

REVIEW 'n Masks

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How to make Photoshop go faster...

- Reboot your computer before you start a Photoshop session.
- Empty your trash! programs s-l-o-w down when the trash is full...
- Do a Disk Cleanup
- DeFragment your drive. A fragmented drive slows things down
- things also go faster if you have at least 20% free space on your Hard Drive.
- Close all those 'other' programs. They take up RAM that Photoshop NEEDS.
- If you can, install MORE RAM! 1 Gig is minimum.

In Photoshop...

- Assign the scratch disk to a second internal drive to speed things up. (NOT a partition of the main drive)
- In Properties, (AND, THIS IS THE BIGGIE) change memory usage to more than 50%. I have mine set to 85%.
- Check for updates. There may be an update to make things go better...

Basic Photoshop Setup

- Change the eyedropper from 'pixel' to '3x3 sample'. Saves clicking on a stray pixel and getting the wrong color.

Saving your workspace:

- Window > Workspace > Save Workspace

Retrieving your workspace:

- Window > Workspace > select preferred workspace

-Level an image with the Ruler

Select the Ruler (hiding under the eye dropper)

Click one end of what is to be the horizontal (or vertical) line and drag to the other end and release.

Go to Image > Rotate Canvas > Arbitrary and the angle of the line has already been entered from when you drew the line with the ruler. CW/CCW has also been selected. Click OK and your image is on the level!

Levels Adjustment Layer:

- Adjust the levels histogram sliders for black and for white. Press the alt/option key while adjusting either slider to see which areas will be clipped (forced to black or white depending on the slider).
- Use the center slider to adjust middle grey.
- You can also use the eyedroppers to set white point and black point.
- Use the eyedroppers to remove a color-cast.
- Use the Save/Load command if you just finished the first of many images. Save your adjustment for the next (give it a name you will remember) and when you open the levels adjustment layer on the next image, Load the saved adjustment.
- Remember you can change the opacity of the layer if you decide it is too much, and you can also change the Blending mode.
- If you mess up, you can Reset the adjustment layer rather than starting over by holding down the alt/option key and Cancel will magically turn into Reset, click on it and the changes are removed so you can start over...
- When you get more familiar with Photoshop and Levels, you can change the Channel setting at the top from RGB to any one of the three colors Red, Green or Blue and adjust their levels separately. Katrin Eismann's book Photoshop, Restoration and Retouching has a detailed example of using levels to 'color balance' an image. (This is an excellent book and it would be to your advantage to purchase the latest Revision.)

Curves Adjustment Layer

- Use a curve's layer to increase contrast or to decrease contrast, depending on the angle of the line. Steeper = more contrast

Hue and Saturation layer

- Mainly used to boost saturation, it can also be used to selectively boost or reduce the intensity of all colors or of specific colors.

-Use Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Hue and Saturation. If you want to adjust the Saturation for the entire image, just grab the Saturation slider and move it to the right to increase or to the left to decrease saturation. Often, when you adjust the Saturation, the brightness level changes and you can use the Lightness slider to correct for the level change.

-If you want to change the Saturation of a specific color, go to the Edit: tab and select the Primary or Secondary color that you'd like to adjust. While adjusting a single color, look at the bottom color stripe to see four guides. The center two guides indicate the color, or range of colors selected to be adjusted and the outer two guides indicate the taper, meaning how sharp the effect will be cut off. If the Inner guides are very close, a very narrow range of color will be adjusted and if far apart, a wider range will be affected. If the Outer guides are very close to the Inner guides, the area of adjustment will be very pronounced, if far apart, there will be a much more gradual taper to what is adjusted.

-**The Magic Wand tool** is still a good option. After you select it, you set the Tolerance (try 20 or 30) and anti-aliasing AND if you want to select all of the areas of a similar color, like sky seen thru trees, turn Contiguous off... or, if you want only one window or brick of many, keep Continuous on which limits the selection to one area. You may need to click many times to get all the shades of one color if the Tolerance is set too small, or if set too high you may end up selecting way too much, in which case you should delete that selection Ctrl/Cmnd D, reduce the Tolerance and try again. You can also 'Add to' or 'Subtract from' the selection using the menu choices in the upper left.

-**The Color Range selection tool** is excellent for picking specific colors. It has four different previews plus 'none' and allows you to select colors and use 'fuzzines' to add close colors like the Tolerance selection for the Magic Wand tool. You can also select specific colors or ranges of luminance (shadow, midtone highlight, an excellent way to select 'highlights' for other adjustments) from the drop down 'Select' Menu. This tool is very good at picking out areas to mask.

Dodge and Burn

-I do not like the Dodge and Burn tools in the Tool Bar, but prefer to create a separate Dodge and Burn Layer. To create the Dodge and Burn layer: Layer > New > Layer and when the panel comes up, give it the name, I use DNB (for Dodge and Burn) then change the Mode to Soft Light and click the Check Box to add a 50% Gray Neutral Layer and click OK. Now, to use the DNB Layer, select the Brush tool and set the opacity to around 12 ->18% (this part is done by eye, see if you are getting the effect you desire. It is better to go over an area 4 or 5 times than to do one big splash!) Set the Default Foreground/Background colors (black and white) With the Black selected as the Foreground Color, you are Burning in, making things Darker. With White selected as the Foreground Color, you are Dodging, Lightening things.

-The main advantages to Adjustment layers (or any layer actually) is that it's opacity can be adjusted, it's Blending Mode can be changed and it can be Masked. And, finally, if you don't like your adjustment layer, you can drag it to the trash and start over without damaging the image pixels!

Adding a Sky...

-Select the image that needs a sky and a matching sky. Keeping in mind that the light on the clouds should match the angle and intensity in the image. Make sure that the sky and the main image have the same dpi and about the same size. Open the image and the sky image. Use the Move tool to drag the sky into the image. Click the 'eye' on the sky layer to turn it off. Select the main image and the Magic Wand Tool, de-select Contiguous and set the tolerance to 20. Click in the sky area (to be replaced) of the image to select it. Watch the "marching ants". If only parts of the sky were selected, change the Selection tab in the upper left to Add To Selection, and click on additional areas until the complete sky is selected. If 'land' is selected, back up one click in the History pallet, reduce the tolerance and try again. Once you have a good selection, In the Layer's Pallet, click on the 'eye' to turn the sky layer on. Then, click the Mask icon at the bottom of the Layer's Pallet. (A square with a circle in it) This will apply your sky selection to a Mask over the Sky layer, blocking the 'bad' sky in the image layer. This procedure works well for 'most' images. The problem arises when you can't make a good mask due to multiple/thin branches etc. (I'm still working on that one!)

Fun with Clipping masks...

-Select an image with lots of flowers. Click on the word Background on that layer and change the name to Layer 0.

-Add a Text layer and using 'Braggadocio' at 70 points, 'Centered' in 'Black', type FLOWERS. Click on the Check Mark in the upper right to select/finish the text.

-Click on Layer 0 and drag it above the text layer.

-Move your cursor to the line between the two layers and holding down your alt/tab key. When you see two circles, click your left mouse button.

-If you did it correctly, you now have a great tool for making some amazing greeting cards and MANY more goodies too!!!

-If you are LOST and/or confused, come to the meeting for a demonstration!