



INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHICS

Balancing Skin Tones

Information Sheet No.

PS634

This is an example of an average image (hey now) that just could use some basic retouching done. It needs to be brighter, needs maybe some color balance and less of the red blemishes.



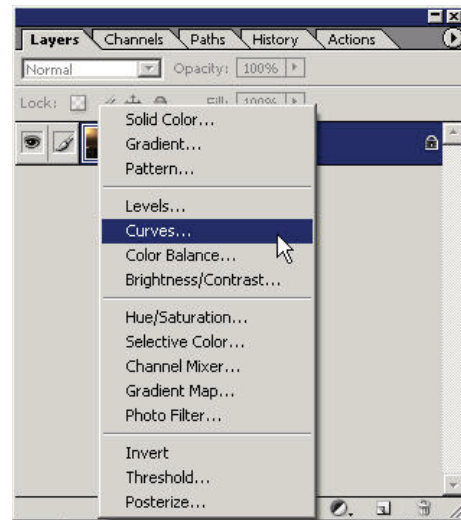
Start by making a selection of the face with the lasso tool, right click and choose feather.



Give it a moderate feather to allow the edges to have a little bit of a soft blend for whatever adjustments we do so it's not as harsh.



Now choose a Curves adjustments layer from the pop-up menu on the bottom of the layers palette.

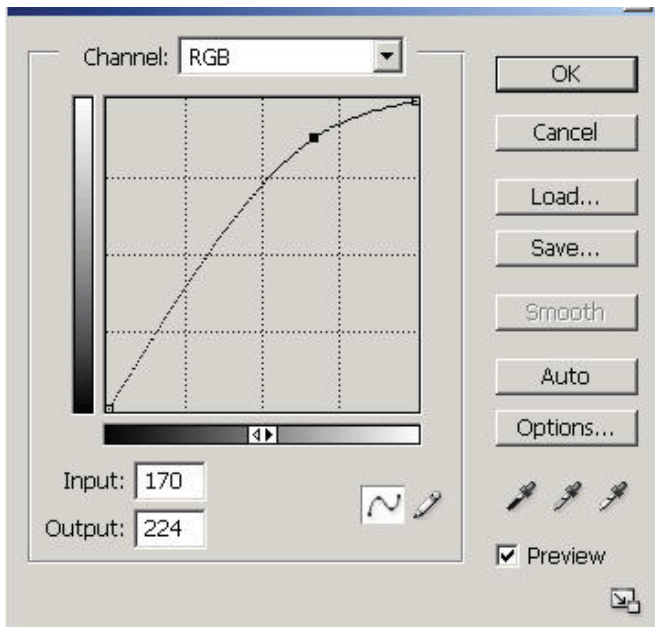


Now hold your mouse down and drag the eyedropper across the face.



You will notice the little scrubby doughnut moves along the straight line of the curve. This is showing the brightness value of the point right beneath the cursor.

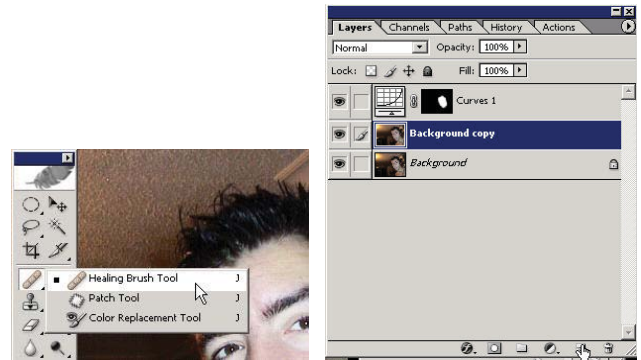
Since the entire range is for the most part the same color, click on a median point, release and Ctrl Click. This will lock in that control point on the curves bar. Note that the density is more towards white on the gradient bar because this is an area that uses less ink and is lighter.



But since we want to lighten this area up, use your up arrow key to nudge this control point up to make the selected range brighter because you are moving it closer to white/light. Press OK for now.

Now create a duplicate layer if you haven't already and go in and use the healing brush or clone stamp to fix up blemishes on a copy of the layer which you can change pixels on.

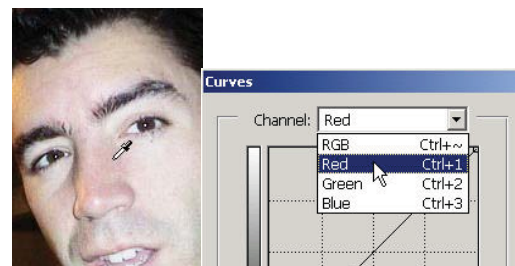
Use the healing brush and clone stamp techniques to help clear up the face.

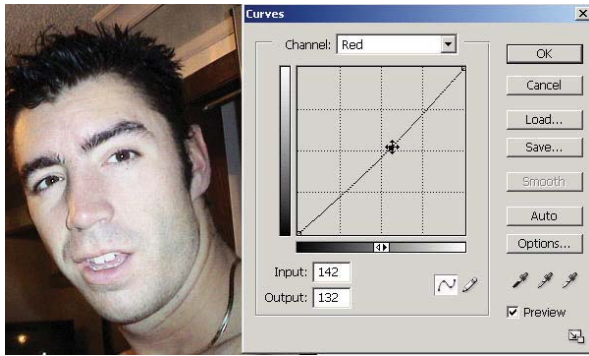


You can make another selection around an area that is a little redder for example (not drinking enough water), feather it and create another curves adjustment layer. Make sure that you are on the working pixel-change layer in the layers palette so the custom adjustment layer will appear right above it and affect only the area you've selected.

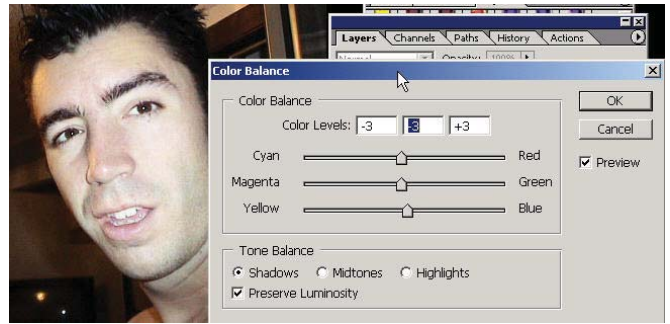


Try going to the Red channel in the Curves dialog box and create another control point by Ctrl clicking on a red portion (represented as it's brightness value). Now you can nudge the value down in the Red channel to get less of a red appearance but be careful b/c like the channel mixer if you do too much the other channels will show too strong. This is one way you can make more custom adjustments.



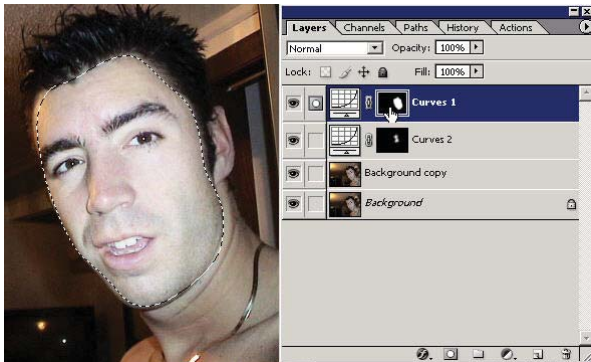


Press OK. Now go back to your layers palette and Ctrl click on the original Curves adjustment layer Mask (the right icon) to select the adjustment area as a selection.

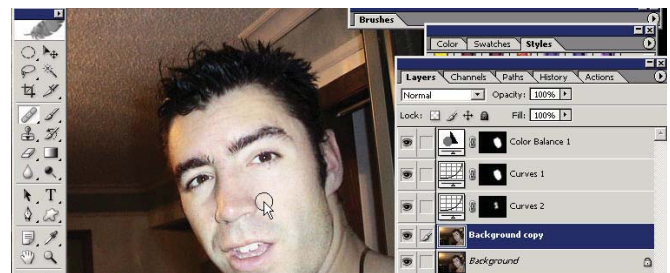


If there's too much of one color, you can use the color balance to swing it more towards where you would like it to be. Unfortunately you can't use a Match Color adjustment layer (only between documents), so you'll pretty much have to eyeball what looks right or have another image open to look off of.

So here I've taught you several different methods to making some quick retouch improvements to an image (not even with the best example for a picture). But it's important for you to understand these concepts such as custom adjustment layers, and how they work to properly balancing light and color..

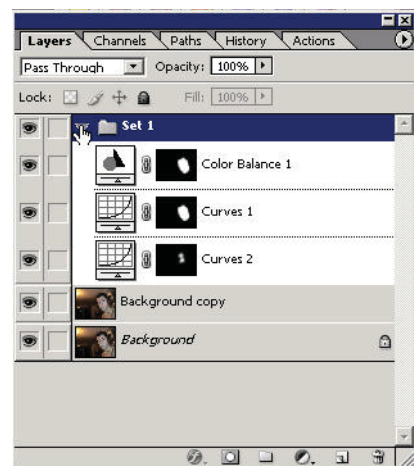
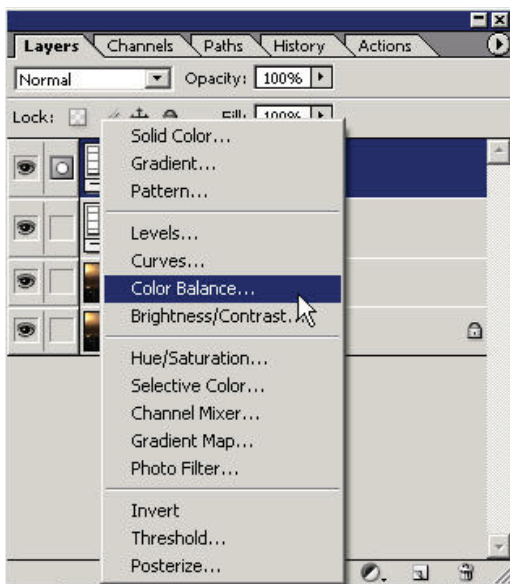


With this area selected you can create another custom adjustment layer such as a Color Balance (from the pop-up menu) which will only apply to the selected area and on the layers beneath it in the layer order/ palette.



Here is the before and after on a digital non-glamorous picture to show improvement purposes in Photoshop CS.

Remember you can organize the adjustment layers in a layer set and



lower the opacity to let more of the original blend through and so there's not as strong of an effect.

