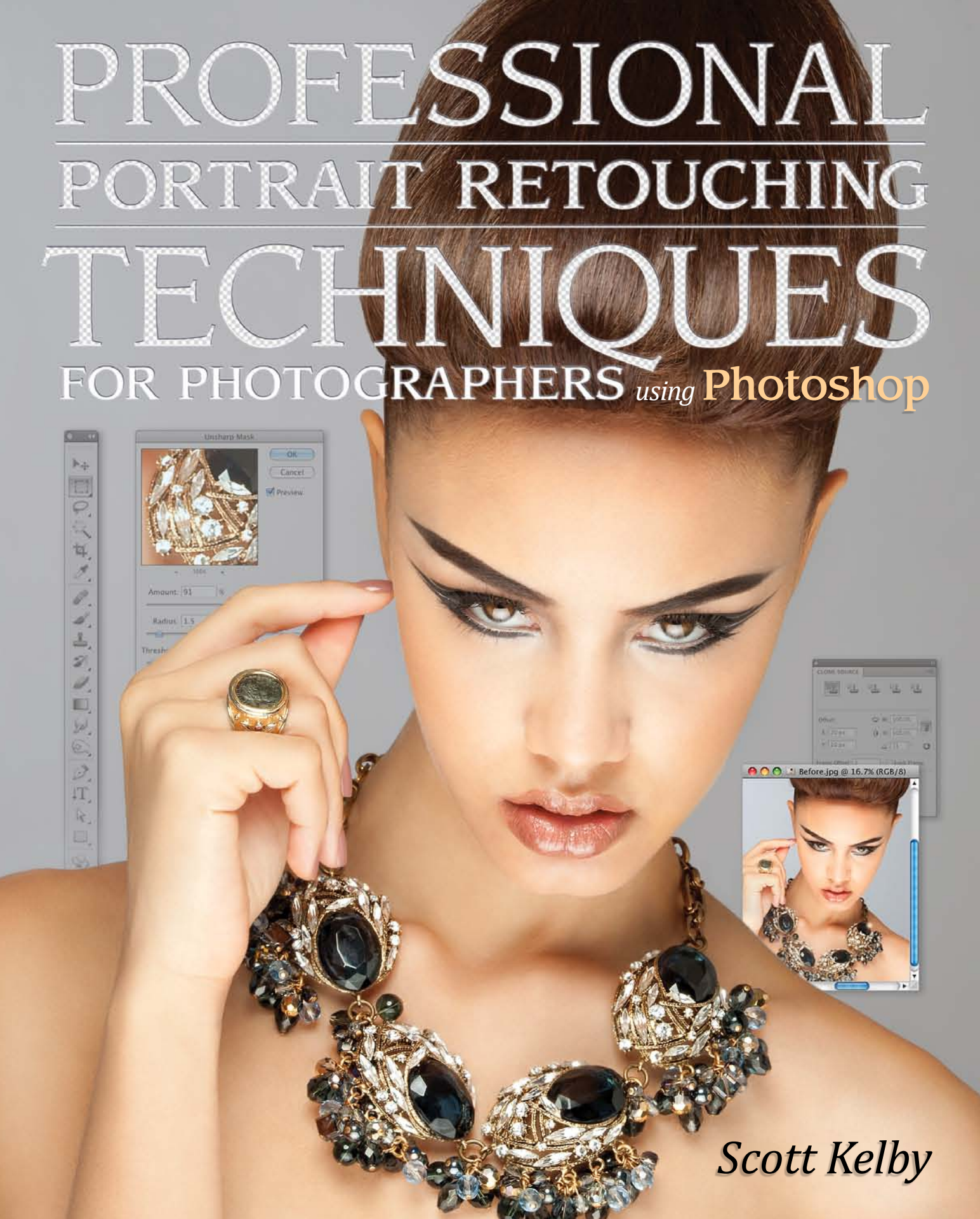
# PROFESSIONAL PORTRAIT RETOUCHING TECHNIQUES

## FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS *using* Photoshop




*Scott Kelby*

# PROFESSIONAL PORTRAIT RETOUCHING TECHNIQUES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS *using* Photoshop

*Scott Kelby*

The ***Professional Portrait Retouching Techniques for Photographers Using Photoshop*** Team

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*To my daughter Kira:*
*You've been blessed with*
*so many of your mom's gifts—*
*I can't wait to see the amazing*
*woman you, too, will become.*

# Acknowledgments

**After writing books for 13 years now**, I still find that the thing that's the hardest for me to write in any book is the acknowledgments. It also, hands down, takes me longer than any other pages in the book. For me, I think the reason I take these acknowledgments so seriously is because it's when I get to put down on paper how truly grateful I am to be surrounded by such great friends, an incredible book team, and a family that truly makes my life a joy. That's why it's so hard. I also know why it takes so long—you type a lot slower with tears in your eyes.

To my remarkable wife, Kalebra: We've been married 21 years now, and you still continue to amaze me, and everyone around you. I've never met anyone more compassionate, more loving, more hilarious, and more genuinely beautiful, and I'm so blessed to be going through life with you, to have you as the mother of my children, my business partner, my private pilot, Chinese translator, and best friend. You truly are the type of woman love songs are written for, and as anyone who knows me will tell you, I am, without a doubt, the luckiest man alive to have you for my wife.

To my son, Jordan: It's every dad's dream to have a relationship with his son like I have with you, and I'm so proud of the bright, caring, creative young man you've become. I can't wait to see the amazing things life has in store for you, and I just want you to know that watching you grow into the person you are is one of my life's greatest joys.

To my precious little girl, Kira: You have been blessed in a very special way, because you are a little clone of your mom, which is the most wonderful thing I could have possibly wished for you. I see all her gifts reflected in your eyes, and though you're still too young to have any idea how blessed you are to have Kalebra as your mom, one day—just like Jordan—you will.

To my big brother Jeff, who has always been, and will always be, a hero to me. So much of who I am, and where I am, is because of your influence, guidance, caring, and love as I was growing up. Thank you for teaching me to always take the high road, for always knowing the right thing to say at the right time, and for having so much of our dad in you.

I'm incredibly fortunate to have part of the production of my books handled in-house by my own book team at Kelby Media Group, which is led by my friend and longtime Creative Director, Felix Nelson, who is hands down the most creative person I've ever met. He's surrounded by some of the most talented, amazing, ambitious, gifted, and downright brilliant people I've ever had the honor of working with.

Thank God for Kim Doty, my Editor. She is amazing, and single-handedly keeps me from visiting a nearby tower, and climbing to the top to throw myself off (anyone catch that vague Gilbert O'Sullivan reference there? Anybody? No?). Kim is just an incredibly organized, upbeat, focused person who keeps me calm and on track, and no matter how tough the task ahead is, she always says the same thing, "Ah, piece of cake," and she convinces you that you can do it, and then you do it. I cannot begin to tell you how grateful I am to her for being my Editor.

Working with Kim is Cindy Snyder, who relentlessly tests all the stuff I write to make sure I didn't leave anything out, so you'll all be able to do the things I'm teaching (which with a Photoshop book is an absolute necessity). She's like a steel trap that nothing can get through if it doesn't work just like I said it would.

The look of the book comes from an amazing designer, a creative powerhouse, and someone whom I feel very, very lucky to have designing my books—Jessica Maldonado. She always adds that little something that just takes it up a notch, and I've built up such a trust for her ideas and intuition, which is why I just let her do her thing. Thanks Jess!

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Thanks to everyone at New Riders and Peachpit, in particular, my way cool Editor Ted Waitt, my wonderful Publisher Nancy Aldrich-Ruenzel, marketing maven Scott Cowlin, and marketing diva Sara Jane Todd, and the entire team at Pearson Education who go out of their way to make sure that we're always working in the best interests of my readers, and who work tirelessly to make sure my work gets in as many people's hands as possible.

Thanks to my friends at Adobe: John Nack, Mala Sharma, John Loiacono, Terry White, Cari Gushiken, Julieanne Kost, Tom Hogarty, Dave Story, Bryan O'Neil Hughes, Thomas Nielsen, Russell Preston Brown, and the amazing engineering team at Adobe (I don't know how you all do it). Gone but not forgotten: Barbara Rice, Jill Nakashima, Rye Livingston, Addy Roff, Bryan Lamkin, Jennifer Stern, Kevin Connor, Deb Whitman, and Karen Gauthier.

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I was very fortunate to have professional retoucher and instructor David Cuerdon as Technical Editor for the book. The entire book is much better because of his input, and I'm very grateful for his advice and his friendship.

I want to thank all the talented retouchers who I've learned so much from over the years: Katrin Eismann, Jane Conner-ziser, Felix Nelson, Natalia Taffarel, Corey Barker, Christy Schuler, Mary DuPrie, Kevin Ames, Dave Cuerdon, Calvin Hollywood, and the community at RetouchPRO.com.

Thanks to my mentors, whose wisdom and whip-cracking have helped me immeasurably, including John Graden, Jack Lee, Dave Gales, Judy Farmer, and Douglas Poole.

Most importantly, I want to thank God, and His son Jesus Christ, for leading me to the woman of my dreams, for blessing us with two amazing children, for allowing me to make a living doing something I truly love, for always being there when I need Him, for blessing me with a wonderful, fulfilling, and happy life, and such a warm, loving family to share it with.

# Other Books by Scott Kelby

*The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 3 Book for Digital Photographers*

*The Digital Photography Book*, volumes 1, 2 & 3

*The Photoshop CS5 Book for Digital Photographers*

*The Photoshop Channels Book*

*Photo Recipes Live: Behind the Scenes*, parts 1 & 2

*Scott Kelby's 7-Point System for Adobe Photoshop*

*Photoshop Down & Dirty Tricks*

*The iPhone Book*

*The Mac OS X Leopard Book*

*The Photoshop Elements Book for Digital Photographers*

# About the Author

**Scott Kelby**

Scott is Editor, Publisher, and co-founder of *Photoshop User* magazine, host of the top-rated weekly videocast *Photoshop User TV*, and co-host of *D-Town TV* (the weekly videocast for DSLR shooters).

He is President of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP), the trade association for Adobe® Photoshop® users, and he's President of the training, education, and publishing firm, Kelby Media Group, Inc.

Scott is a photographer, designer, and award-winning author of more than 50 books, including *The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 3 Book for Digital Photographers*, *The Adobe Photoshop CS5 Book for Digital Photographers*, *Photoshop Down & Dirty Tricks*, *The Photoshop Channels Book*, *The iPhone Book*, *The iPod Book*, and *The Digital Photography Book*, vols. 1, 2 & 3.

Scott's book, *The Digital Photography Book*, vol. 1, is the best-selling book ever on digital photography. In 2010, Scott became the #1 best-selling author across all photography book categories. From 2004–2009, he held the honor of being the world's #1 best-selling author of all computer and technology books, across all categories.

His books have been translated into dozens of different languages, including Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Korean, Polish, Taiwanese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Dutch, Swedish, Turkish, and Portuguese, among others, and he is a recipient of the prestigious Benjamin Franklin Award.

Scott is Training Director for the Adobe Photoshop Seminar Tour and Conference Technical Chair for the Photoshop World Conference & Expo. He's featured in a series of Adobe Photoshop online courses and DVDs at KelbyTraining.com and has been training Adobe Photoshop users since 1993.

For more information on Scott, visit his daily blog, *Photoshop Insider*, at www.scottkelby.com.

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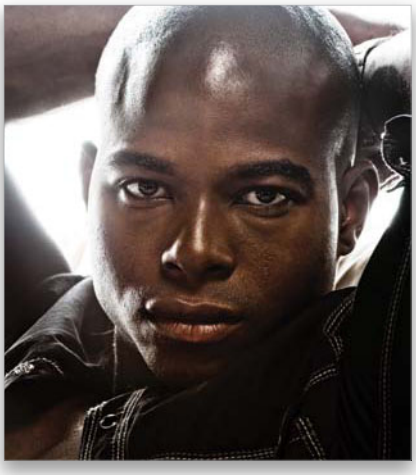

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# Seven Things You'll Wish You Had Known Before Reading This Book

It's really important to me that you get a lot out of reading this book, and one way I can help is to get you to read these seven quick things about the book that you'll wish later you knew now. For example, it's here that I tell you about where to download something important, and if you skip over this, eventually you'll send me an email asking where it is, but by then you'll be really aggravated, and well...it's gonna get ugly. We can skip all that (and more) if you take two minutes now and read these seven quick things. I promise to make it worth your while.

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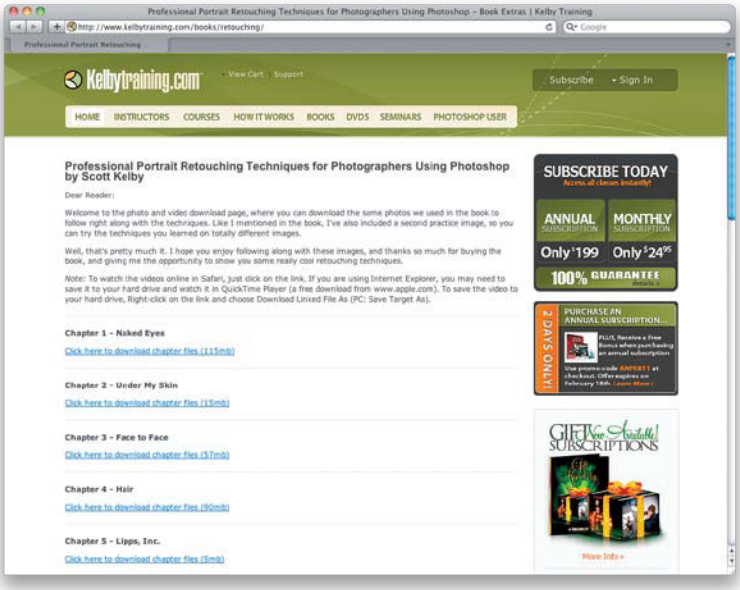
## #1 This book was written for photographers—not photo retouchers.

Most photographers aren't able to send their images out to a full-time, high-end retoucher, so we wind up doing our own portrait retouching in Photoshop. That's exactly who I wrote this book to help—photographers who want better, faster, more realistic results from their own portrait retouching. The key word here is "photographers." This isn't a book to learn how to become a high-end portrait retoucher (which is a very hard job, done by highly skilled, and very patient, professionals who take whatever time and steps are necessary to create absolutely perfect images. I have immense respect for these folks, who spend an average of four hours on a retouch, and as much as two to three days on a single cover image). However, as photographers, we usually don't get paid for the retouching part of our jobs, so we need to get back to shooting as quickly as possible. That's why I only focus on teaching you the fastest, easiest techniques to get your retouching done in as little time as possible. That means doing things that some high-end retouchers would definitely wrinkle their brow over, but when you make your living from shooting, you need to get back to shooting. That's what this book is about—quick, efficient techniques for great-looking, natural retouches that make you, and your subject, look great.

## #2 Download the practice images, so you can follow right along with me.

I've made all of the photos I used here in the book available for you to download, so you can follow right along with me as we work. For this book, though, I added something extra—a second practice file, so you can try the same technique you just learned on a totally different image. With retouching, it's the repetition that builds your speed, so this is another way for you to take what you've just learned and apply it somewhere else. You can download the images at **www.kelbytraining.com/books/retouching** (see, this is one of those things I was talking about that you'd miss if you skipped this and went right to Chapter 1).




## #3 You don't have to read this book in order.

I designed this book so you can turn right to the retouching technique you want to learn and start there. I explain everything as I go, step by step, so if you want to learn how to sharpen your subject's eyes, just turn to page 81, and in a couple of minutes, you'll know how.

## #4 The intro pages at the beginning of each chapter are not what they seem.

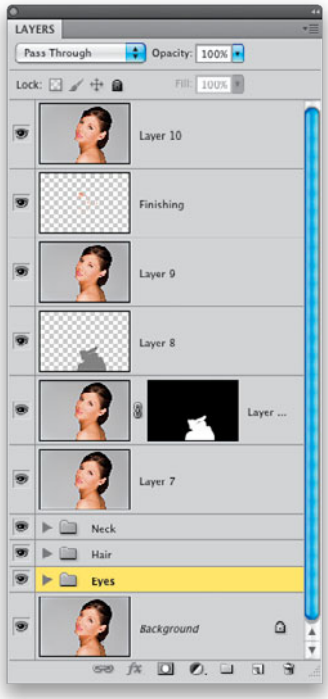
The chapter introductions are designed to give you a quick mental break between chapters, and honestly, they have little to do with what's in the chapter. In fact, they have little to do with anything, but writing these quirky chapter intros has become kind of a tradition of mine (I do this in all my books), so if you're one of those really "serious" types, I'm begging you—skip them and just go right into the chapter, because they'll just get on your nerves. However, the short intros at the beginning of each individual technique, up at the top of the page, are usually pretty important. If you skip over them, you might wind up missing stuff that isn't mentioned in the technique itself. So, if you find yourself working on a technique, and you're thinking to yourself, "Why are we doing this?" it's probably because you skipped over that short intro.

## #5 I included a chapter on my own start-to-finish retouching workflows, but don't read it yet.

At the end of the book, I included a special chapter detailing my retouching workflows for a 5-minute, 15-minute, and 30-minute retouch, but please don't read it until you've read the rest of the book first, because it assumes that you've read the book already, and understand the basic concepts. So, it doesn't spell everything out (or they would be really, really long, drawn-out workflows). In this chapter, I refer back to things you've already learned, and if you haven't learned them…well…you'll get kinda stuck there. So, do yourself a favor—read the first six chapters first, then do the workflows.

## #6 Do I need to do all this stuff?

Absolutely not. In fact, the goal is to do as little as possible, and be as subtle as possible, so if you can finish off an image with just two or three techniques from the book, that's fantastic. If you find yourself using 20 or more techniques, maybe it's time to find some better looking subjects (kidding, just a joke). I just don't want you to think that you have to apply everything in this book to every photo. Start by evaluating the image and what needs to be done. I always start by looking at the image and asking myself, "What do I wish here was different?" (For example, I wish his teeth weren't yellow, and that he didn't have that big mole on his neck, and all those stray hairs across his face.) Then you turn to the pages with those techniques and apply just the ones you need. Retouching is one of those "less is more" things.




## #7 I made you a Retouching Checklist.

One of the things photographers ask me the most is, "How do you know what to retouch?" So, I made you a checklist of things to look for. Now, you don't have to do all the things on the checklist (in fact, if you do, perhaps retouching shouldn't be your biggest concern), but at least you'll have a list to make sure that nothing that needs to be retouched slips by you. I put this checklist right before the workflow chapter that's at the end of the book (you'll find it on page 294). Also, I took it a step further by creating a custom Photoshop panel, so you won't even have to pull out the book—the panel will be right inside Photoshop. You can download it at www.kelbytraining.com/books/retouching. See, I told ya I'd make reading this worth your while.

MacBook Pro

# Why We Retouch

**Before you dive into the book,** I hope you'll invest two minutes in reading my philosophy on why we retouch. I think that, not only will this help you understand where I'm coming from with these retouches, but it also will make you a better, more aware, retoucher. The ability to make people look their best, or better than their best, is amazingly powerful and, as someone retouching photos, you have a responsibility to your subject, your client, and yourself to do this right.

A couple of years ago, my wonderful wife surprised me with a trip to the Tuscany region of Italy. It was an amazingly beautiful place (and the food was...well, the food was insane!), and one afternoon I grabbed my camera gear and drove up into the Asciano hills (I couldn't get anyone in my family to go with me—I think I had already burned them out with all my photography outings that trip).

At one point, I pulled to the side of the road when I saw this beautiful little villa, sitting up on a hill, surrounded by tall olive trees, and this amazingly green, rolling grass—it was just stunning. I set up my tripod, got out my remote cable release, and really took my time to capture the scene that I wish my family had been there to see. After I was done shooting, I stood there for a moment, took a deep breath of the fresh air, and just gazed upon that perfect little "villa in Tuscany" scene. I couldn't wait to show my family the pictures.

When I got back to our hotel room, I immediately found the image and opened it in Photoshop, so I could rush out and show everybody the image full-screen. But as soon as the image opened, I was stunned to see something that totally ruined the picture for me—power lines and telephone poles. Not just one or two. About two dozen. There were lines and cables and 20-foot poles all over the place. I never saw them while I was standing there right in front of the scene in Tuscany, but the moment I opened the image in Photoshop, it was the very first thing that jumped out at me. I sighed, and then I spent the next two hours carefully removing every line, every wire, and every pole, because I wanted the scene to look like what I saw while I was right there, standing in front of it.

Well, photos of people are exactly the same. You can have a one-on-one conversation with someone for a solid hour, take a quick portrait of them, and when you open their image, every flaw, every blemish, and every little imperfection you totally missed during your conversation may as well have a big red circle around it and a large arrow pointing right to it. I know it's the truth, because it's happened to me, and countless other photographers, again and again over the years.

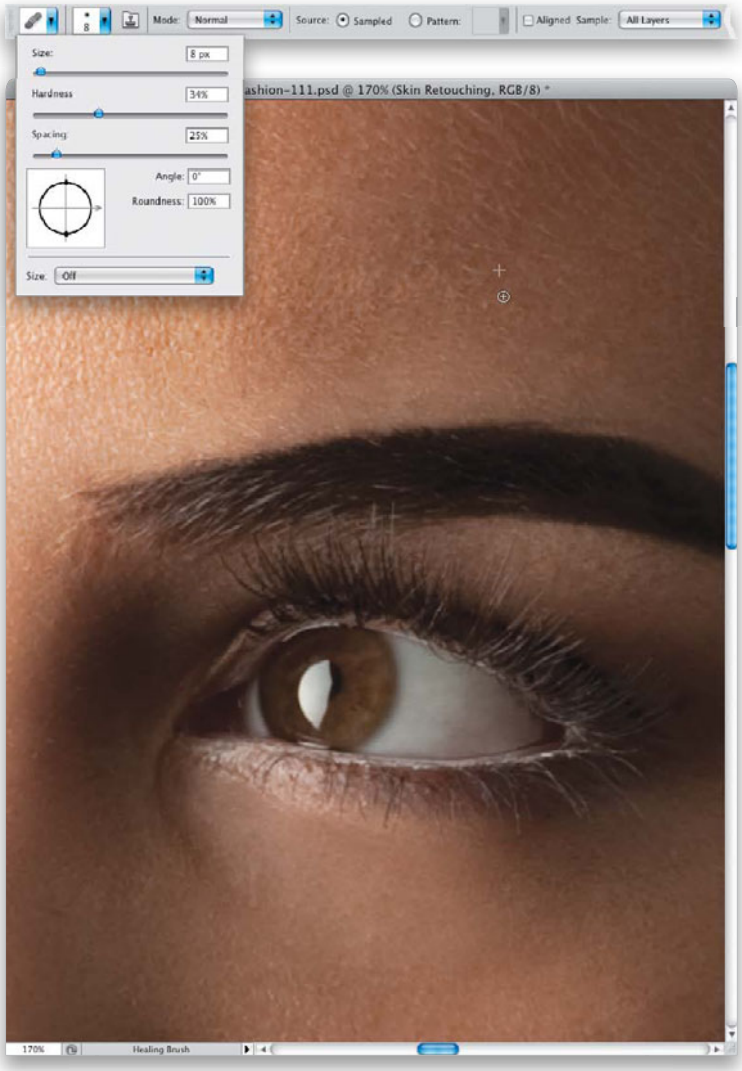
So, our job, when we're retouching people, is to take that flat, unflattering, two-dimensional still image of them, where every flaw doesn't just stand out, but gets magnified, and make them look as good as they did when they were standing right in front of us.

If you go too far, they will know it has been highly retouched and they won't feel good about it. Worse than that, their friends and family will know it has been highly retouched. But, if you're careful to make them look as good in the photo, or perhaps just slightly better, than they do in real life, their friends and family will love the photo, and so will your subject.

Lastly, here's one thing I learned the hard way: You're about to learn some amazing techniques and no doubt you'll want to brag to your subject about what an amazing retouch you did for them in Photoshop, and how great you made them look. But, here's my advice: don't do it. Never show them the before/after, and don't show their friends or family, either. This is about making them look their best, not making them feel their worst. Keep this between you and Photoshop, and I promise you, you'll be glad you did.

# 12 Things You Need to Know Now to Make Your Retouching Easier

I know you want to get to retouching, but I promise you—if you take just a few minutes to read these 12 things, you'll better understand what you'll be doing, why you're doing it, and you'll get better results faster from your retouching. Really. I promise.




## #1 Think Small

If I could only give you one piece of advice, one secret about successful retouching, it would be to work with a small brush as much as possible. Of course, as photographers, most of us just want to get the job done as quickly as possible, so we use a large brush, which does get things done faster, but often picks up a repeating pattern (repeats a speck, or hair, or blemish from the area where you sampled), or it smudges an area when you've brushed over it a few times, and generally it's one of the big causes for a retouch looking shabby. Stick with small- or medium-sized brushes as much as possible, and I promise you, your retouching will look more professional. Also, to get more control, work at low Opacity settings with your brushes (between 10% and 30%), and gradually build up your strokes, one on top of another. You can't do this every time you use a brush, but when you can, it makes a big difference.

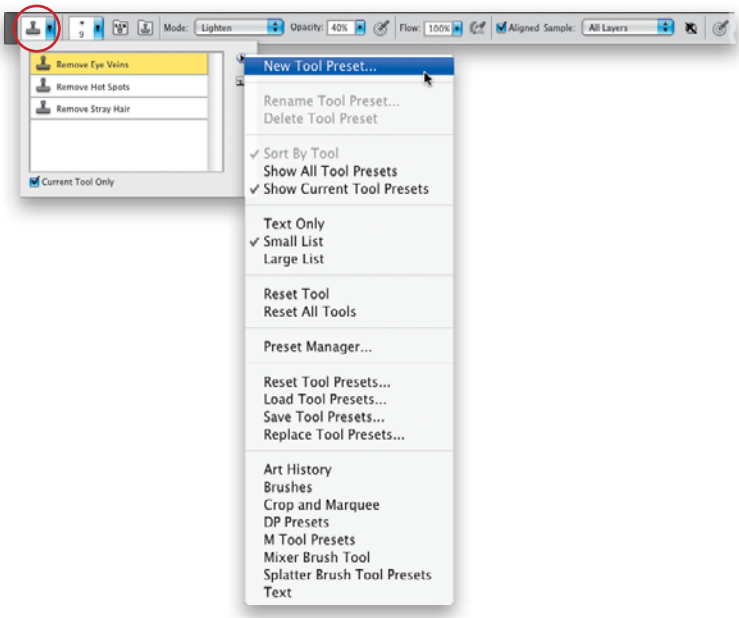
## #2 Use a Pen and Tablet

If you decided to become a professional house painter, one of the first things you'd buy is a roller brush, because it makes your work easier, and you'd get more done in less time. Then, you'd probably buy a small edge brush to get the corner details. These are the tools of the trade, and about any pro you meet would have these. Well, it's kind of the same with retouching. I don't know a single professional retoucher that doesn't use a Wacom pen and tablet. It's the retoucher's tool-of-the-trade, because it makes your retouching tasks so much easier, and you'll get more work done in less time. Plus, it will let you do the detail work (like an edge brush for painters) that makes all the difference in the final image. I don't get a kickback or payout whether you buy a tablet or not, but this is the tool we all use (I use the Intuos4 medium-sized tablet myself). That being said, you do not need a tablet to do any of the techniques in this book—you can tough it out with a mouse. ;-)

COURTESY OF WACOM: IMAGE WITHIN MONITOR © SCOTT KELBY

## #3 Save Time with Tool Presets

You'll wind up using the same tools, with the same custom settings, pretty often, and you can save yourself a lot of time by using tool presets, which remember all those settings. For example, let's say you use the Clone Stamp tool for removing stubble, and you have the tool's Mode set to Lighten, the Sample pop-up menu set to All Layers, the Opacity at 40%, and you use a medium-sized, soft-edged brush. Once all that's in place, click on the Clone Stamp tool icon up at the left end of the Options Bar (shown circled here in red), and then in the Tool Preset Picker, click on the right-facing arrow in the top-right corner and, from that menu, choose New Tool Preset. Give your tool preset a descriptive name (like the ones I've already added to the Picker here) and click OK. Now, anytime you need to remove stubble, you don't have to enter (or remember) all those settings, just click on that icon, then click on your tool preset, and it's all set up and ready to go.




(Continued)

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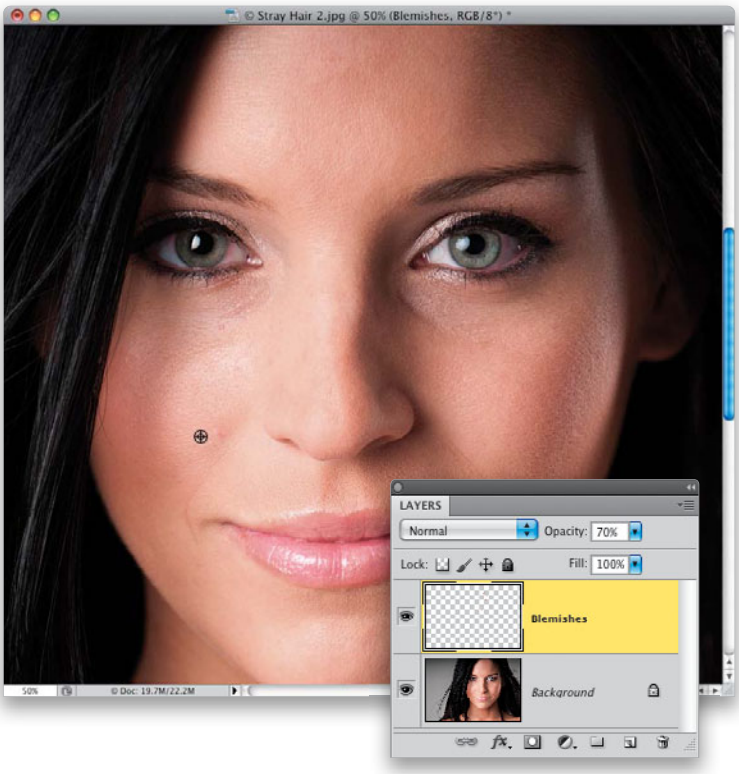
## #4 Walk Away After a While

If you've been retouching for a while, you start seeing everything as a problem to be retouched, and after about an hour, most folks start to over-retouch and not realize it. That's why, after an hour of retouching, you need to take a break, do something else for five or ten minutes, and then return to retouching with a fresh view. I know this one might sound silly as you're reading this right up front, but an hour from now, it will make total sense. This is a more important point than it sounds right now.

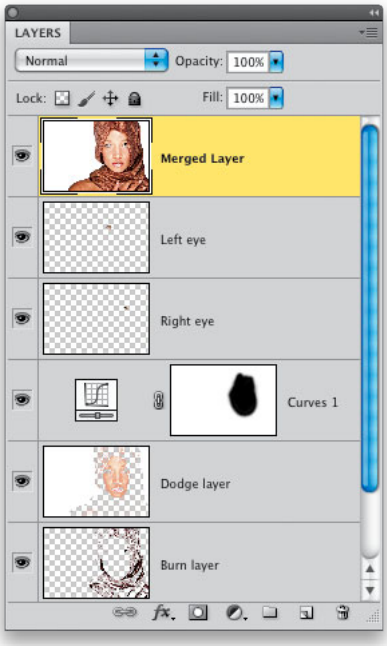



## #5 Why We Work on a Layer

We do most of our retouching on a separate layer (or a copy of the Background layer, if necessary) for a few reasons: (1) We can lower the intensity of any retouch by lowering the opacity of the layer we did our retouching on, and we do this a lot throughout the book. (2) It lets us have a quick before/after anytime by just hiding the layer from view, and then turning it back on (just click the Eye icon to the left of the layer's name in the Layers panel). And, (3) it protects the original background image, so we can always go back to it if we need to (so, basically, our edits are non-destructive). This is a guideline, but it isn't a rule, because when you've got five minutes to do a retouch, you can't be working with 10 layers, but for the most part, we always try to keep our retouches on one or more separate layers.

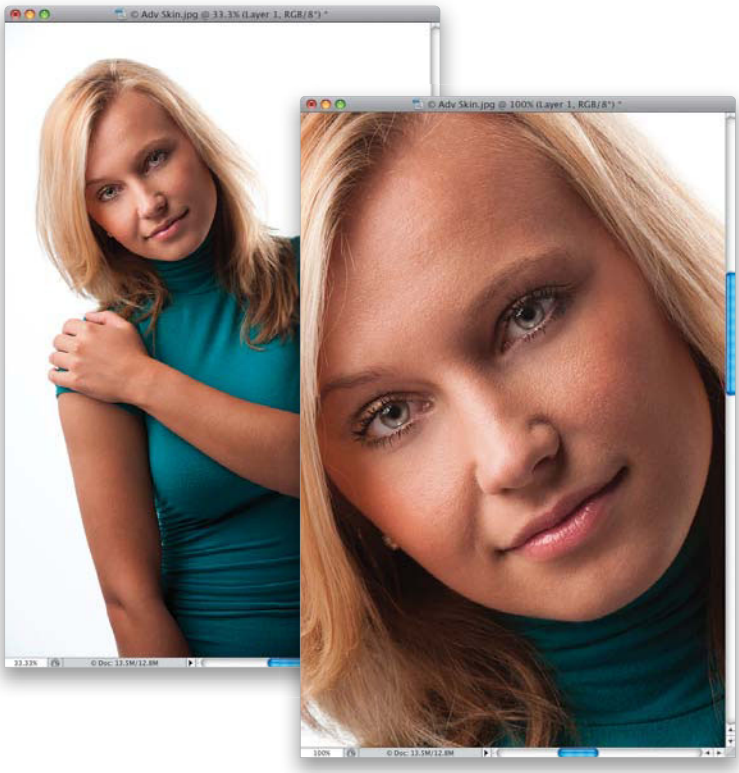
## #6 Learn This Keyboard Shortcut

Command-Option-Shift-E (PC: Ctrl-Alt-Shift-E) is the shortcut for creating a merged layer, and what this does is it creates a brand new layer with a flattened version of your multi-layered document (as seen at the top of the layer stack here). That way, you can keep lots of your earlier retouching layers intact while you work on a flattened version of the file. Then, if you need to go back and fix something, you still have the original layers. If this sounds confusing, it will totally make sense in just a few minutes. Another handy keyboard shortcut to know is Command-H (PC: Ctrl-H). If you have a selection around something, pressing that shortcut hides the "marching ants" selection border, so you can more easily see what you're working on. Just don't forget to press it again when you're done retouching that area.




## #7 Don't Retouch Zoomed Out

If you work with your image zoomed out at 66.7%, or 50%, or 33.3%, or smaller, you're gonna get burned by some little area you missed. It might be a small piece of skin that you didn't brush over when smoothing, or a tiny part of the image you missed when you changed its hue, but unless you do most of your retouching at 100% size or larger, I guarantee you something is going to slip by and embarrass you—or worse yet, your client. In the book, you'll see me use different zoom sizes to make things fit better for you, the reader, but when I'm retouching, I'm always working at 100%. It's important to zoom out every so often, because it's easy to do too much to a small area, and you'll only realize it has been over-retouched when you zoom out, but when I'm working, I zoom in to 100% if at all possible.



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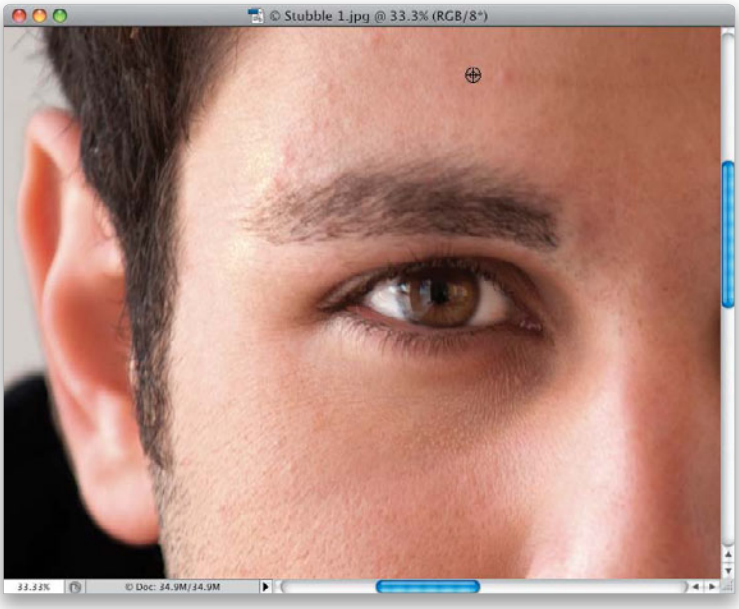
## #8 The Direction of Your Strokes Matters

Whenever you can make out a direction of the texture of something (like skin), or the angle of something (like hair), try to make your brush strokes go in that same direction. I know you're probably thinking, "Well, duh!" but I see people cloning up and down on a forehead area all the time. If you look at the direction of the skin texture there, it goes from left to right (well, it goes horizontal anyway), and if you want your retouches to look more natural, just be aware of which direction to make your strokes so they blend in with what you're brushing on—it makes a difference.

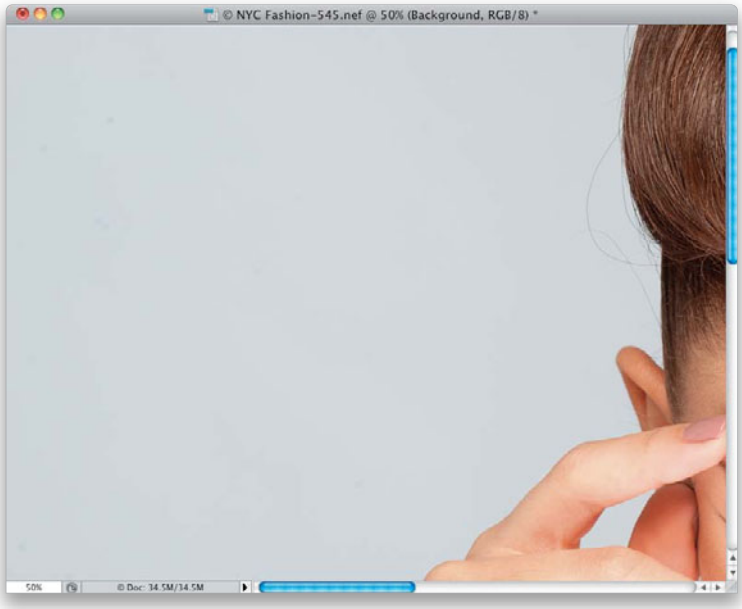


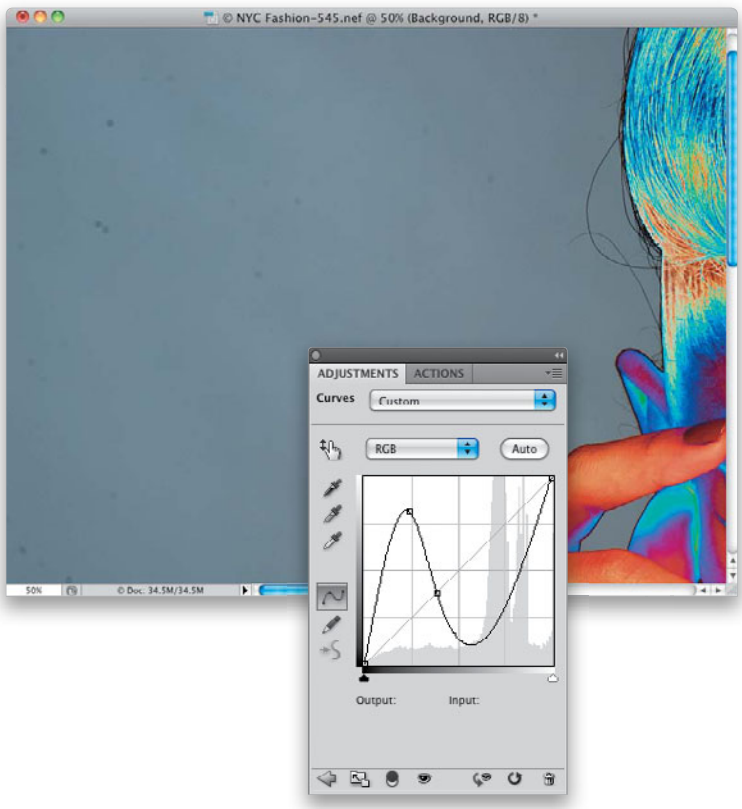

## #9 Applying These Retouches to Men

As much as I hate to admit it, retouching men is pretty easy (well, compared to retouching women, anyway), because you don't have to make their skin silky smooth, or make the eyelashes long and lustrous, or adjust their makeup, or lipstick, and so on. Because of that, you don't see a lot of guys in this book, but many of the retouches on women here in the book also apply to men (like removing blemishes, or stray hairs, or making their eyes symmetrical), so don't worry—you're covered.

## #10 Use a B&W or Curves Adjustment Layer to See If You Missed Anything

When you're removing dust or specks from a background or sky, or removing blemishes or spots on clothing, because you're working on a color image, it's easy to miss a spot here or there. It happens to all of us, but it can really be a mess when a big one sneaks by us and we get a call from the client. That's why a lot of professional retouchers use a couple of temporary layers that they toggle on/off, just to help them see the spots, stray hairs, and blemishes much more clearly. One is a simple Black & White adjustment layer. This works great on skin, and you can keep it hidden until you're about to finish up an area—then you make it visible and see if you missed anything. The second one is a two-hill Curves adjustment layer (like the one shown here. To add points to the curve, just click anywhere along the line and then drag the point where you want it). This one does an amazing job of finding specks, spots, and stray hairs (try it on a solid studio background, like you see here—it's amazing!). Again, you'll only use it to check your work, but it can really save your butt by catching those things you might have missed. And if you get something crazy in your cloning or healing cursor while fixing those things you missed, make sure you're working on the image layer and your brush is set to sample only the current layer.

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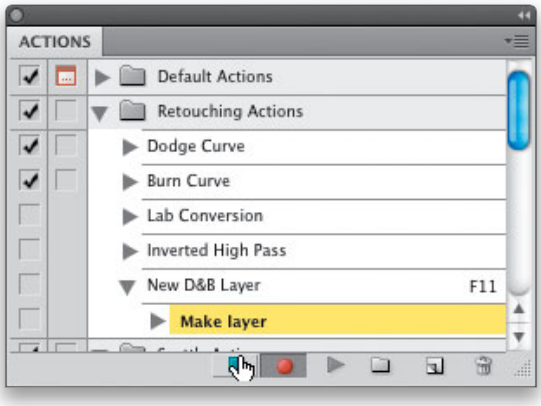
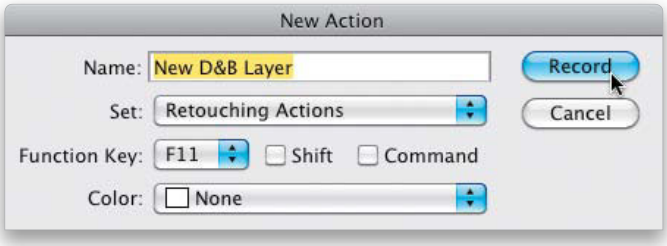



## #11 Use Actions to Work Even Faster

When retouching, you'll wind up doing the same thing again and again, which is why you need actions (Photoshop's built-in recorder, which remembers your steps, and plays them back by hitting just one key—no matter how many steps it took—faster than you could ever do it). For example, in Chapter 3, we learn how to create a special new layer for dodging and burning, where you have to choose New Layer from the Layers panel's flyout menu, then set the layer's blend mode to Soft Light, and then turn on the checkbox for Fill with Soft-Light-Neutral Color (50% Gray). You can have it do all this in just one click of an F-key on your keyboard. Open the Actions panel (go under the Window menu and choose Actions), and click the Create New Action icon at the bottom of the panel (it looks like the Create a New Layer icon). Give your action a name (New D&B layer), choose which function key you want to use for playback, then hit the Record button. Now, go make your Soft Light layer. When you're done, hit the red Stop button at the bottom of the panel. To play it back, at super-speed, just press that F-key.

## #12 How Long You Should Spend Retouching a Particular Image

I hate to give you, "Well, that depends," but, "Well, that depends." When you do the shoot, you probably know how the image you're creating is going to be used (it's for a website, for a print ad, for a model's online portfolio, etc.), and because of that, you need to make a realistic decision about how much time you, as a photographer, can commit to the retouch. If this image is going to be used on the cover of the local bridal magazine, you'd better invest 30 or more minutes (a long retouch for a photographer). If it's going to be a 2x4" image in the clients' wedding book, on a page with six other photos, this image gets five minutes max! Another consideration is how tight the image is cropped. Is the image a close-up? Then you need to consider every little detail, from stray hair to red eye veins. However, if your subject is farther away, like a ¾-length view or full-length shot, you probably won't need to be nearly as detailed (if their eyes wind up only being 1/32 of an inch high in the image, how much time do you really need to spend retouching their eyes)? In short, you have to make realistic decisions about how much time to spend retouching.

# Chapter 4 HAIR

## Retouching Hair

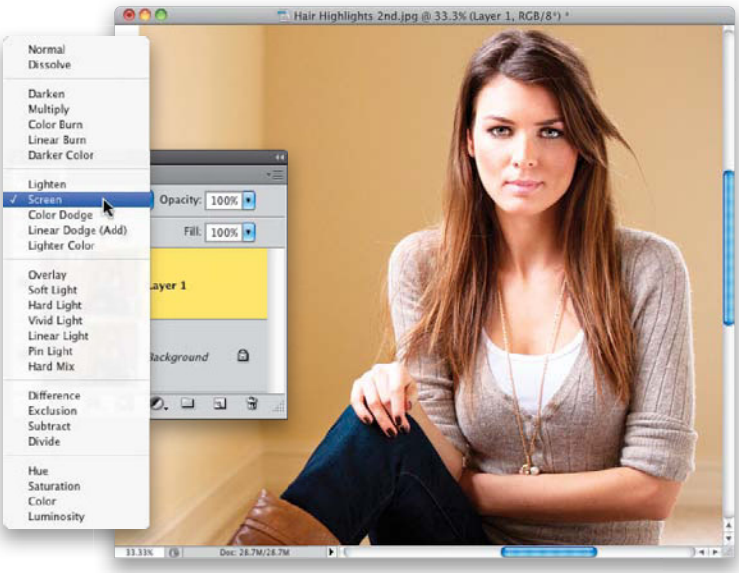
I know, at first glance, it looks like I just took the most obvious name possible for a chapter on retouching hair, but I'm actually naming this chapter after the 1968 Broadway musical, *Hair*, which is, coincidentally, enjoying a revival on Broadway right now, and playing to packed houses for the same reason it did back in '68—the actors are naked. That's right, nudie nakedness, which is exactly what you're going to see a lot of in this chapter. Okay, not really, but you were getting psyched there for a moment, weren't you? Come on, admit it, you were like, "Cool!" for just a second there, and then I pulled the rug out from under you, just like they pull their clothes off in this chapter (see, I got ya again, didn't I? Man, you are incredibly naughty for a photographer/retoucher). Anyway, this chapter is about how to make people's hair look lustrous, which is a word you don't get to use every day (well, it's not a word you want to use on the playground if you hope to walk away without a few broken bones), but the word "lustrous" is actually derived from the Latin phrase lustyamadeus, which loosely translates to "naked conductor," which is exactly what you'll find on page 72. (Man, you are so gullible. So now you're actually naughty and gullible. You're naughtible.) Now, if I really wanted to make sure you read this chapter, I wouldn't have named it "Hair," I would have named it "Bare." Better yet, "Bare Naked" or perhaps "Bear Naked" or "Br'er Rabbit" (man, did that just take an unexpected turn). Anyway, there's nothing in this chapter that I would be embarrassed to show to my brother-in-law, who manages a casino/truck stop just outside Vegas, and I think that alone speaks volumes.

# Adding Highlights to Hair

I use this retouch on nearly every portrait I shoot, because not only does it add more depth and dimension to the look of the hair, it actually enhances the lighting you used to make the shot.

## Step One:

Here's the image we're going to work on (don't forget to download it from the website mentioned in the book's intro up front). Because of the light from the window, she already has some good highlights on the left side, and there are also some on the right, but we're going to enhance both to make her hair really have shine (and to make the lighting look even better, which isn't a bad thing).




## Step Two:

Start by duplicating the Background layer by pressing **Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J)**, then change the blend mode of this layer from Normal to **Screen** (as shown here). This makes the entire image much brighter (as you can see here).

## Step Three:

As you saw in Step Two, the entire photo is brighter, but of course, we only want the hair brighter, and then just the highlight areas. So, press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key, and click on the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel (it's shown circled here in red). This hides this brighter layer behind a black mask. Now, get the Brush tool **(B)**, choose a small, soft-edged brush set at 100% Opacity up in the Options Bar, make sure your Foreground color is set to white, and start to paint over the brightest areas of her hair (the highlight areas). As you do, it reveals a brighter version of her hair. So, basically, if you see a bright area of her hair, paint over it to make it brighter (as you see here, where I'm painting over the hair on the left side of the photo near her shoulder).

## Step Four:

Continue painting the highlights up at the top of her head, as well. These aren't nearly as bright, but that's all the better—you're making the subtle highlights up there less subtle.

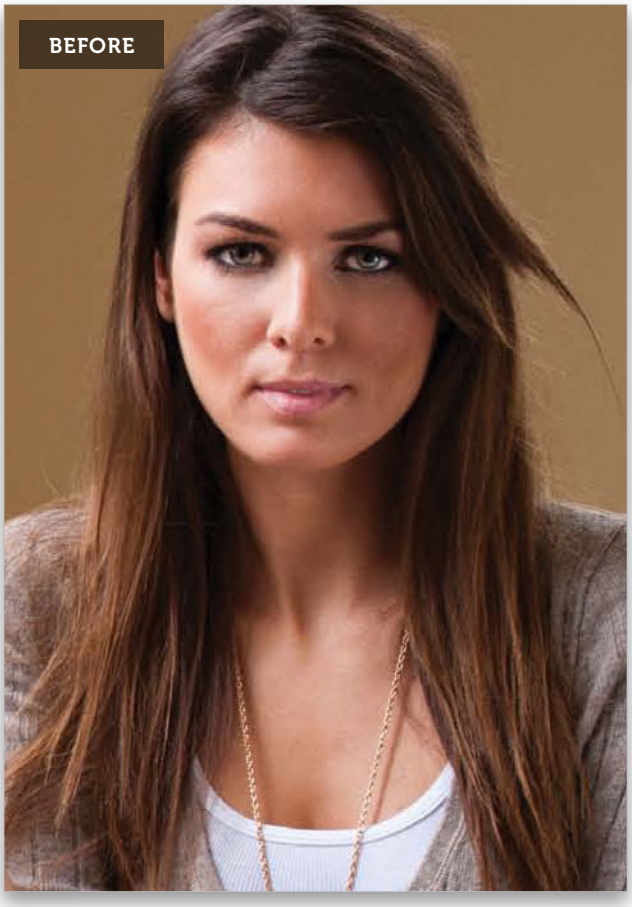
(Continued)

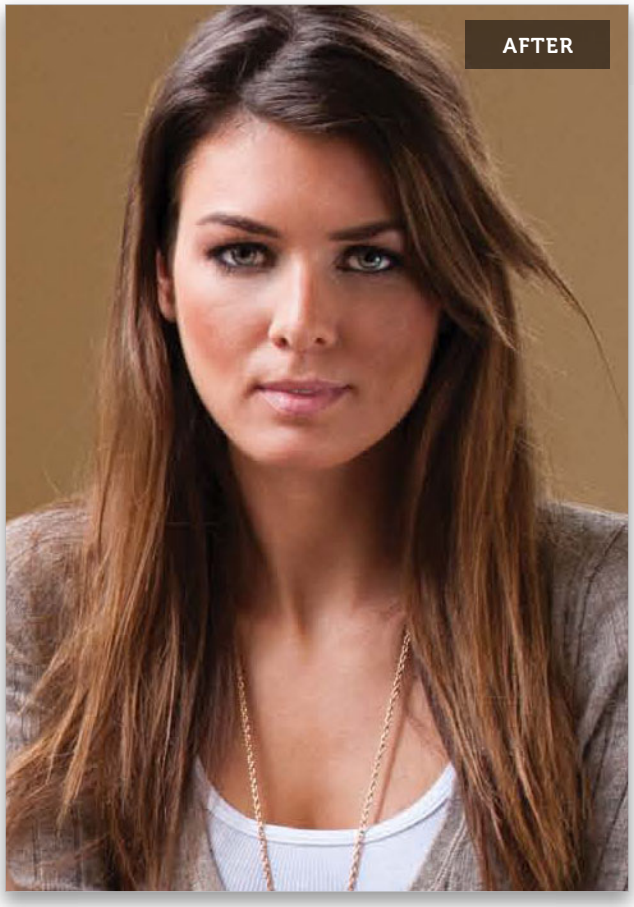
## Step Five:

Here, I'm painting over highlights on the right side. Continue all the way around, until all the highlight areas are painted over, so they reveal the lighter layer in just those spots.

## Step Six:

Now it's time to tweak the brightness amount, so it looks natural, by lowering the Opacity of this brighter layer. In this example, I had to lower it to 60% to give us the final image you see here, which looks pretty natural, but depending on the image, you might have to go lower, or even leave it at 100%—that's a call you'll have to make as the photographer/retoucher.


BEFORE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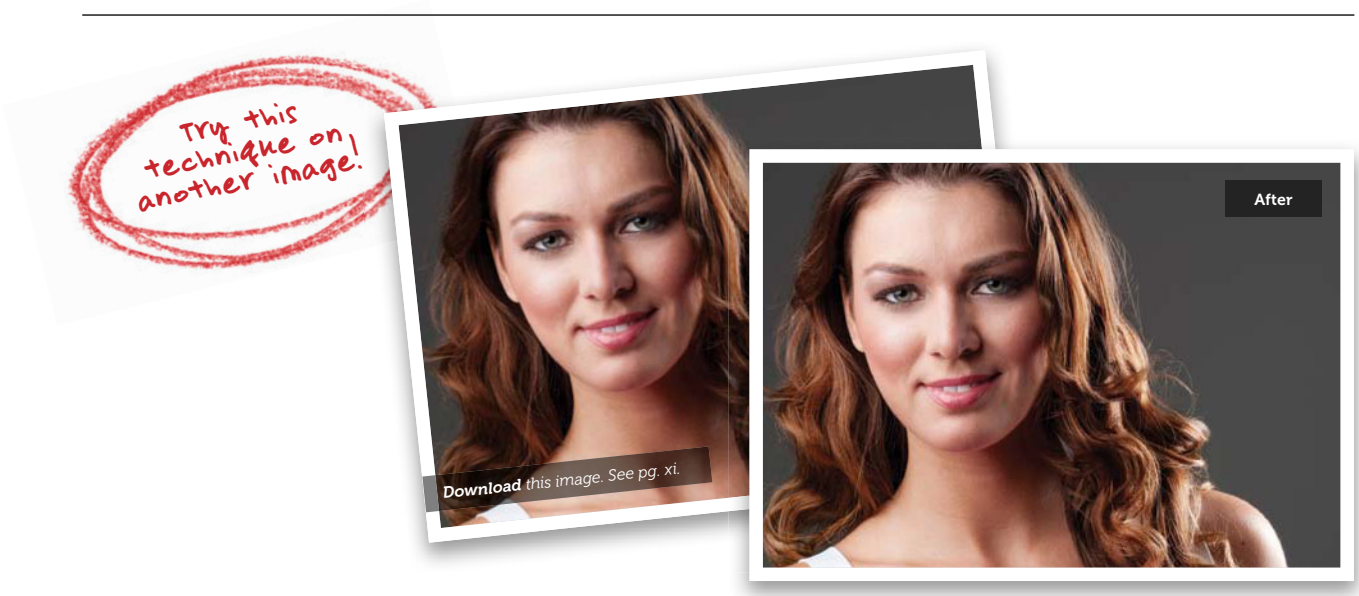
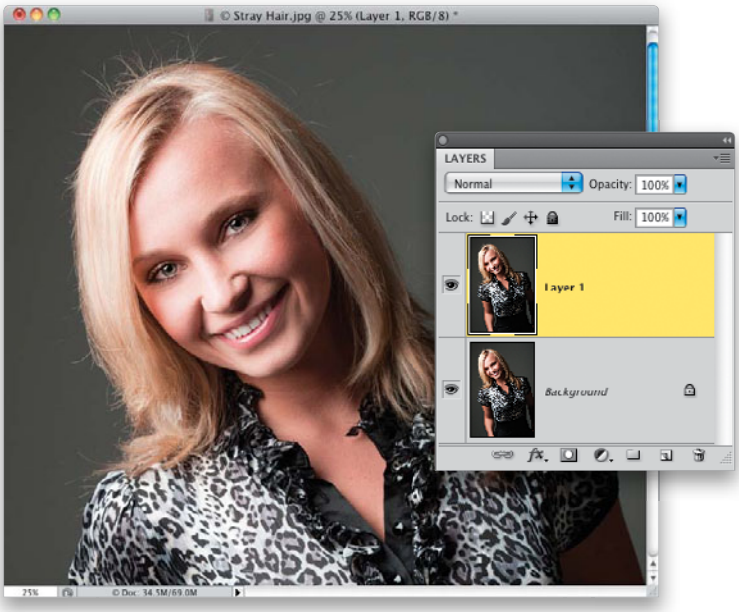

Try this technique on another image!
Download this image. See pg. xi.
After

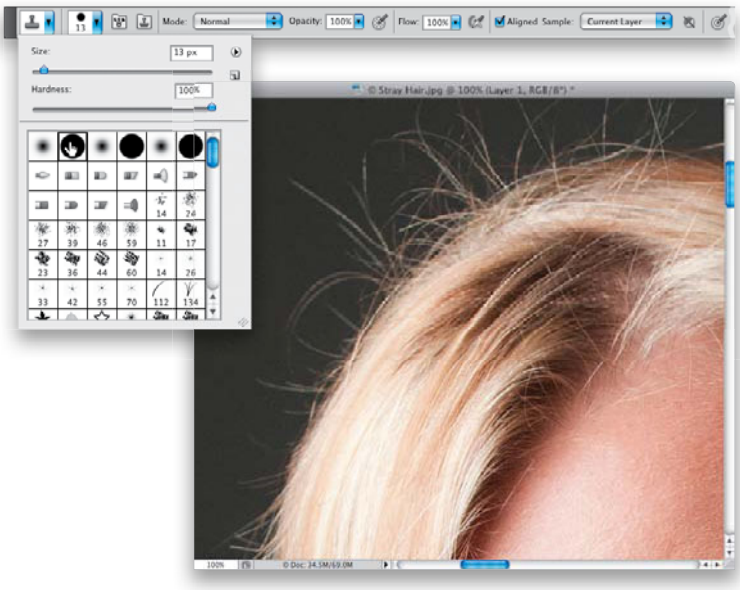
# Removing Stray Hair Strands

This is another one of those little things that makes a big difference, and once you take the few extra minutes to remove stray hairs, when you see portraits where the photographer didn't take the time, they stick out like a sore thumb. Luckily, this one is much easier and faster than you might think (as long as the stray hairs extend outside of your subject, which is usually the case. If they cover an eye, or extend onto their face or clothes, be prepared to become a very patient person).




## Step One:

Here's the image we want to retouch, and if you look closely, the subject's hair is...well...it could use some anti-static retouching—mostly on top, and a bit on the side, and there's one hair extending onto her forehead we should probably fix while we're there, too. Start off by duplicating the Background layer by pressing **Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J)**. We'll be doing all our stray hair removal on this layer (which not only gives us an out if things get really squirrelly, but it's a great way to see a quick before/after).

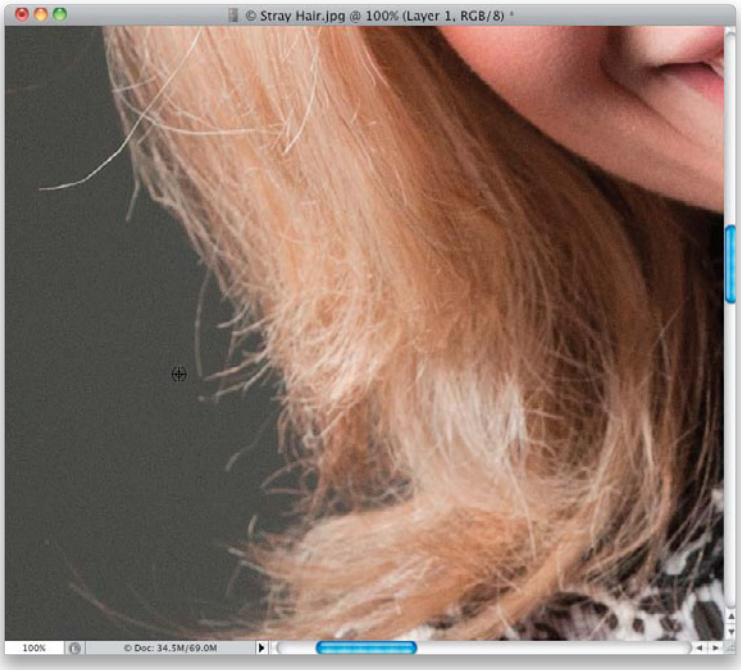



## Step Two:

Because we're going to have to trim right up to the sides of the hair, the Healing Brush isn't going to work well on this retouch—it would smear the edges when we got up close to the outside edge of her hair. So, instead, my tool of choice for this is the Clone Stamp tool **(S)**, with a hard-edged brush, like the one you see me choosing here from the Brush Picker. Now, it's time to zoom in (to at least 100%) and get to work. (*Note:* If your background isn't an even color, you may have to start with the Healing Brush tool, and switch to the Clone Stamp tool as you get closer to her head.)

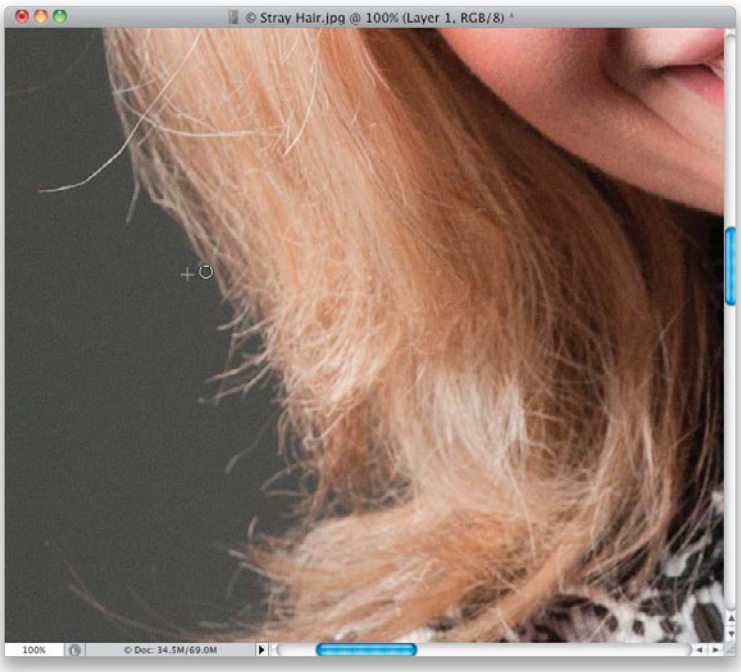
## Step Three:

The actual brush size you choose should be just a little bit larger than the hairs you want to remove, so don't just go with the size I'm using here for your other projects. Look at the hair strands and choose your brush size based on that—a little larger than the strand you're trying to remove. Now, pick a starting point where you can follow around the head and not miss any spots (I'm starting on the lower-left side of the photo here). Here's what to do now: press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key and click once just outside the strand you want to remove, in a clean area without any hair. It needs to be pretty darn close, so the color, tone, and texture you're sampling here are nearly identical to what's around the strand you're about to remove.




## Step Four:

Start at the end of the hair farthest away from the head, and follow along the path of the hair, almost like you're tracing it, and stop when you reach her head (as seen here). The little plus sign to the left of my brush tip cursor shows you how close to where I'm painting I sampled (Option-clicked) in the previous step. Don't sample so close that you clone over yourself (and repeat some of the hair you're trying to remove), but get fairly close. If you make a mistake, just press **Command-Z (PC: Ctrl-Z)** to Undo your last stroke and try again. If you need to undo more than one stroke, press **Command-Option-Z (PC: Ctrl-Alt-Z)** up to 20 times to undo your last 20 steps (that's all you get by default). If you think you'll need more undos, then you and I need to have a talk (kidding!). Go to Photoshop's Preferences (under the Photoshop menu on a Mac, or the Edit menu on a PC), to Performance, and where it says History & Cache, type in a higher number of History States. It takes up more memory, but you get more undos.

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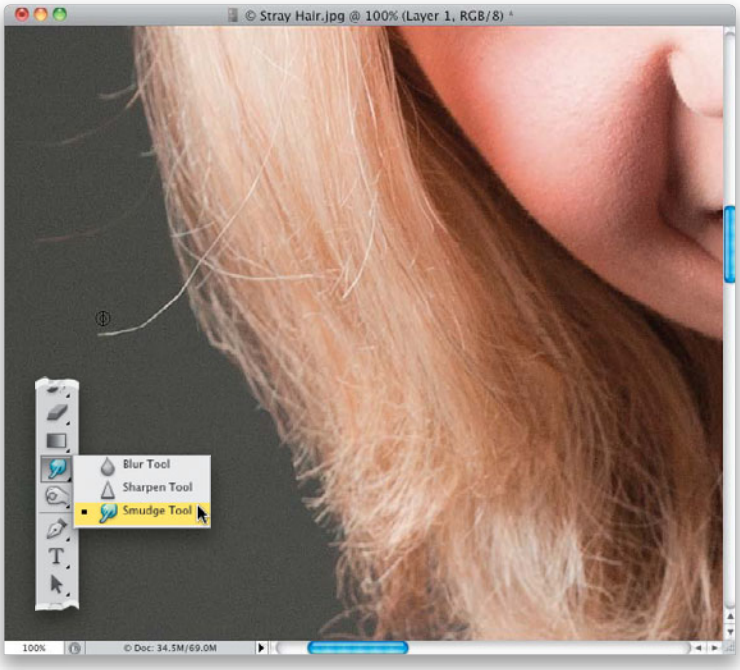
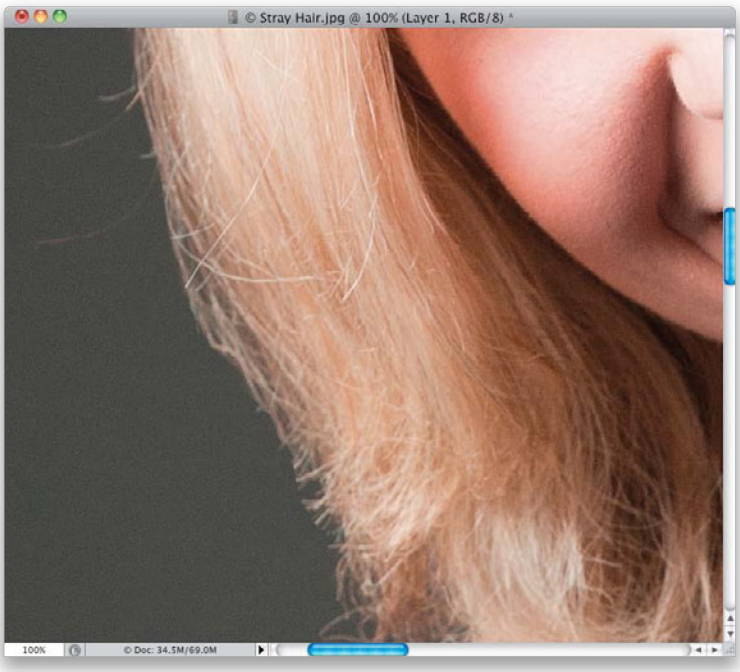



## Step Five:

That's basically the process—you sample near a strand of hair, and use the Clone Stamp tool to remove it, stopping right at the main body of her hair. Now, that being said, you notice how the hairs are starting to look kind of straight and lopped off in a straight line (retouchers call this "helmet head")? I try to do two things to keep things looking a little more random: (1) I don't remove all the stray hairs—I try to leave a few short ones here and there, so it looks somewhat natural, and (2) I try not to leave them looking cut off straight. Here's a great tip for what to do for that: get the Smudge tool from the Toolbox (shown here, nested below the Blur tool) and, using its default settings and a brush size just a tiny bit bigger than the hair, paint a few strokes over the ends. It pulls the hair out, so it tapers at the end and looks natural (just paint your strokes in the direction of the hair). Now, let's look at this really annoying strand here, because it's going to pose its own problem. Start by switching back to the Clone Stamp tool and sampling right above it (as shown here).

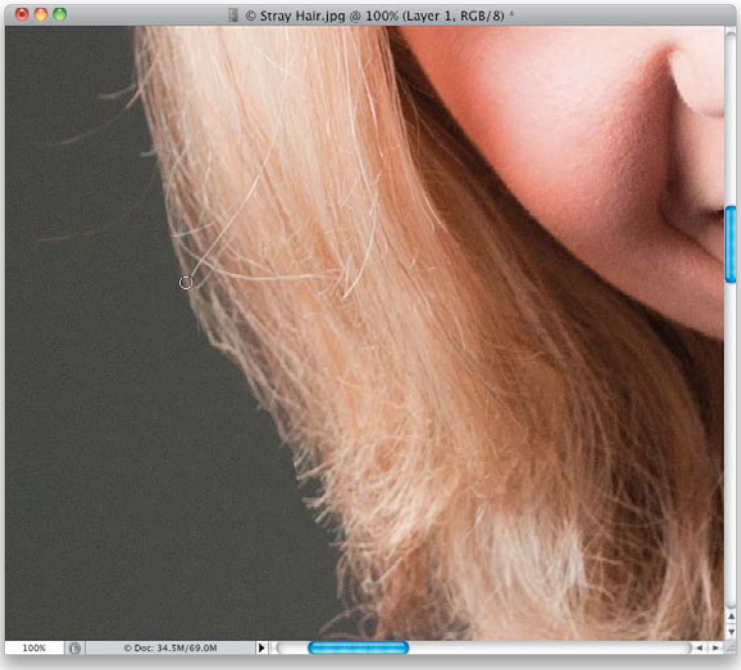



## Step Six:

Clone it away, starting at the part farthest away from the head, and stopping right at the edge of the rest of her hair. You see how it just kind of stops there, like you broke the hair as if it were an uncooked strand of spaghetti? If I see that, I usually use the next technique, where we pick up and move existing hair to cover problems. But, in the next step, I'll show you something else I do, which breaks the rules, but only a tiny bit.

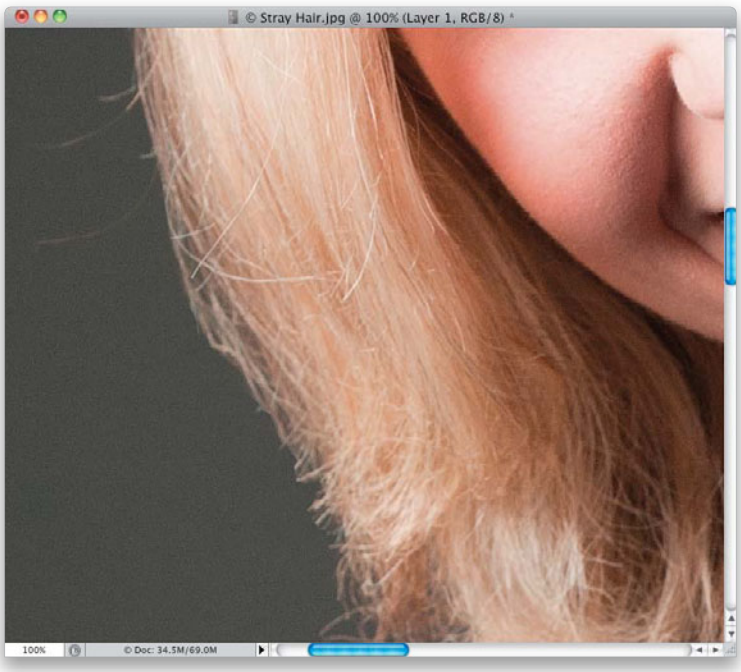
## Step Seven:

You're going to Option-click (PC: Alt-click) inside the hair, just above the "broken off" end of the strand you just removed, and use that to cover the end a bit. Now, just move down over the broken off end, and simply click once (as shown here).




## Step Eight:

This kind of moves the end back a little more inside the hair, and it doesn't look as obvious. Yes, this is a very subtle thing, and you have to decide if it's even worth doing for the intended final use (for example, if the final use is somebody's Facebook profile photo, I'm not sure I'd even consider doing this), but again, as the photographer, you have to decide what level of retouching is necessary for the job. Now, just continue around the head, going from the left, up over the top, and ending on the right, removing as many stray hairs as you feel is practical. Just remember not to make it look like you did this with the Path tool or a pair of scissors.

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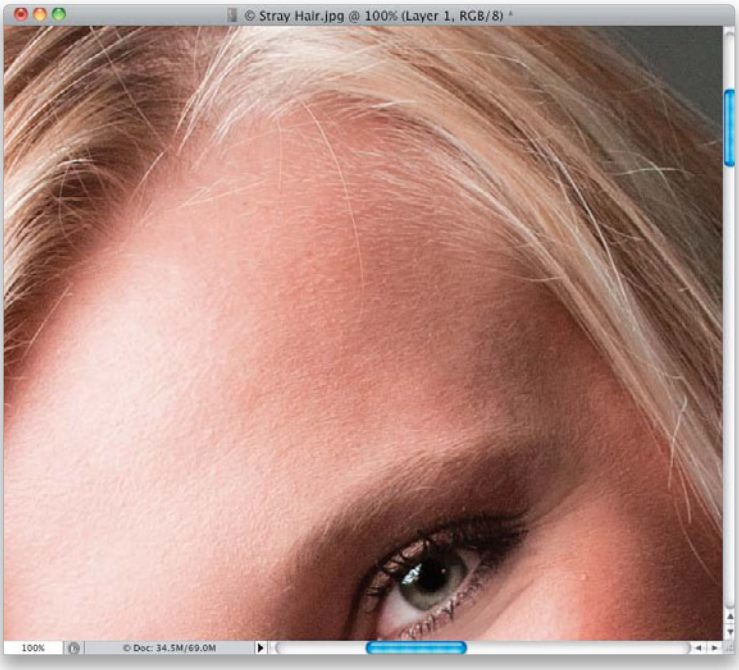
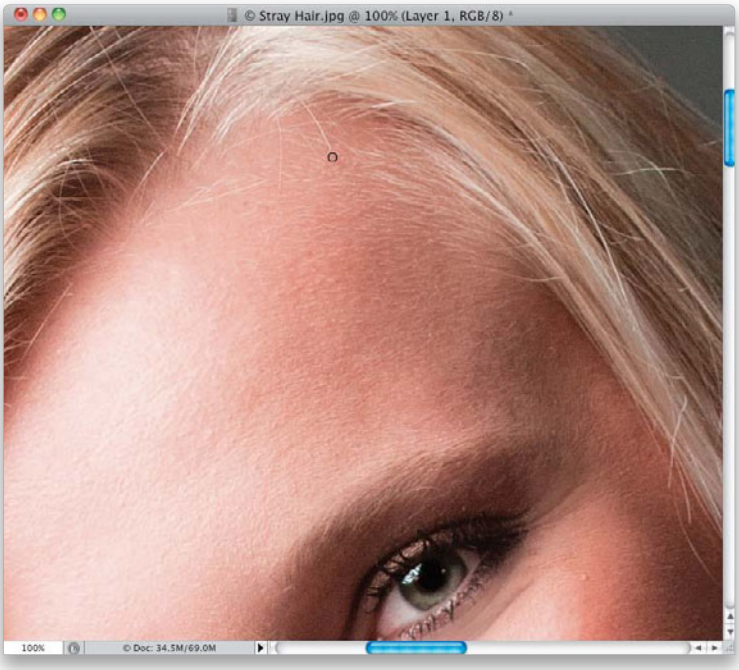



## Step Nine:

Now, let's look at stray hairs that extend over the skin, like you see here on her forehead, where one big one, and a few friends, are encroaching on our otherwise unfettered skin area (I know, I went all *Masterpiece Theatre* on you there for a moment). Since part of it is on skin, and part of it goes near the hair, I use a two-tool approach in cases like this.

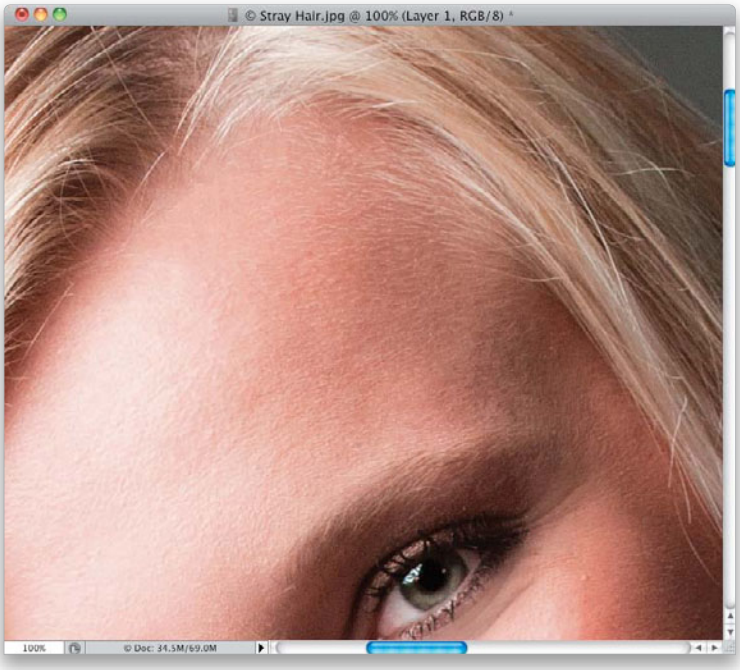



## Step 10:

I start with the Healing Brush tool (press **Shift-J** until you have it) to get rid of most of the stray hair extending over the skin. We're basically doing a skin repair, and the Healing Brush works well for this, so sample (Option-click [PC: Alt-click]) an area of skin very near the stray hair and paint over it, stopping when you start to get near the hairline (as seen here).

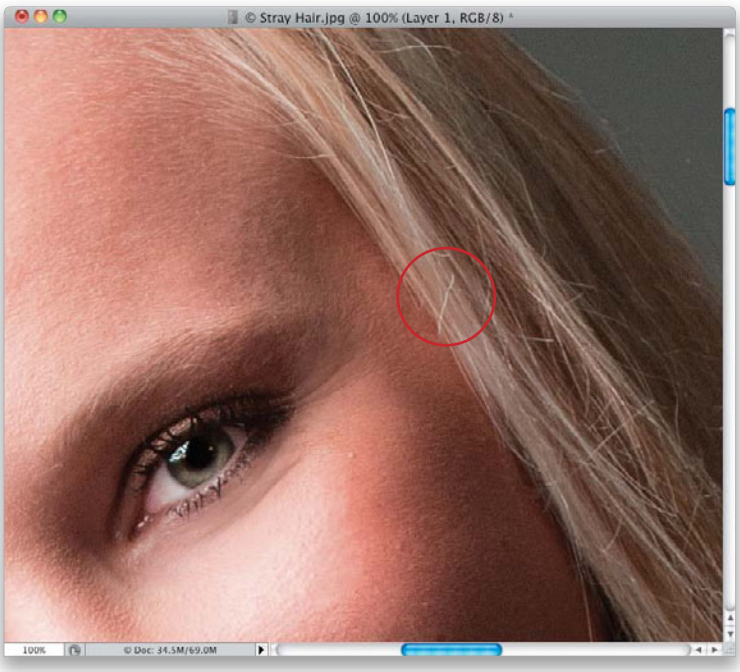
### Step 11:

Switch to the Clone Stamp tool again, and choose a very small, soft-edged brush at 100% opacity. Sample a clean area very near the last bit of hair you need to remove, and clone that final section away, so it's completely gone (as seen here). While I was there, I cleaned up the other few stray hairs over the skin using the same two-tool combination.




### Step 12:

Now, you can see other hairs out of place that are over the main parts of her hair (meaning they're not extending onto her skin, or onto the background. They're just messy hairs). For example, take a look at the hair I have circled here in red. For these, I mostly use a technique for moving pieces of hair (which you'll learn next), because when you start cloning hair, it usually looks kind of fake. It might look okay from a distance (and fine for low-res Web photos, or Facebook profile pages, and stuff like that), but if this is going to be a print or an image that really matters, you'll need to move existing pieces of clean hair down over the stray hair to cover it.

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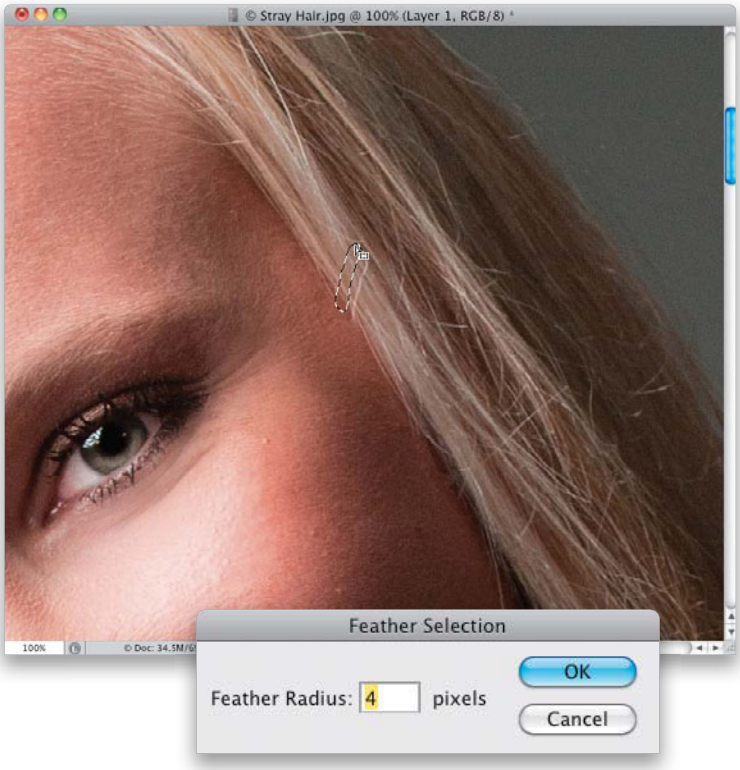
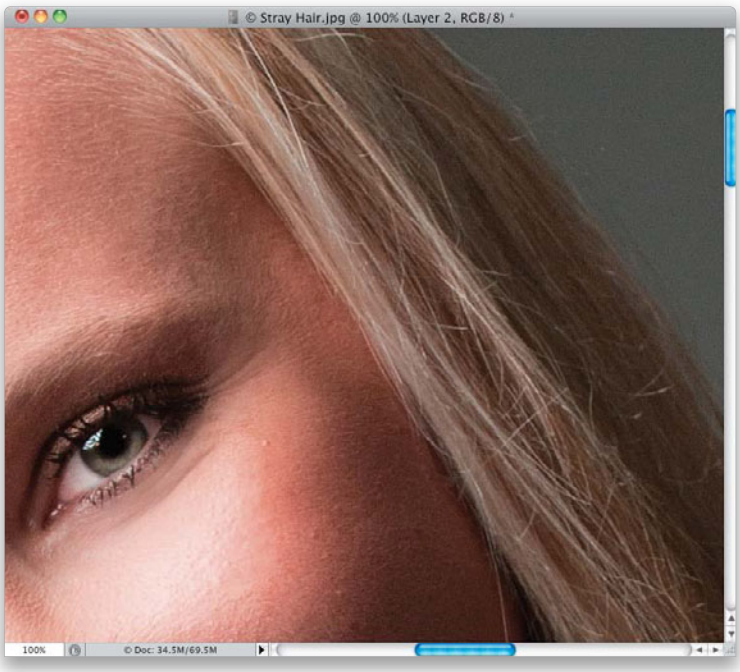



## Step 13:

Start by getting the Lasso tool **(L)** and draw a selection around the hair in question, leaving just a little space around it. While you still have the Lasso tool, click inside your selected area and drag that selection just a tiny bit above the hair, to a clean area of hair, as seen here (of course, if there isn't a clean area above it, try just below it). Now, to soften the edges, go under the Select menu, under Modify, and choose **Feather**. When the Feather Selection dialog appears, enter 4 pixels for just a tiny bit of edge softening, and click OK.




## Step 14:

Press **Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J)** to lift that selected area of clean hair and put it up on its own layer. Now, switch to the Move tool **(V)**, and drag this layer down and position it right over the stray hair to cover it completely (as shown here). If you made your selection small enough, it should be a perfect fit and not overlap anything or cause any other problems. If, for some weird reason, it's not a perfect fit, press **Command-T (PC: Ctrl-T)** to bring up Free Transform, then press-and-hold the Command (PC: Ctrl) key, click on one of the Free Transform corner points, and bend the hair so it fits the right way (holding that key lets you distort the shape the way you want it), then press **Return (PC: Enter)** to lock in your transformation. Again, you probably won't need to do that last part, but hey—ya never know.

Try this technique on another image!

# Fixing Gaps in Hair

Retouching hair is one of the trickiest retouches, because the Clone Stamp tool and the Healing Brush tool usually give you pretty lame results. So, you usually have to move hair from one place to another to cover the problem, and this is one of the situations where you need to do just that—covering a gap in the hair caused by your subject's position, or movement, or a fan, or one of the dozen things that cause a gap to appear temporarily and mess up your shot. Here's the best way I found to fix it:

## Step One:

Here's the image we want to retouch, and you can see the gaps in her hair, just above her shoulders. Again, using the Clone Stamp tool or Healing Brush tool here would be a nightmare (and a dead giveaway), so instead, we're going to pick up chunks of nearby hair and use them to cover the gaps.

## Step Two:

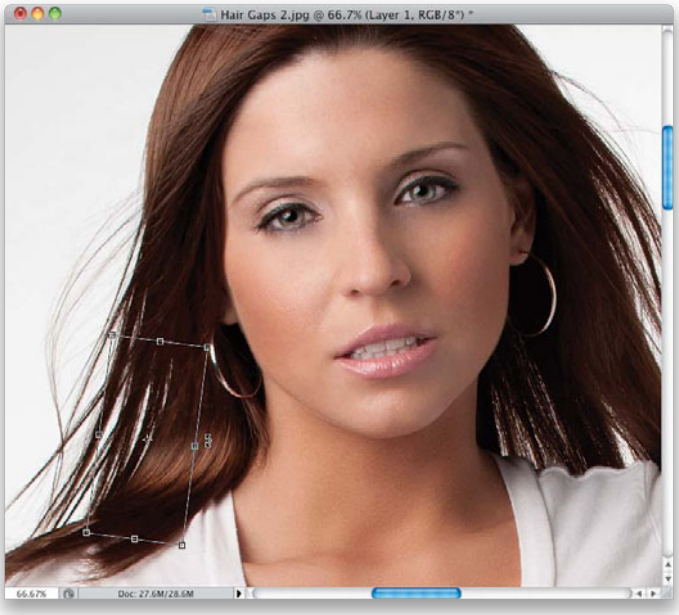
Get the Lasso tool **(L)** and draw a selection over a chunk of hair that's near the gap you need to remove (as shown here, where I've selected an area just to the right of the gap on the left). You're going to need to soften the edge of this selection, so it blends in when we move it over the gap. So, go under the Select menu, under Modify, and choose **Feather**. When the Feather Selection dialog appears, enter 4 pixels and click OK. By the way, 4 pixels isn't a magical number—it's just my starting place. The higher the number, the softer (and more transparent) the edges will be, so if they seem too soft, try 3, or even 2.

## Step Three:

Now, press **Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J)** to place that chunk up on its own separate layer. Switch to the Move tool **(V)** and move that chunk layer over to the left until it covers the gap. Now, although it does sometimes happen, more often than not, it's not going to cover the gap perfectly and just blend right in with the hair around it. So, in the next step, you're going to have to tweak it, but don't feel like you made a bad selection—you nearly always have to transform the copied hair chunk a bit to make it work.

## Step Four:

Press **Command-T (PC: Ctrl-T)** to bring up Free Transform, so you can rotate the chunk clockwise to match up with the existing hair around it better (as shown here). Just move your cursor outside the Free Transform bounding box, and your cursor changes into a two-headed arrow (seen here). Now, just click-and-drag in a small circular motion to your right and the chunk rotates. Once it's rotated, you may have to move your cursor inside the bounding box to reposition the chunk a little to make the hair match up better. Granted, it's not perfect, but that's okay—we still have more tweaking to do.

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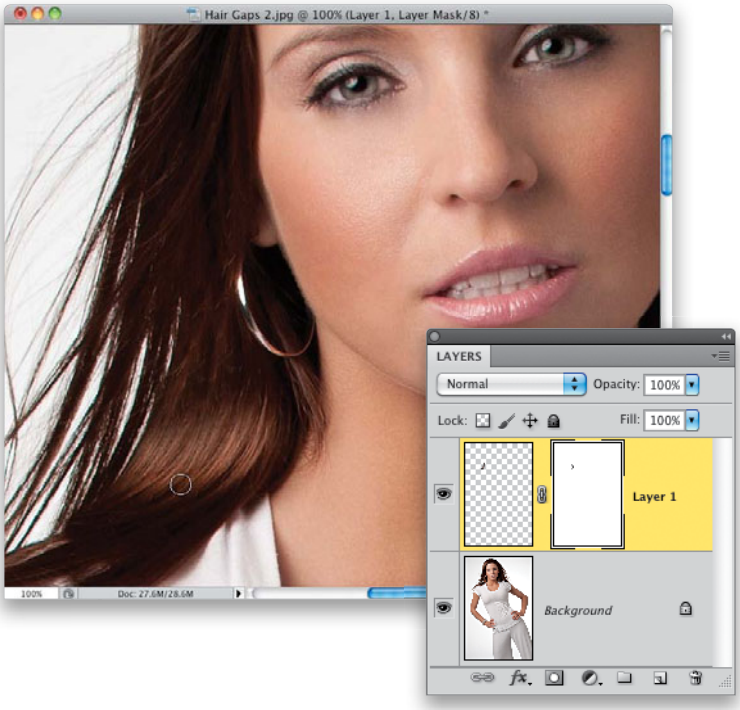
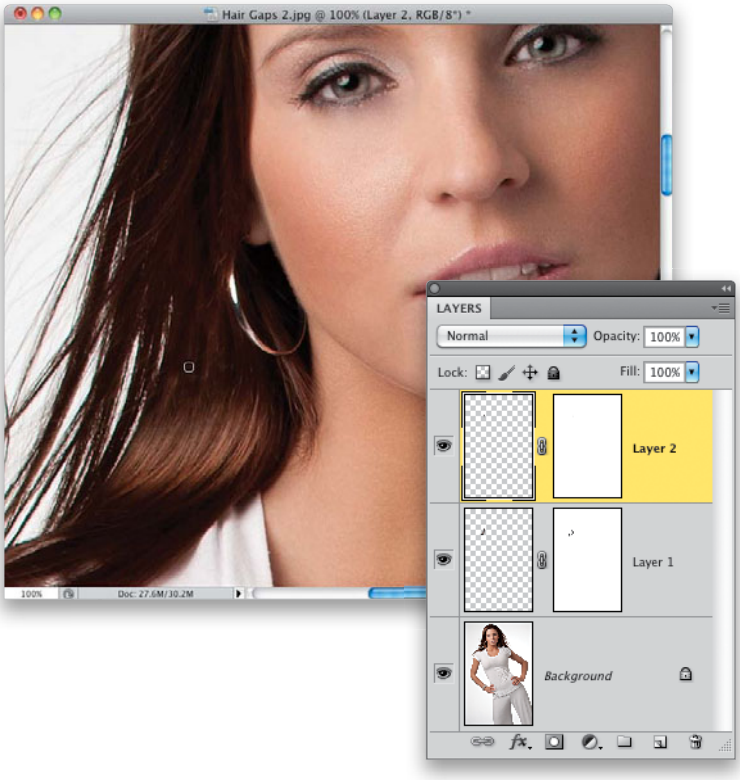



## Step Five:

Press **Return (PC: Enter)** to lock in your Free Transform rotation. You can kind of see an edge area on the right side of the chunk that isn't quite blending very well, so we're going to mask that away in just a couple of brush strokes. Click on the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel to add a layer mask to this layer. Now, get the Brush tool **(B)**, press **X** to set your Foreground color to black (because your layer mask is white), set your brush Opacity to 100%, and choose a small, soft-edged brush. Paint a few small strokes over the top of the chunk to help blend that part in with the surrounding hair.

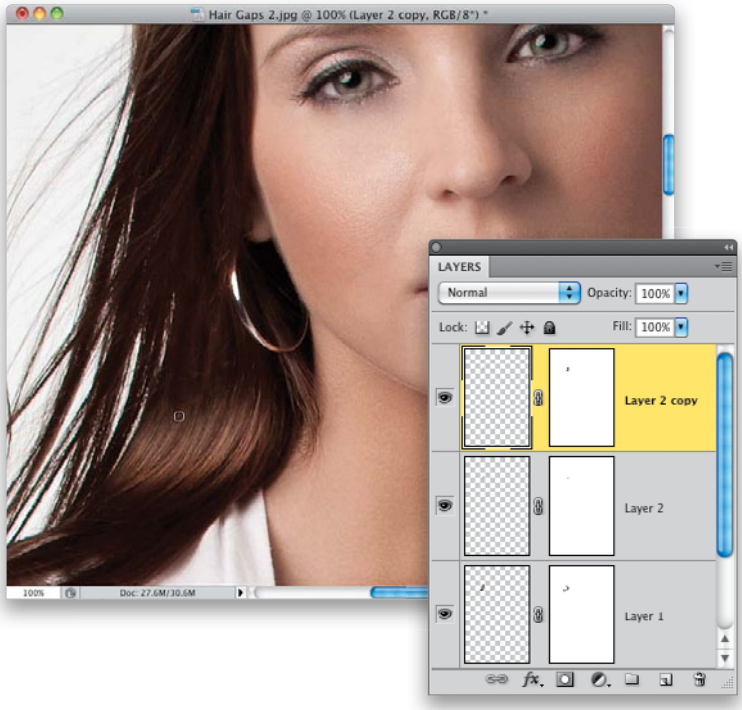



## Step Six:

If you look at the top of the copied area in Step Five, you can tell pretty easily that it is a duplicate of that area next to her earring, so we're going to copy a darker area of hair just above the gap we're fixing. Click back on the Background layer, use the Lasso tool to make a new selection, feather the selection, and copy it up onto its own layer. Since we're trying to cover the top of our first fix, click-and-drag this new copied layer above the first copied layer. Then, use the Move tool to drag it into place, and use Free Transform, if you need to, to rotate it.

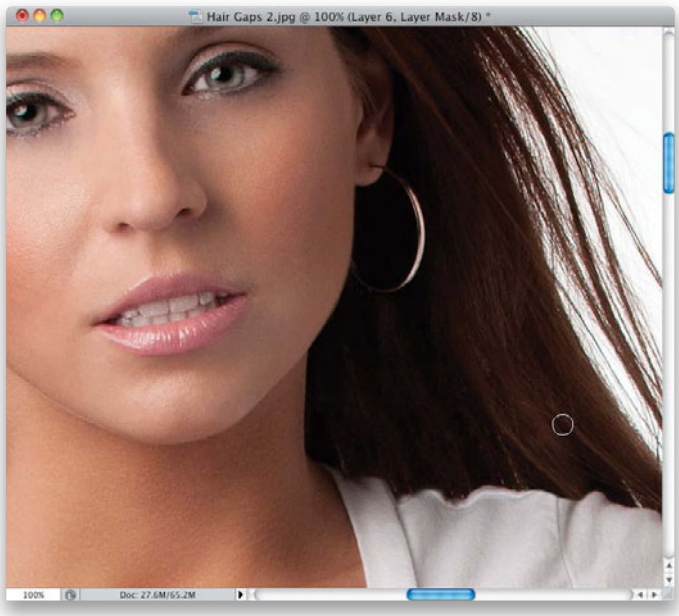
## Step Seven:

In this case, it looks like we covered most of that bright spot, but there's still a small bright area beneath our last fix. So, press Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J) to duplicate that last fix, then use the Move tool to drag it down a little, add a layer mask, and paint some of the edges away to make it blend better.




## Step Eight:

Use the same process to fill in a little more on the left side. After you get some of it filled in, you may want to press **Command-Option-Shift-E (PC: Ctrl-Alt-Shift-E)** to create a merged layer, then make your selection from it. When you're done with the left side, move over to the right side and fill those gaps, too. Now, we got lucky with this one, that all it took was a little rotation to get these chunks pretty close to where all we had to do was a little masking. Sometimes, you'll have to actually flip the hair horizontally, so it doesn't look like a copy of hair sitting beside itself (a dead giveaway). If that's the case, once you bring up Free Transform, just Right-click inside the bounding box and when the menu appears, choose **Flip Horizontal**. Then you'll have to rotate it back into place, but this little horizontal flip can really help hide that fact that you "borrowed" hair from a nearby area. See the next page for a before and after.

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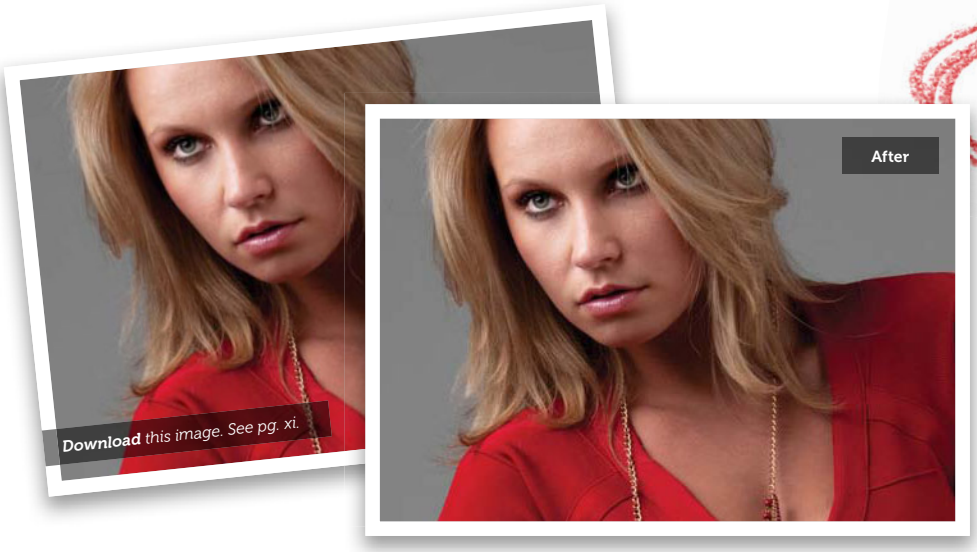


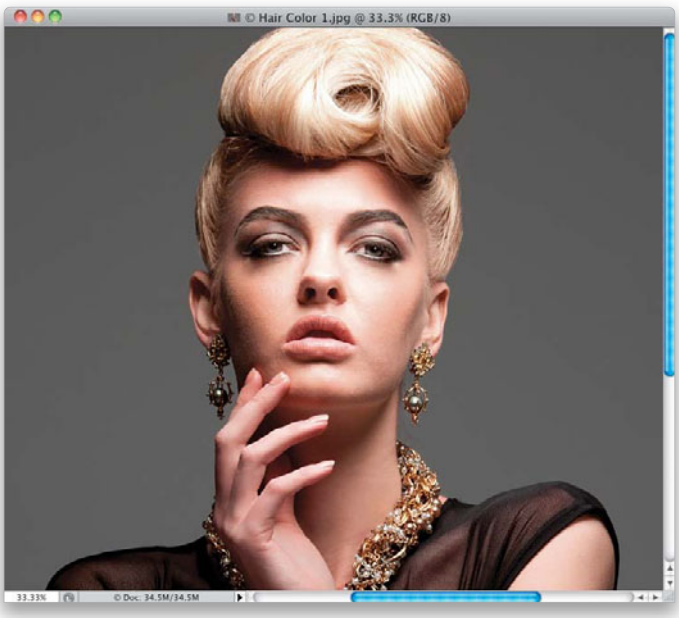

Try this technique on another image!

# Changing Hair Color

This is fairly common, especially if you're working with an art director who wants the model's hair to match the clothes, but luckily, most of the time, a change of hair color is fairly subtle, and not from one extreme to another.

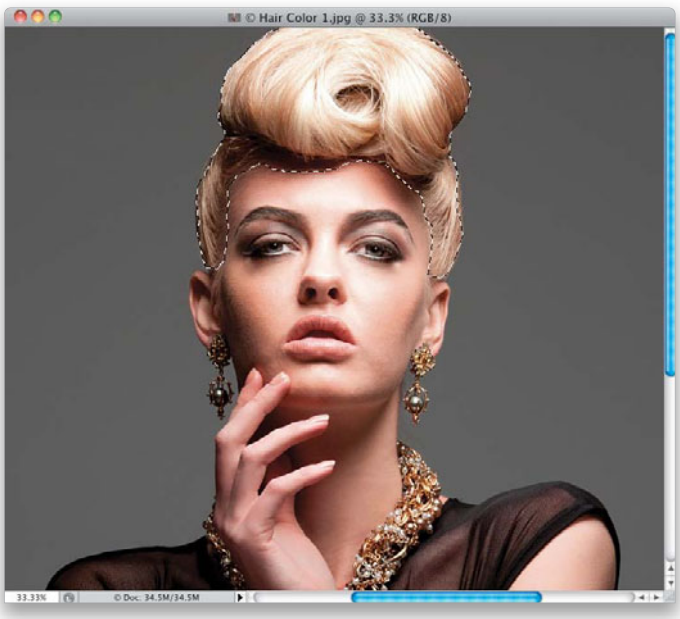
## Step One:

Here's the image where we're going to (eventually) change her hair color from blonde to brunette, but we're going to have a couple of stops at different colors along the way, along with a technique variation, so you've got lots of options (especially if your subject, or client, wants a big variation in color).




## Step Two:

Start by getting the Quick Selection tool **(W)** and then literally paint over your subject's hair to select it. If it over-selects, and starts selecting her face, you can remove that spillover by pressing-and-holding the Option (PC: Alt) key and painting over the spillover areas to deselect them. Use a fairly small brush, and just keep painting until it's all pretty much selected (as shown here). Also, you don't have to worry about making a perfect selection for two reasons: (1) we're going to have Photoshop fine-tune the selection for us in the next step, and (2) we'll automatically have a layer mask, so we can fine-tune the mask just by painting on it if it needs tweaking. So, relax, and get your selection kinda close, then move on to Step Three.

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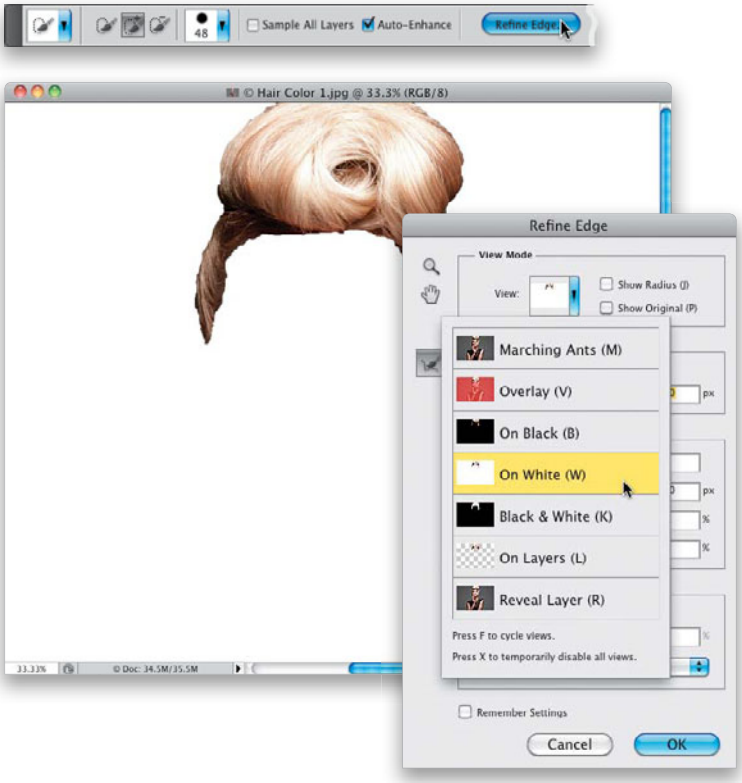
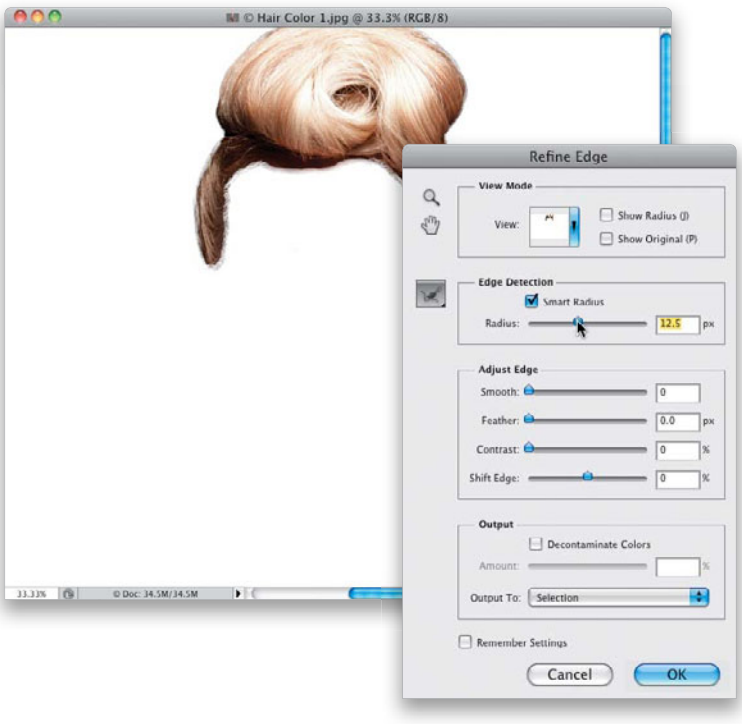



## Step Three:

Once your selection is in place, and while you still have the Quick Selection tool, go up to the Options Bar up top and click on the Refine Edge button (as shown here). This brings up the Refine Edge dialog, and gives you a preview of your selection (you can choose to view your selection on different backgrounds—choose the **On White** background from the View pop-up menu, so it looks like it does here). You can see from the selection we have here, it's pretty harsh and jaggy, but don't worry—that's all about to go away.

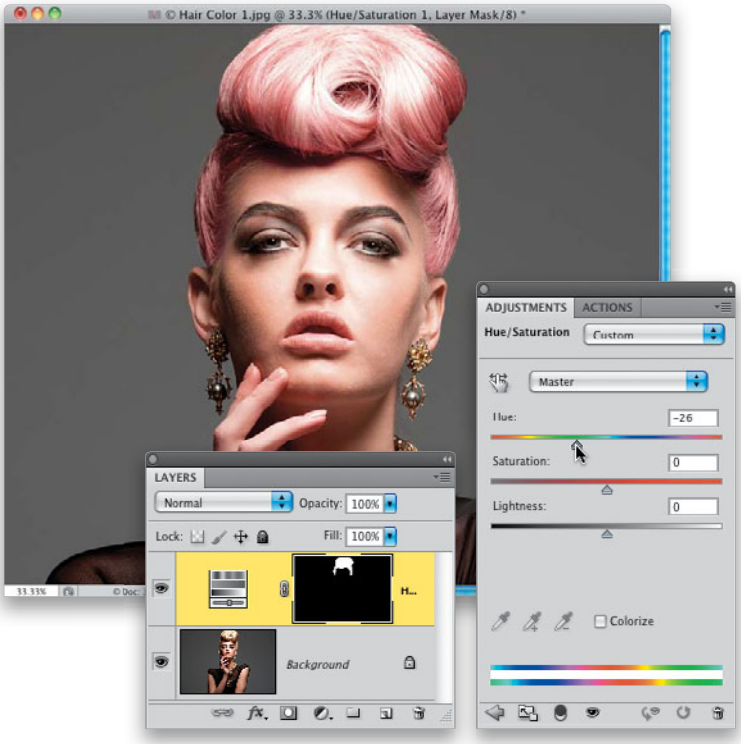



## Step Four:

To get a much better, smoother, and more encompassing selection, go to the Edge Detection section of the dialog and turn on the Smart Radius checkbox. This helps you get a better, more accurate edge around your selection (especially helpful with hair), but just turning on the checkbox isn't enough—you need to then take the Radius slider and drag it to the right (as shown here), and you'll see the edges start to change from harsh to very usable (as seen here). Again, they don't have to be perfect—you can always edit the mask we're going to make in a moment by just painting on it. So, at this point, we're definitely closer, but if it's not perfect, just roll on.

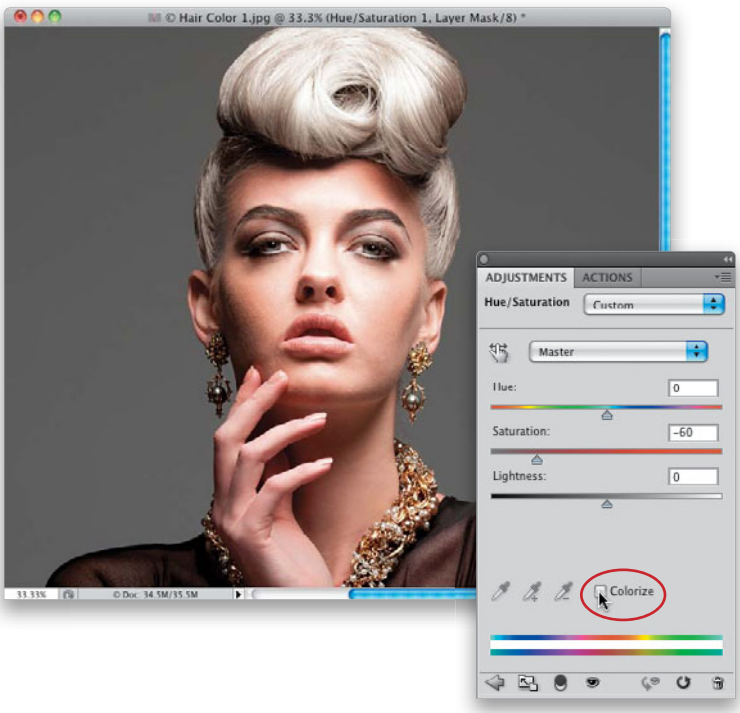
## Step Five:

When you click OK in the Refine Edge dialog, the dialog goes away and your selection is back in place, and of course, even though you can't see it, your selection is dramatically better. So, click on the Create New Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel, and choose **Hue/Saturation** from the pop-up menu. Now, changing hair color is as easy as dragging the Hue slider in the Adjustments panel. Here, I dragged it to the left a little bit and the hair turned pink. Once you make an adjustment like this, you'll be able to see much more clearly if you missed any areas with your selection, and luckily, your Hue/Saturation adjustment layer comes with a layer mask, so you're ready to edit. If you see you missed an area, get the Brush tool **(B)**, make sure your Foreground color is set to white, choose a small brush, and paint right on the photo on the area you missed to add it. If you selected too much, paint on that area in black to get rid of it.




## Step Six:

Now, if the color is too intense, drag the Saturation slider to the left (I usually have to do this to some extent when changing hair color, or the new color becomes too overpowering, so you can almost count on having to lower the Saturation amount. While you're there, go ahead and lower it quite a bit and her hair turns almost silver, which in this case looks kinda cool). Okay, the variation I talked about earlier is to turn on the Colorize checkbox at the bottom of the Hue/Saturation options in the Adjustments panel (shown circled in red here) and you get a different result from your Hue, because now rather than just shifting the Hues that are there, it's pouring a tint on top of your color.

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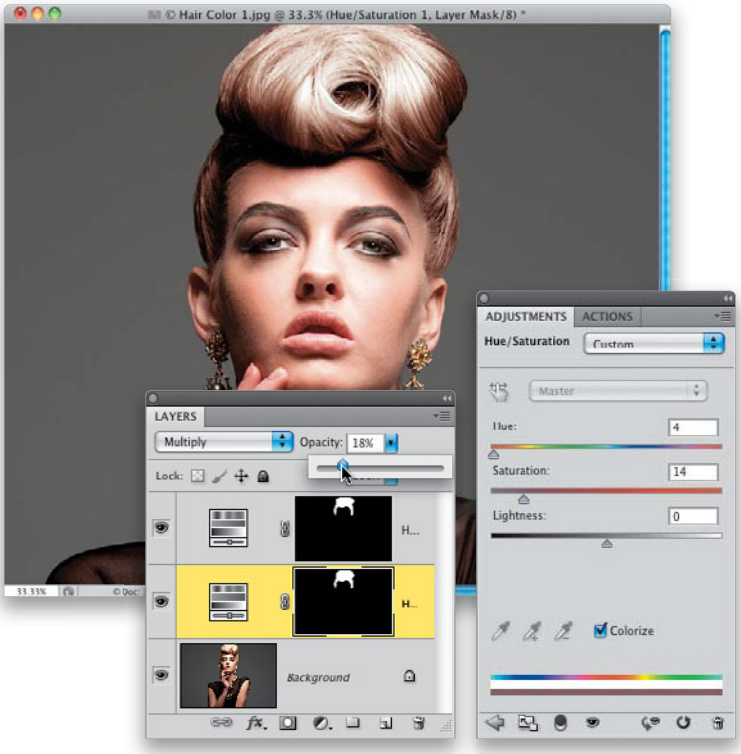


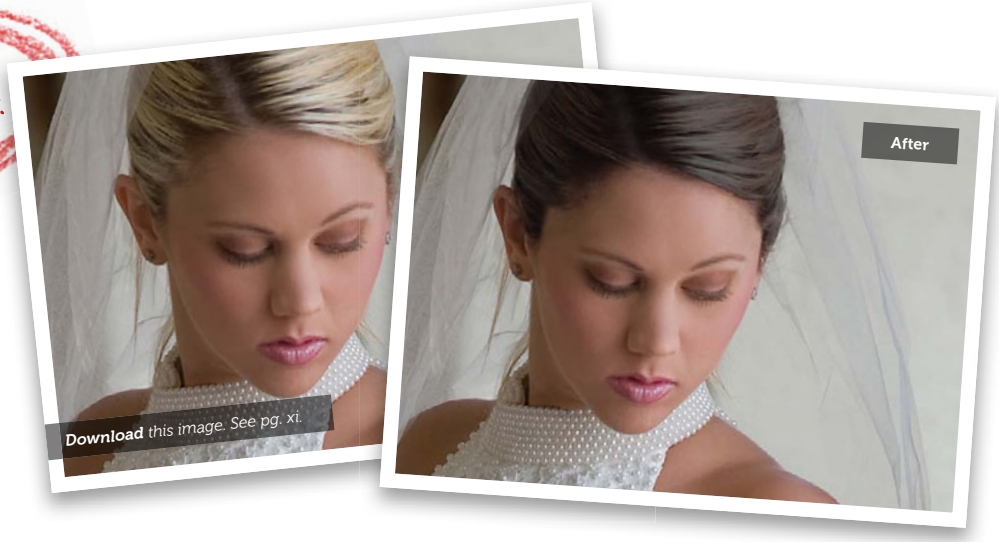
## Step Seven:

To change her hair to brunette, we're going to change the pop-up menu at the top of the Adjustments panel back to **Default**, then go to the Layers panel and change the blend mode of this Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to **Multiply**. We're just going to use this layer for the blend mode change, so, press **Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J)** to duplicate the layer. We'll now change the color using this duplicate layer, so in the Hue/Saturation options in the Adjustments panel, turn on the Colorize checkbox, and drag the Hue slider almost all the way to the left, until it reads 4, then lower the Saturation until the color look about right to you (here, I lowered it to 14). Now, click back on your first adjustment layer, and lower its Opacity until the color looks more realistic (usually around 18%, as shown here). *Note:* The Multiply layer works for changing light hair to a darker color. If you need to change dark hair to a lighter color, you'd change the blend mode to **Screen** instead.

## Step Eight:

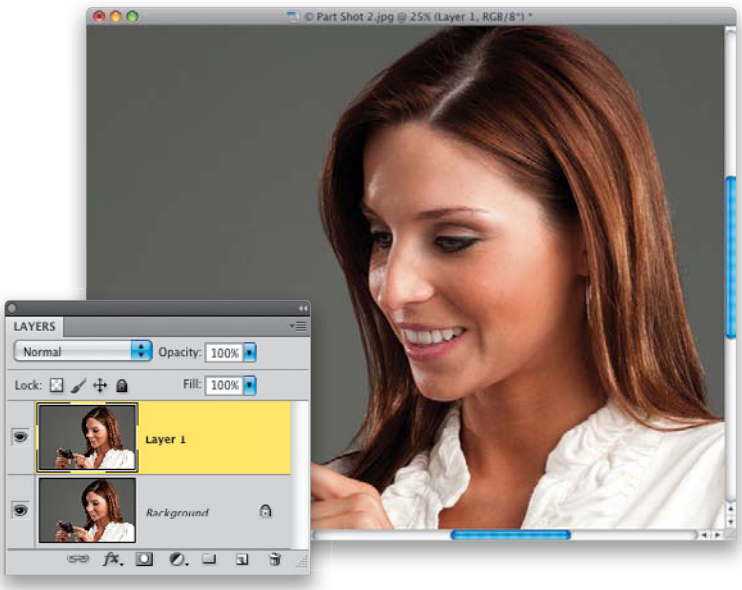
This last step is optional, but if it looks like you still are missing any part of her hair, now is when you'll fix it (there were a few hairs by each ear and along the temple on the left that I missed in my selection, and that still looked blonde). So, get the Brush tool, and lower the Opacity in the Options Bar to around 30%, then paint over the hairs you missed. By painting with a low opacity like this, you can build up the color—perfect for these small, wispy hairs. Then you'll need to copy this layer mask over the one on the bottom Hue/Saturation adjustment layer, so they match. To do this, simply press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key and click-and-drag the mask on the top adjustment layer over the one on the bottom adjustment layer. A dialog will appear asking if you want to replace the mask, so click Yes and you're done.

Try this technique on another image!



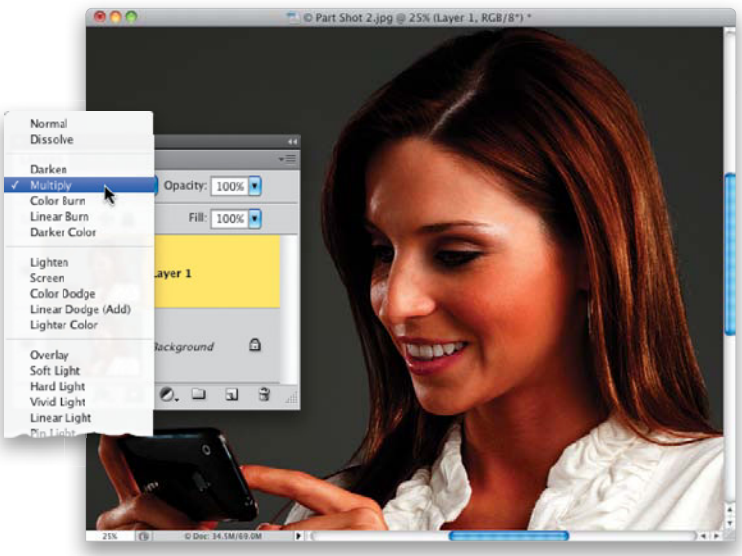
# Darkening a Part Line

Since the human eye is drawn to the brightest part of an image, you don't want your viewer's eye drawn to the part in your subject's hair. Sometimes that's the case, but luckily for us, it's a pretty quick fix. This is one of those retouches that you may not have to do to every portrait, but when you need it—it makes a big difference.




## Step One:

Here's the image we're working on, and if you look at the part in her hair, it's just wide enough, and the light is positioned in just such a way, that it accentuates the part line and draws your attention up there. So, we're going to darken that area to make it appear thinner and less noticeable. Start by pressing **Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J)** to duplicate the Background layer.




## Step Two:

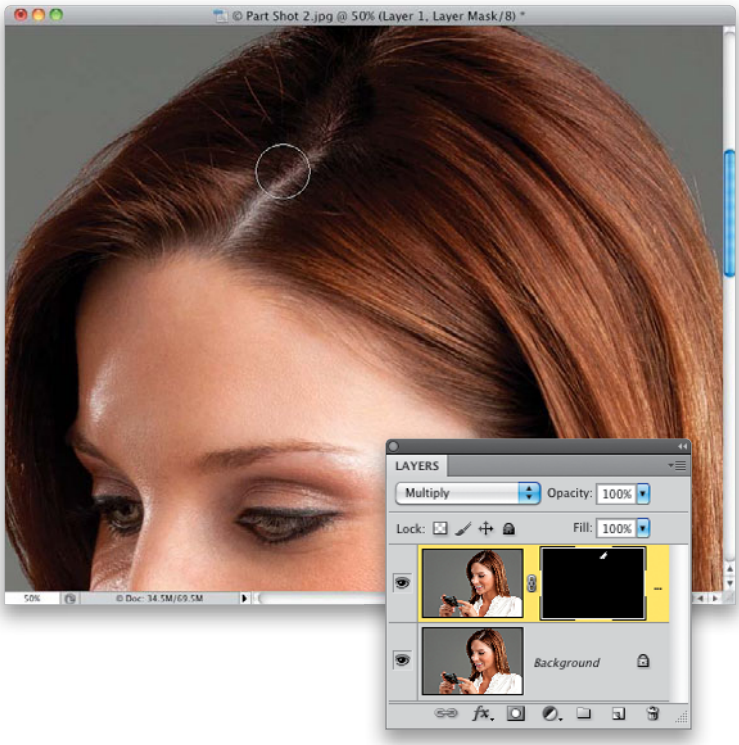
Change the duplicate layer's blend mode to **Multiply**. Notice how much darker her part looks compared to Step One. Of course, the rest of the image is way too dark, but we'll fix that in a minute.

## Step Three:

Since we only want the part area darker, press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key, and click on the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel (it's circled in red here). This adds a black layer mask, hiding the darkened layer.

## Step Four:

Now, get the Brush tool **(B)**, choose a medium-sized, soft-edged brush, and make sure your Foreground color is set to white. Start painting over the part area to darken it. If you think it looks too dark, you can always lower the layer's Opacity, although I didn't do that here. You can see before and after images on the next page.

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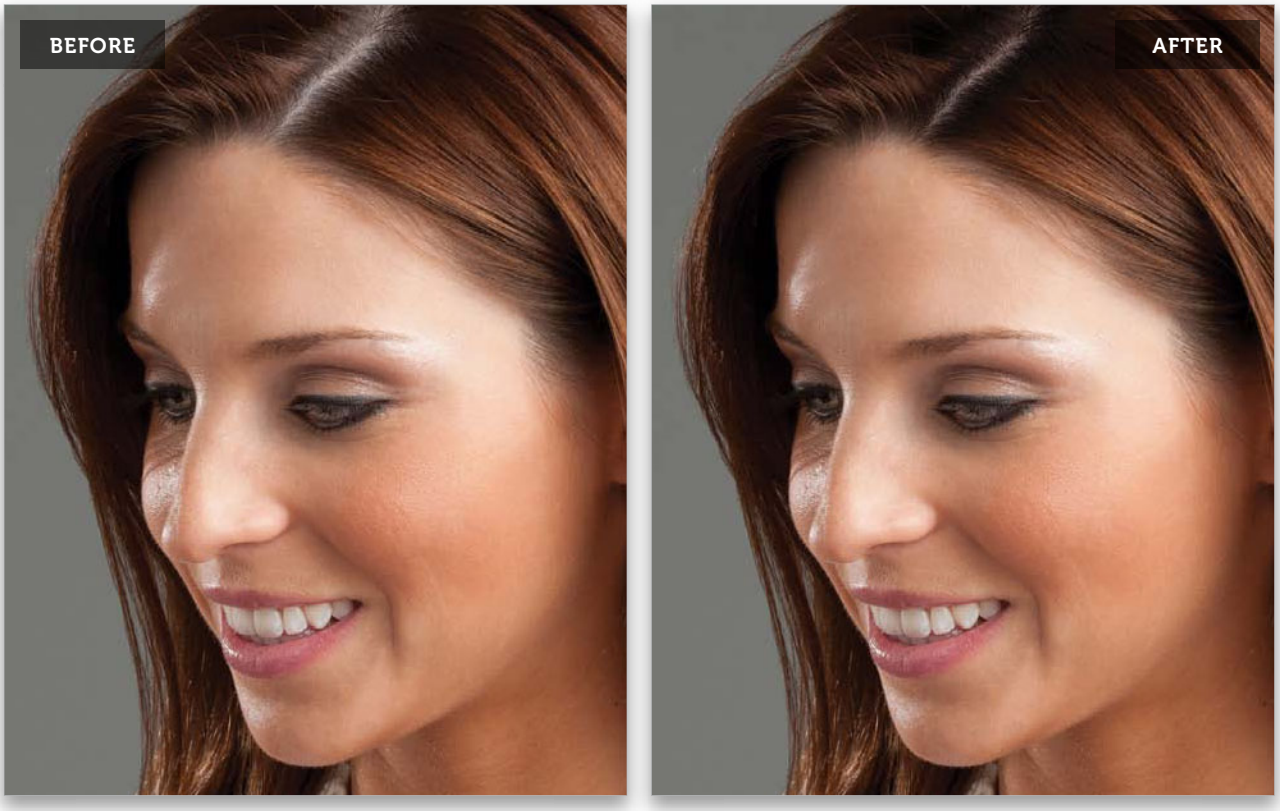
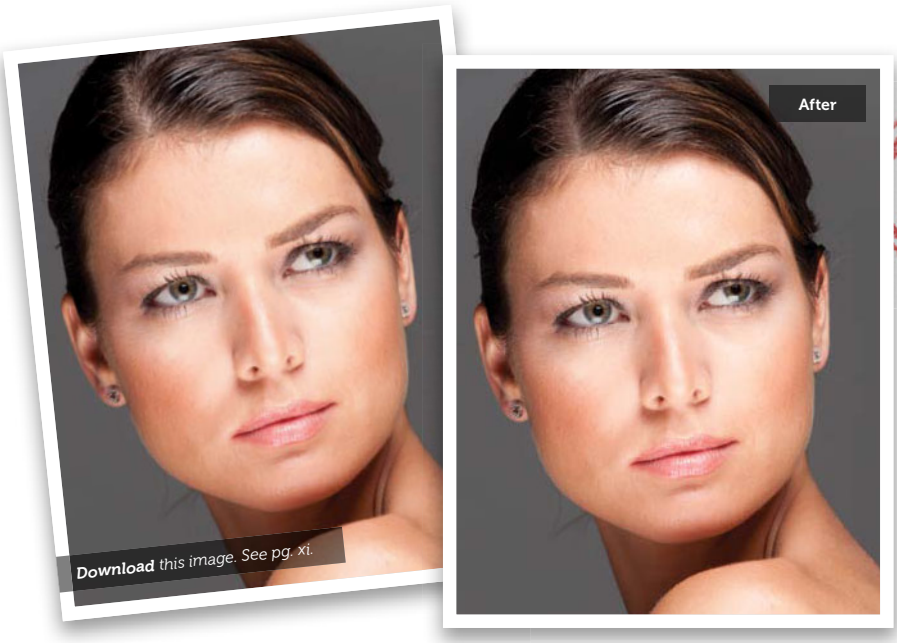



Try this technique on another image!

# Hiding Roots

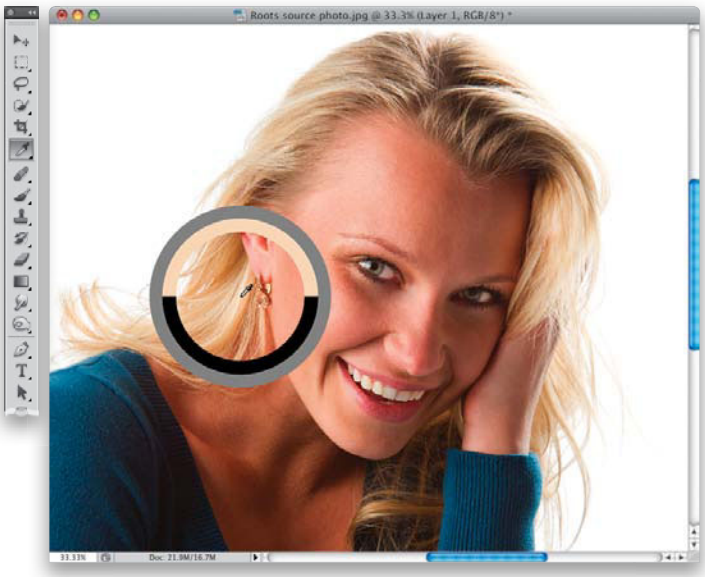
This retouch, where you're lightening your subject's roots, is a pretty common retouch, and it's pretty quick and easy in most cases. I'm going to show you my standard method, but I'm adding an additional step at the end that I now use in my retouching—a darkening step to add more dimension—that I picked up from retoucher Christy Schuler, and that makes such a difference.

## Step One:

Here's the image we're going to be working on. You can download it from the companion website, mentioned in the book's introduction, and follow right along. The roots aren't too bad here, but once we tweak 'em, you'll see it makes a difference. Start by clicking on the Create a New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel to add a new blank layer.

## Step Two:

Get the Eyedropper tool **(I)**, which we're going to use to steal (okay, borrow) a color from a bright part of her hair. So, let's do that: take the tool and click it once on the brightest area of her hair, as shown here. By the way, that big round ring that appears is there to help you see precisely which color you're choosing as you click.

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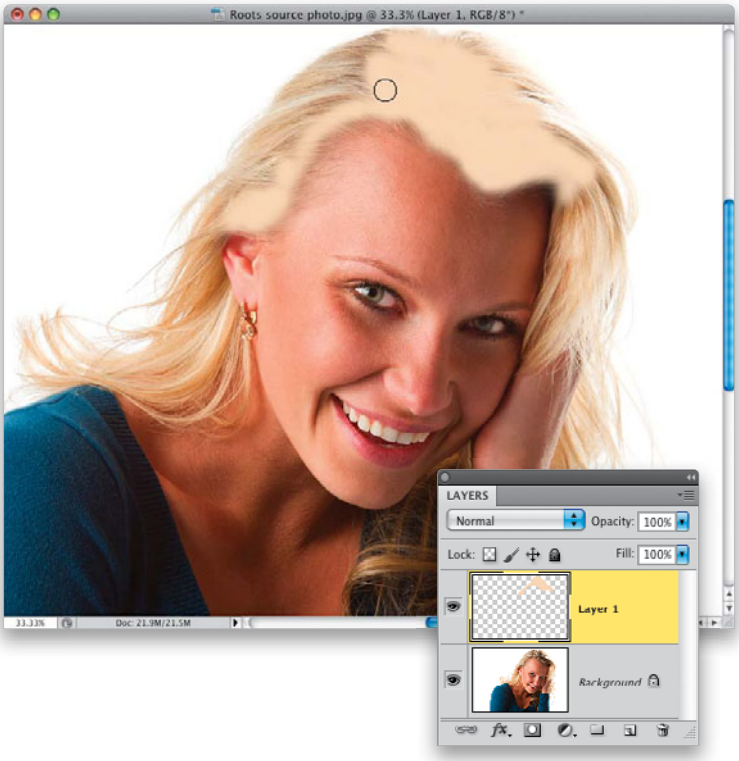
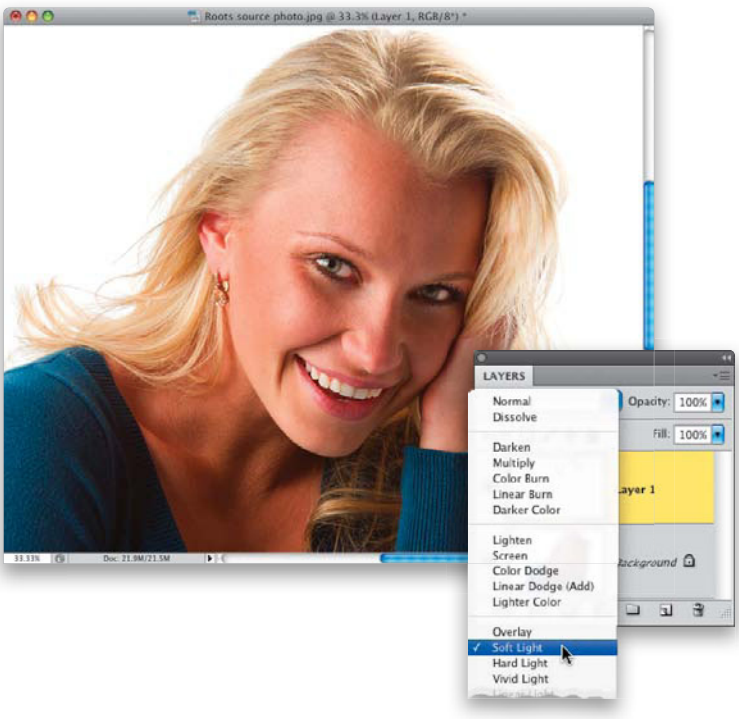



## Step Three:

Get the Brush tool **(B)**, choose a medium-sized, soft-edged brush, and paint over the dark areas at the base of her hair and in her part line (as shown here). Don't worry if you don't get every bit of it at this point—you'll be able to easily add more in just a minute.

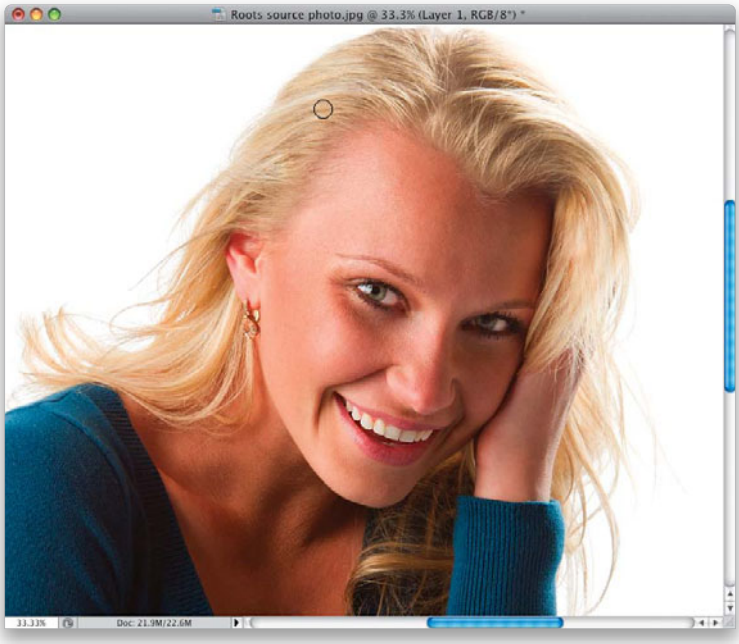



## Step Four:

To get this painted layer to blend into your photo on the Background layer, go to the Layers panel and change the blend mode for this paint layer from Normal to **Soft Light** (as shown here). Now you can see the painted area blend with your image (compare what you see here with the image in Step One—look at how much lighter the base of her hair, where the roots would be, is now).

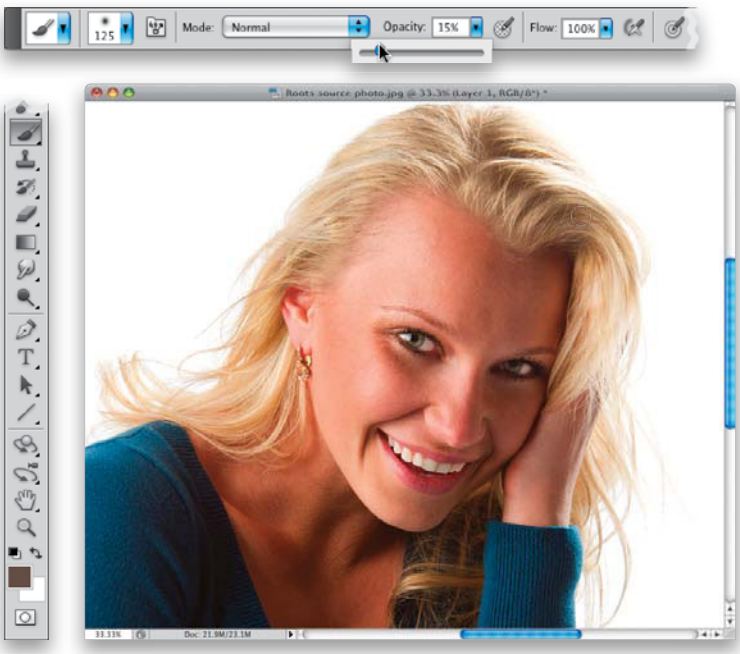
## Step Five:

Now that you've changed to Soft Light mode, and your Foreground color is still the color sampled from the brightest area of her hair, to add more areas, you can just paint right on the photo, and it blends in as you paint (as seen here, where I'm painting another area of hair on the left side of the image).

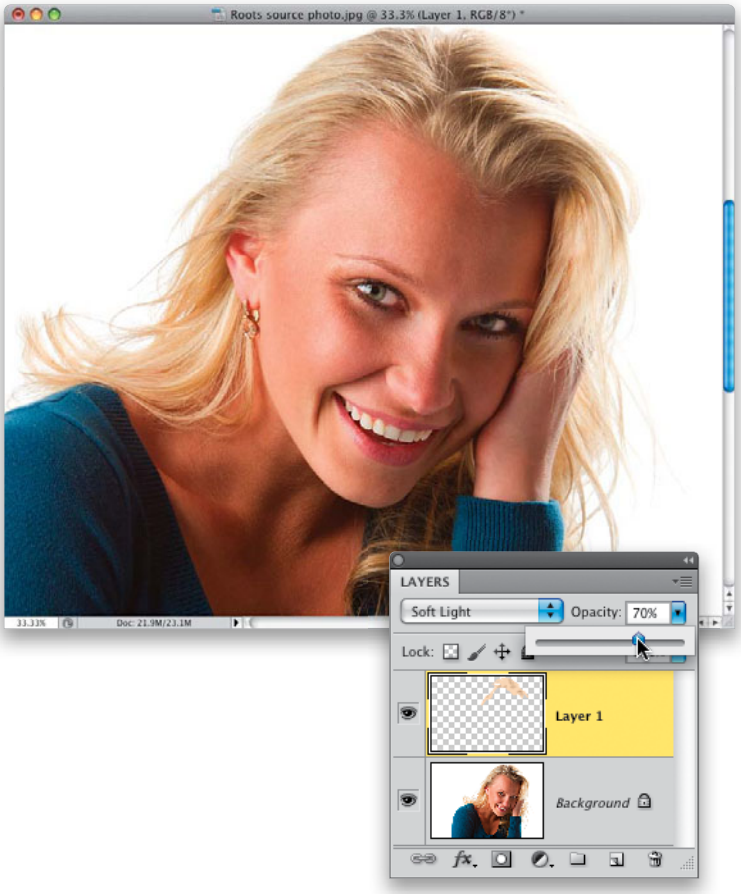



## Step Six:

Here's the additional step I now add that makes a difference in the depth of the retouch: Take the Eyedropper tool and sample a darker area of her hair. Then, with the Brush tool, with the Opacity lowered to around 15%, so it's very subtle, paint a few strokes over the darker areas within the areas you just lightened a moment ago (as shown here). Just paint a few strokes here and there to give it some dimension—this little step helps to make it look more natural and realistic.

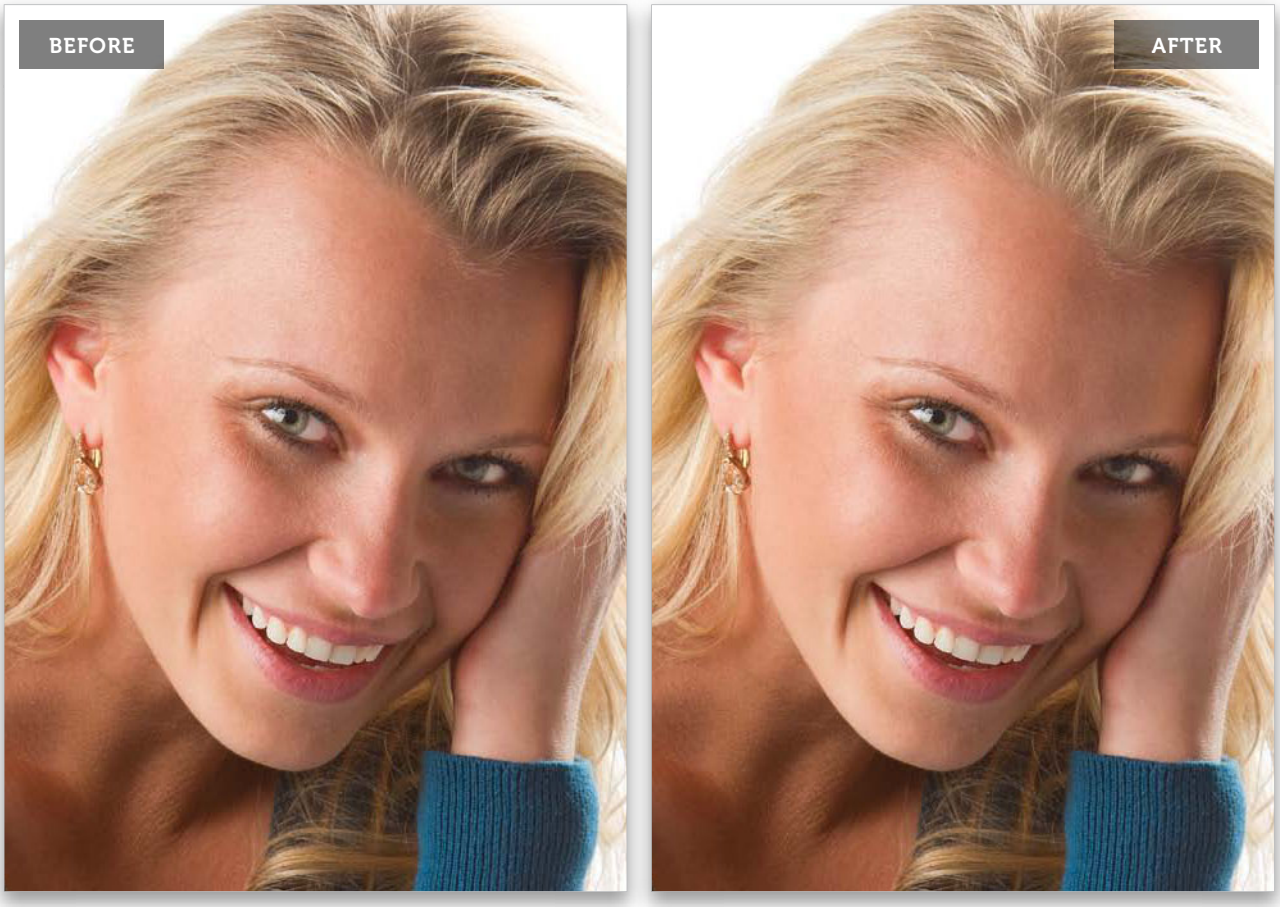


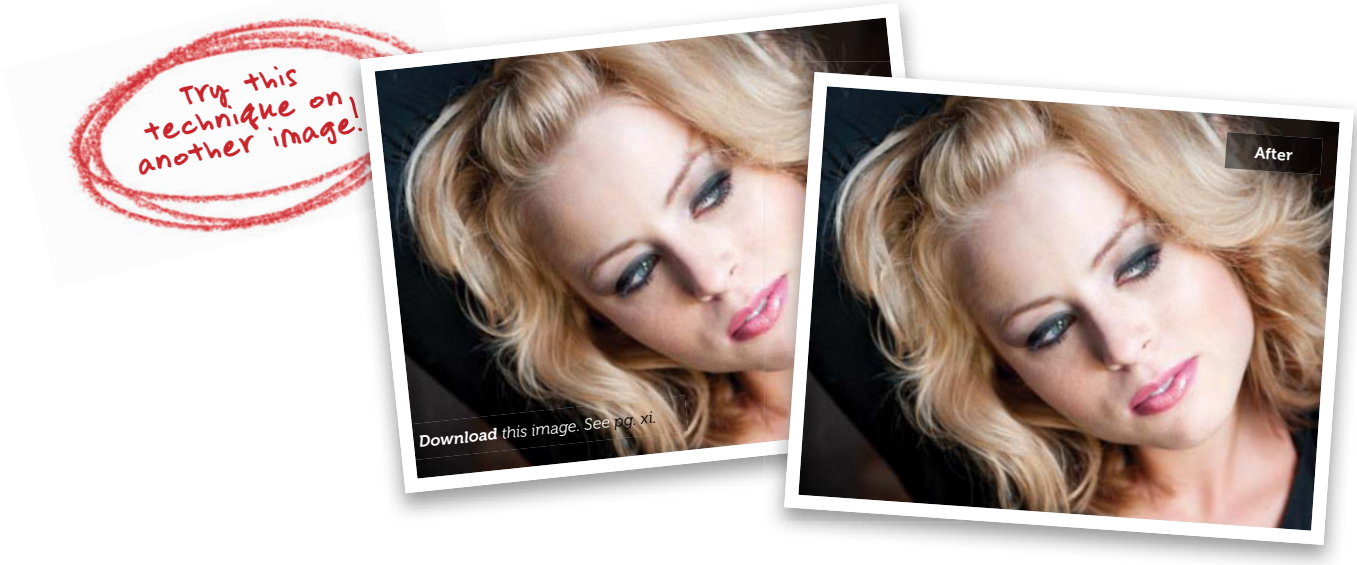

(Continued)




## Step Seven:

Lastly, since this was all done on its own separate layer, you have the option of toning down the entire retouch by simply lowering the Opacity of this paint layer in the Layers panel. Here, I lowered it to around 75%.


BEFORE
AFTER


Try this technique on another image!
Download this image. See pg. xi.
After

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