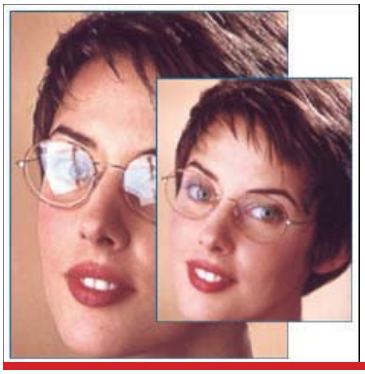


INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHICS

Getting Rid of Eyeglass Glare

Information Sheet No. PS774

It's happened to you, it's happened to me. You get a great photo but the dreaded eyeglass fairy has stricken again. For example, take the image below of my college mentors shot on a recent trip to Dallas. And unfortunately, unless you can get your subjects to pop the lenses out of their glasses before you shoot, there is no quick and easy way to fix it.

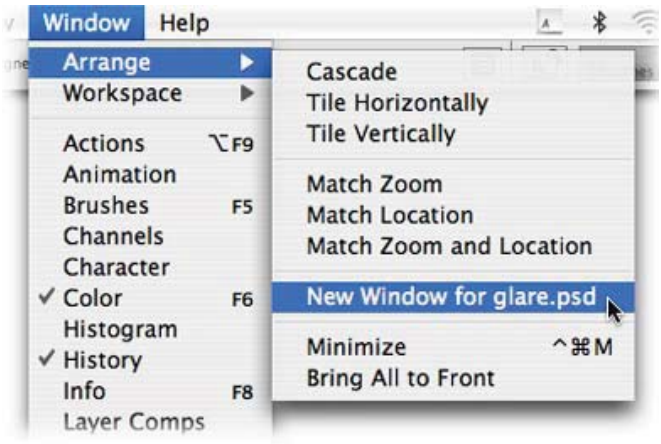
An eyeglass glare is an overexposure, pure and simple. The reason there's no way to fix the problem is that there is literally nothing to fix—there is no information there; nary a pixel. Zip. Zilch. Nada. That's why fixing the glare is challenging, for the fix literally requires creating something from nothing.

The good news is that the Clone Stamp Tool is perfect for the job. For with it we can copy pixels from one area of the photo into the nothingness that is the glare. The bad news is that it takes time, and depending upon how big and bad the glare is, lots of it.

Build your nest

Because we're about to embark upon some pretty serious detail work, let's spend a few moments getting our nests built (aka arranging our workspace). WARNING: Do not and I repeat do not size your image down. We need the maximum amount of pixels available to pull this off so save the cropping and downsizing until later.

Step 1: Pop open the offending photo and choose Window > Arrange > New Window for [insert document name].



Zoom way into one window by pressing Command + (PC: Ctrl +) several times and leave the other one at about roughly the size you want it to be when you're finished. For example, I'm emailing the final image so it'll end up being around 320 pixels wide. This way I can see what effect my detail work is having on the photo at actual size as I work. This is what my workspace looks like now:

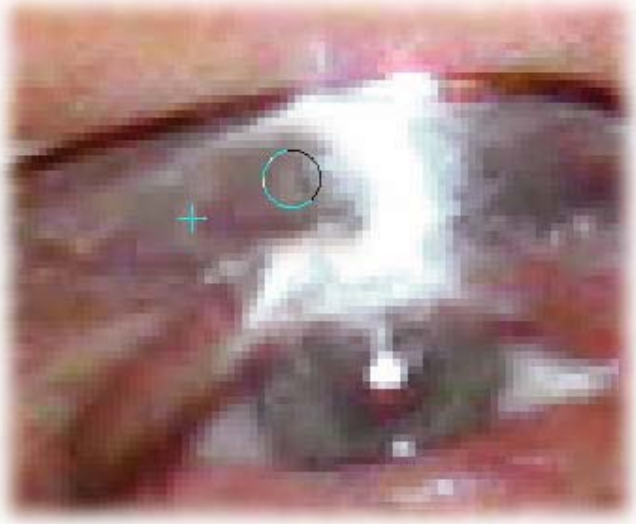
Let the cloning begin!

The Clone Stamp Tool works by sampling one area of the photo to use to paint onto another. To do so, we need to tell Photoshop where that sample area is, then mouse over to the area we want to fill in.

Step 2: Press S to select the Clone Stamp Tool.

Mouse over to the document and press the Option key (PC: Alt) and click an area near the glare to sample it, like so:

Step 3: Mouse over to the glare area begin to paint gently. You may want to play around with the brush size and you'll want to perform a combination of single clicks and/or short little drags. TIP: Cycle down in brush size by pressing the left bracket, [, and cycle up in brush size by pressing the right bracket,].

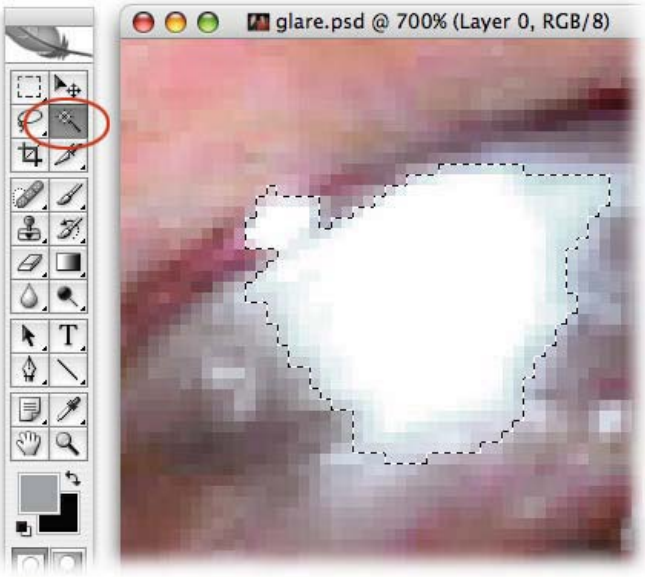


That's the processs. To make it look real, you'll want to keep resampling other areas near the area you're fixing, and keep changing brush sizes along with alternating between clicks and drags. For example, to fix the eyelid area, I sampled a bit of the lid itself to keep the hue and texture as accurate as possible.

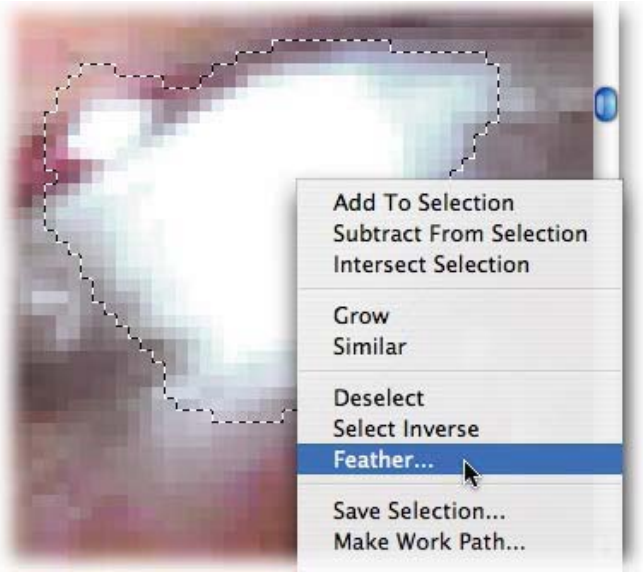
Selecting the glare first

Now, let us modify this method slightly by making a selection of the offending area first. That way we don't mess up the area around the glare.

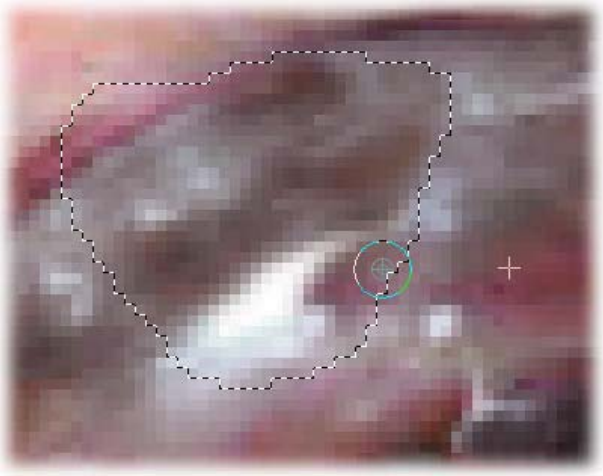
Step 1: Press W to select the Magic Wand and click once within the glare area to select it.



Step 2: Choose Select > Modify > Expand and enter 2-3 pixels. Feather the selection so that it doesn't have hard edges by choosing Select > Feather and entering 2-3 pixels again. TIP: You can also Control click (PC: Right click) within the selected area and choose Feather from the contextual menu, as shown below:



Step 3: Press S to select the Clone Stamp Tool and proceed exactly as we did above. Option click (PC: Alt click) to sample an area, then paint onto the glare area.



This time only the area within the selection is affected, no matter how wildly you swing that brush. In other words, you don't have to be as careful while painting. I'm not a huge fan of this method because the glare never seems localized quite enough for this method to work well, but it bears mentioning anyway.

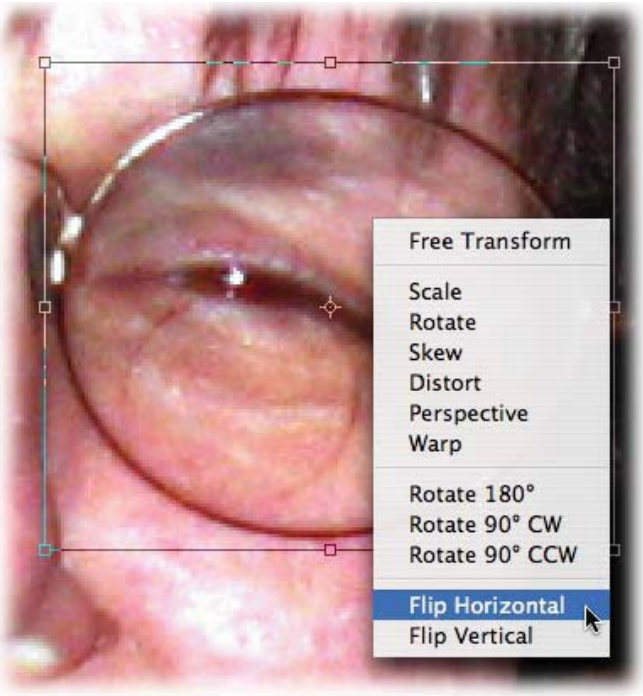
Duplicating the good eye

Another way to fix a lens glare is to copy one good lens or eye onto the other. Obviously this will only work if you have one eye that's okay (sans the glare), and luckily in our example photo we do.

Step 1: Press L to select the Lasso tool and draw a selection around the good eye.

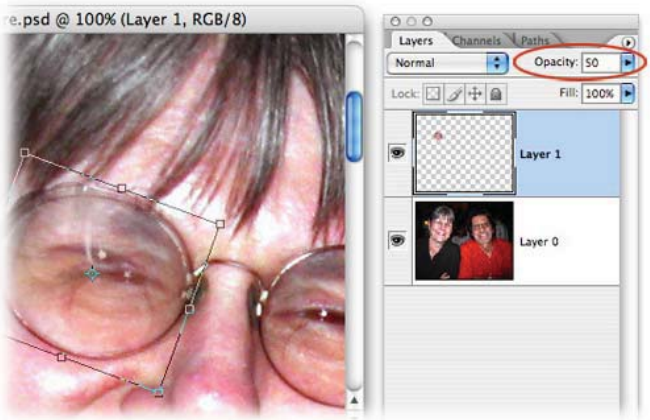
Step 2: Press Command + J (PC: Ctrl + J) to jump it up onto its own layer. Press Command + T (PC: Ctrl + T) to invoke Free Transform. Control click (PC: Right click) within the transform box and choose Flip Horizontal from the contextual menu. Press Return to accept the Transform.

Step 3: Press V to select the Move Tool and move the new eye into the right place. Over in the Layers Palette, reduce the Opacity of the new eye layer to around 50% so that you can see the old eye underneath. That'll help you line things up.

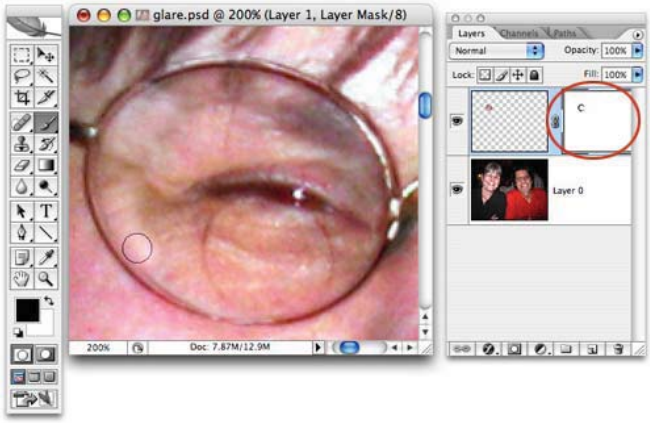


Step 4: Invoke Free Transform again by pressing Command + T (PC: Ctrl + T) and grab any corner handle and rotate the eye slightly. Now that you can see the old eye, just rotate the new one until they match fairly closely. When finished, press Return to accept the Transform then increase the Opacity of the eye layer back to 100%.

Step 5: Since my original eye selection wasn't perfect, I added a Layer mask so I could cover up certain bits of the new eye layer. Do this by pressing the circle within a square icon at the bottom of the Layers Palette.



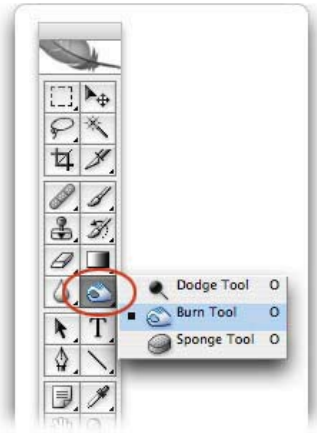
Step 6: Press B to select the Brush tool and with black as the topmost color chip in your Toolbar, begin painting the areas of the new eye that you wish to hide.



Another thing I could do at this point (but you don't have to) is to apply the mask I just made and then merge the layers. Then I would be free to use the Clone Stamp Tool to continue correcting the color of the eye area to make it look real. You might even use the Healing Brush to do some additional blending (it works in much the same way as the Clone Stamp Tool, in that you must Option click [PC: Right click] to select a sample area then brush over the area you want to fix).

Here's where we have now. It's not bad, but there's still one thing you can do.

Step 7: Last but not least, let's darken Wayne's eyebrows by selecting the Burn tool.



Step 8: With a combination of clicking and dragging, the Burn tool did a good job of darkening the eyebrows just a bit. Remember to press Command + Z (PC: Ctrl + Z) to undo if you go too far.

Here's the final product:

Not too shabby, but again, it took some time. However, this is a great exercise for increasing your retouching and painting skills (each tool we used work with a paint brush cursor). In the end, if you have some time and patience, you can get really good at detail work like this and you might even enjoy it.