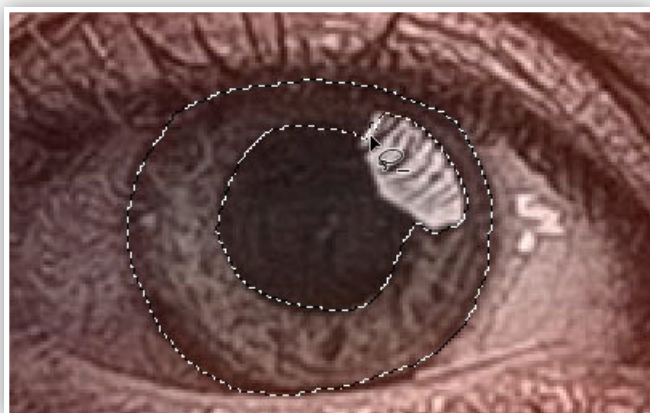
28 With the Hue/Saturation layer active, you can adjust the Hue, Saturation and Lightness sliders in the Hue/Saturation Properties tab. Adjust to add a more red and vibrant tint to the lips.



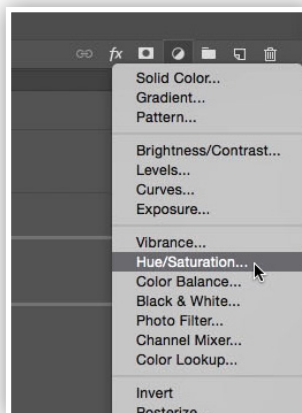
29 At the moment, the edge of the selection is quite hard. Click on the Hue/Saturation layer mask thumbnail to activate it and then choose a 2 pixel Feather value from the Layer Mask Properties tab to soften it. We can work on the eyes next.



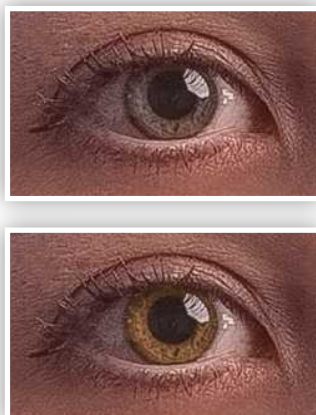
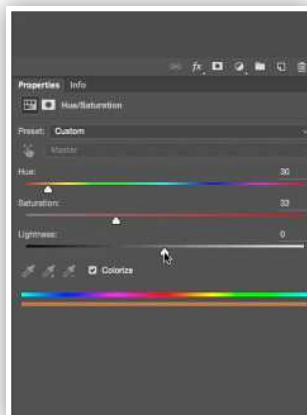
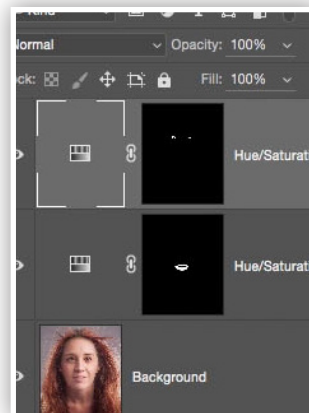
30 Click on your Lasso Tool (L) again and draw around the outer edge of one iris first. Then hold the Shift key, you will see a small + symbol next to your cursor, now you can add the other iris to the selection.



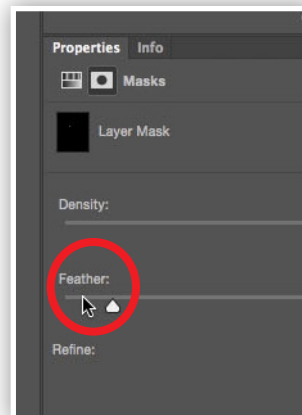
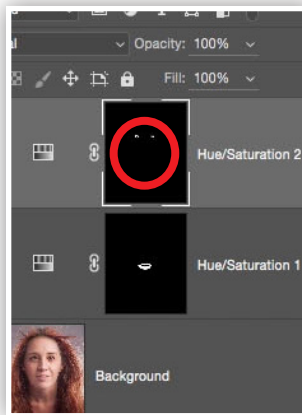
31 Now press and hold the Alt key, and as you did with the lips, draw a selection around each pupil and the highlight. When you let the Alt key go, you have a selection of the irises only.



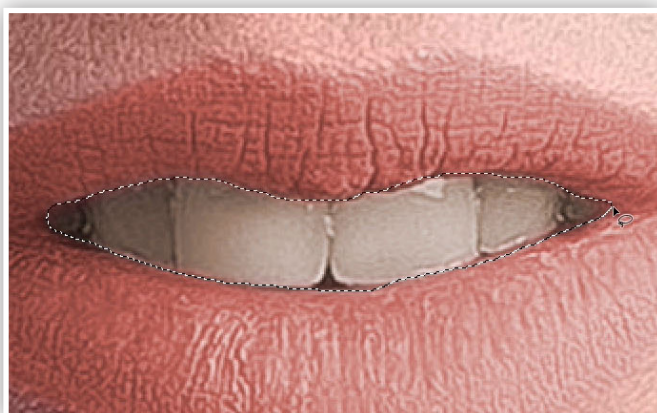
32 With the selection still active, click on the Create New Adjustment Layer button and click on Hue/Saturation. A second Hue/Saturation layer will be added in the shape of the irises.



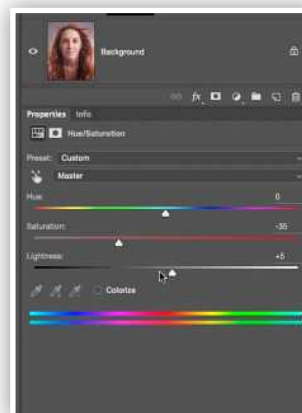
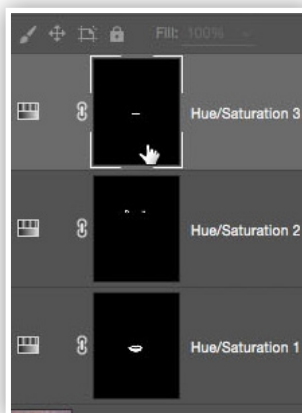
33 As before, with this second Hue/Saturation layer active, you can adjust the Hue, Saturation and Lightness sliders in the Hue/Saturation Properties tab to add more saturation to the eyes.



34 Clicking on the Hue/Saturation layer mask and adding a 2 pixel Feather to the Hue/Saturation layer mask properties as you did with the lips, will soften the hard edge of the mask.



35 Go to the Lasso Tool once again. This time draw a selection around the teeth. We're going to use this selection to add a little sparkle to the teeth as one final touch.



36 As with the lips and eyes, create a new Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and add it to the top of your layer stack. Under the properties tab, decrease the Saturation to about -35 and alter the Lightness to about +5.



37 Here are the 3 steps the image has gone through. The original image was given a basic cleanup and used frequency separation to produce flawless skin. Then some small cosmetic tweaks were added for the final result.

38 The skin retouch and additional cosmetic enhancements are complete. You've covered the main procedures that many pro retouch artists use to take portraits to the next level.

Achieve perfect skin

A powerful workflow process that can give stunning results!

Exposure Blending

Convert one Raw file multiple times for a well balanced image

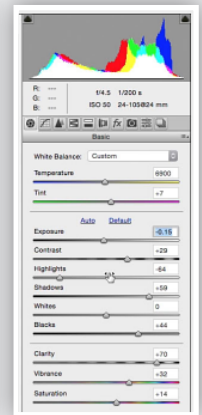
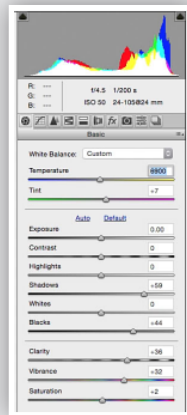
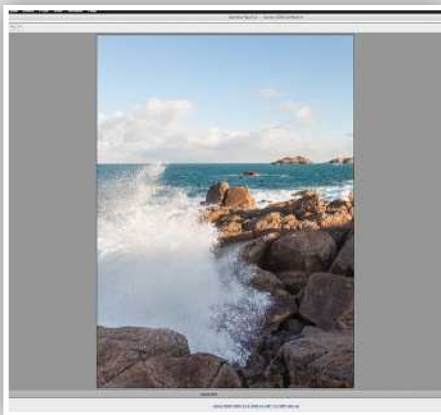
There is an often used technique where you process a single Raw file a number of times with different exposure settings to get the most out of the various elements in the image, and then layer them in Photoshop and you selectively mask each one to only reveal the

best of each exposure for each layer. It is a simple, but effective way of producing a final image where all the elements blend together in a much more balanced final image. We take you through the process with a sample image shot on the North coast of Treco in the Isles of Scilly.

AFTER

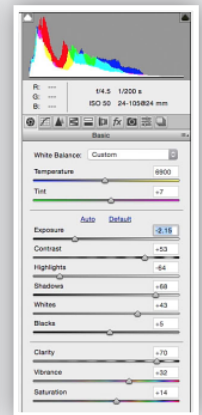
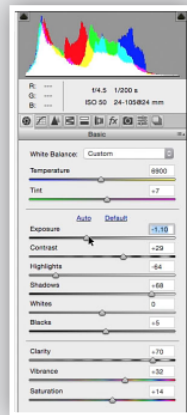
BEFORE

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01 The original single Raw file was opened in Adobe camera Raw. The image's settings were adjusted so the foreground rocks revealed as much detail as possible. This image was saved as a jpeg called 'rocks'.

02 The Raw file was then adjusted so that the sea and the white water spray and highlights were as well exposed as possible. This was saved again but called 'sea' this time.

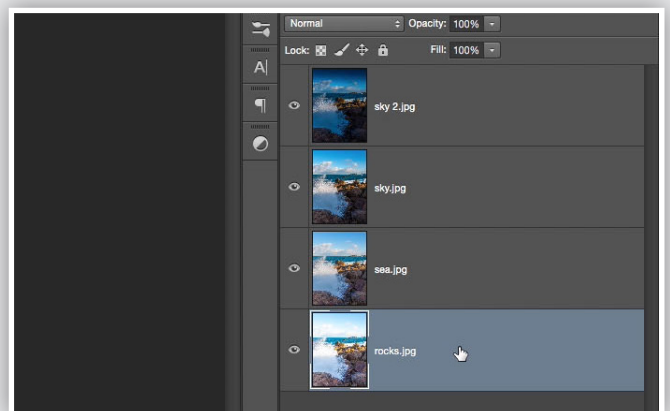


03 Once again, the Raw file was adjusted. The exposure was decreased so the sky was darker but with enough contrast in the clouds. This version was saved as a jpeg named 'sky'.

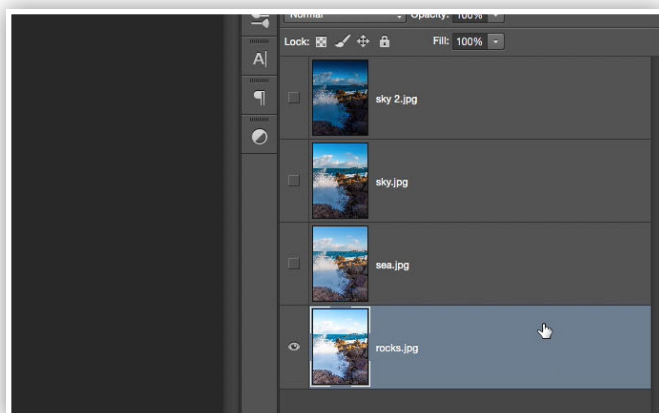
04 Finally, it was decided to create one last jpeg called 'sky 2' which was darker still than the previous version. This meant there was a deeper blue sky to use at the top of the image.



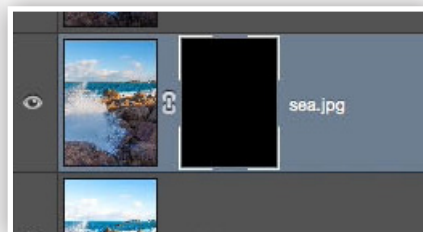
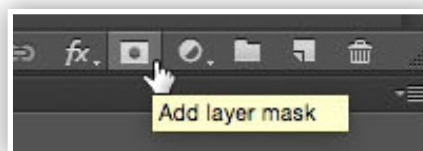
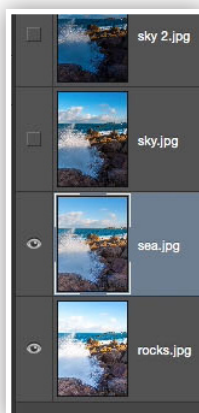
05 In Adobe Bridge, select the four jpegs and then go to Tools > Photoshop > Load Files into Photoshop Layers. The four images will be loaded into Photoshop in one document and stacked in individual layers.



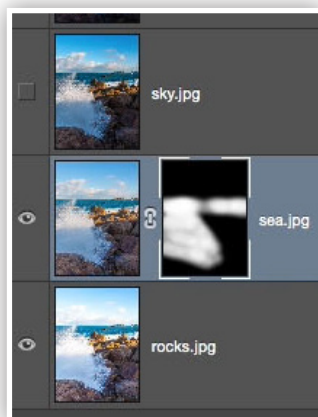
06 In our example, we have ordered the images with the 'rocks' layer first, then 'sea', next is 'sky' with 'sky 2' at the top of the stack.



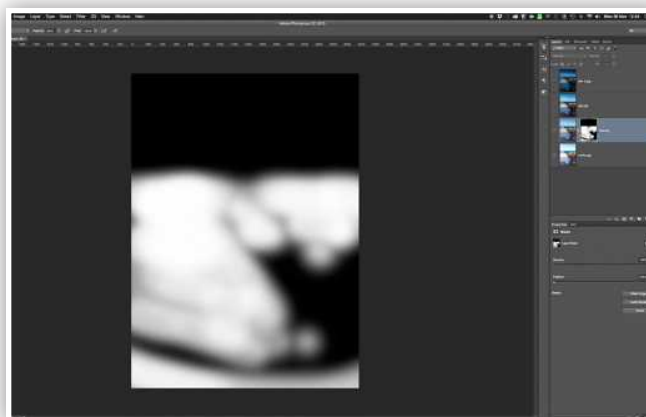
07 Turn off the visibility of all the layers except the 'rocks' base layer. Each subsequent layer will be masked to let a specific portion of each layer show through and blend with the base 'rocks' layer.



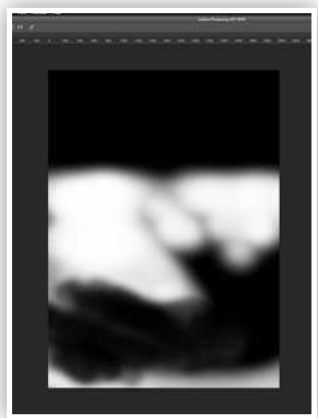
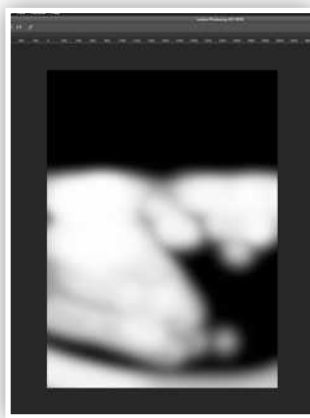
08 Make the 'sea' layer visible. Whilst pressing the Alt key click on the Add Layer Mask icon to add a black mask to the 'sea' layer. The 'sea' layer will become blocked by the mask, but we can start to reveal areas of this image in the next step.



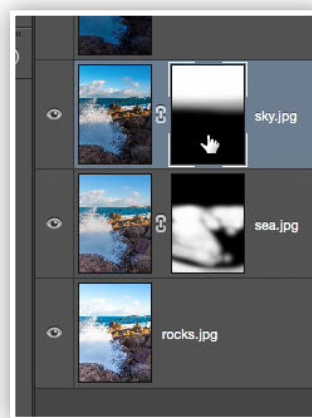
09 Click on the 'sea' mask thumbnail to activate it. Choose a large soft white brush and start to paint white in the areas of this layer you want to be visible. As you paint white on the mask, more of the sea and spray will be allowed to show through.



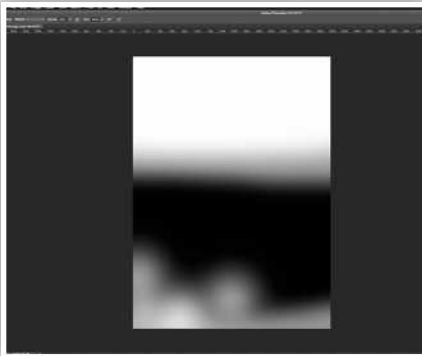
10 If you press the Alt key and click on the mask thumbnail for the 'sea' layer, you will be able to examine the mask on its own more clearly. Press Alt and click the thumbnail again to revert to the normal view.



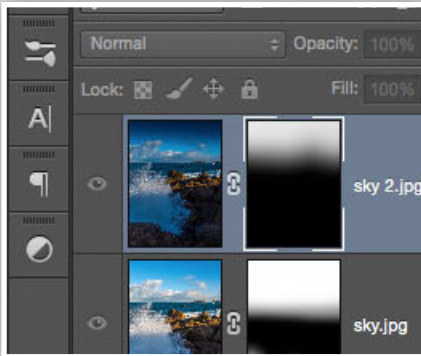
11 If you want to remove any areas you've just painted white, hit X on your keyboard to toggle the foreground colour from white to black, and paint black over any white areas as you wish. Press X again to go back to white.



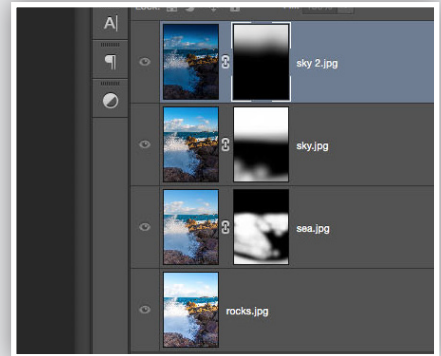
12 Make the 'sky' layer visible, and using the same approach as the previous steps, add a mask and paint on the mask where you want the better exposed sky to show through.



13 If you view the mask on its own, you can see the areas in white that are allowing portions of the sky and the rocks of the 'sky' layer to be visible. Anything in black is effectively blocking the image.



14 Finally, we come to the 'sky 2' layer. As in the previous steps, add your mask to this layer and paint on the mask with your soft, white, brush to reveal more of the darker blue sky at the top of the image.



15 Your document will now comprise of four layers. Each different exposure has been masked to allow the best of each to show through and what you see is a composite of all four layers.



16 If you compare this to the original Raw file, you'll see that with a few different exposure adjustments at the processing stage, you can create a blend of images that gives you a well-balanced final result.



It's all in the blend

Give your images the perfect exposures they deserve.

Lomo Effect Images

Low fidelity images that everybody loves

The Lomo Kompakt Automat, or the Lomo LC-A as it is more commonly known, is a Russian point and shoot camera built in the eighties. It has a fixed focal length lens of 32mm and used 35mm film. Truth be told, it wasn't exactly the best film camera on the market but it was responsible for kickstarting a whole new style of photography known as Lomography. The

original LC-A and the newer LC-A+ produce contrasty, saturated images. It was prone to light leaks and images were heavily vignetted. However, over time, people actually sought out this look and actively tried to emulate it. It has become a very popular form of photography. Now we can create our own lomo images right here in Photoshop.



AFTER

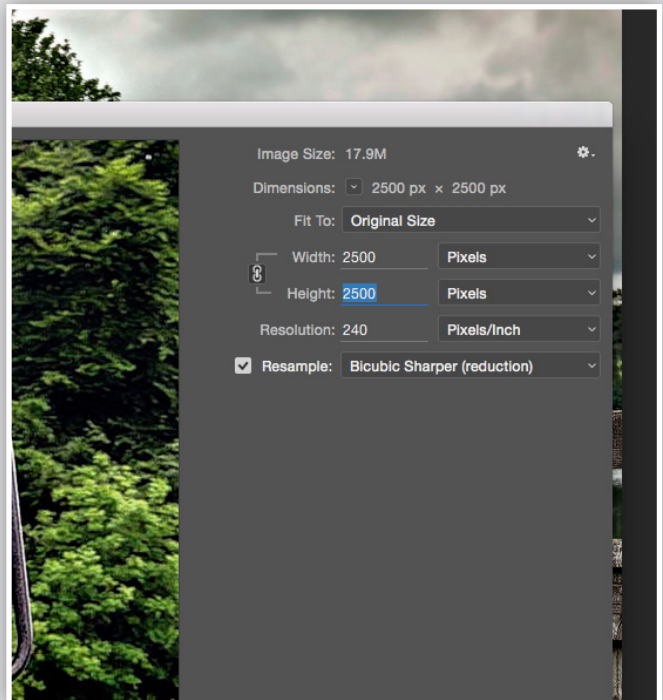


BEFORE

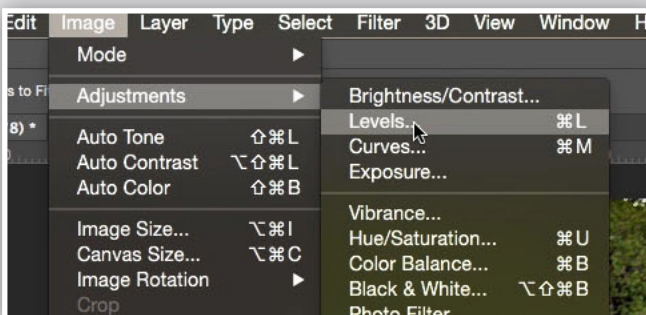
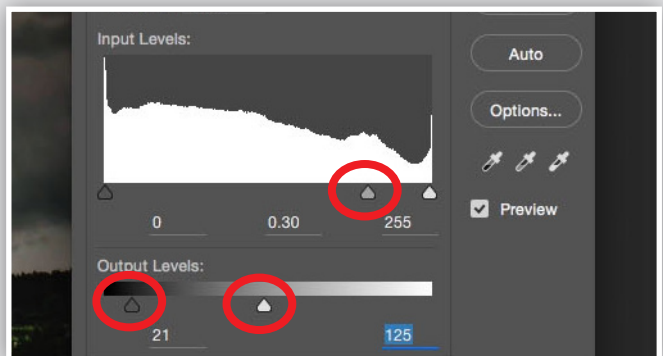
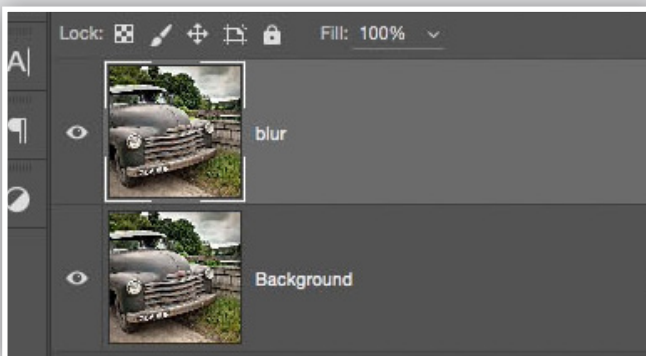
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01 We start with our base image of an old truck. It has lots of detail and some interesting grungy surfaces and textures, a brooding sky and some nice greenery.



02 This sample image is 2500 pixels square and our settings are based on an image of this size. If you're using a different size image, some of your settings may need to alter appropriately.

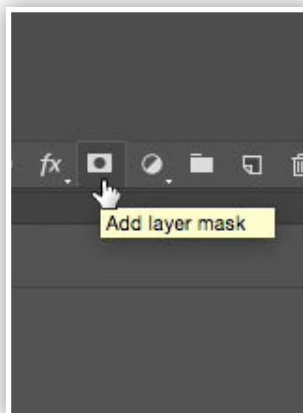
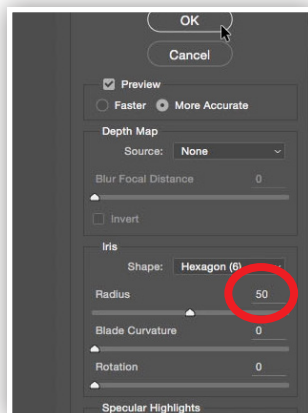


03 Press Cmd + J to duplicate the image and name it 'blur'. Then go to Image > Adjustments > Levels (Cmd + L). We are going to use this layer as our dark vignette.

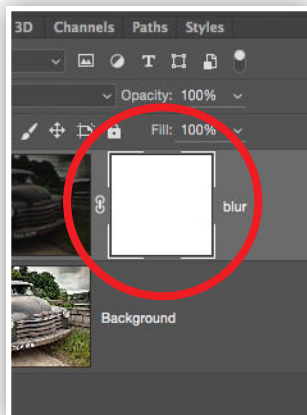
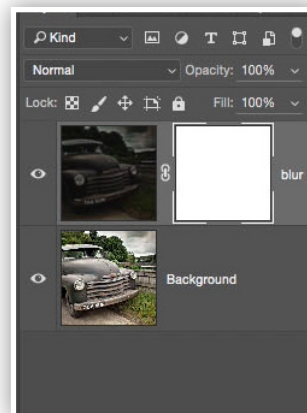
04 Move the Midtone slider to the right to darken the image and also move the Output Levels sliders toward the middle to reduce contrast. Set Shadow Output to 21 and Highlight Output to 125. Click OK to proceed. The 'blur' image is now much darker.



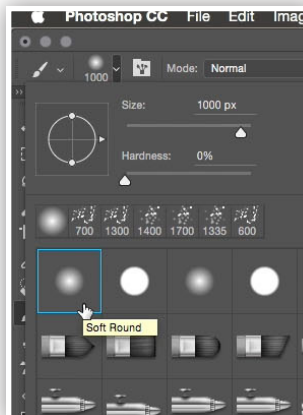
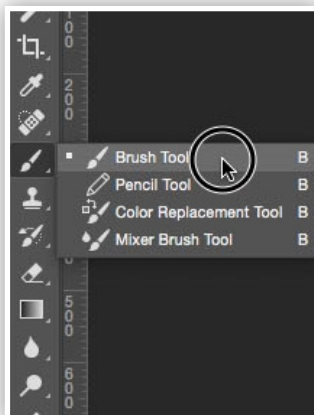
05 With the 'blur' layer still active, go to Filter > Blur > Lens Blur and make the Radius 50. This results in a dark, blurred version of the original background image. Click OK to move on to the next step.



06 Keep the 'blur' layer active and click on the Add Layer Mask button. A mask will be added to the 'blur' layer. Now we need to reveal some of the original truck image in the layer below.



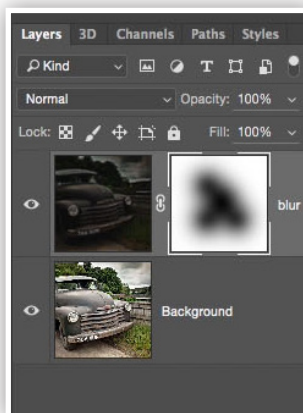
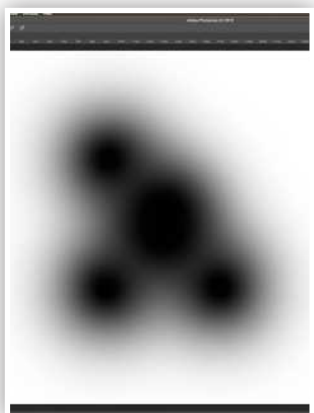
07 Click on the 'blur' layer mask thumbnail to make it active (you will see the layer mask thumbnail highlighted, not the actual image thumbnail) and then go to your toolbar and select the Brush Tool (B).



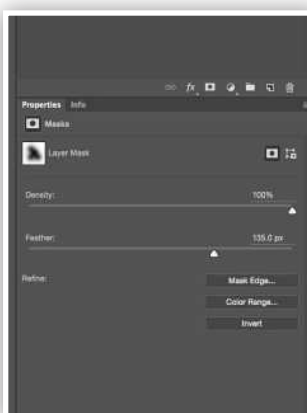
08 Make the brush about 1000 pixels and set the style to Soft Round. Make your foreground colour black (press X) and then dab your black brush onto the image where you want the original 'Background' image to show through.

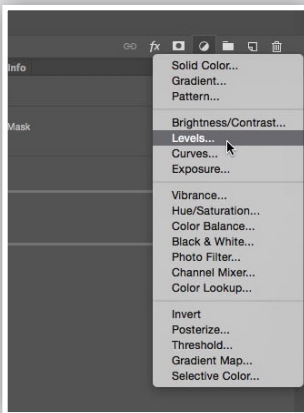


09 The effect you're looking for is to have the centre of the image show through, but leave dark, blurred parts around the outside of the image. You can Alt + left-click on the layer mask to view it in isolation.

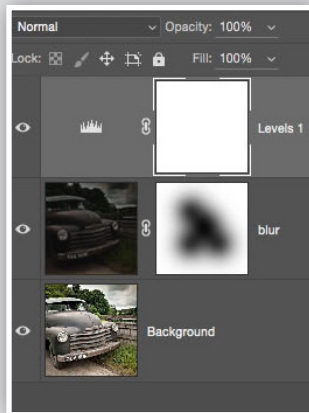


10 Alt + left-click the layer mask thumbnail again to return to the normal view. Go to the Layer Mask Properties and set the Feather value to 135 pixels to soften your brush strokes a little.

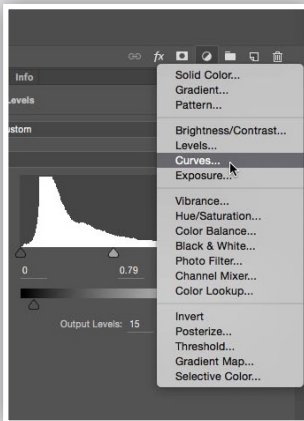




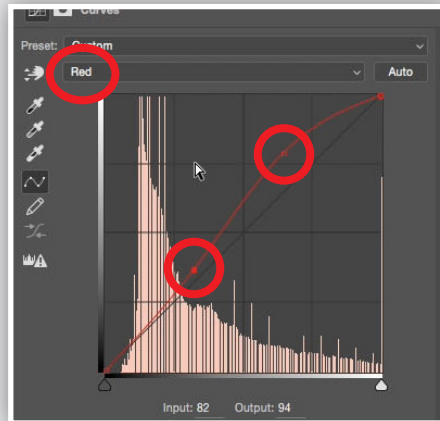
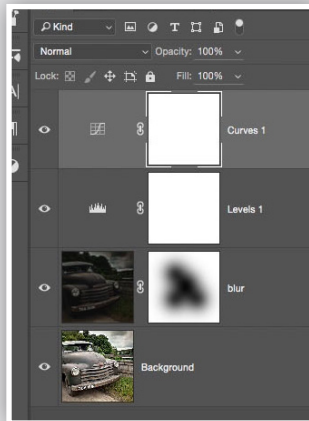
11 Click on the Create New Adjustment Layer button and select Levels from the menu. This will add a non-destructive Levels Adjustment at the top of the layer stack.



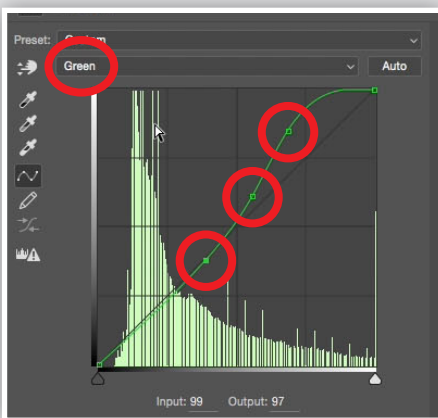
12 Adjust the Levels Properties to add a little contrast by moving the Highlight and Midtone sliders to the left. Also make the Shadow Output Level about 15.



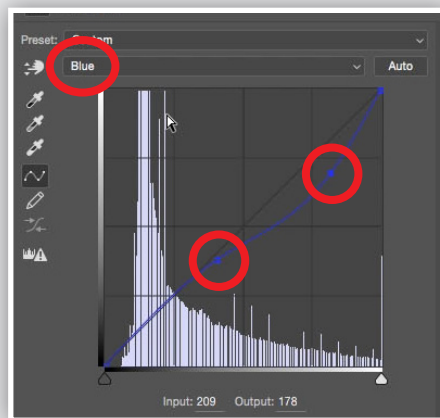
13 Now we can shift the colours to get the look we're after. Click on the Create New Adjustment Layer button again and click on Curves. Make sure the new Curves adjustment is at the top of the layer stack.



14 In the Curves Properties panel, click the RGB button and select Red. Add two control points to the red line and move them to create a shallow upward curve as shown. The image will take on a pink hue.

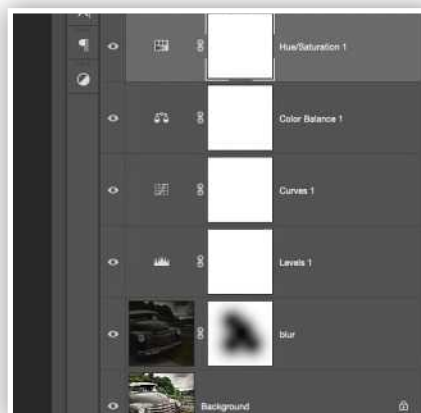
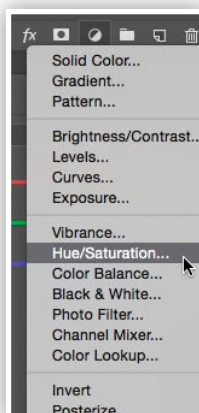
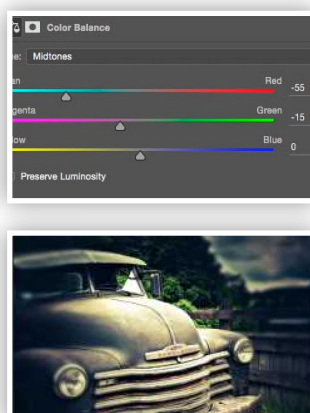
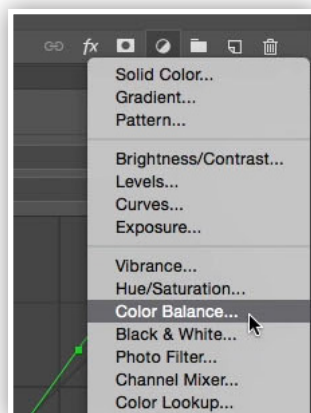


15 Now choose Green from the RGB button and add control points to the green line and make a more aggressive curve as shown in the example.



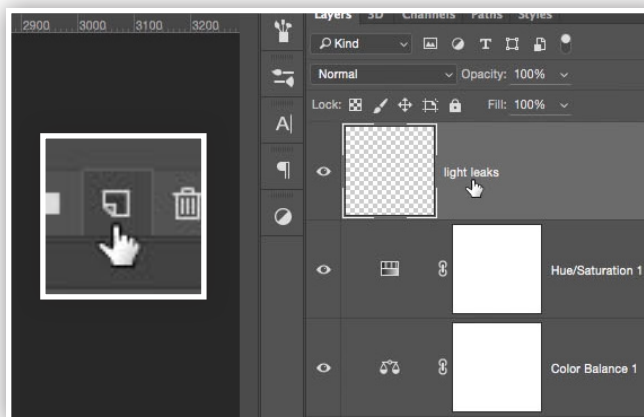
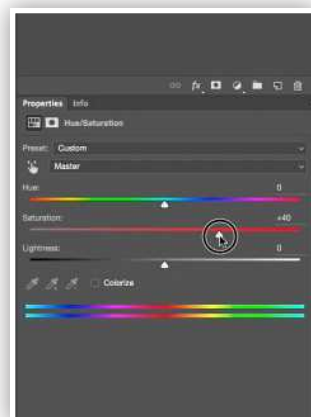
16 Finally, click on Blue in the RGB panel and add two control points and make a shallow downward curve as shown above.





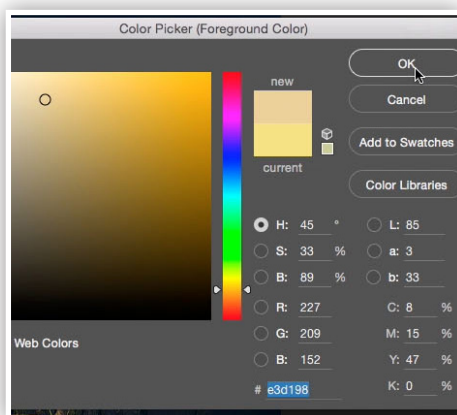
17 You can add further colour tweaks by adding a Color Balance adjustment and under the Colour Balance Properties, push the Cyan/Red to -55 and Magenta/Green sliders to -15.

18 Click on the Create New Adjustment Layer button once more and add a Hue/Saturation adjustment to the top of the layer stack.



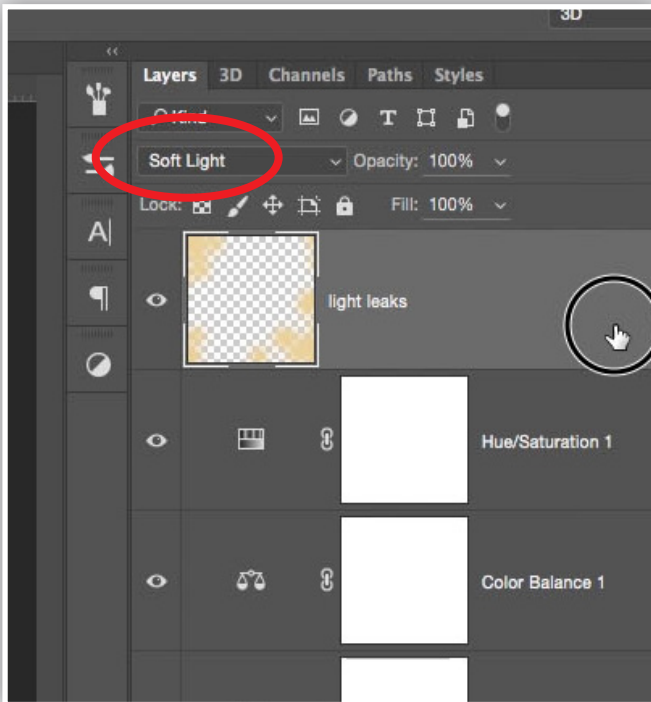
19 Because LC-A cameras are characterised by their contrasty and saturated images, we can push the Saturation value to about +40 in the Hue/Saturation properties panel.

20 Next, go and add a new layer to the top of the stack. Call this layer 'light leaks'. This is where we can reproduce the classic look of light bleeding onto the film while in the camera.



21 Click on your foreground colour swatch to activate the Colour Picker Tool and choose a pale beige colour, similar to the colour of the bonnet of the truck. Click OK when you have a colour you like.

22 Press B to activate your brush tool and using a large, soft brush, paint daubs of the pale beige colour, on the 'light leaks' layer at random places around the outside of the image.



23 Click on the Blend Mode button at the top of the layers palette and choose Soft Light from the menu. The daubs of beige will blend into the image. Duplicate this layer if you want the effect to be stronger.



24 Your lomo effect is complete. You have taken your original image and now added the classic look of an old Russian camera that, even though it is flawed, is beloved by so many photographers.



Photos in the lomo style

Lomography images. No need for an old Russian camera.

Stone Skin Effect

AFTER

BEFORE

A fun technique for human statues

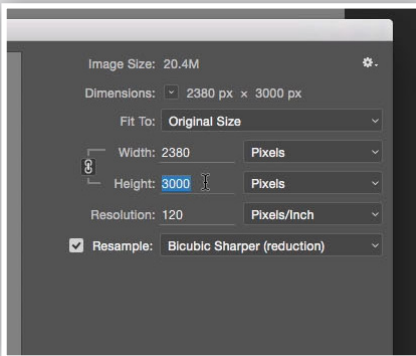
An intrepid hero in some fantasy realm is wandering through some dark and dangerous dungeon and happens upon a hideous Medusa who instantly turns him into stone. It's a familiar scene from Greek mythology. For Medusa, turning someone into stone was all too easy. For

the rest of us, however, we need a little help from Photoshop, a suitable hero image, and a picture of some rocks that were taken at a local beach. Here's a fun tutorial that lets you turn flesh into stone and also learn about a more advanced form of the familiar Blend Mode process.

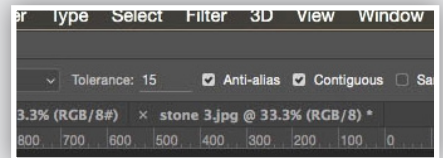
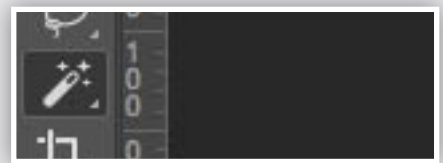
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01 We begin with a suitable muscular hero type. As luck would have it, he's decided to do his adventuring without the aid of a shirt. That's more skin we can turn to stone.



02 Our example 'stone 1' image is 2380 pixels wide by 3000 pixels high. We have based our settings in this tutorial on this image size.



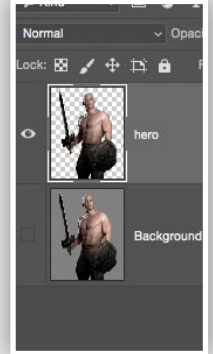
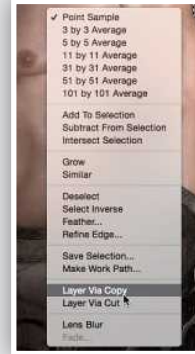
03 At the moment our man is on a grey background which we need to remove. Go to your toolbar and select the Magic Wand Tool (W). Make the Tolerance about 15 and make sure the Contiguous button is checked.



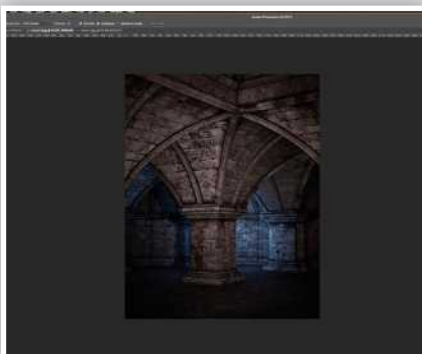
04 Click on the grey background and it will be selected. Hold the Shift key and you'll see a small + symbol next to the wand cursor. You can add any missing areas between his waist and arm and his legs to the selection.



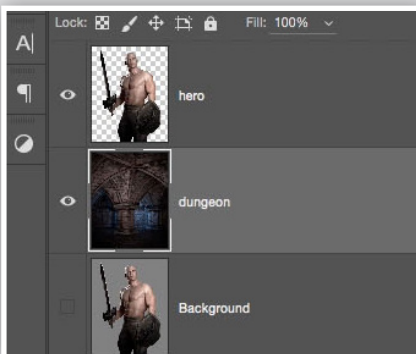
05 Rather than destroy this layer, we will Invert the selection by going to Select > Inverse (Shift + Cmd + I). Now the man is selected, not the grey background.



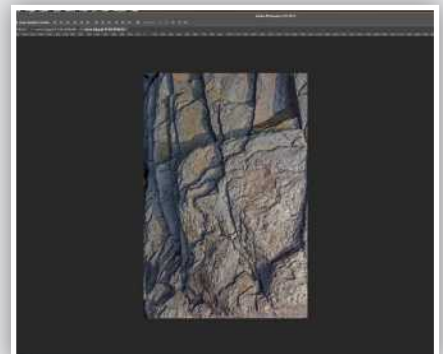
06 Right-click on the selection and you call up the context menu. Select Layer Via Copy to create a new layer containing just our subject and name this new layer 'hero'. Now he needs a suitable background.



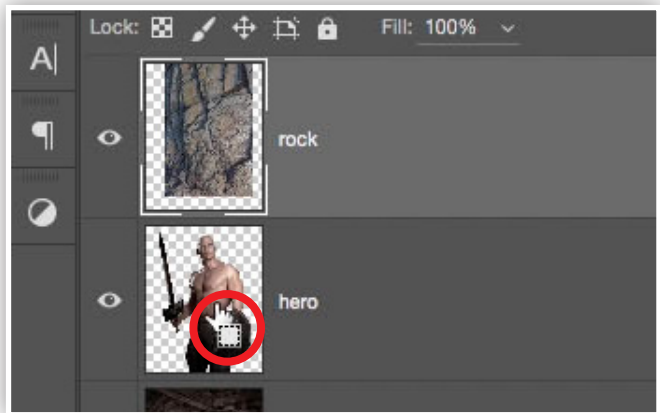
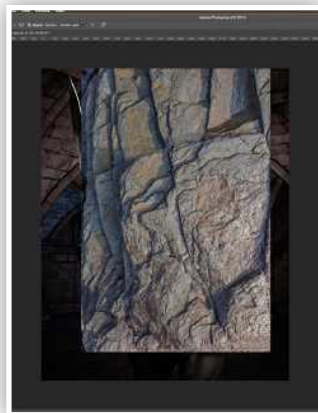
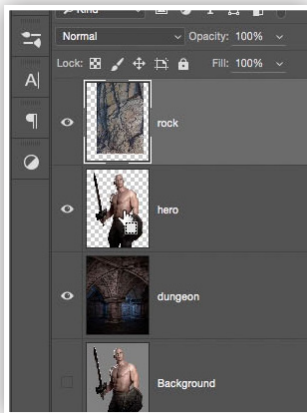
07 Go to File > Open and browse to the image 'stone 2' and open it. Press Cmd + A to select it and then Cmd + C to copy it to the clipboard. Go back to your main document and press Cmd + V to paste it in.



08 Name this new layer 'dungeon' and drag it so it is beneath the 'hero' layer in the stack. Now we need to find some stone.

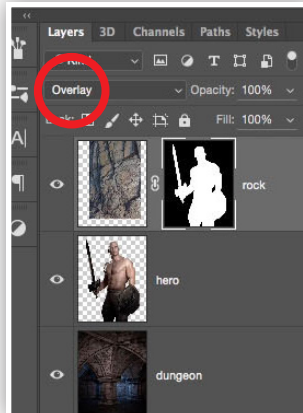
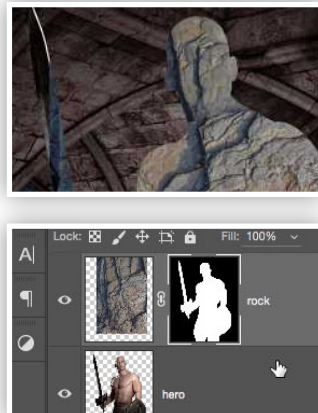


09 Go to File > Open and browse to the 'stone 3' image and open it. As with the dungeon image, press Cmd + A to select it, Cmd + C to copy it, then go to your main document and paste it in using Cmd + V.



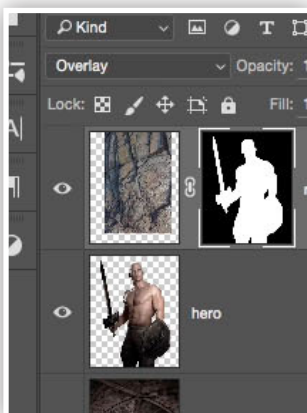
10 Call the new layer 'rock' and make sure it covers any exposed skin of our hero. Now we need to trim off any unwanted rock.

11 Keep the 'rock' layer active but move your cursor over the layer thumbnail of the hero, hold the Cmd key, and left-click. The contents of the 'hero' layer will create a selection for you in the outline of our figure.



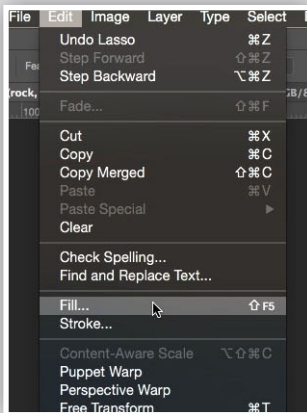
12 You will see the marching ants that define the selection in the shape of our hero appear overlaid on the image of the rocks. Click on the Add layer Mask button and you'll add a hero-shaped mask to the 'rock' layer.

13 Click on the Blend Mode button and make the 'rock' layer's blend mode Overlay. You'll now see a blend of skin and stone, but we need to mask out the clothes and weapons so just his skin appears as stone.



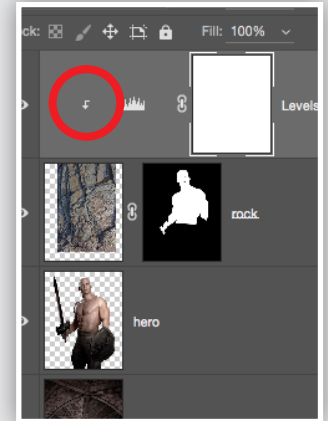
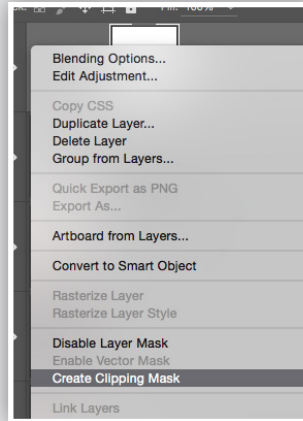
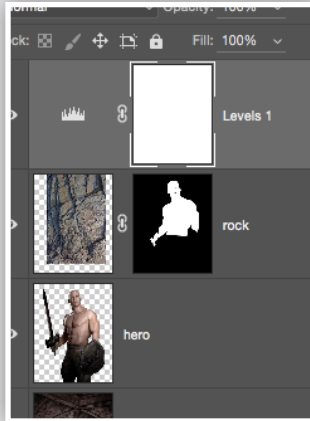
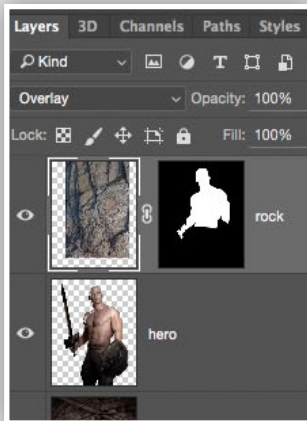
14 Click the 'rock' layer mask thumbnail to make it active. Use the Lasso Tool (L) and begin to draw a selection around the hilt of the sword.

15 Zoom out of the image a little, hold the Shift key and add the rest of the sword blade and handle, his trousers and shield to the selection.



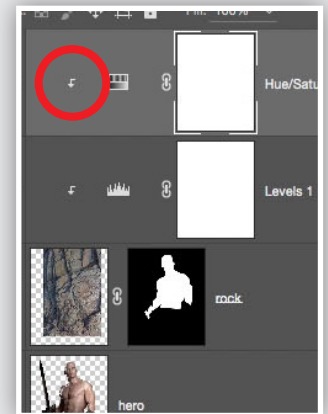
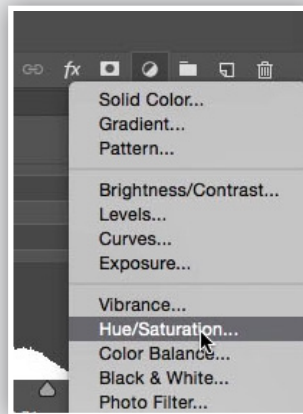
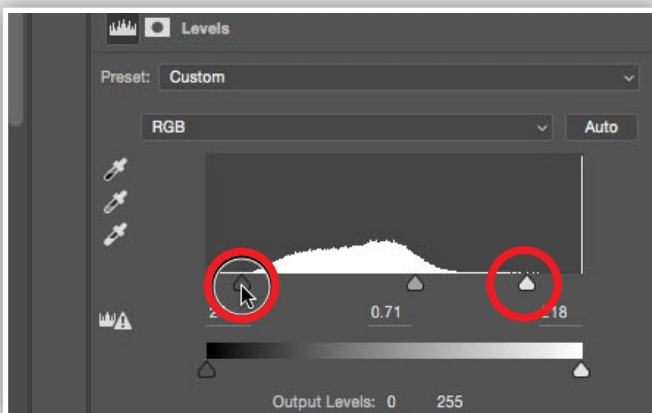
16 Go to Edit > Fill (Shift + F5) and fill the selection with 100% Black. Click OK to fill the selection. If you Alt + left-click on the 'hero' layer mask, you'll see something like the example above.

17 Alt + left-click on the layer mask again to return to the normal view. We now have our hero with just his exposed skin blended with the rock layer above.



18 Click back on the 'rock' layer thumbnail (not the mask) and click on the Add New Adjustment Layer button. Select Levels from the menu. A new Levels Adjustment Layer will be added to the top of the layer stack.

19 We need to adjust the 'rock' layer only so right-click the 'Levels 1' layer and choose Create Clipping Mask from the menu. A small arrow appears on the layer to indicate it will affect only the layer beneath it.

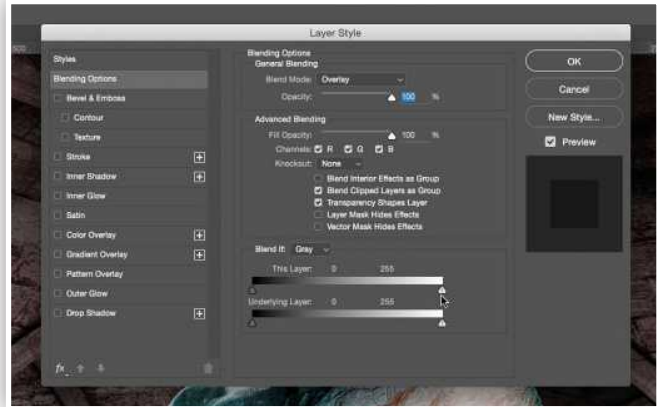


20 In the Levels Properties panel, move the Shadows and Highlights sliders towards the centre of the histogram to add more contrast to the rock image.

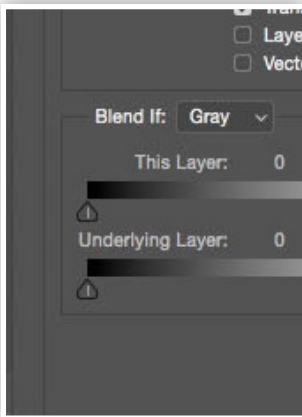
21 Click on the Add Adjustment Layer button again and add a Hue/Saturation adjustment. Just as you did with the 'Levels 1' adjustment, clip this 'Hue/Saturation 1' layer to the 'rock' layer as well.



22 Adjust the Hue and Saturation sliders to alter the rock colour to a more vibrant blue. A Hue value of 192 and a Saturation value of 35 should give a good result.



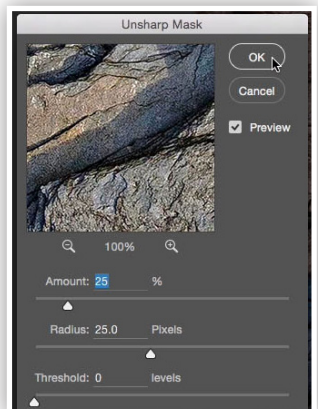
23 Double-click the 'rock' layer thumbnail image and you will call up the Layer Style dialog box. We are going to use the Blend If option to refine the blend of stone and skin.



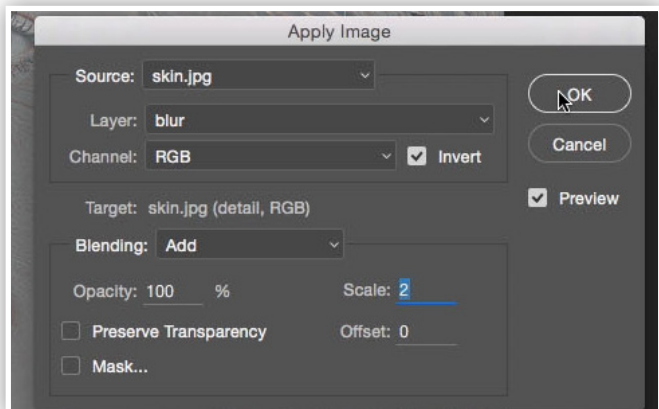
24 The This Layer and Underlying Layer slider tabs can be split in half by Alt + left-clicking on them.



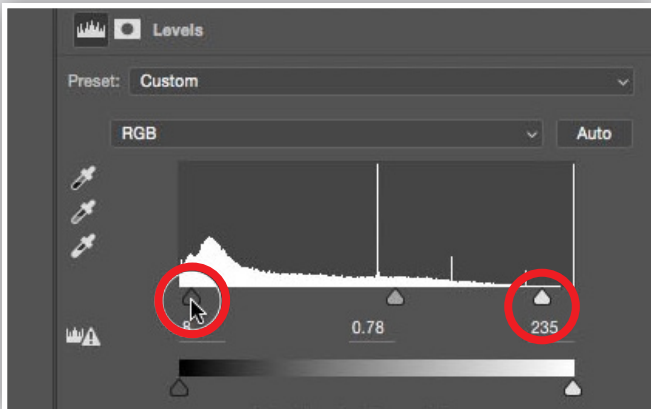
25 As you slide the released halves of the Shadows and Highlights slider tabs back and forth, you alter how the 'rock' layer blends into the 'hero' layer and vice versa. Click OK when you are happy with the results.



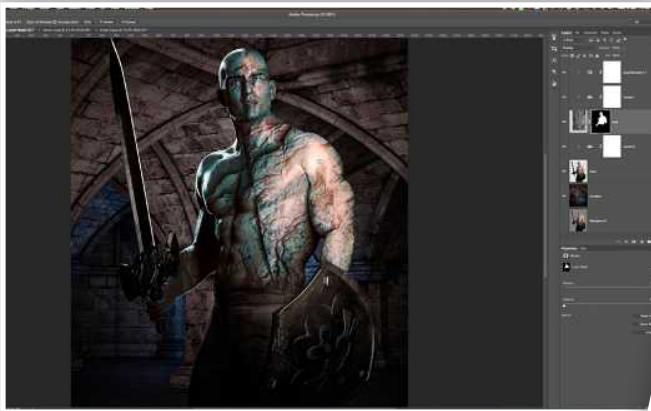
26 Keep the 'rock' layer active and go to Filter > Sharpen > Unsharp Mask and set the Amount to 25%, Radius to 25 pixels and Threshold 0 levels. Click OK to add some sharpness to the rocks.



27 Click on the 'hero' layer then click the Create New Adjustment Layer button and select Levels. A second levels adjustment will be added above our hero. Clip this layer to the 'hero' layer below following the same method outlined in step 19.



- 28** Adjust the 'Levels 2' Properties by dragging the Shadows and Highlights tabs towards the centre of the histogram slightly to add more contrast to our hero.



- 29** This fantasy image is complete. Our hapless hero has been turned to stone.



**Have you got
the Medusa touch?**

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