Boost Your Photoshop Skills

Tips Every Designer Should Know

Presented by: Lisa Ellston   lisae@jdsindustries.com

- How to Remove Backgrounds

- How to Create Mockups

- How to Use .EPS templates

- How to Fix Dark Photos

- How to Increase Photo Size without Losing Quality

- How to Fix Blemishes with the Spot Healing Brush

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In Photoshop, there are a number of ways to remove backgrounds.

The first method is very quick and easy if you have a solid background that needs to be removed.

First, open the image in Photoshop. Right click on the Background layer and select Duplicate Layer. Shut off the original Background layer.

On the left toolbar, select the Magic Eraser tool - it is located under the Eraser tool.

With the Magic Eraser tool selected, adjust the Tolerance on the top toolbar. The higher the number you type in this box, the more pixels will be removed with one click as Photoshop will know you want to remove pixels from a broader range. Set a low Tolerance and Photoshop will only remove pixels that are more similar in color to the pixel you clicked.

Click anywhere on the background image to remove it.

To remove other areas that are the same color inside of the image go to Select>Color Range. Choose Localized Color Clusters and select the Selection button at the bottom. Using the eyedropper click on the color in the image you want to remove. Click OK. This will then show the selection of the areas picked. If this is correct press the Delete key to remove the color from those areas. This will be especially useful when using the image for mockups.

Save the image as .png file in order to keep the removed areas transparent.
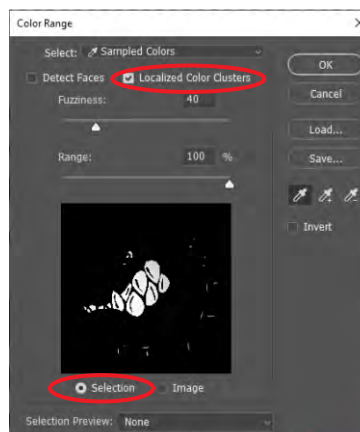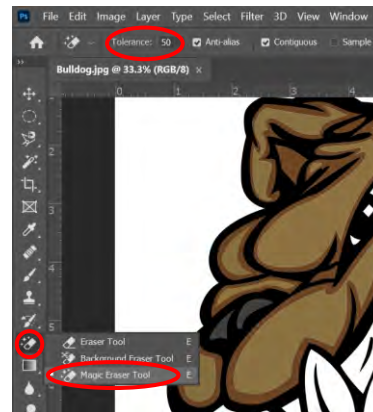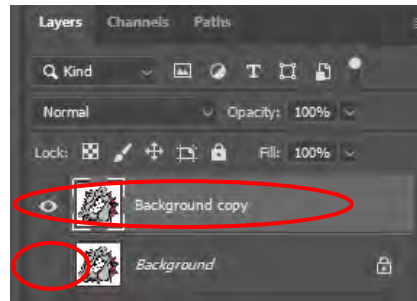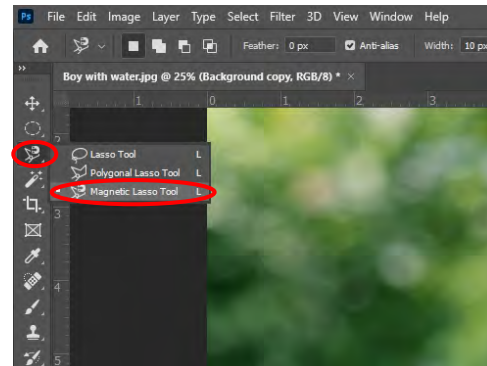
The next way to remove the background from an image in Photoshop is to use the Magnetic Lasso tool.

Open the image in Photoshop. As in the previous method, right click on the Background layer and select Duplicate Layer. Shut off the original Background layer.

On the left toolbar, select the Magnetic Lasso tool.

Click once to start the path, then move the mouse around the edge of the object that will be kept. Don't worry if it isn't perfect. We will go back and clean it up later. Once the path ends where it began, the line will turn into a selection. To remove the background, invert the selection so that everything around the object is selected instead of the object itself. Go to Select/Inverse or Shift-CTRL-I.
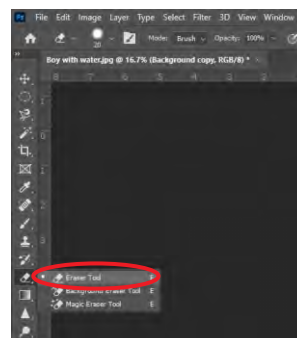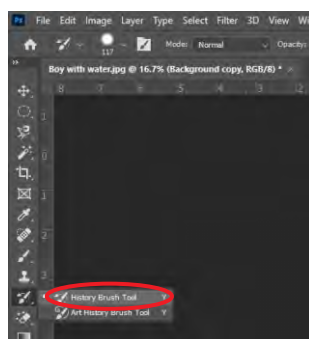
Press the Delete key to remove the background.

To clean up the image use the History Brush tool to bring back elements. Use the Eraser tool to remove elements.

To keep the transparent background, save the image as .png file.

How to Create Mockups

Customers may have a hard time visualizing how a product is going to turn out with their artwork. Mockups are a great way to show your customers what you can do. If you are creating your own artwork, you can use the same mockups when creating your websites or catalogs.

Distributors should have undecorated images available for free that you can download and use to create mockups to send to your customer.

Open the image that you are mocking up then place the .png file of the artwork on top.

If the product you are mocking up is not white, this is where it becomes important to remove any white in the artwork so that you don't deceive the customer into thinking the end product will have white in it.

If you are doing shirts that are not 100% polyester then reduce the opacity on the artwork so that it will have the faded look that blended fabric will have.
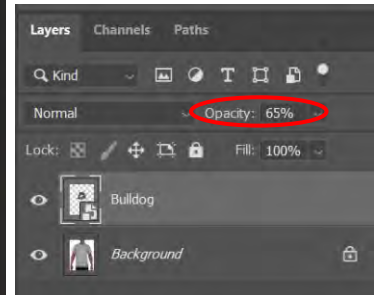
To do a more complicated markup where the entire product will be covered you will use a masking method. In this example, we'll be using a sublimated pet tag.

Open the image of the blank pet tag then place the artwork on top of it. If you are not sure of placement, move the artwork layer below the pet tag layer

Once the artwork is where you want it move that layer to the top again. Right click on the artwork layer and select Create Clipping Mask.

Add text or other embellishment and then save the image as either a .png or .jpg.
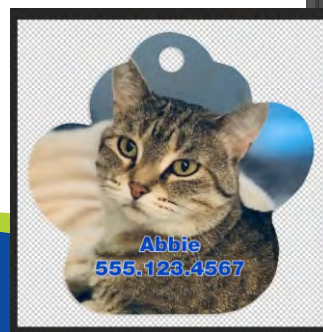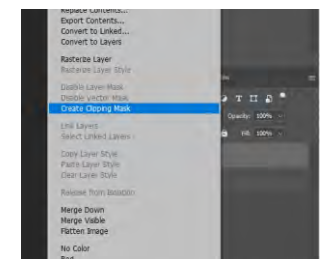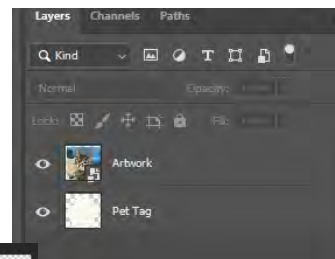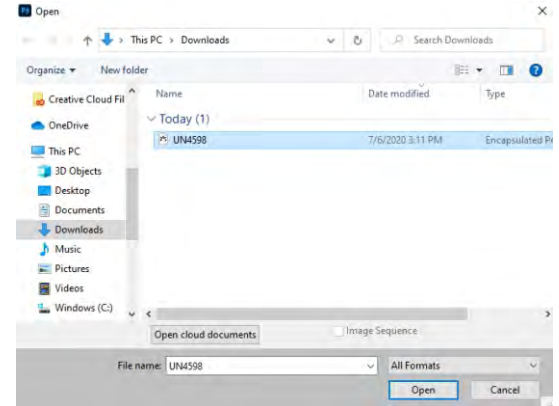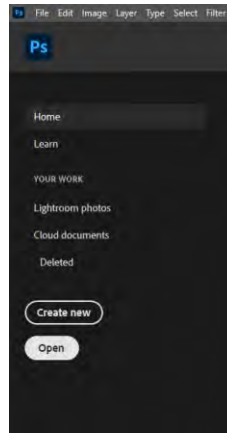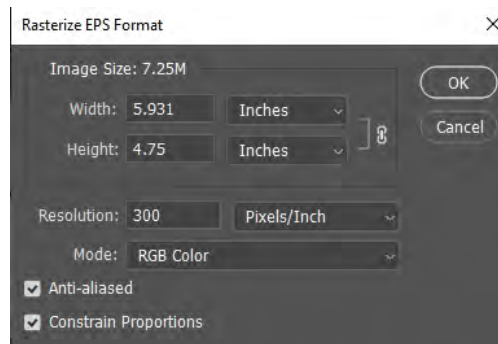
How to Use .EPS Templates

An .eps file is a universal file format that will work in many different design softwares. Using a template that is in an .eps format is quite simple in Photoshop. Here are the steps:
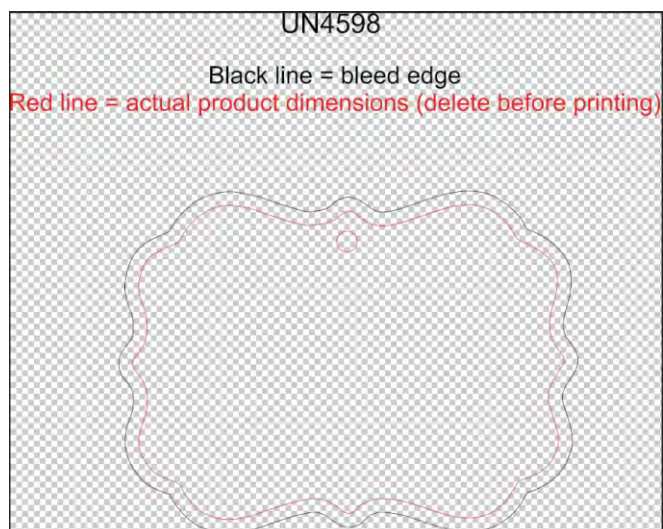
1. Download the template.

2. Open up Photoshop and click the Open button. Locate the downloaded file and click Open.

3. Leave the width and height as is. Be sure that the Resolution is set at 300 and the Mode is set on RGB Color. Click OK.
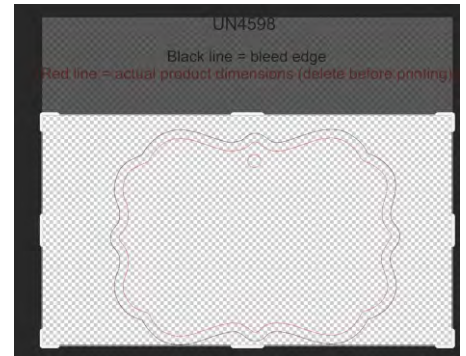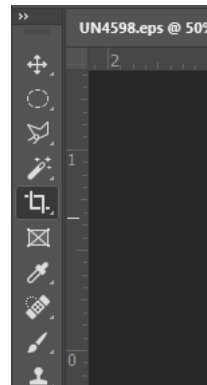

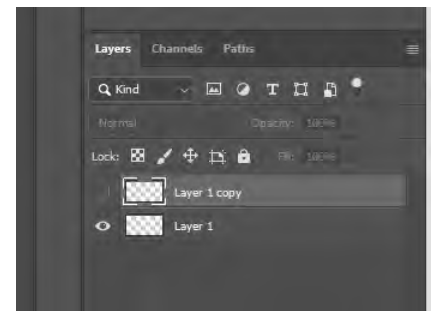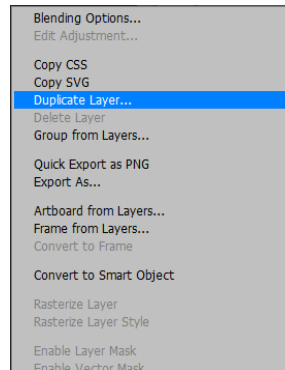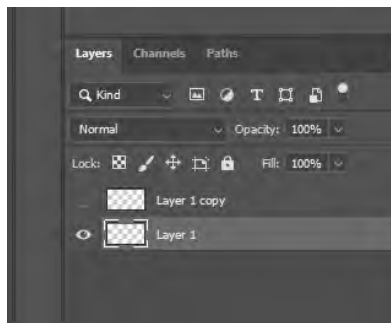4. The text in the template explains what each line represents.

5. Using the Crop tool, crop the image so that the text is removed.

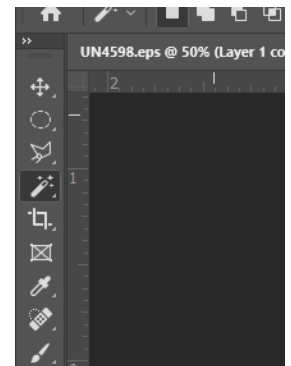6. Right click on Layer 1 and select Duplicate Layer.

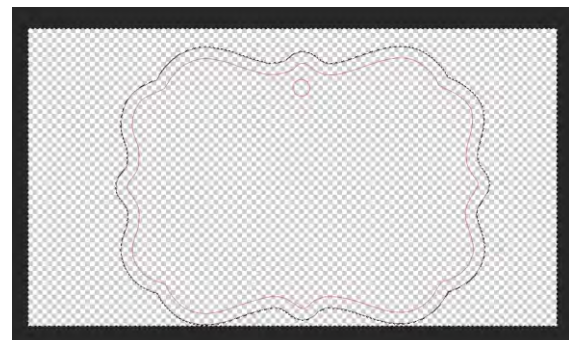7. Shut off the top layer (we will use this layer later for reference).

8. Select Layer 1 then click on the Magic Wand Tool.
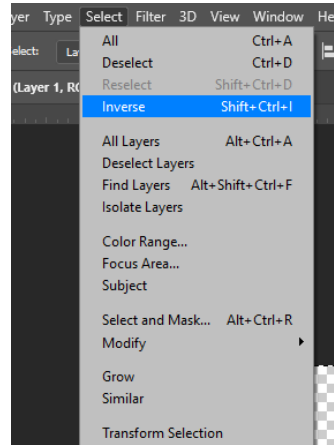
9. Click anywhere outside of the template.

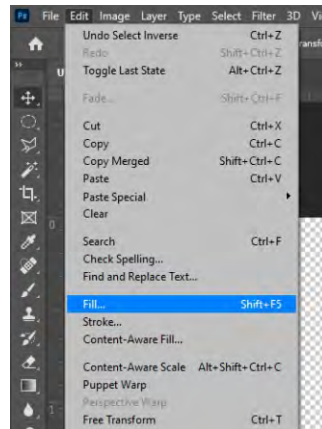10. The edge around the template and the black line will appear with the moving dotted line which means the outside is selected.
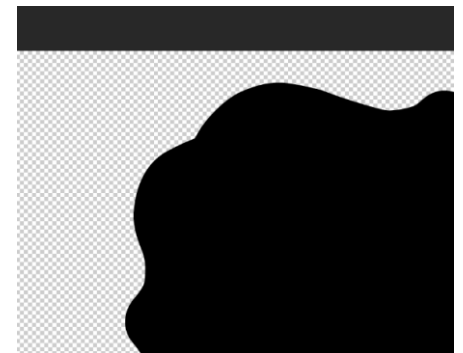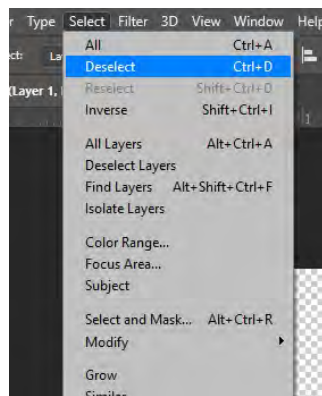
11. Invert the selection so that the inside is selected. Go to Select > Inverse. The moving dotted line will now only be around the black line of the template.

12. Go to Edit > Fill. Change the Contents to Black. Leave the blending as is. Click OK.
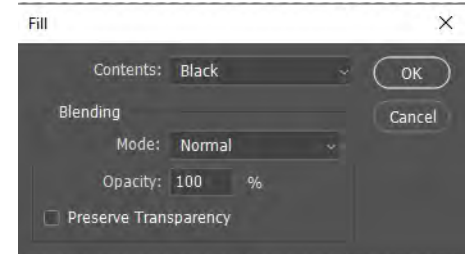
13. Go to Select > Deselect or Ctrl-D to remove the moving dotted line.

14. Bring in the image of your choice. Go to File > Place Embedded. Locate the file to be imported. Click Place.
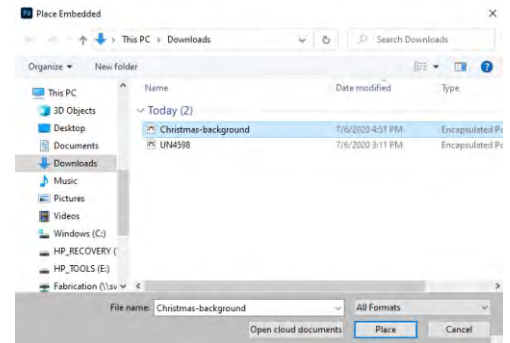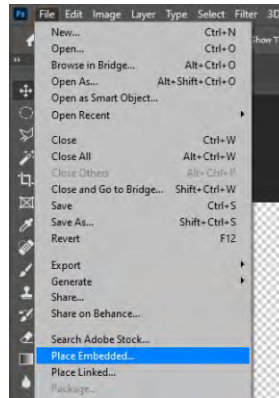
15. Move the image to the bottom layer and adjust the size and location as needed.
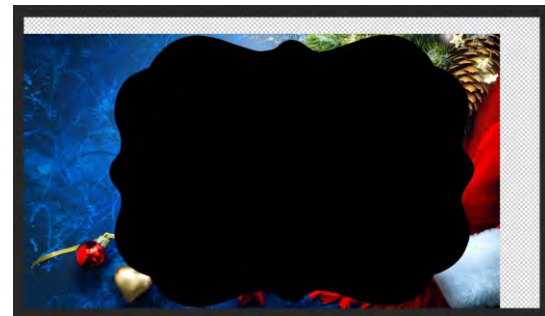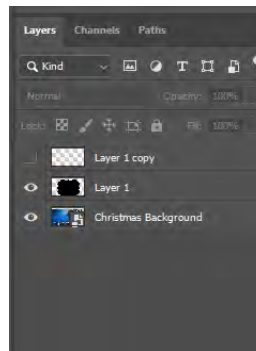
16. Move the image back to the middle layer. Right click on the image layer and select Create Clipping Mask
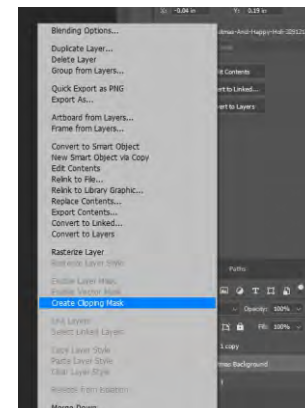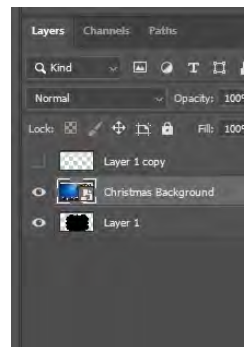
17. Turn the top layer back on so that the guidelines are visible.

18. Turn the top layer back on so that the guidelines are visible.
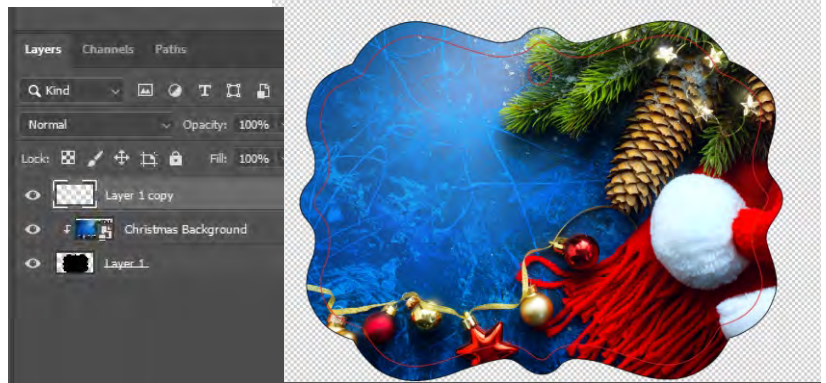
19. Add any text that is needed.

20. Before printing, shut off Layer 1 again so that the red lines do not print.
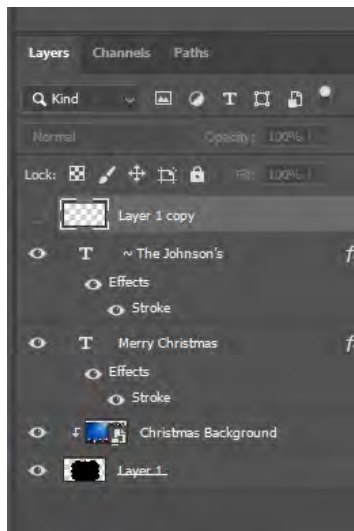
This lesson will demonstrate how to bring back detail from a dark photo using the Shadow/Highlight tool.

Original Image

Completed Image

First because the shadow highlight tool is not available as a layer adjustment, duplicate the background image.

Right click on the background layer in the Layers Palette and choose duplicate layer.
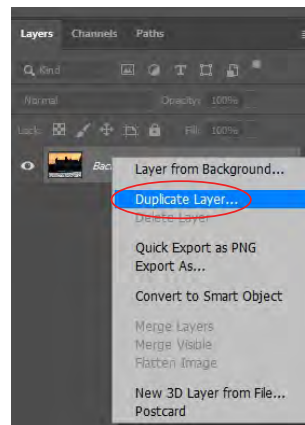
With the new duplicated layer active, go to Image>Adjustments>Shadows/Highlights. This will open the Shadows/Highlights dialog box with a default adjustment.

Each image will be different. It may take some practice to get the best results.
(Hint: you may have to check the Show More Options Box)

NOTE: Each image will have different percentages specific for that image.

Under the Shadows section move the Amount slider. This determines the intensity of the adjustment.

Next, adjust the Tone under the Shadows section. The Tone is the range of tonal values that will be affected by the change. Lowering the tone will affect only the very darkest areas. If increased to one of the highest values, the tonal width will affect the dark through the light areas and apply the adjustment to those.

Adjust the Radius, which is the distance of transition between the area affected and the area not affected.

To bring back some the color in the sky, adjust the Highlights section.

To bring back lost color in the photo, adjust the color correction. Most of the time the color can be increased some to bring back some of the saturation.

Click OK and the image is finished and can be saved.

Completed Image

How To Increase Photo Size Without Losing Quality

In a perfect world we would always use photos that are high resolution at the size that we intend to use them. Unfortunately, we do not live in that fantasy world and many times photos we receive have been pulled off social media or other internet locations. Usually, these photos are low resolution and smaller in size. To upsize these photos can mean poor results. In this section, we will show a method of improving low resolution images and make them more usable.

DPI stands for "dots per square inch". This is because printers print with dots. If working for monitors then use PPI "pixels per square inch".

So why is DPI or PPI important? The amounts of pixels in an inch in addition to the physical size of the image will determine the quality of that image.

When looking at an image, holding it 6" to 12" away from your face, the image should look very crisp and clear. The more pixels there are in the image the more they will appear blended to the naked eye. The fewer pixels, the image will appear choppy because the pixels are larger.

Now if you were to view the same image from further away - say 5 ft - the image with a lower amount of pixels will begin to look smoother.

So really, the distance the image will be seen from will determine how low of dpi can be used.

Can you simply just increase the amount of pixels? You can, however the amount of information in the pixels does not increase. That is why just increasing the pixels from 72 to 300 does not really give a better result. Instead of looking choppy, it may just look blurry. But there are ways to make the image look better so that it can be sized up.

72 dpi

300 dpi

72 dpi

300 dpi

72 dpi increased to 300 dpi

How To Increase Photo Size Without Losing Quality

Photoshop has added tools that will allow the user to increase the number of pixels in an image while smoothing out the pixelation.

Start by bringing in the image as a Smart Object. Smart Objects will retain the image information even after it is changed.

Then go to Image > Image Size. Change the width and height to the size needed (leave the lock turned on so that the image is sized proportionally) and change the resolution to 300. Make sure the Resample is checked.

Next to the Resample checkbox is a dropdown. Choose from either Preserve Details (enlargement), Preserve Details 2.0 or Bicubic Smoother (enlargement) - whichever one will improve the preview image. The preview image can be moved around to give a better area to view. Once that is selected click OK.

Regardless of this method it is likely that if an image that is only 1 inch in size at 72 dpi is enlarged to 8 or 10 inches at 300 dpi, the result will not look good.

Rasterize
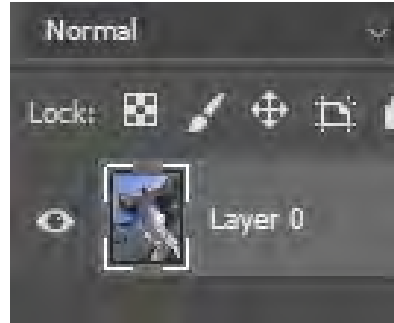
Smart Object
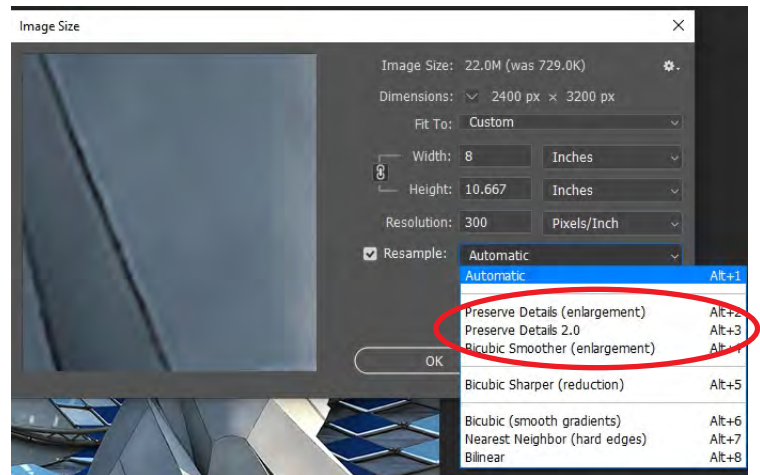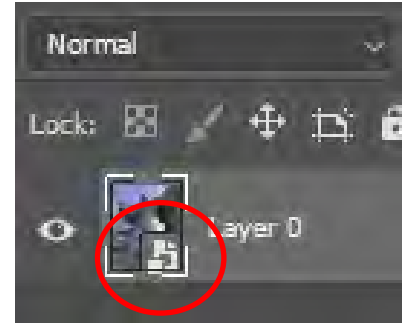
This lesson will demonstrate how to quickly fix blemishes with the Spot Healing Brush in Photoshop and also how to smooth out skin without losing detail.

Original Image

Completed Image

1. Open the image that needs correcting. Right click on the Background Layer and select Duplicate Layer. This is done so that if mistakes are made, the original image is still available. Shut off the Background layer and rename the copied layer.

2. Select the Spot Healing Brush Tool *(sometimes known as the bandaid tool)* from the toolbar.

3. Begin clicking on the different areas of the photo that needs fixing. Make the brush size larger or smaller using the bracket keys - [ ].

4. On the Property bar of the Spot Healing Brush toggle between the choice of Proximity Match and Content Aware depending on which one looks better and gives a more natural match.
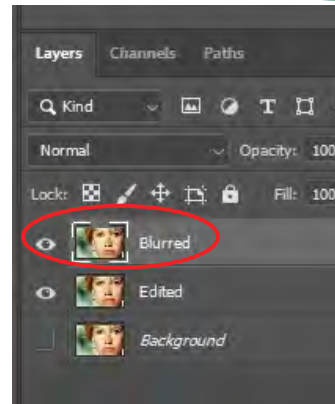
5. If a mistake is made in an area it can easily be corrected by using the History Brush. Simply select it and the paint over the area to bring it back to the original pixels.
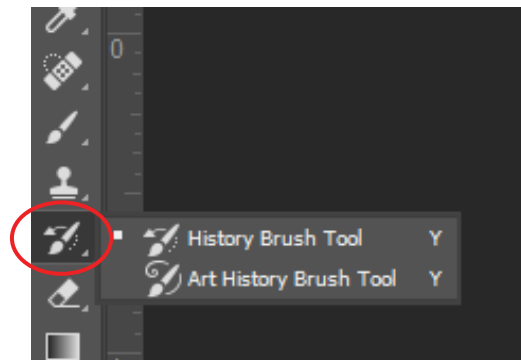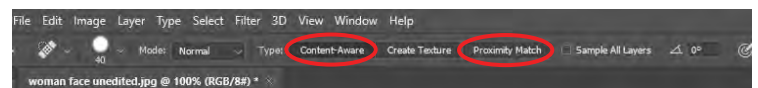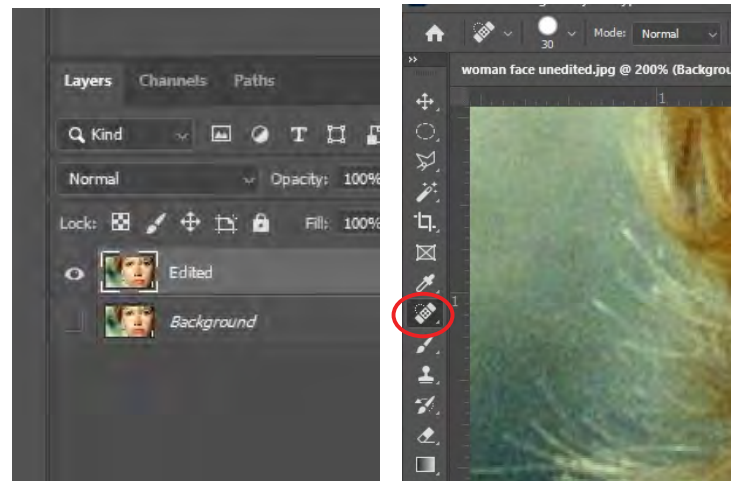
7. Once all the blemishes are fixed with the Spot Healing Brush, smooth out the skin. Make a duplicate of the Edited layer and rename the new layer Blurred.

8. With the Blurred layer selected go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur.

9. Move the radius slider to slightly blur the image. Click OK. *Note: the amount of pixels will be different for each image.* Don't worry if the eyes get blurry. That will get fixed in the next steps.
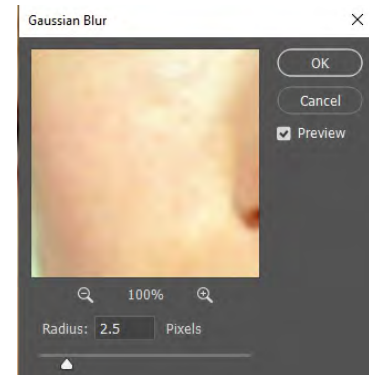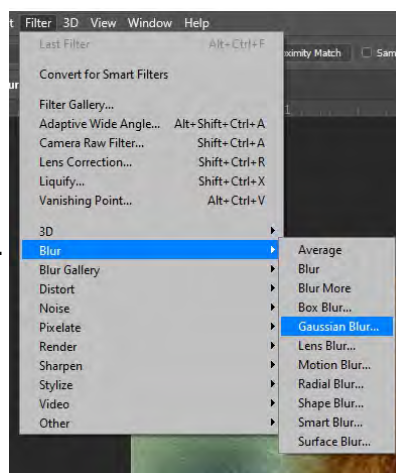
10. With the Blurred layer still selected click the Edit in Quick Mask Mode button (second tool from the bottom of the toolbar).

11. Click on the Paintbrush tool and with 100% opacity begin painting out the areas that needs more detail brought back - eyes, mouth etc.
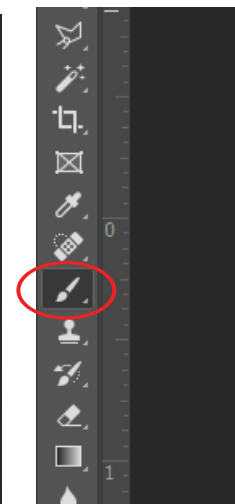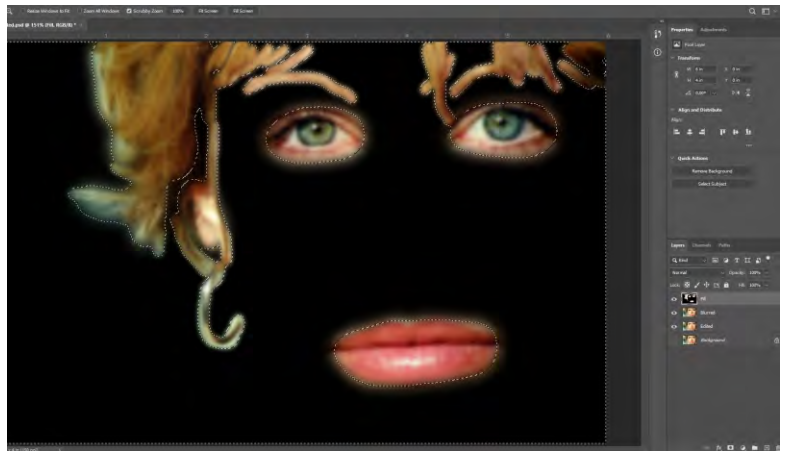
Click off the Quick Mask Mode to see the selection.

Create a new layer and go to Edit > Fill and fill the selection with 100% black. The result will only show the areas where the blur will be removed.

Name the new layer and move it below the Blurred layer.

Right click on the Blurred layer and choose Create Clipping Mask. A small arrow will appear pointing to the layer below it. The details that were painted over now appear clear.
Go to Select > Deselect or CTRL-D to remove the selection.
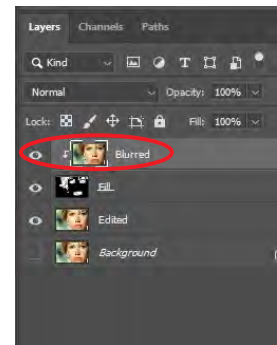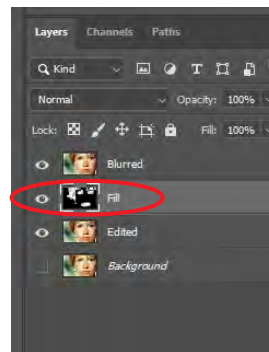
If some areas of the face are still not smoothed out enough, select the Blurred layer and use the Blur tool to paint over the areas that need further smoothing.
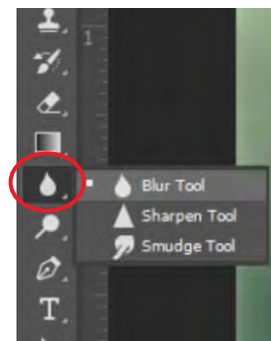
To sharpen areas that need more detail, select the Edited layer and use the Sharpen tool to increase the amount of detail.
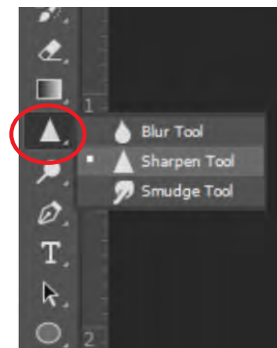
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Tips Every Designer Should Know

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