



INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHICS

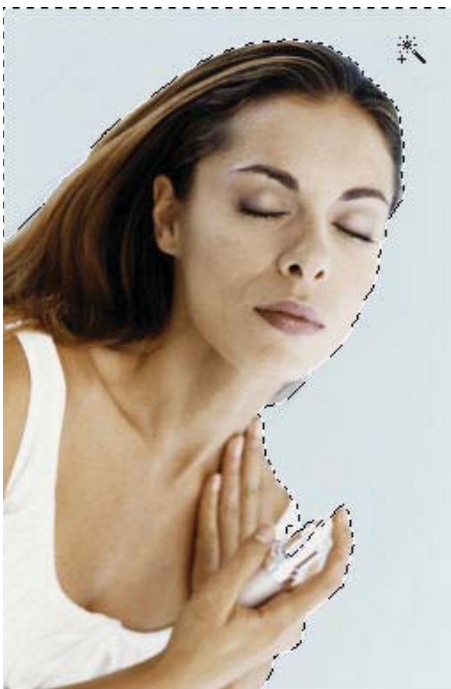
Gradient Blends

Information
Sheet No.
PS780

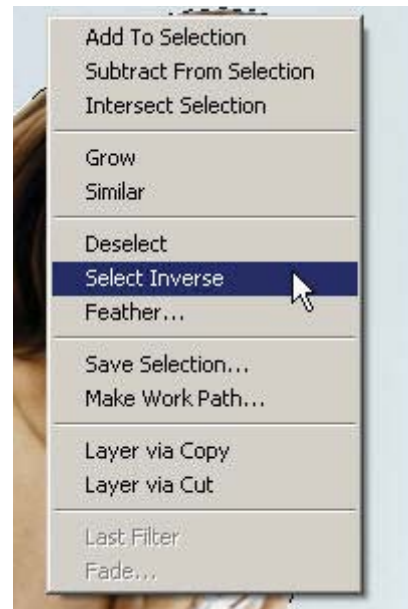
Here you are going to learn a very simple yet very effective way to create beautiful blends and fades. Create a new document at the desired size that you want. Keep in mind your end format (72 for web, 300 for print).



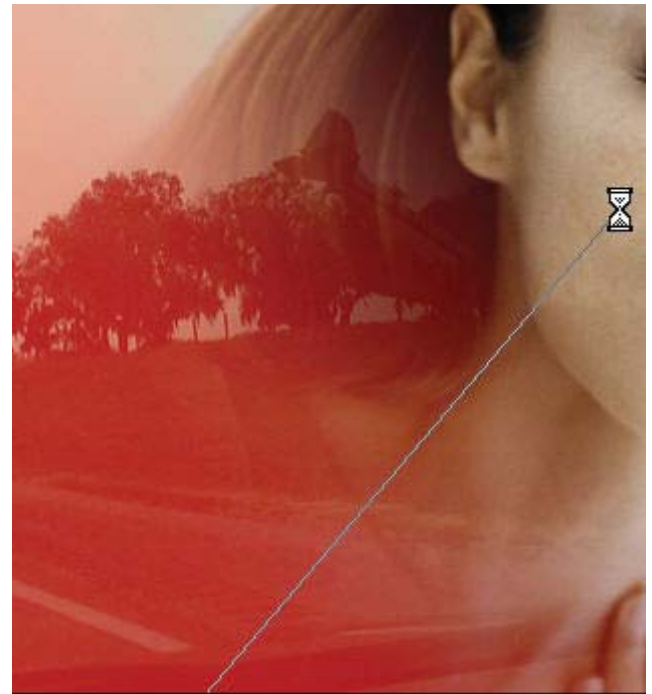
Now, find a photograph of a person that you think should work well with your other chosen photograph. When designing, you'll learn to pre-visualize and "feel" a design or idea just by looking at independent elements (photographs, layers).



Now, make a good selection of your person, actor, and character. Here the magic was used with a tolerance of 10. Since the background is so simple and the pixels are almost the same shade of the color, it will be a very easy selection. In this case, select the background and then right click and select inverse; you want to do things the easiest way that you can. You could try and select her, but in this case keep your sanity and select the simple background and then "inverse" it to close in on her.

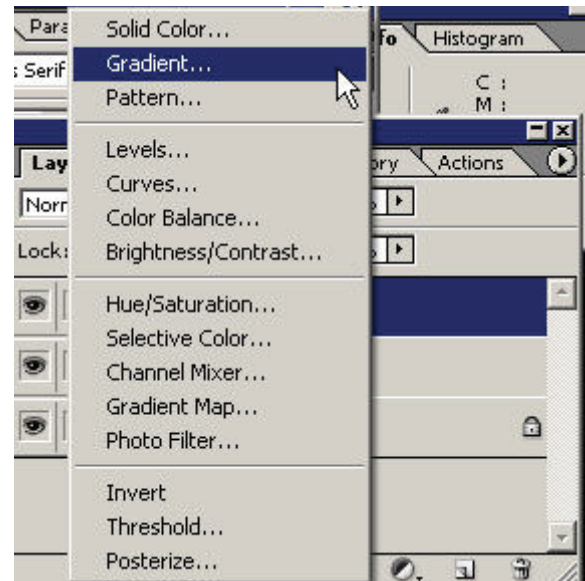


Now, with the person selected choose the Move tool (v) and click inside of the selection and drag it over to the desired image that you are going to blend with. Dragging a selection will create a new layer on the new document which is actually a copy (the original selection is still on the first document). Now you have a copy of your chosen person or object on the new document. Here's where the fun begins.



The longer your swipes are, the smoother the blend will be; the shorter your swipes means there will be a shorter, crisper blend. Gradient layer masking allows you to quickly create very professional blends..

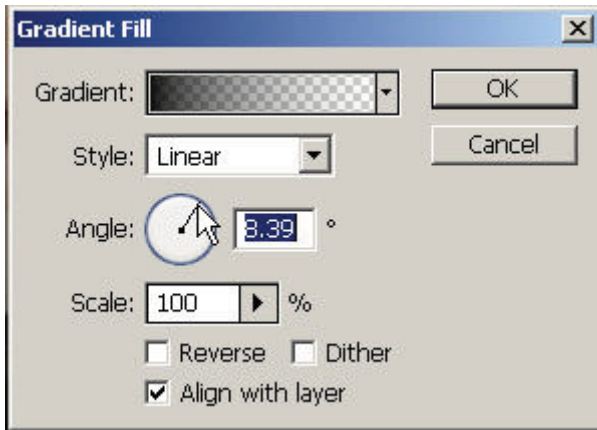
Now, to add some more character to the final image, create a gradient fill layer on the adjustment/fill layer icon on the bottom of the layers palette.



And it's so easy to do this you should be shocked. Simply create a layer mask on the layer of the object you dragged over (Layer: Add Layer Mask..or click on the Add a Mask icon in the layers palette). By creating a mask you are going to allow pixels to be hidden. This is better than erasing them. Gradient layer masking is my single favorite tool in Photoshop and I use it all the time. Choose the linear gradient tool with foreground to transparent and black as the foreground color and just swipe.

You can choose the settings you so desire in the dialog box. Here a black foreground to transparent gradient fill was created. This will allow black to fade into the rest of the image where I choose it to. You can change the settings and style but here linear at this angle

was chosen. Black is a natural color and can look like darkness or night whereas choosing a rainbow gradient but be rather funny and unnatural (in this case, too “vectory”).



And now you have the final result. You’ve taken a selection, brought it in, gradient layer masked it to blend in with the rest of the image and then added a black gradient fill layer to fade to darkness and changed some blending modes. Even though you should be able to tell it’s not a perfect selection (it was done in a hurry), your mind should just be storming with ideas of what you can now do! This should open whole new worlds of possibility up to you so please take advantage of it because it. It takes years for some people to figure it out on their own.

You can always go ahead and take it a step further by duplicating a layer and changing the blending modes and opacity just to see what looks best to help with a desired effect or mood. Here the top layer is on Normal with the opacity brought down and the bottom layer of her on screen. Note again that the black on the layer mask is hidden pixels and white represents what is showing of that layer. Also, when you duplicate a layer with a layer mask, the new layer will be an exact replica with the layer mask too.

