Adobe® Photoshop® Elements 4

in a Snap

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Adobe® Photoshop® Elements 4 in a Snap

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Improving Portraits

IN THIS CHAPTER:

Although a photograph is an accurate record of a specific moment in time, there's no particular reason why you have to "remember" the flaws your camera captured as well: the slightly yellow teeth, the blotchy skin, the wrinkles, and the wind that blew everyone's hair out of place. Using the Editor's tools, you can erase these flaws or simply make them less noticeable. For example, you can erase freckles and blemishes, lighten the skin under someone's eyes, and remove an annoying glare from their eyeglasses. You can even add a soft glow around your subject to soften an otherwise harsh appearance, or to project a sense of innocence. In this chapter, you'll learn how to perform these and other digital tricks while maintaining the essential loveliness and inner beauty of your subjects.

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101   Create a Soft Focus Effect

✔ **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**	➔ **SEE ALSO**
57 Erase Part of a Layer	**35** Change Color Mode
99 Blur a Background to Create Depth of Field	**54** Create a New Image Layer

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To apply a soft, romantic look to an image, you can use the **Gaussian Blur** filter. This filter applies a soft blur to the entire layer or selection and is easy to use. The filter has only one option—the radius, which controls the amount of blur. The larger the radius, the greater number of pixels blurred together, and the more detail you lose. I like to control the effect somewhat by using it on a duplicate layer and then softly sharpening important features such as a person's eyes, nostrils, and mouth. In this task, you'll learn how to perform this same trick.

1   Duplicate the Image

Open the image in the Editor in **Standard Edit** mode and save it in Photoshop (***.psd**) format. If the image isn't already in grayscale or RGB color mode, then you must convert it by selecting either option from the **Image**, **Mode** menu.

If the image has more than one layer, select the layer you want to soften from the **Layers** palette. Then drag the layer you want to blur onto the **Create a new layer** button on the **Layers** palette to create a copy of it, or select **Layer**, **Duplicate Layer**. Name the new layer **Blurred**.

2   Select Gaussian Blur Filter

With the **Blurred** layer selected, select **Filter**, **Blur**, **Gaussian Blur** from the main menu or double-click the **Gaussian Blur** icon on the **Filters** list of the **Styles and Effects** palette. The **Gaussian Blur** dialog box appears.

2 Select Gaussian Blur Filter

Create a New Layer Button

Gaussian Blur

1 Duplicate the Image

4 Sharpen Features

3 Adjust Radius and Click OK

Before   Eraser Tool

After   **5** View the Result

Diffuse Glow and Gaussian Blur Combined

▶ TIPS

The Editor comes with a **Soft Focus** effect you can try if you like, but the result is very, very subtle and produces a very soft overall blurring of the current layer.

Another way to create a soft glow in a photograph is to apply the **Diffuse Glow** filter (choose **Filter**, **Distort**, **Diffuse Glow**). This filter uses the current background color, so be sure to reset it to white or a very light color before beginning. Set the **Graininess** value to **0**, the **Clear Amount** to **10** or more (to control the amount of the background color that shows through the glow), and the **Glow Amount** to **2** or so. If you want to combine the **Diffuse Glow** filter with the technique discussed here, apply it to the **Background** layer before copying it. The result of applying both filters is shown in the second example.

3 Adjust Radius and Click OK

Adjust the **Radius** setting in the **Gaussian Blur** dialog box to a value that blurs the image enough to soften it, typically somewhere between **4** and **9**. You'll be unblurring any areas you want to remain sharp (such as your subject's features) in step 4, so don't worry about getting the image too blurry. Click **OK**.

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4 Sharpen Features

The **Gaussian Blur** filter blurs everything on the current layer, including the features of your subject's face. This causes the image to lose impact because the viewer's eye depends on sharp features to distinguish a person. Select the **Eraser** tool from the **Toolbox**. On the **Options** bar, select a soft, small brush from the **Brushes** drop-down list. Lightly brush over the eyes, nostrils, and mouth areas of your subject. This action reveals the original, sharp layer underneath, bringing those features back into focus.

▶ TIP

You can further lessen the effect of the blur by lowering the **Opacity** of the **Blurred** layer on the **Layers** palette.

5 View the Result

After you're satisfied with the image, save the result in the PSD file. Then resave the image in JPEG, PNG, or non-layered TIFF format, leaving your PSD image unflattened so that you can return at a later time and make different adjustments if you want.

I've always loved this photo of my daughter, lying contentedly in her daddy's arms on the day she was born. But I thought a bit of soft focus might improve the image. So, I applied a Gaussian blur using a radius of 6.1 to blur the image. Then I sharpened her features just a bit, placing the focus clearly

on her peaceful face. I also sharpened her hand because I considered it an intimate part of the photograph. Having just her hand in sharp focus made her father's hand look strange because it was blurred. But I didn't want to sharpen it because I didn't want her father's hand to dominate the photo (which it could have because his hand was so much larger than she was at that time). So, I sharpened along the edges of two fingers only, using the **Eraser** set to half opacity.

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102 | **Remove Wrinkles, Freckles, and Minor Blemishes**

✔ **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**	→ **SEE ALSO**
54 Create a New Image Layer	**103** Whiten Teeth
	104 Awaken Tired Eyes

Almost everyone has certain…er…cosmetic distinctions that help identify and even glamorize a person. However, if they're the temporary kind, you might not want a permanent record of them. Sometimes a perfectly good photograph is marred by minor distractions such as a few blemishes, a mole, a cold sore, or a few wrinkles just beginning to show. Is it vain to want to fix nature? Perhaps, but don't let that stop you—especially when it's so easy to eliminate imperfections you don't want to show.

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As explained in **88 Remove Unwanted Objects from an Image**, you can use the **Clone Stamp** tool to paint away minor defects in a photograph by copying good pixels from some other area. For some very minor problem areas, you might try the **Healing Brush** or the **Spot Healing Brush** discussed in **83 Remove Specks, Spots, and Scratches** and an upcoming tip. But in either case, the process is tedious and often easily detectable unless the tools are used sparingly. In this task, you'll use a quicker method that involves one of the blur filters.

1 **Duplicate Background Layer**

Open an image in the Editor in **Standard Edit** mode and save it in Photoshop (***.psd**) format. Then drag the Background layer onto the **Create a New Layer** button on the **Layers** palette to create a copy of it or select **Layer**, **Duplicate Layer**. Name the new layer **Unblurred**.

2 **Blur Background Layer**

Change to the **Background** layer and select **Filter**, **Blur**, **Blur More** from the menu or double-click the **Blur More** icon on the **Filters** list of the **Styles and Effects** palette. The **Background** layer is blurred just a bit.

102 Remove Wrinkles, Freckles, and Minor Blemishes

For very large images, the **Blur More** filter might not do enough to blur the layer. In such cases, try the **Gaussian Blur** filter (choose **Filter**, **Blur**, **Gaussian Blur**) or double-click the **Gaussian Blur** icon in the **Filters** list of the **Styles and Effects** palette. Increase the **Radius** until the imperfections are blurred, and click **OK**.

▶ **TIP**

To see if the **Background** layer is blurred enough, hide the **Unblurred** layer temporarily by clicking its eye icon on the **Layers** palette. Redisplay the layer when you're done.

3 Erase Freckles and Blemishes

On the **Layers** palette, change to the **Unblurred** layer. Click the **Eraser** tool on the **Toolbox**. On the **Options** bar, select a soft round brush. Adjust the **Size** value so that the eraser is slightly bigger than the blemish you want to remove. Click the freckle or blemish with the eraser, which erases that spot, revealing the blurred layer beneath.

4 Erase Wrinkles

Change the **Size** value on the **Options** bar to resize the **Eraser** tool so that it's just wider than the wrinkles you want to remove. Then drag the **Eraser** over any wrinkles to erase the wrinkle, revealing the blurred wrinkle on the **Background** layer.

▶ **TIP**

Another way you can remove blemishes and freckles quickly is to blend them away with the **Spot Healing Brush** tool. Set the **Size** so that the brush includes the clean area of skin around the blemish or freckle, set **Type** to **Proximity Match**, position the pointer over the blemish or freckle, and click to blend it away.

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5 View the Result

After you're satisfied with the image, save it in its PSD format. Then save the result in JPEG, PNG, or non-layered TIFF format, leaving your PSD image unflattened so that you can return at a later time and make different adjustments if you want.

This photo of me and my daughter is just wonderful, but the small blemish and the wrinkles just beginning to show around my eyes made the photo less than perfect for me. A bit of blur and a few minutes with the **Eraser**, and I'm the person I see when I look in the mirror. Add a bit of judicious cropping and some work at removing the reflections from my daughter's glasses as described in **105** **Remove Glare from Eyeglasses**, and I have a portrait worthy of my living room wall.

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103   **Whiten Teeth**

✔ **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**	→ **SEE ALSO**
69 About the Toolbox	**102** Remove Wrinkles, Freckles, and Minor Blemishes
	104 Awaken Tired Eyes

There are many products on the market you can use to whiten your teeth—gels, toothpastes, whitening strips, and bleaches—but none work as fast and as effectively as digital editing. It's not vanity to want to improve Mother Nature; in our culture today, a great importance is placed on having clean, white teeth, and if a photo will be used in a resume or to advertise a product, you'll want to give the best impression you can by making sure that your subject looks his or her best.

Whitening teeth is tricky, however; you don't want the effect to look obvious and artificial. You'll want to avoid the temptation to use pure white to paint over all your teeth, which results in a picket-fence effect that can look genuinely scary. The technique explained here uses the **Dodge** tool, which selectively lightens the brightness of the pixels over which it passes. You must be cautious, however, so that you don't burn out the color and create a fake whiteness.
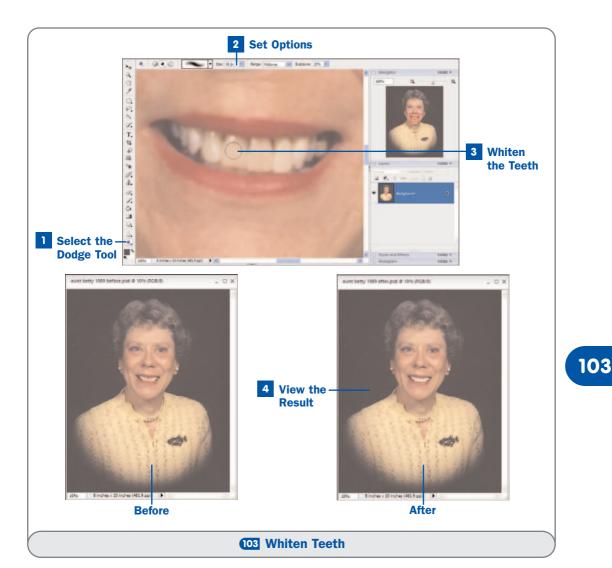
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▶ **NOTE**

I always get good results with the **Dodge** tool, but if you don't like its effects, try selecting the teeth, choosing **Enhance**, **Adjust Color**, **Color Variations**, choosing **Highlights**, and clicking the **Increase Blue** and **Lighten** buttons. See **94** **Correct Color, Contrast, and Saturation in One Step**. You can also try choosing **Enhance**, **Adjust Color**, **Adjust Hue/Saturation**, and then increasing the lightness in the **Master** channel and decreasing the saturation in the **Yellow** channel. See **95** **Adjust Hue and Saturation Manually**.

1 **Select the Dodge Tool**

Open an image in the Editor in **Standard Edit** mode and save it in Photoshop (***.psd**) format. Zoom in on the teeth so that you can see them clearly, and then select the **Dodge** tool in the **Toolbox**.

2 **Set Options**

On the **Options** bar, choose a soft round brush. Adjust the **Size** of the **Dodge** tool so that the brush tip is about the size of one tooth. Set the **Range** to **Midtones** so that you affect only the midtones, and set **Exposure** to about **20%** so that you don't lighten the teeth too fast and accidentally burn out the color.

2 Set Options

3 Whiten the Teeth

1 Select the Dodge Tool

4 View the Result

Before

After

103 Whiten Teeth

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3 Whiten the Teeth

Position the brush tip over the first tooth and click once. The tooth should get just a bit lighter. Click again to lighten a bit more, or move to the next tooth. Repeat until all the teeth are whiter. You can also drag the brush over the teeth.

Remove any remaining imperfections (such as uneven color or spots on the teeth) with the **Clone Stamp** tool. See **88 Remove Unwanted Objects from an Image**.

▶ **TIP**

To isolate the effects of the **Dodge** tool, select the teeth before beginning. You might want to select the gums as well (if they are reddish and irritated) so that you can lighten them, too.
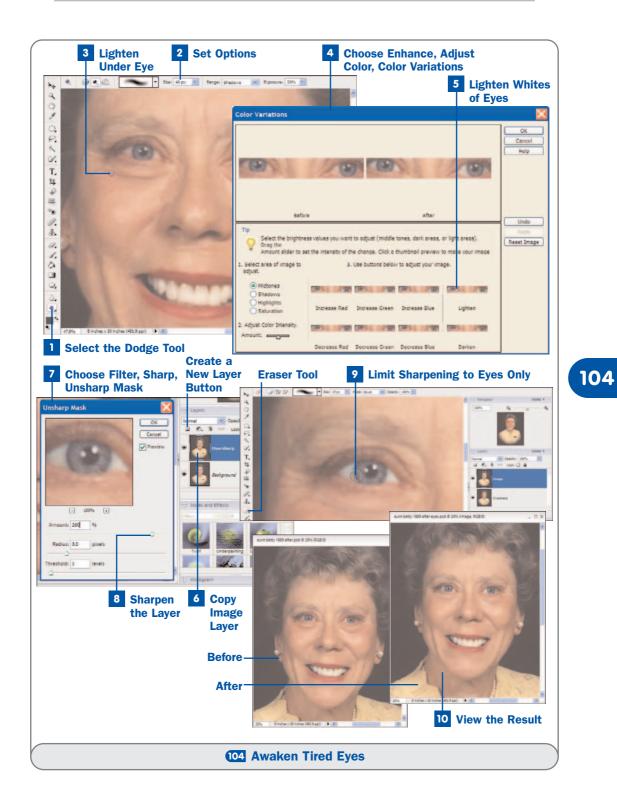
4 **View the Result**

When you're satisfied with the result, make any other changes you want and save the PSD file. Resave the result in JPEG, PNG, or non-layered TIFF format, leaving your PSD image with its layers (if any) intact so that you can return at a later time and make additional adjustments if you want.

My Aunt Betty prided herself on her appearance, so I know she'd be horrified to learn that her teeth were not perfectly white when she sat for this other-wise impeccable portrait. (Frankly, I suspect the culprit was her lipstick.) In any case, a few minutes with the **Dodge** tool fixed that easily. Compare the original to the whitened version; you can see that the teeth look better, and yet still natural. The last things to address are the circles under her eyes, an unfortunate family trait, emphasized by the type of lighting being used. To fix that problem, I'll follow the steps in the next task, **104** **Awaken Tired Eyes**.

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104 **Awaken Tired Eyes**

✔ **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**	→ **SEE ALSO**
69 About the Toolbox	**67** Correct Red Eye
	93 Lighten or Darken Part of an Image
	102 Remove Wrinkles, Freckles, and Minor Blemishes
	103 Whiten Teeth

They say that the eyes are the window to the soul. It must be true because if a woman has dark circles under her eyes, we think she looks tired (even if the dark circles are a natural skin condition). By slightly lightening the skin under the eyes, you can take years off a face and brighten a person's outlook. And it's sim-ple to do, using the **Dodge** tool.

3 Lighten Under Eye

2 Set Options

4 Choose Enhance, Adjust Color, Color Variations

5 Lighten Whites of Eyes

Color Variations

OK
Cancel
Help

Before   After

Undo
Redo
Reset Image

Tip
Select the brightness values you want to adjust (middle tones, dark areas, or light areas). Drag the Amount slider to set the intensity of the change. Click a thumbnail preview to make your image.

1. Select area of image to adjust.

○ Midtones
○ Shadows
○ Highlights
○ Saturation

2. Adjust Color Intensity.

Amount:

3. Use buttons below to adjust your image.

Increase Red   Increase Green   Increase Blue   Lighten

Decrease Red   Decrease Green   Decrease Blue   Darken

1 Select the Dodge Tool

7 Choose Filter, Sharp, Unsharp Mask

Create a New Layer Button

Eraser Tool

9 Limit Sharpening to Eyes Only

Unsharp Mask

OK
Cancel
☑ Preview

Amount: 280 %

Radius: 3.0 pixels

Threshold: 5 levels

8 Sharpen the Layer

6 Copy Image Layer

Before

After

10 View the Result

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Redness in the whites of the eyes caused by chlorine in swimming pools or lack of sleep can also make your subject look tired. To whiten the eyes, you'll remove the redness gradually and lighten them a little using the **Color Variations** command. One final thing that can make eyes look tired is a lack of sharpness. Eyes that are in sharp focus have a distinctive twinkle that makes their owner look alert, interesting, and beautiful. Eyes such as these invite a viewer to look a moment longer at the subject. To fix a problem with slightly out-of-focus eyes, you'll over-sharpen a copy of the image on a new layer and use the **Eraser** to reveal only the sharpened eyes.

1 Select the Dodge Tool

Open an image in the Editor in **Standard Edit** mode and save it in Photoshop (***.psd**) format. Zoom in on the eyes so that you can see them clearly, and then select the **Dodge** tool in the **Toolbox**.

▶ TIP

If you'd like more control over the **Dodge** tool, try duplicating the image layer and performing your lightening on the copy layer. You can then adjust the **Opacity** of the copy layer to lower the effect of the lightening if you accidentally apply too much.

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2 Set Options

On the **Options** bar, choose a soft round brush. Adjust the **Size** of the **Dodge** tool so that the brush tip is about the size of the area you want to lighten. In this case, I adjusted the size so that the brush was the same size as the crease under one eye.

Set the **Range** to **Shadows**, and **Exposure** to about **20%** so that you don't lighten the under-eye area too fast and accidentally burn out the color.

3 Lighten Under Eye

Drag the brush over the area you want to lighten. In my case, I dragged the brush carefully over the under-eye crease. Repeat this step for the second eye.

4 Choose Enhance, Adjust Color, Color Variations

If your subject's eyes are red or tired looking, select the white area of both eyes using your favorite selection tool. (I used the **Magic Wand** tool to select the whites of each eye, and the **Lasso** to snag any parts that didn't get selected.)

Choose **Enhance**, **Adjust Color**, **Color Variations**. The **Color Variations** dialog box appears.

5 Lighten Whites of Eyes

Select the **Midtones** option in the lower-left corner of the dialog box so that you affect only the midtones in the image, and then click the **Decrease Red** button to remove the redness from the eye area. Click the **Lighten** button to make the whites a little whiter. The **After** image at the top of the dialog box reflects the changes you're making. When you're through, click **OK**.

▶ **NOTE**

You can click the buttons in the **Color Variations** dialog box more than once to apply the same change multiple times. For example, you could click the **Decrease Red** button twice if your subject's eyes are particularly reddish.

6 Copy Image Layer

To sharpen the eyes of your subject, drag the image layer onto the **Create a New Layer** button on the **Layers** palette to create a copy of it or select **Layer**, **Duplicate Layer**. Name the new layer **Oversharp**.

7 Choose Filter, Sharp, Unsharp Mask

With the **Oversharp** layer selected, choose **Filter**, **Sharpen**, **Unsharp Mask** from the menu or double-click the **Unsharp Mask** icon on the **Filters** list of the **Styles and Effects** palette. The **Unsharp Mask** dialog box appears.

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8 Sharpen the Layer

In the **Unsharp Mask** dialog box, zoom in on one of the eyes and then adjust the settings for the filter until the eye is sharp and crisp. I typically leave the **Threshold** at a low value, set the **Radius** to somewhere between 1 and 3, and then play with the **Amount** until I get the effect I want. See **97** **Sharpen an Image** for more help. Check the other eye in the preview window of the dialog box (by dragging the image in the preview), and when you're satisfied with the look, click **OK**.

To make the eyes really sharp, reapply the **Unsharp Mask** settings one or two more times by choosing **Filter**, **Unsharp Mask**.

9 Limit Sharpening to Eyes Only

The effect right now is a too-sharp image, and we wanted to limit the effect to just the eyes. First, if the image is on the background layer, convert it to a regular layer by choosing **Layer**, **New**, **Layer from Background**. Rename this layer **Image**. Drag the **Oversharp** layer below the **Image** layer.

The sharpness will appear to go away, but really it's just hidden by the image layer above it. To reveal the sharpened eyes, click the **Eraser** tool on the **Toolbox**. On the **Options** bar, select a small, soft brush. On the **Layers** palette, select the **Image** layer. Then erase just the eyes, revealing the over-sharpened layer below.

▶ **NOTE**

Because the **Oversharp** layer is below the **Image** layer, you won't see the effects of the sharpening on your actual image at first. To view the sharpening, on the **Layers** palette, click the eye icon on the **Image** layer to hide that layer temporarily.

10 **View the Result**

After you're satisfied with the result, make any other changes you want and save the PSD file. Resave the result in JPEG, PNG, or non-layered TIFF format, leaving your PSD image with its layers (if any) intact so that you can return at a later time and make additional adjustments if you want.

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Although I had brightened Aunt Betty's teeth, the circles under her eyes and their tired look still bothered me. So I lightened the creases under her eyes just a little; the goal was not to make her look half her age, but the way in which I remember her—a happy, beautiful woman. I also whitened her eyes just a bit, and then sharpened them, which helps me to feel like Aunt Betty is looking more directly at me, making this a more engaging portrait of my aunt.
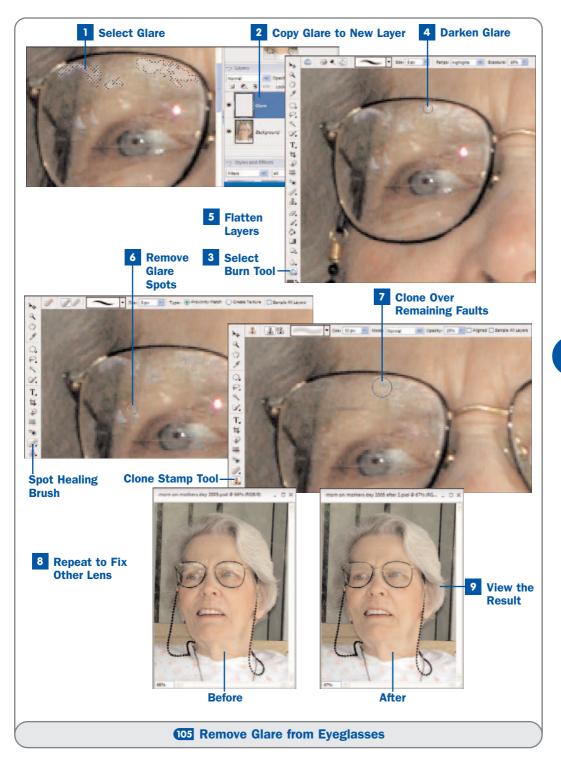
105 **Remove Glare from Eyeglasses**

✔ **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

46 Draw a Selection Freehand or by Tracing Its Edge

55 Create a Layer Filled with a Color, Gradient, or Pattern

→ **SEE ALSO**

93 Lighten or Darken Part of an Image

104 Awaken Tired Eyes

Probably the most difficult photographic repair you will ever attempt is to remove glare from a person's eyeglasses. What makes this repair so difficult is that no one method works every time. In this task, you'll learn a variety of techniques, one or two of which should work on your photograph.

1 Select Glare   **2** Copy Glare to New Layer   **4** Darken Glare

5 Flatten Layers

6 Remove Glare Spots   **3** Select Burn Tool

7 Clone Over Remaining Faults

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Spot Healing Brush   Clone Stamp Tool

8 Repeat to Fix Other Lens

9 View the Result

Before   After

Because glare is difficult to remove, it's best to try to eliminate it while taking the photograph. One way to remove glare is to use a polarizing filter—a special filter that you twist to allow light polarized in one direction only to enter the lens, eliminating glare. If you don't happen to have a polarizing filter with you, try moving your subject so that the light is coming at him or her from a different angle, moving your own position in relation to the subject, or simply having your subject remove his or her eyeglasses or look off to one side or slightly downward.

▶ **TIP**

If you wear eyeglasses, you can keep an old pair of frames (minus the lenses) on hand for picture-taking time. Without the lenses, you obviously won't get the glare, and the empty frames will help your face look more natural.

1 Select Glare

Open an image in the Editor in **Standard Edit** mode and save it in Photoshop (***.psd**) format.

Because each eyeglass lens typically needs a slightly different adjustment, it's best to work on one eye at a time. It's also best to isolate what you're doing on another layer so that you can easily start over (by deleting the layer) if need be. Zoom in and then, using either the **Lasso** or **Magic Wand** tool, select the area of glare on the first lens. You'll copy this area to another layer before making changes to it.

2 Copy Glare to New Layer

To copy the selected area, choose **Edit**, **Copy** from the menu. To place the copy on a new layer, choose **Layer**, **New**, **Layer via Copy**. Name the new layer **Glare**.

▶ **TIP**

If only one eyeglass lens has glare, you can try another method to remove it. Try copying the good eye to another layer, flipping it, and skewing it to conform to the other eye space. Then flatten the layers and use the Clone Stamp tool to blend the eye into its new surroundings. You can also try copying an eye from a similar photograph that does not have any glare.

3 Select Burn Tool

Click the **Burn** tool on the **Toolbox**. On the **Options** bar, choose a soft round brush. Adjust the **Size** of the **Burn** tool so that the brush tip is about the size of the area you want to darken. Set the **Range** to **Highlights** so that you affect only the lightest areas of the image, and set the **Exposure** to a small

value such as **10%** so that each stroke over the area darkens the pixels only slightly. These settings enable you to work slowly to remove the glare.

4 Darken Glare

Make sure that the **Glare** layer is selected on the **Layers** palette. Brush the **Burn** tool over the glare to darken it so that it better matches the surrounding area. If necessary, darken the midtones as well by setting the **Range** to **Midtones** in the **Options** bar. You might not be able to remove the glare entirely; your goal here is to bring out the detail of the face behind the glare.

5 Flatten Layers

Before you can perform the next step, which involves using the **Spot Healing Brush** to blend pixels to remove remaining trouble spots, you'll want to flatten the image so that you can use the repairs you've made so far in the blending process. You might want to save the PSD image at this point, before merging layers. Before you merge the layers, however, you might want to increase the saturation in the glare area because it might have been desaturated by the **Burn** tool. Select the **Sponge** tool from the **Toolbox**, set the **Mode** to **Saturate**, adjust the **Size** and **Flow** settings, and drag over the area to bring its colors back.

When you're satisfied that you've done all you can with the **Burn** tool, choose **Layer**, **Flatten Image** to merge the layers together.

6 Remove Glare Spots

After merging the layers, if there are any sharp points of glare (as opposed to larger glare patches), you can remove them with the **Spot Healing Brush**. Click the **Spot Healing Brush** on the **Toolbox**. Set the **Type** to **Proximity Match** and adjust the **Size** so that the brush is slightly larger than the glare spot you want to remove. Then click the spot to remove it. Repeat this process as needed to remove any other glare spots. You can also use the **Spot Healing Brush** to blend good pixels with pixels you darkened in step 5, making your repairs less noticeable.

7 Clone Over Remaining Faults

To fix the remaining problem areas, click the **Clone Stamp** tool on the **Toolbox**. On the **Options** bar, select a soft round brush, adjust the **Size**, and set the **Mode** to **Normal**. You might want to lower the **Opacity** as well to help disguise what you're doing. Press **Alt** and click the area you want to clone, and then drag the brush over the glare area to transfer the **Alt**-selected pixels to the new area. Repeat to repair any other flaws.

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▶ **TIP**

To clone a skin color from another portion of the face, you might want to turn off the **Aligned** option for the **Clone Stamp** tool in the **Options** bar so that you don't clone anything but that small area, and not the objects in that same vicinity.

8   Repeat to Fix Other Lens

After you're satisfied with the way in which the first eyeglass lens looks, repeat steps 1–7 to remove the glare from the second lens (if any).

9   View the Result

After you're satisfied with your changes, save the PSD image. Then resave the result in JPEG, PNG, or non-layered TIFF format, leaving your PSD image with its layers (if any) intact so that you can return at a later time and make additional adjustments if you want.

Even though this portrait of my mother was taken in the shade of a covered porch, the glare of the sunlight still caught her eyeglasses. After removing the glare, her wonderful eyes are now much more apparent.

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