

Dodging and Burning Skin Tones

Many portraits suffer from unsightly highlights caused by light falling unevenly or on perspiring skin. Using the built-in Photoshop 'Dodge & Burn' tools can be highly unsatisfactory often resulting in muddy grey patches. This simple method reduces this glare in a more sympathetic manner.

- 1 Open the image in Photoshop and process it to your liking. Create and select a new blank layer above the original image [Ctrl-Shift-N].



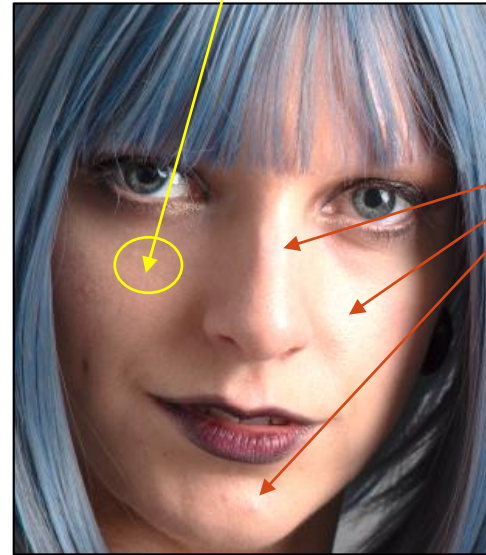
- 2 Select the *Brush* tool [B] from the tools palette on the left of the screen. On the *Options Bar* at the top of the screen set the options to the values shown below ensuring that the spray brush is selected.



- 3 The next step is to select a suitable skin tone to dodge or burn the highlights (or dark areas) of the image. Ensure that you have the new, blank layer selected. If you want to Burn (Darken) an area then select an area that is slightly darker and vice-versa to Dodge. To select the colour you wish to use simply hold down the Alt key and click the area, the mouse pointer will show the *Eye-dropper* tool. The *Foreground / Background* tool will change to reflect the colour chosen



- 4 *Alt-Click* to select a darker tone to Burn-in the highlights.

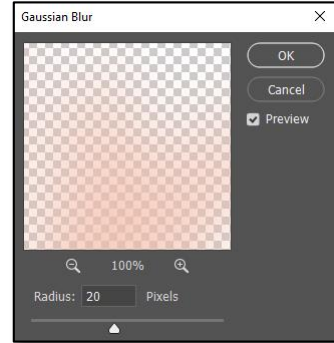


Highlight areas to be reduced

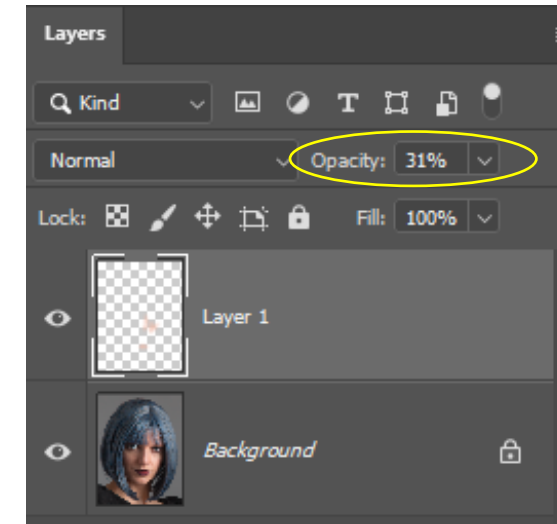
Using a soft edged brush, brush over the highlight areas until you can see the highlights reducing. With the settings from step 2, you build up the effect as you continue to brush. Use varied directions to randomize the effect.

To lighten the darker areas just select a lighter skin tone and paint over as above. Do this on another new layer.

- 5 Once you have completed the Dodging and Burning you will need to further soften the effect by applying a Gaussian Blur to the layer. A figure between 15 – 25 tends to work well. Click *OK* to apply. Blurring will help the effect to gradually fade around the edges to the original image on the layer below.



- 6 The final step is to reduce the *Opacity* of the New Layer to increase the realism of the effect. This will allow some of the skin texture from the original image to show through the painted layer. The degree of *Opacity* will depend on the amount of painting that you applied and your personal preference.



In this example I found that around 30% *Opacity* worked well. Click the *Eye off* and on to see the effect and further amend the *Opacity* if required.

Ensure that the *Layers Palette* is showing, press F7 if it is not visible.