

FIX PHOTOS FAST



with
ACTIONS



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Actions: Fix Photos Fast! Pre-Class Videos

Layer Mask Basics

These instructions are the same for Photoshop or Photoshop Elements. Some earlier versions of Photoshop Elements do not have a layer mask option, so [download my free layer mask workaround](#), which will allow you to add a layer mask, and then you can follow along with these same instructions.

Blend Mode Example

- A layer mask is accessed and used in the Layers panel. Its purpose is to hide part of the layer. Let me give you one of many scenarios where I use a layer mask, and that is when I add a blending layer.
- Get the Move tool and click and drag a blending texture onto your photo.
- If you need to resize the texture, press Ctrl T (Mac: Cmd T) to get Transform options. With textures I often don't worry about proportions, so I'll click and drag from any transform handle or a side handle. Double click inside the outline to commit the change.
- Change the blend mode at the top of the Layers panel from Normal to whatever you desire (I used Color Burn), and reduce the opacity of the layer, if necessary.
- Click on the Add Layer Mask icon. In some versions of Photoshop Elements, the icon will be at the top of the Layers panel, and in other versions it will appear at the bottom. In Photoshop it's always at the bottom. When you click the icon, a second thumbnail filled with white will appear on the layer, and nothing will change on your photo or document.
- Get the Brush tool. In Tool Options open the Brush Preset Picker and choose a soft brush. The Mode should be normal and the Opacity 100%.
- Make sure the Foreground Color Chip is black. If it isn't, click on the curved arrows to switch colors.
- On your photo, brush wherever you don't want the texture to appear. (I brushed over the cat.) Brushing with black conceals the layer.
- Reduce the Opacity of your brush to partially remove some of the texture effect. I reduced mine to around 30% and brushed over the area behind the cat.
- If you want to add any of the blending effect back in, switch the Color Chips again so that white is the Foreground color. Brushing with white will reveal the layer. Adjust your brush opacity as desired—I used 100% opacity and painted over the white fur on the cat.

So remember, on a layer mask, black conceals and white reveals.