

Photo Restoration

Blending Modes

A levels adjustment layer with the correct blending mode can be used to alter density and contrast of an image as follows:

In order to...	Use this blending mode...
Darken an image	Multiply
Lighten an image	Screen
Increase contrast	Overlay, Soft Light or Hard Light

Dealing with images that print too dark

A common problem when printing ones own a photo is that the print is darker than the screen. To fix this, use a levels adjustment layer and set it's mode to Screen. The lightening effect will probably be too great but this is easily dealt with by adjusting the layer's opacity. Such an adjustment with opacity of 35% is equivalent to a one-stop lighter image.

Removing marks from the background

This "quick fix" can save a lot of work with the clone stamp and healing brush:

1. Flatten the image then duplicate the background layer (Ctrl J)
2. Change the blending mode of the copy layer to "Lighten"
3. With the move tool selected, used the arrow keys on your keyboard to move this duplicate layer 2 pixels right and two pixels down (each key press moves the layer 1 pixel)
4. Add a layer mask filled with black (Layer>Layer Mask>Hide all)
5. Making sure that the layer mask is active, and with white as the foreground colour, use a soft brush to paint out dark spots.

White spots (less common) can be removed by repeating the steps 2 to 5, but setting the blending layer of the copy layer to "Darken".

Dust and scratches

This can sometimes help to clean-up image backgrounds. It's worth trying...

1. Flatten the image then duplicate the background layer (Ctrl J)
2. Use Filter>Noise>Dust and Scratches – you will need to experiment with the radius value. I used 15 pixels in my demonstration
3. Add a layer mask filled with black (Layer>Layer Mask>Hide all)
4. Making sure that the layer mask is active, and with white as the foreground colour, use a soft brush to paint out marks.

Dodge and burn on a layer

1. Add a new, empty layer at the top of the layer stack
2. Change its blending mode to "Soft Light"
3. Choose a soft-edged brush, set the foreground colour to white to dodge; black to burn
4. Paint on the blank layer.

Toning an image

Choose Layer>New Fill Layer>Solid Colour, with the blend mode set to "Colour". Choose a suitable foreground colour. Use the layer opacity to reduce the intensity.

