

The Beginner's Guide to Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop



American Writers & Artists, Inc.

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The Difference Between Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom

By professional photographer Shelly Perry

Before we get into the Lightroom vs. Photoshop debate, let me explain what I do for a living...

The majority of my work these days includes two types of photography: stock and portraiture.

After a portrait photo shoot, my workflow process includes:

1. Uploading the images to my computer and processing them in either Photoshop or Lightroom to adjust lighting, color, and contrast (more on this in a minute).
2. Fixing little details like acne or wrinkles, so that my client looks 10 times better than she thinks she does.
3. Preparing the files for print -- including some cropping and size adjustments.

For stock photography, my workflow is similar, but with some important exceptions...

Firstly, I need to edit out any visible signs or logos.

Secondly, I need to avoid technical problems that might occur through my editing. (While these may go unnoticed by my portrait client, my stock client is more particular.)

Personally, I find both programs – Lightroom and Photoshop -- useful. Here's why...

The Difference between Lightroom and Photoshop

To appreciate the differences between Lightroom and Photoshop, I like to think about it this way:

Lightroom = global change

Photoshop = targeted change

To fix something specific within an image (remove a logo, fix a wrinkle, brighten dark circles under my client's eyes, etc.), I have to use Photoshop.

But, when I want to apply a change to the entire photograph (convert it to black and white, crop, adjust the color saturation, etc.), I prefer to use Lightroom.

Why? Well...even though I can make my global changes in Photoshop, Lightroom is often faster and easier. While I may have to finish my editing in Photoshop, it can cut my workflow time by at least a half to start processing in Lightroom. When you're working with 30 to 40 images at once, that's a huge time-saver.

Lightroom also catalogs all my images, keywords them, adds my copyright info, and makes them super easy to sort, rate, and find. You can do some of that in Photoshop, too, but it's time consuming.

With Lightroom, when my client requests reprints, I can pull up his photos in a matter of minutes. It recalls the location of the photo on my computer and remembers everything I did to process that image before printing. You don't get that with Photoshop.

So, in my line of work, I find it helpful to combine the best of both programs.

If you're shooting for stock or portraits, I suggest you do the same.

How To Copyright Your Photos in Photoshop and Lightroom... and Why it's Important to Know How

By professional photographer Rich Wagner

The world of digital photography has dramatically changed the way photographers submit their work for publication. Gone are the days of sending slides and hand writing little stickers to fit on the slide mounts.

Now we can upload our photos over the internet or put them on CDs. But what about all that copyright information that used to fit on the slide label? How do we protect our photos now?

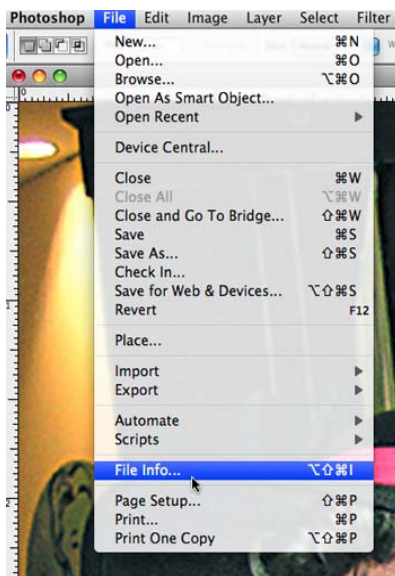
The good news is that you can attach your photo copyright information to the digital file in a process called "embedding." When you take these simple steps to embed and copyright your photos with your information, it always remains with the photograph file.

And it's just as important from a business standpoint, because you can add your contact information at the same time. Now the publisher can find your phone number, or a link to your website, to view more of your work.

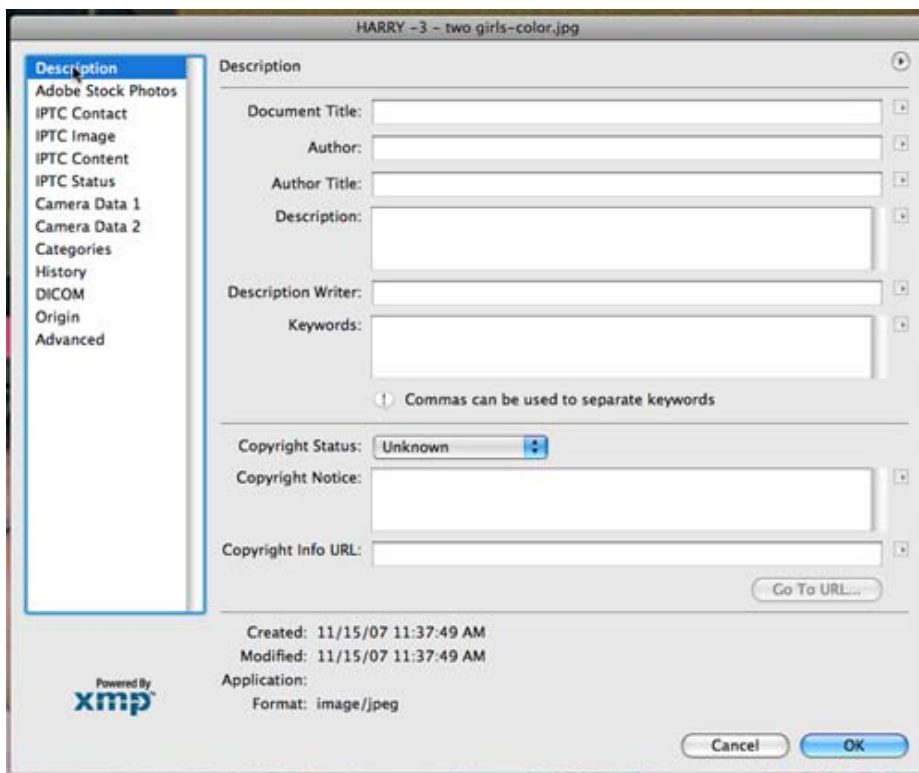
Just follow these simple steps in Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom to protect your photos and embed them with your information...

If you're a Photoshop user:

Open a photograph in Photoshop, go to the "File" menu, and click on "File Info."



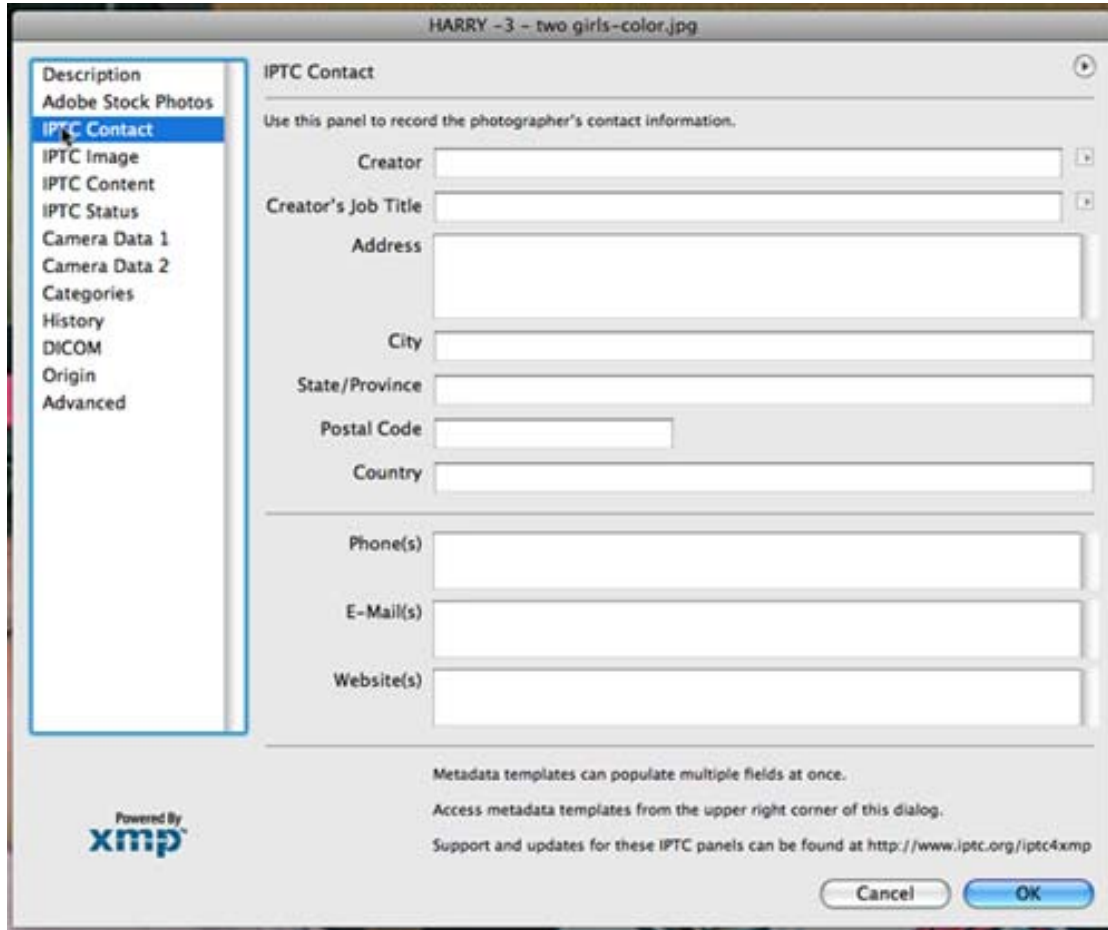
You'll see a screen offering information on your shot and a menu bar on the left. By default, it opens to the "Description" menu...



Here is where you can add a title, your name as the "author," a description, and other photo copyright information. I generally title the photo and put a short description here. I also add my

website in the "Copyright Info URL" box. That's where editors or buyers will go to contact me about usage.

Next, click on the "IPTC Contact" menu. IPTC stands for International Press Telecommunications Council.



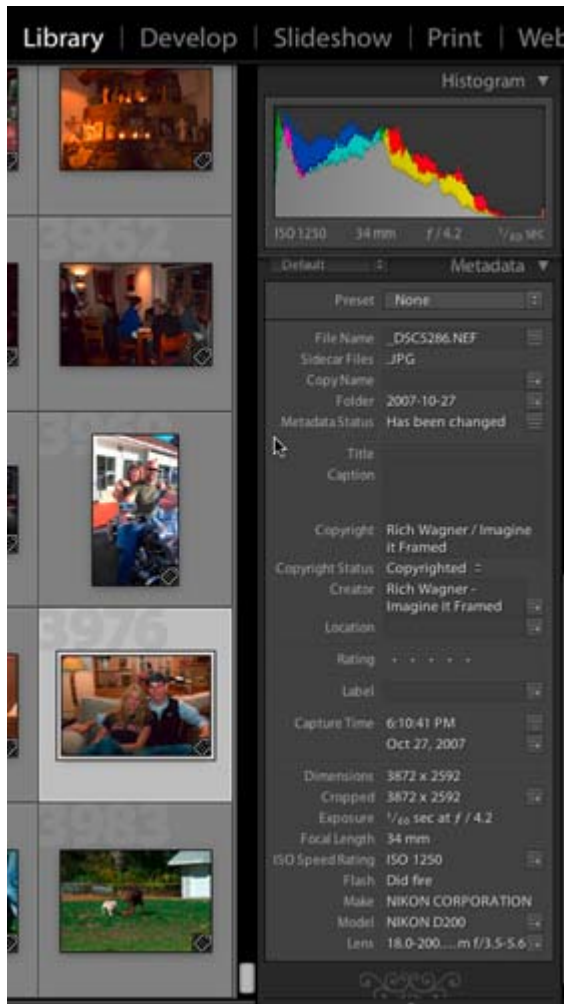
This is where you can put your contact information, including your email address and website. Click on OK and this information stays with the photograph for reference by the purchaser.

As you can see, there are many other menus. Some provide information on the camera used and the settings. These IPTC menus were originally developed for press photographers who need to attach information to images when they are submitting them electronically. They are useful for all photographers, however, because they provide a standard way of storing information such as captions, keywords, and location.

Adobe Lightroom, a program released this year, will also let you add information to your photographs. In fact, you can set up the program to automatically add your info when you transfer the photos from your camera to the computer. For now, though, let's take a look at how to copyright your photos when they've already been imported.

In Lightroom:

Just click on a single photo, or on multiple shots. A panel to the right shows the metadata information. You can edit it as you wish, including all the same contact and photo copyright information we've already discussed.



Once you've done that, your information will be saved with the photo file, further protecting the copyright.

Another way to protect your photos is by adding a "watermark," or a small image on top of your photo. In theory, the watermark makes the shot unusable because it covers part of the image. Other programs and "plug-ins" for Photoshop allow you to add a watermark to your photograph. A watermark doesn't give you any more legal protection, however. It just disfigures a portion of the image. For my work, I rely on the metadata copyright info rather than a watermark.

Sorting Your Photos in Lightroom

By professional photographer Riley Caton

Digital cameras make it easy to shoot more pictures than ever. During a recent trip to Australia, my wife Karen and I shot over 350 images of endangered sea lions in under an hour. We were in Australia for 48 days and shot nearly 9,600 images in total. Of those, I think we saved just a few over 2,000.

So, how did I tame the beast?

Well, for starters, I don't even start to look at my photos without first backing them up onto a separate hard drive or CD. You should do the same.

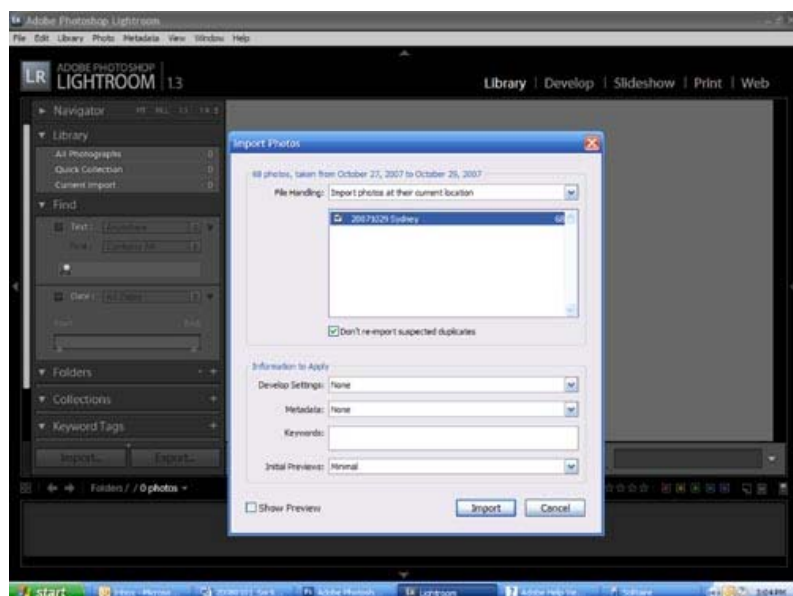
Once that's done, my digital workflow process includes sorting and deleting everything I know I don't want. Photos that are out of focus or improperly exposed... photos where someone stepped in front of my lens before I clicked the shutter... and anything else that isn't visually pleasing.

There is no hard-and-fast rule about how this should be done. Here's what I do in Adobe Lightroom...

Importing Your Photos into Adobe Lightroom

First, import your photos into Lightroom. You can do that by going up to "File" and selecting "Import photos at their current location."

Here, you can add text data, like your copyright information and/or keywords. You can add or change this text later in batches (that's part of the beauty of working in Lightroom instead of in Photoshop). But if you want your copyright information and/or keywords on everything you import, you might as well put it in at the start.



Picture Selection in Lightroom

Now you can begin the process of selecting which pictures to keep and which to delete. Set your viewing software so you can view the details of your images, one or two at a time. In Lightroom, you can use the "grid" or "loupe" views for this purpose.



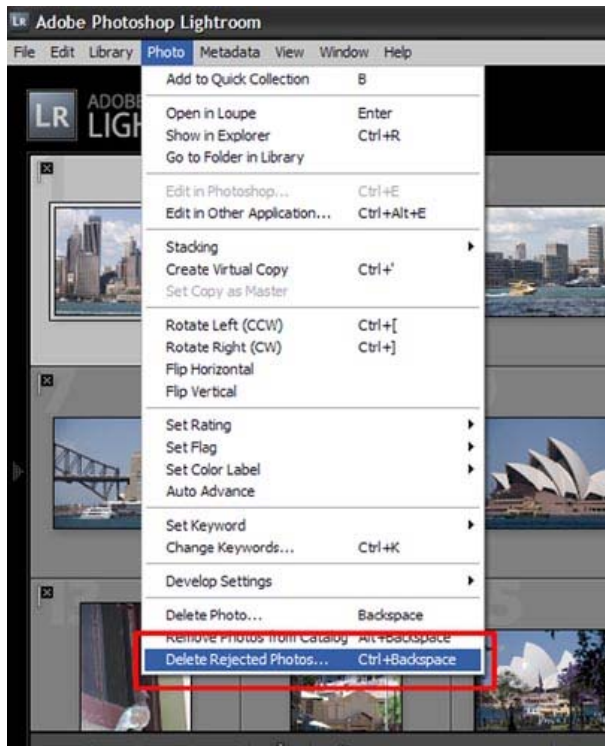
Initial Selection -- Look at each image carefully and ask yourself the following question: "Is it in focus and properly exposed?" If the answer is "no" to either question, the image is a candidate for deletion. In Lightroom, you can mark the image as a "Pick" or "Rejected" by right clicking on the flag in the upper left corner of the image frame.

Secondary Selection -- Filter out the rejected images by clicking on the "Pick" flag next to the "Filters" row in the lower right side of the window. The rejected images are now hidden, but haven't been deleted. Next, ask yourself, "Does the image express the right compositional elements? Can it be cropped to improve the composition?" If the answer to either of these is "no," mark the image as "Rejected."



Deleting Unwanted Photos in Lightroom

Delete Rejected Images -- Now that you have determined which images to delete, Lightroom provides you with a batch deletion option. Open the pull down list under "Photo" on the tool bar and click on "Delete Rejected Photos..." Lightroom will lead you through the deletion process.



One final thought... transfer, back up, and select your images on a daily basis or at the end of each shoot. There's nothing more daunting than the thought of sorting through thousands of accumulated images all at once.

Using Layers in Photoshop to Spot Color Black-and-White Photos

By professional photographer Shelly Perry

Selective Coloring, or “Spot” Coloring is a technique that makes your image really “pop” by turning the photo into a black and white image, besides one object.

This technique used to be called "hand coloring" because it was literally done by hand on the print with photo oils (kind of like a paint or dye). For years, I created images this way -- and though I enjoyed it, it was incredibly labor-intensive.

These days, things are a lot easier. Today, you can achieve similar results with just a few steps, using layering in Photoshop.

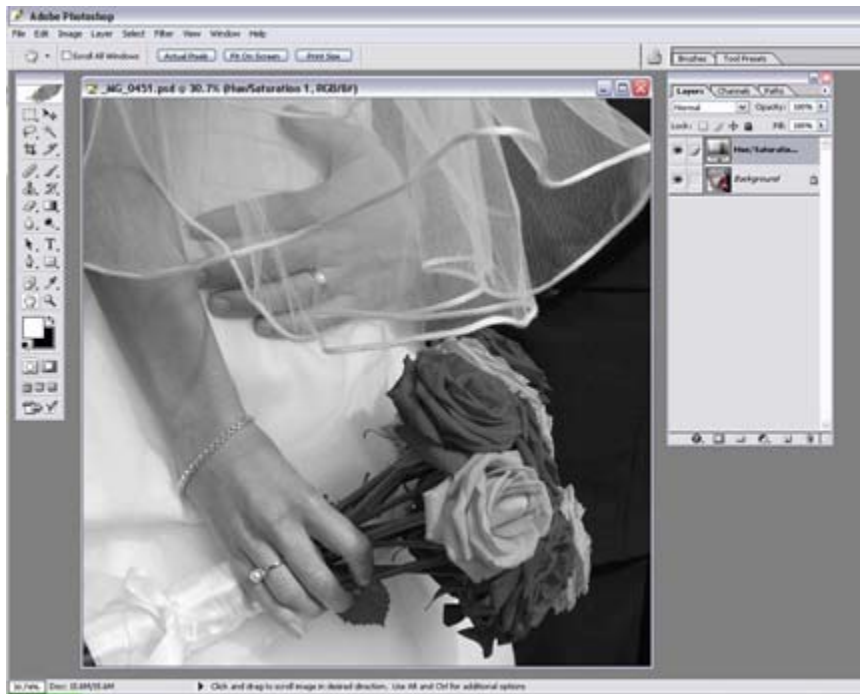
Keep in mind that there are numerous ways to do just about anything in Photoshop. I'm just giving you one way. The more time you spend in Photoshop, the more comfortable you will feel with its functions. And eventually, you will find your own favorite features and ways of processing photos.

So let's get started...

Here's an image I shot at a wedding in Paris last May, as it looks in Photoshop. I'm going to turn it into a black-and-white photo and then put spot color back on the flowers...



Here's how: Up on the menu bar, I hit "Layer," then "New Adjustment Layer," then "Hue/Saturation" and I just drag the saturation slider all the way to the left. (By the way, this is not the best way to make a black-and-white photograph, but it is a quick-and-easy way, and I use this method on photos like this all the time.)



You can see here that we have two layers in Photoshop; on the layers pallet (over to the right) we have the original image (called "Background") and a second layer (called "Hue/Saturation").

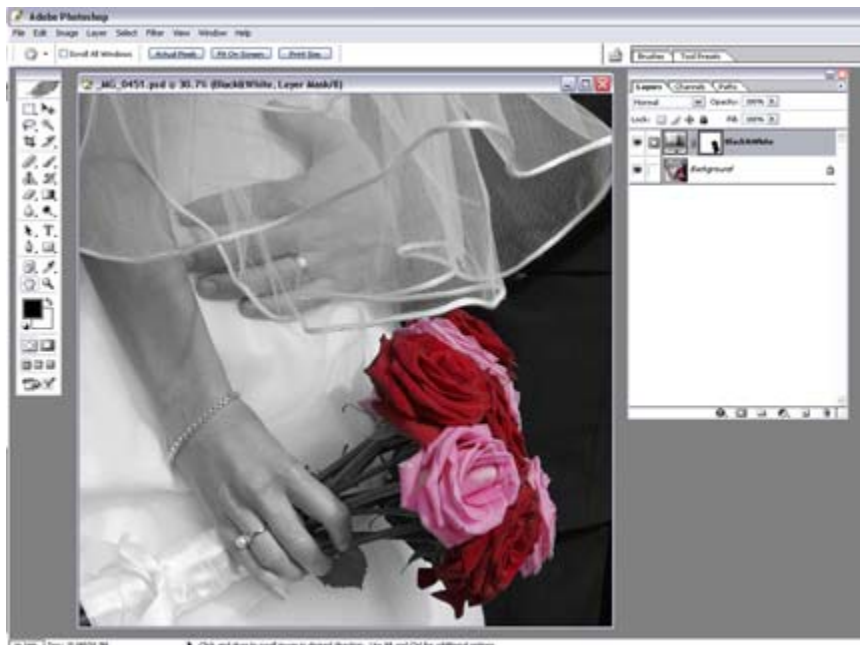
At this point, I like to rename my layers, and I suggest you do the same. It's a good habit to get into so you know what is what -- especially if you're going to start using layers in Photoshop all the time. It just makes it that much easier if they all have meaningful names. You will notice in the next frame I re-named mine to "Black & White." It's as simple as renaming a file on your computer. Just right click and rename.

That done, we need to bring back the color of the flowers.

An easy way to do this is to simply "mask out" the black-and-white layer where the flowers are. To do that, simply hit that little button on the bottom of the pallet (second one from the left) that looks like a camera or washing machine. That's the button for creating a mask.

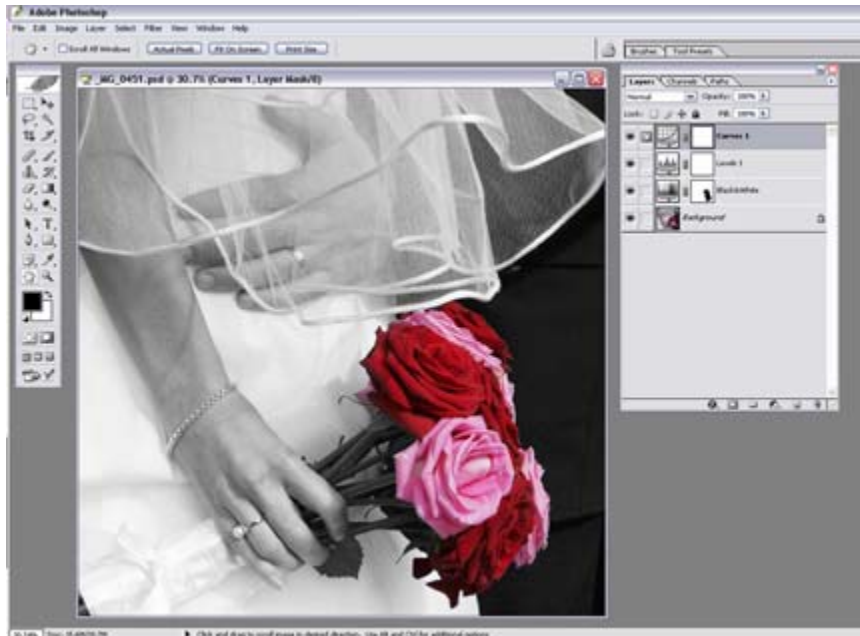
Then use a paint brush and paint black on the mask where the flowers are. A good little phrase to remember in Photoshop is "White reveals and black conceals." So, again, we're going to spot color the flowers by painting black all over them.

Remember, there are other ways to make a selection and speed up the process but painting is a good way to get started. See the mask next to the "Hue/Saturation" on the layers pallet? It's that white box that looks like there is a little blob in it -- that blob is the mask of the flowers.



Once the flowers are masked, I put on two more layers in Photoshop to give it a little more pop and contrast.

I use "Levels" and "Curves"... and if nothing else, every image I process gets a layers and curves adjustment.



And voila ... we went from this color image to a black and white image with an isolated spot of color.

Adjusting Levels and Curves in Photoshop

By professional photographer Shelly Perry

Getting a working knowledge of how to process your digital images -- whether in Photoshop, Lightroom, or some other imaging software -- can be daunting.

Here are two basic photo processing steps you should put every one of your images through.

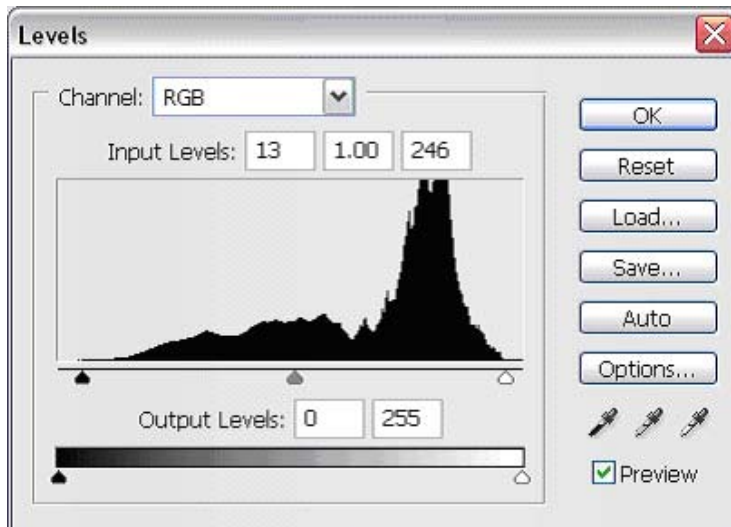
Back when we were all shooting film, we knew that an image was not really an image until it went through the chemistry (or what was affectionately known as "the soup") which turned the film into negatives (or slides). And then, from the negatives, we made prints.

Now, with digital, we have instant feedback on our shots. But that doesn't eliminate the need to "process" them, to make them the best they can be. As I said, you should process all your shots before you print them. Think of it as the "digital soup."

Photoshop offers automated adjustments, though I discourage you from using them. Instead, begin with these two straightforward digital adjustments for basic photo processing and you'll immediately improve your photos and make them easier to sell.

1) Photo Processing Using "Levels" in Photoshop

Levels will set the overall TONE of the image. Use the HISTOGRAM as a reference. To see the "Levels" histogram, click on "Image," then "Adjustments," then "Levels."



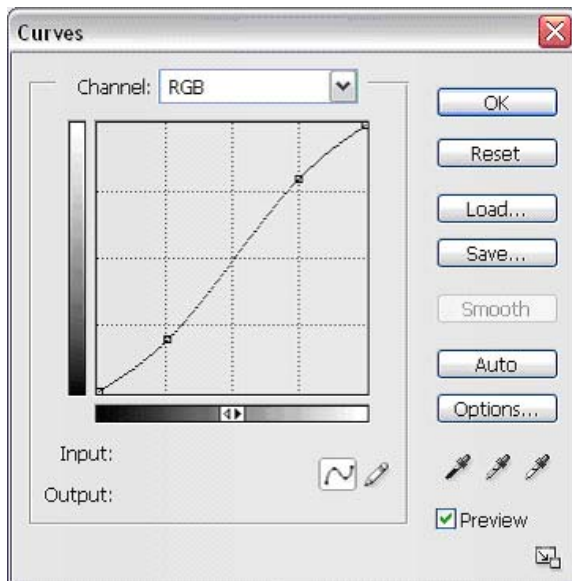
The dark areas of your image are represented on the left of the histogram, and the white areas on the right. See the three arrows at the bottom of the graph... one black, one gray, and one white?

You want your image to have some small areas of black and also white. To make sure it has those, all you need to do is click on the little triangles and drag them in until they meet the edge of the shaded areas, as shown above.

2) Photo Processing Using "Curves" in Photoshop

To find the "Curves" screen, first select "Layer," then "New Adjustment Layer," and then "Curves."

With "Curves," you will set the CONTRAST in your photos.



When you first open a "Curves" box, you'll see a straight, diagonal line in the box. To increase the contrast in your photo, you can darken the shadow areas by dragging the line in the dark zone (lower left) down... and dragging the line in the white zone (upper right) up.

Your diagonal line will now look like a slight "S." As in this example, an S curve darkens shadows and opens highlights for a nice simple contrast adjustment.

One thing I notice in images that have not been processed is that they look as though they have a slightly gray film over them. This tells me right away that these shots are right out of the camera and that no photo processing tools have been used to enhance them.

Here are two examples from Austin to illustrate my point. See if you can see the "gray film" lift as I make these two adjustments I've just told you about: "Levels" and "Curves..."



Right out of the camera -- see how the image is "flat?"



With slight "Levels" and "Curves" **photo processing** adjustments, the "gray film" has lifted. The image has more tone, contrast and even a bit more punch in the color.

Another example:



Here's another before and after with nothing more than a "Levels" and a "Curves" photo processing adjustment done to each.

I hope you are able to see with these two examples the vast difference simple photo processing can make. With these two quick-and-easy steps, you can transform an image from the basic shot you captured in camera to a processed, more fully developed image.

One thing to keep in mind with all imaging software is that a little goes a long way.

Always use a gentle hand with your image adjustments.

Correcting Over-Exposed Photos in Photoshop

By professional photographer Shelly Perry

One of the biggest problems travel photographers face is photo lighting and having to correct over-exposed photos. When you're on an assignment and you have just two days to bring back an article with photographs of a place, you have to deal with whatever light God gives you on those two days.

You can get up early and you can shoot again in the evening or at night -- but sometimes you'll only have time to get to a place once. Parades are often held mid-day. Certain parks and historic

areas don't allow admission before noon. Sometimes you stumble upon a story/photo opportunity while you're out exploring. Maybe you can come back, maybe you can't.

My point is: Working with natural light is always a challenge. As a speaker at AWAI's photography workshops and an "inspector" at iStockphoto.com, I see a lot of really great pictures ruined by poor lighting.

Pictures that are over-exposed are not good. You want your colors to be saturated, not faded. And your white areas should still hold some detail.

The way to avoid this altogether is to look at the histogram or blinking highlights in your camera as you're taking the picture. You would clearly if parts of your photo are overexposed. And if they were, you could compensate on the spot, by adjusting your camera's settings.

But sometimes you get what you think is a great shot home and low and behold... it's overexposed. The damage is done.

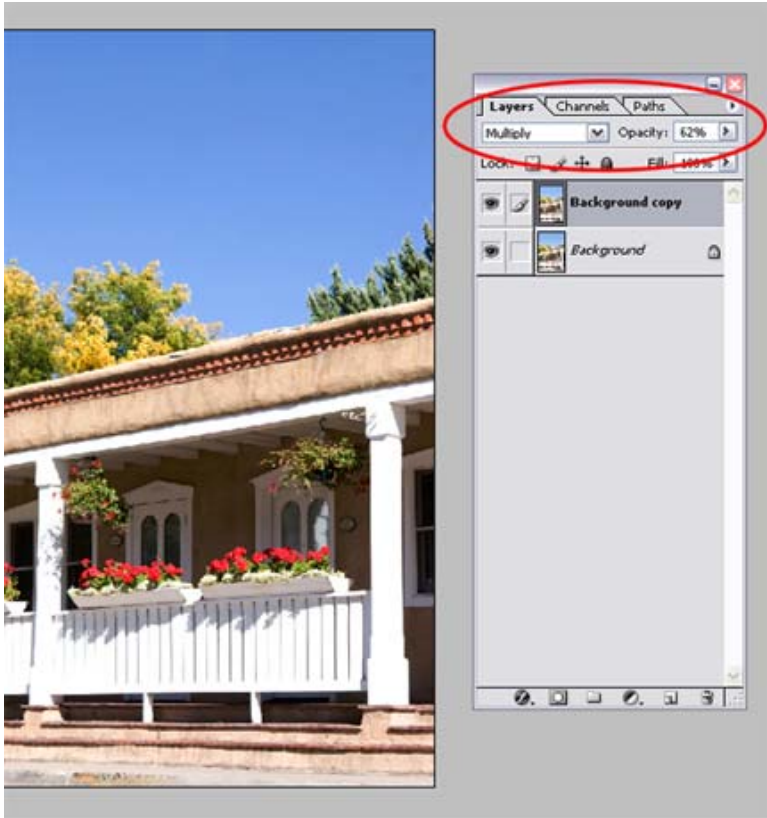
The good news is, however, that you can sometimes correct over-exposed photos in Photoshop. (I should tell you, though: It's easier to fix slightly underexposed images than it is to fix overexposed ones.)

Nevertheless, I was able to fiddle with this image. Let me show you what I did to fix it:

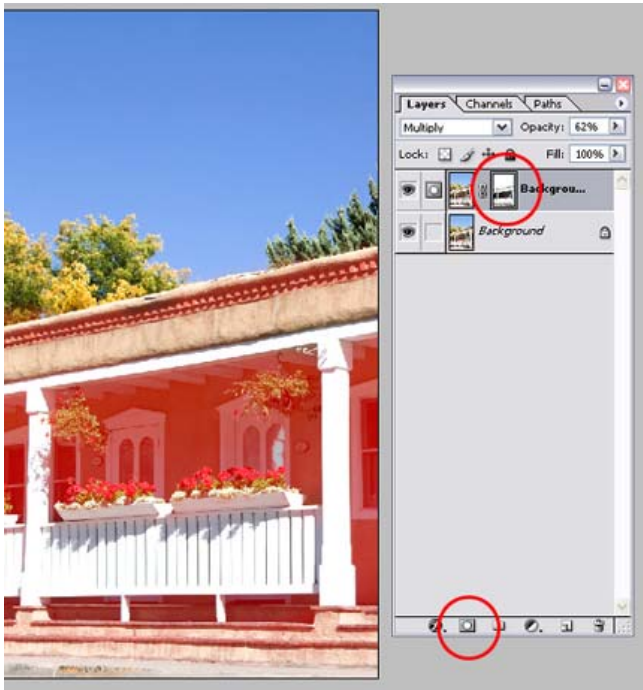
Fixing An Over-exposed Picture:

First, I opened the over-exposed image in Photoshop and made a duplicate layer (right click on the background image and choose "duplicate layer").

On the "layers" pallet, I chose "multiply" and then dropped the opacity to 62%. There is no hard and fast rule here. I chose 62% because it just looked right to me. You can see that the colors are already more saturated...

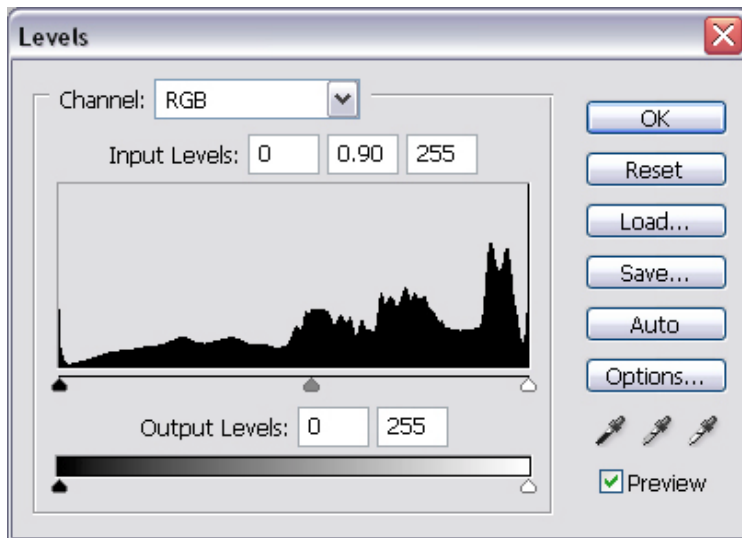


But since I wanted to correct as much of the overexposed area as I could without exaggerating the contrast, I put a filter on the layer.



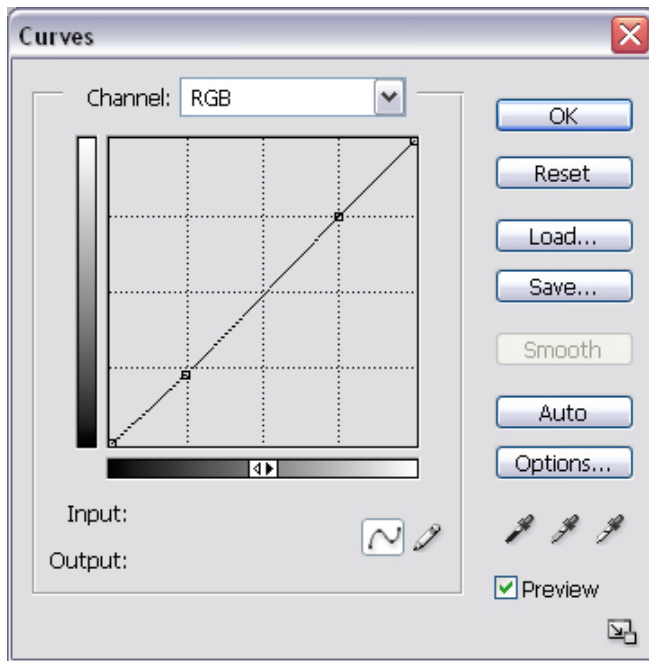
You can put a filter onto any layer (except the background) by clicking on the filter icon at the bottom of the pallet (see the lower red circle). Then, I used the brush tool to paint in the darker shadow areas with black on the filter layer. When you do this, make sure your filter layer is selected and it will show up red, as in the image here. This red area is called a "mask."

Next, I added a level adjustment layer by clicking on the "layers" menu at the top of the screen, hovering the mouse over "new adjustment layer," and choosing "levels." (A box appears, asking you to name the layer. Just click "ok.")



Since the image we are correcting is over exposed, you can see a solid black line to the right of the histogram in the image here, representing the white in the image. In this case, I lightened up the midsection (the medium shades in the photo) just slightly, by dragging the middle of the three arrows under the histogram to the right a bit.

I also went for a very minor "curves" adjustment just to brighten the image and give it a little bit of pop. You can do this by going to the "image" menu at the top of the screen, hovering over "adjustment," and choosing "curves..."



Notice I did not increase the white area -- I only adjusted the dark side slightly. Play around with this feature until the lighting of the photo looks right to you.

The colors have more saturation, we have saved the detail in the shadow area, and we have given the impression that the white railing is not totally blown out.

Now, overexposure is hard to deal with and this "fix" is far from perfect. You can't bring back details and colors that your camera never captured in the first place.

Adjusting Color Casts and Tones in Photoshop

By professional photographer Shelly Perry

See this cow...



This is a picture that was submitted to our monthly photo challenge.

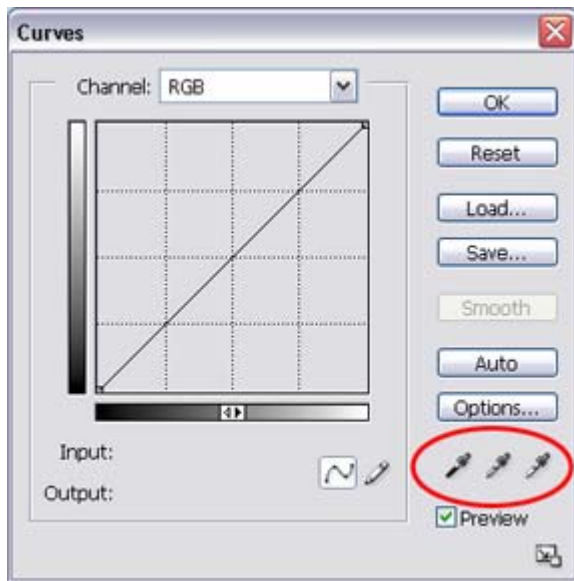
Different light has different qualities. One of those qualities is the color cast or tone of the photo and that's what's amiss here with this blue (well, technically speaking it's called cyan) cow.

You're limited in your ability to deal with this color cast/tone in your camera, but this is definitely something you can fix post-processing using color correction in Photoshop.

Here's how...

1. Open the file up in Photoshop.
2. Go to "Layer"... then, "New Adjustment Layer"... then, "Curves." By the way, I renamed my Layer "color correction" so it's easy to find later.

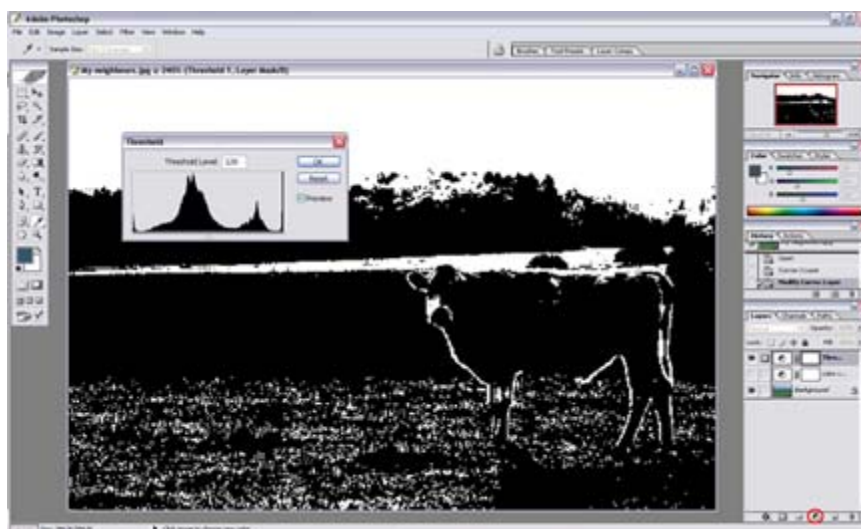
On this screen, we are going to use the eye droppers (circled in red)...



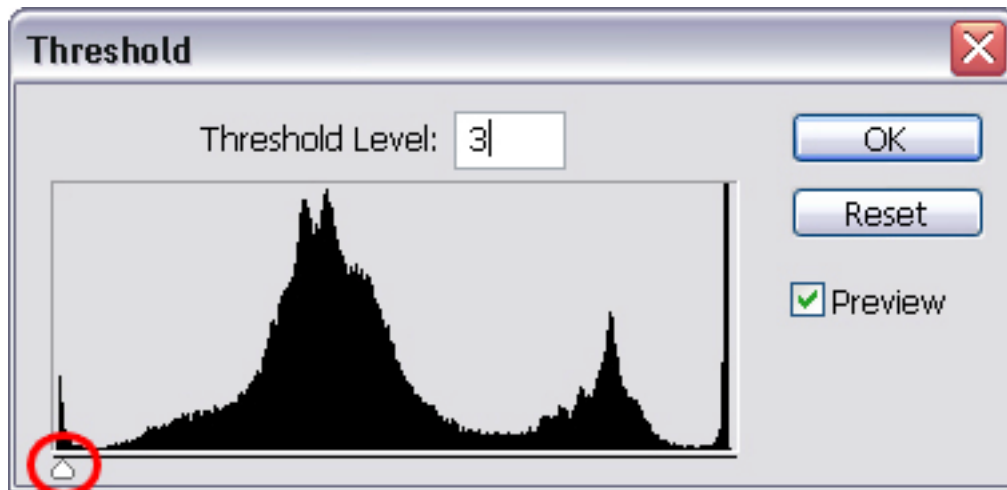
3. The trick now is finding the blackest black in your picture. You're going to click on that black area with your little black eye dropper circled above. And each time you click on something black, the dropper will adjust the color of the photo. So peck around a little until you find the blackest black spot.

Quick Tip -- If you can't determine where your darkest blacks or whitest whites are (granted, it's sometimes hard to tell) you can find them easily with a layer called "Threshold."

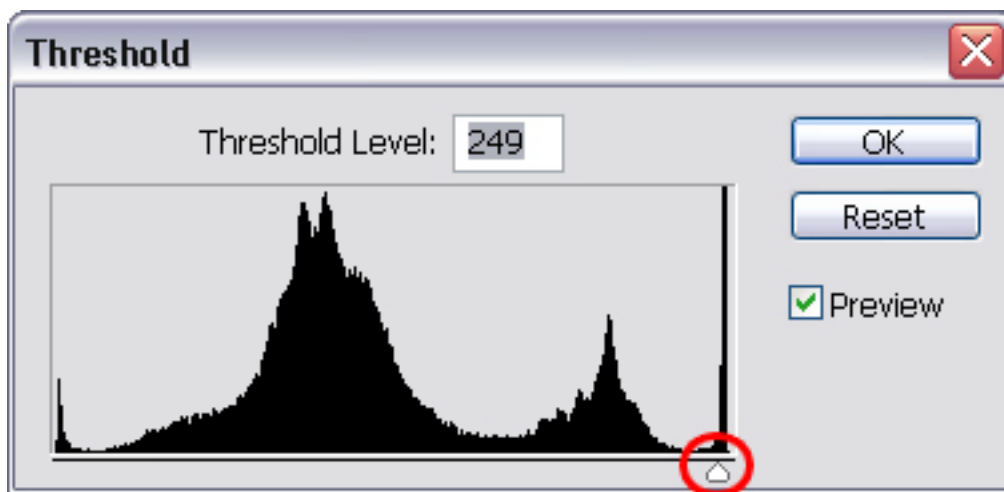
You can access this layer by clicking on the fourth button from the left on the very bottom of your layers pallet (see below... circled in red.). It's a circle with black on top and white on the bottom. And it'll look like this when you open it...



Now use the little slider and slide it all the way to the left -- you will see everything start to disappear. Then slide it just slightly back till you see a few black specks (enough for you to get your eye dropper onto.)



Do the same to the right. This is now showing you the white areas. Be careful that you actually get a white spot and not a blown highlight. Sometimes you have to go a little bit farther in to find it.



This is a great image for this example because it is not "clipped" on either side (meaning there is detail in all the blacks and detail in all the whites.)

So now that you've made a mental note of where the blackest of blacks and the whitest of whites are, you can simply exit from the Threshold layer. There is no need to save it -- it's just for your information.

4. Now that you know where your blackest of blacks and your whitest of whites are -- go back to the curves layer (remember that I named mine "color correction").

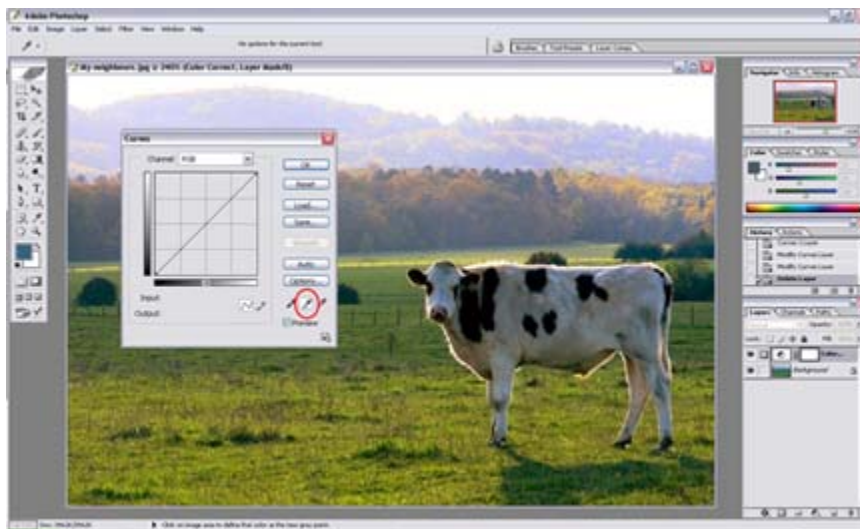
Use the black eye dropper and click your black spot. Then use the white eye dropper and click the white spot.

When I did this with this cow picture, I hit a few snags (as you'll often do when you're adjusting the color of your photos because color correction in Photoshop can be tricky)...

When I clicked on my blackest black spot with my black eyedropper, there were only subtle changes. And when I clicked on my whitest white with my white eyedropper, things started to go wild because the side of the cow facing us is in shadow (and isn't exactly white).

So when this happens, you have to use that middle eye dropper (circled in red on the screen shot below). Just like the black and white eyedroppers, this one is for "middle gray" and your job is to find a nice middle gray spot on the cow.

I clicked around a little until I found a spot that gave me the color casts for the photo that I liked (without losing the hills in the background -- be sure you're watching all the elements in your picture and not just your subject). And here's what we have...



5. As a final step, because the color correction in Photoshop added a bit more contrast than I wanted, I changed the layer from "normal" to "color" (see the red circle below for where to change this...)



And we went from the original blue cow to this warm light cow in a few short steps.

WARNING: Not all color correction changes you make in Photoshop are for the better. Part of being a photographer is personal taste, so play around and see what works for you.

How to Remove Logos from your Photos and Sell them as Stock

By professional photographer Shelly Perry

If you're thinking about shooting and selling your photos to stock agencies, your photos have to be clean. And by that I mean logo-free, trademark-free, even three-stripe Adidas free.

But even if you have logos in your images, you can remove those logos from your photos -- using Photoshop. Take this photo, for instance...



What's great about this picture is that it has a nice composition and it's cute. If this photographer

wants to sell this photo as stock, though, SpongeBob has to go.

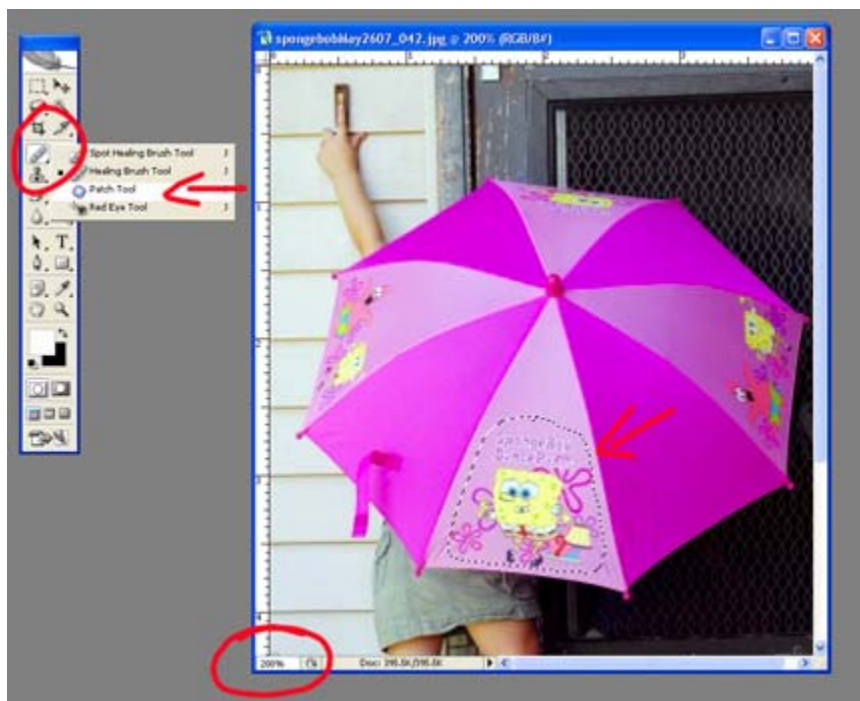
Here's how I'd do it...

(As with all things Photoshop, there are a number of ways to get rid of SpongeBob. In fact, even the way I'm about to show you combines a few different techniques...)

To start, I am going to use what's called a "patch." To find the patch tool, you must first find the tool on the left toolbar that looks like a Band-Aid. (It's usually the fourth one down on the left. I've circled it on the screen shot below.)

Behind that tool is the patch tool. To get to it, right-click and chose it from the drop down menu.

With that tool selected, you can then click and hold and make a circle around that front SpongeBob (see the picture below). Try not to draw your circle outside the umbrella and try not to clip any part of SpongeBob with your circle. Increase the size of the picture if you're having trouble getting in tight enough (see the second red circle on this next shot, where I increased the size from 100% to 200%).



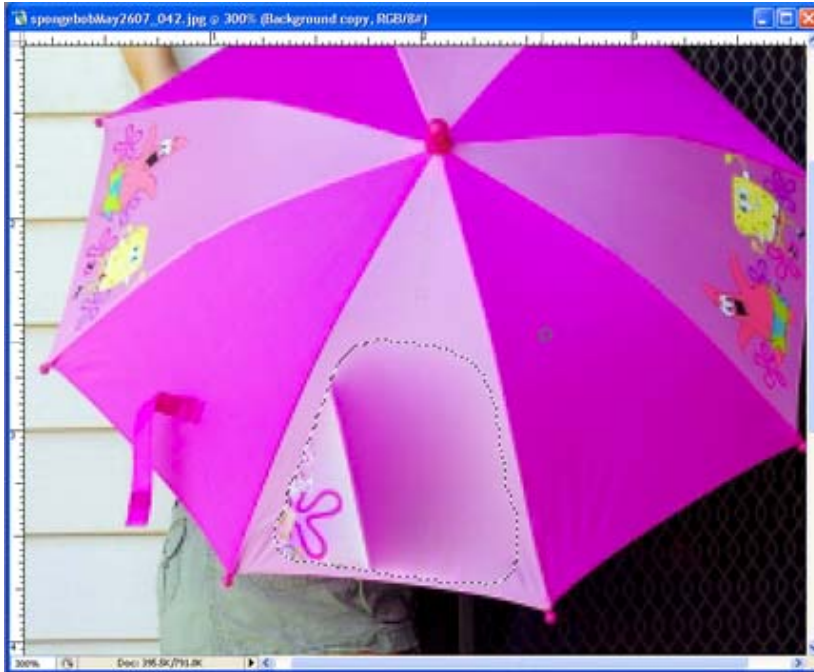
Once you've circled SpongeBob, drag him to the right, into the next umbrella panel. You do this by clicking and holding your mouse and dragging him as far into the next panel as he'll go -- without going over the crease into the third panel.

Don't worry that this new panel is a different color or that SpongeBob doesn't fit into this next panel. The patch tool is looking for texture and not color, and you can always repeat this step when something doesn't fit.

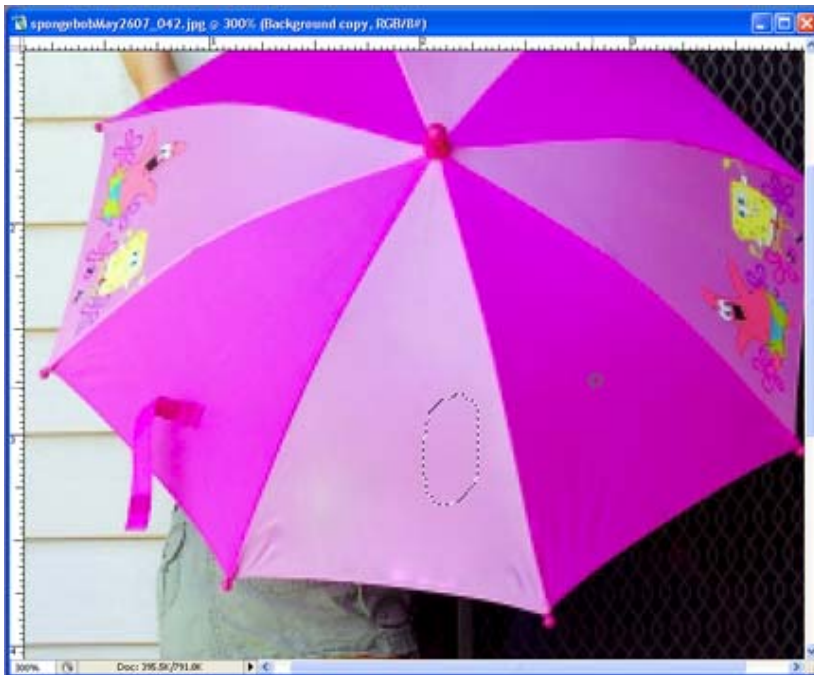
Once you've pulled Bob into that next panel over, let go of him. If Bob were smaller, we'd likely

be done now, but since the circled SpongeBob is bigger than the right-hand umbrella panel, we need to repeat the process.

Here's what my picture looked like when I pulled Bob over the first time...

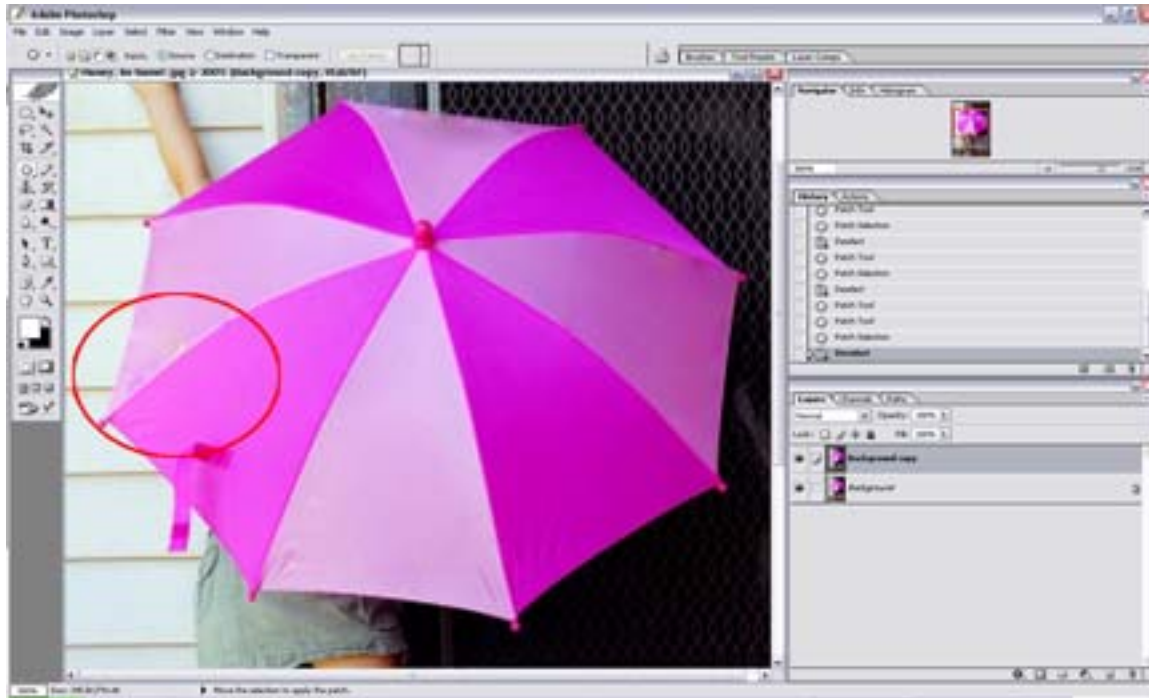


Each time I pull him over to the side, I'll draw my circle a little smaller until, eventually, all the dark pink is gone and I'm left with a clear panel; I have removed the logo from the photo.



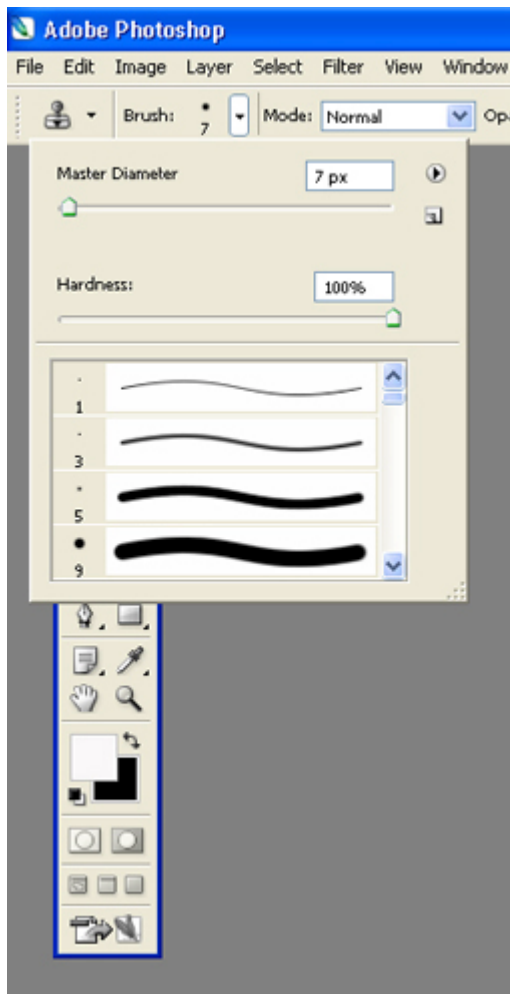
This patch tool is great for things like this, where you have a lot of similar textures to work with. Just watch out for edges and creases as that's where you get into trouble -- when the textures start to change.

Repeat this process for all the remaining SpongeBob panels on the umbrella and double-check for spots you can't reach with the patch tool.



Once all the panels are clear and you have successfully removed all the logos from the photos, you need to use the clone stamp tool to make sure your colors match. You'll find this tool on the toolbar just below the patch tool (5th icon down on the left). It looks like an address stamp.

When you click on this tool, you'll likely need to adjust your brush size. For this, I'll use a size seven. You can change your brush stroke size at the top of your screen by clicking the little upside down triangle next to the brush number here...



Unlike the patch tool, the aptly named clone stamp will clone both texture and color, so you need to be careful. You have to pick an area you want to clone that matches exactly.

Once you've found a spot you can clone, move your mouse over it and press the ALT key on your keyboard and click with your mouse. This will select that spot as your stamp.

Once you have a stamp, go to the area you want to cover and click on it. You'll see that an exact clone of the space you marked with the ALT key will show up wherever you click.

Go around the rest of the umbrella this way cleaning up anything that's remaining. Keep in mind you may have to adjust your brush size throughout this process -- I do so often as I work to get into those tight corners and odd spaces.

Here's my final picture...



Remember, though, that I also adjust my "Curves" and "Levels" with every shot I submit to sell for stock -- and I suggest you do the same.

To finish this photograph, I nudged the mid tones a little (the middle slider) just slightly to the left... toss in a curves layer... and decide to warm it up just a little.

And then maybe, just for fun, I might change the color of the umbrella...

