

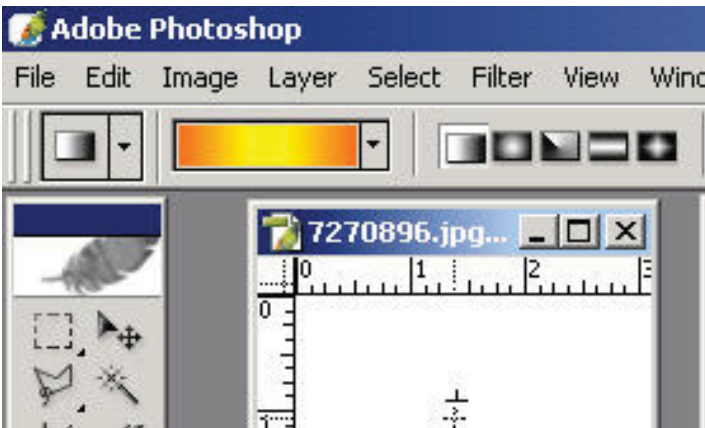
# INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHICS

# Using the Gradient Tool

Information Sheet No.

PS788

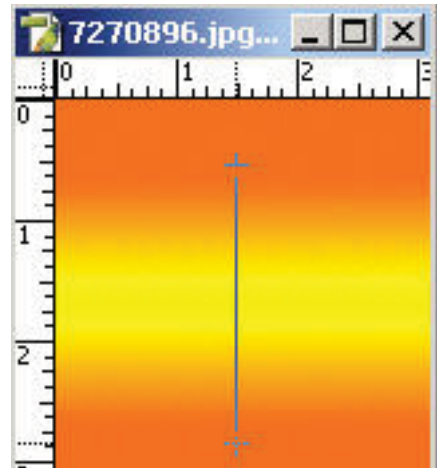
This packet gives you a chance to experiment with the different gradient tool options.



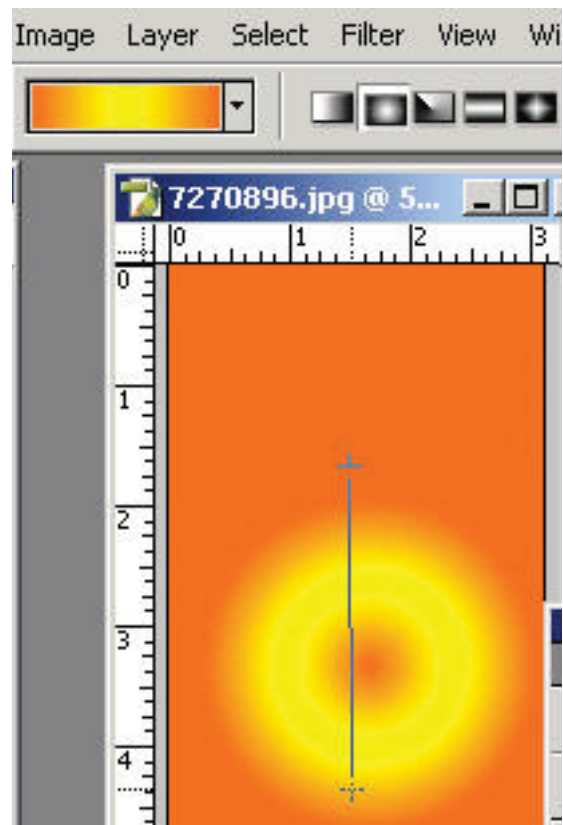
When using the gradient tool, the size of your 'swipe' will determine the sharpness and density of the gradient. Here you can see a short, tiny swipe forms a sharp line.



To create a nice gradient fade use a medium stroke or more of a 'gradual' effect a really long stroke. When you are on foreground to background default for programmed gradients) and aren't using blending modes, you get one swipe to fill the layer. If that doesn't work then swipe again to create a fresh gradient.



Here is the radial gradient tool in use.

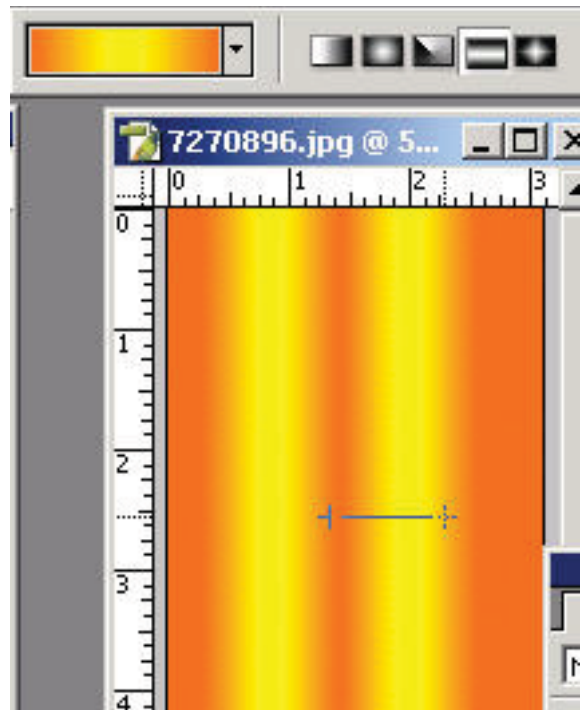


The gradient tool is really powerful when combined with something called layer masking. With the gradient tool on certain

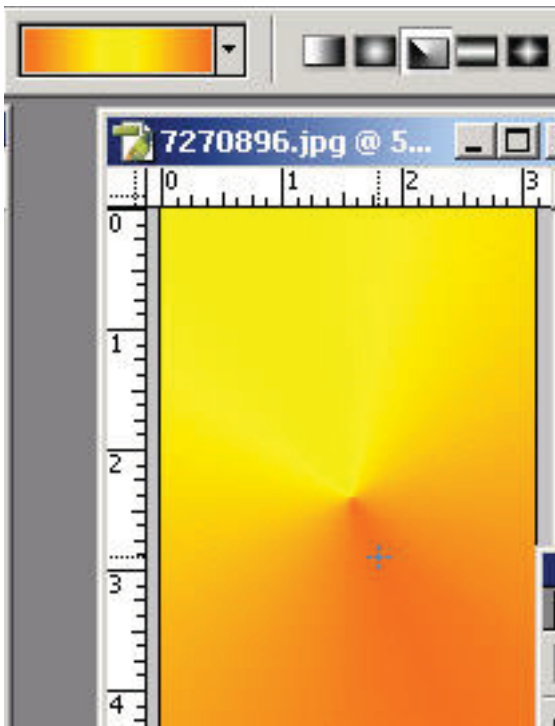
settings you will be able to create perfect fades, blends and transitions between different images.

Here, though you should just get comfortable with the gradient tool and the different choices available. Try different color gradients also. It will take some practice to get the perfect 'swipe' to deal with any situation (this will come with experience) and can save you the time of using sloppy eraser tool techniques.

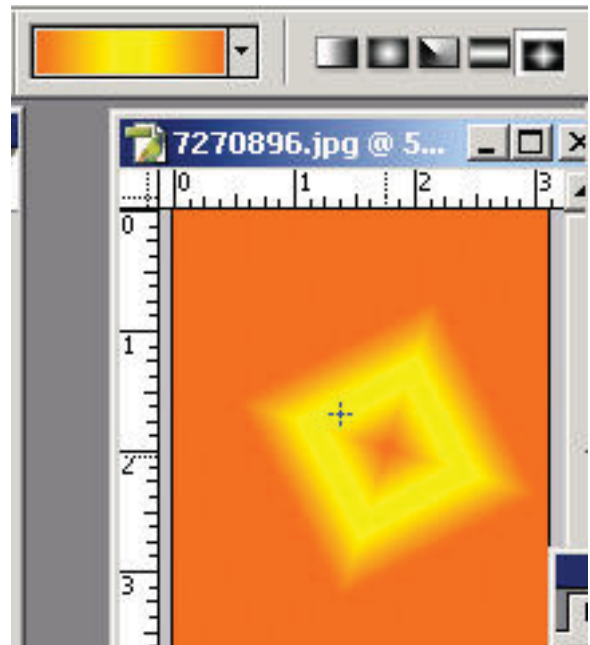
This is one instance where the Angle gradient tool actually works.



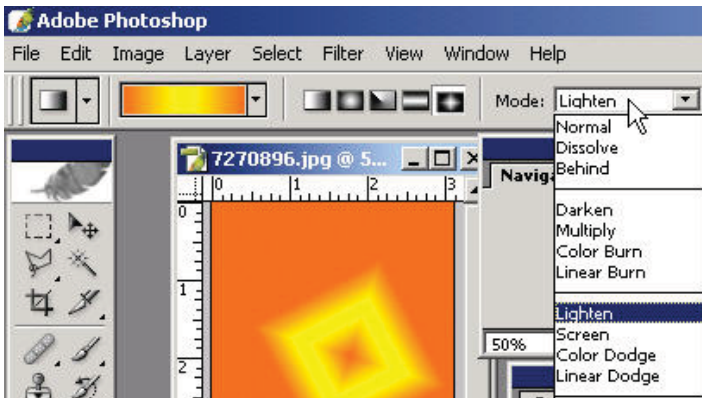
To make really cool designs and take your creative skills to the next level you really must master the basics. Patience and knowledge are a virtue with learning this tool.



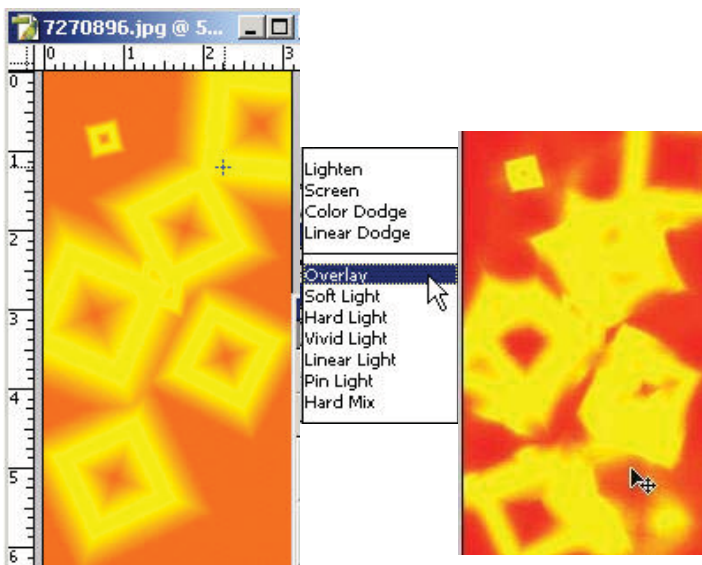
Try using the reverse setting; it does just that; it turns the gradient in on itself and does the opposite. Here is the reflected gradient on reverse.



Many PhotoShop tools have the option to use blend modes for applying the tool. The gradient tool is one of them. This will determine how the tool 'reacts' with the light of the layers beneath it.



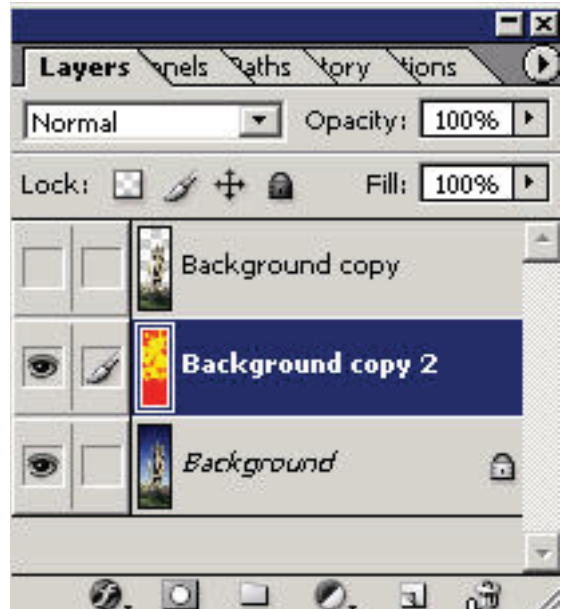
Changing blending modes here causes you to add or subtract light each time that you use the gradient tool. Try swiping it on the diamond gradient on some different blend modes.



The darken modes will often turn to black real soon because you are adding dark each time you swipe.

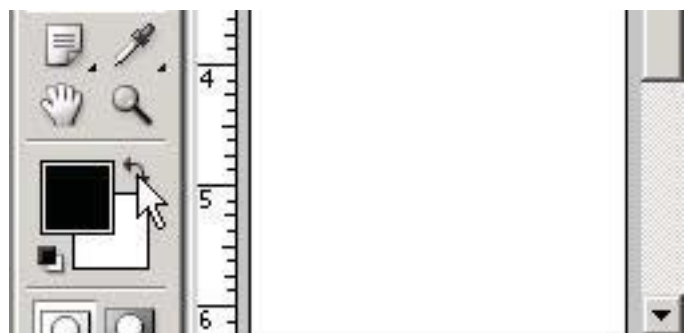
This is a little beyond what you need to know for basics training but it's always good to know. Each tool has more to it than meets the eye. When you start adding things up, Photoshop has infinite possibilities and mostly all of the tools you will ever need.

Remember that all this gradient swiping you're doing right now is done on its own layer. You can easily hide that layer or throw it in the oscar grouchy trash bin.

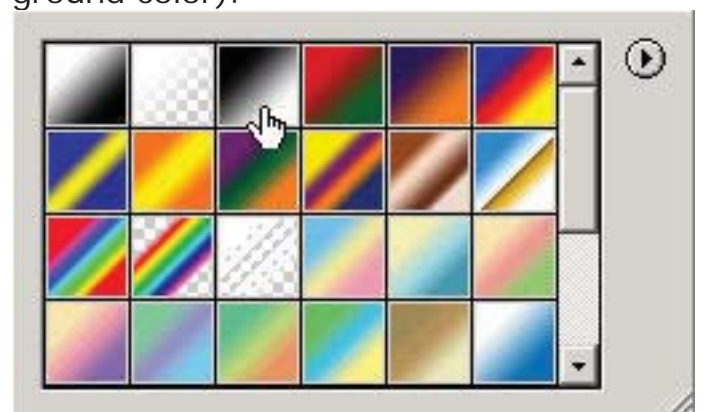


Create a new blank layer (layer: new: layer is the menu way) and choose another gradient. You'll note that the first two upper left gradients will always reflect the colors (foreground and background) that are chosen in the color chooser in the toolbar.

By toggling (D,X or clicking on the arrow) these you can see the gradient foreground color switch to the white to black in this case.



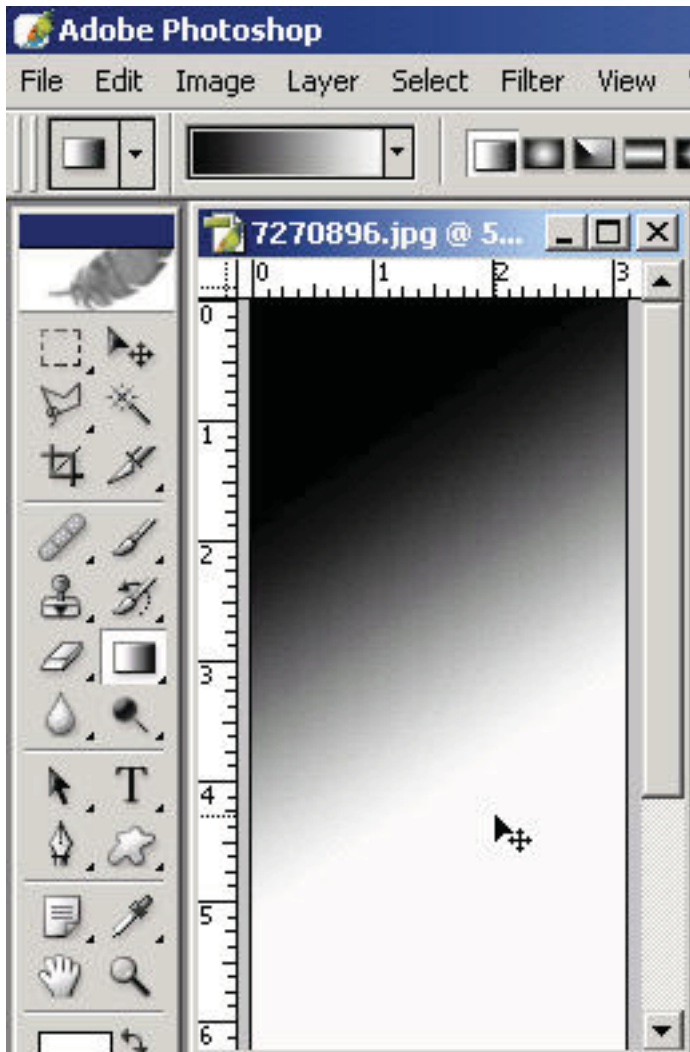
But here choose the third which is loaded as a default (or make sure black is the foreground color).



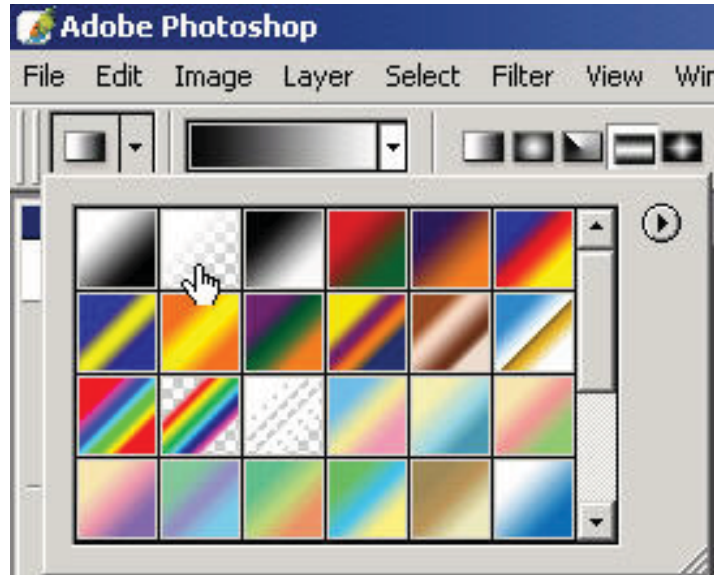
Now give a diagonal swipe on the new blank layer to fill that layer with the gradient.



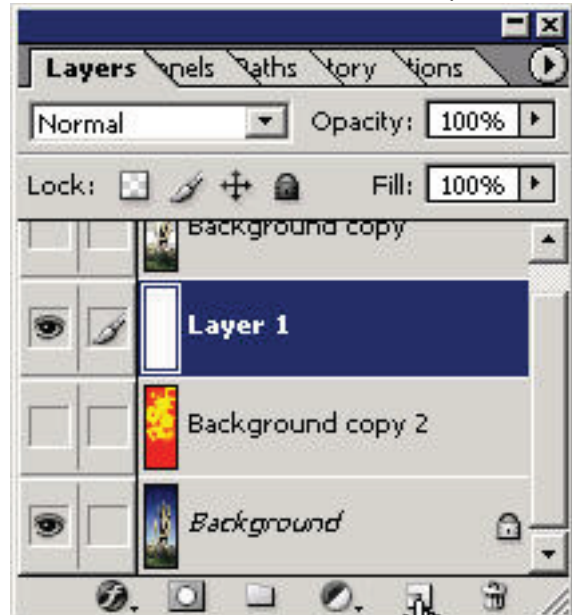
You can see the nice fade with the linear gradient tool.



Whatever your chosen foreground color is (in the color chooser), the second option will always be Background to Transparent so you see White to Transparent.



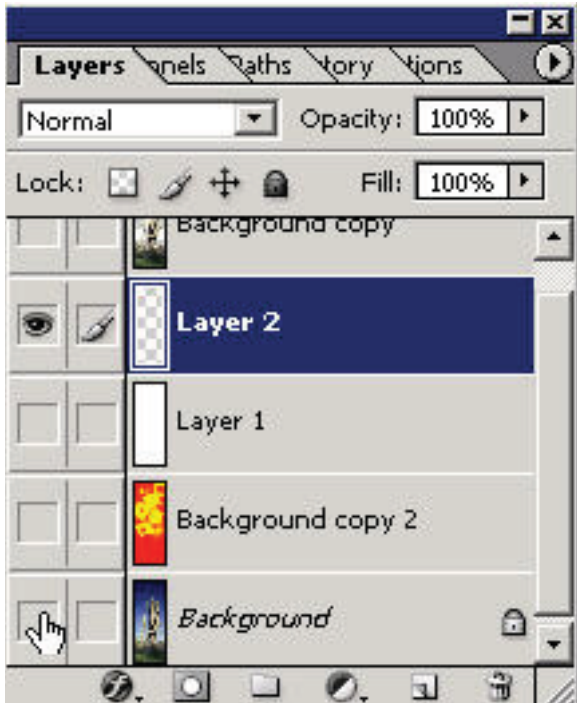
This means a swipe will start with white and the rest will be invisible leaving the rest of the layer untouched and everything else visible below it. This is an important concept to understand. You actually use foreground to transparent much more often than foreground to background (where you just get the color fill of those two colors).



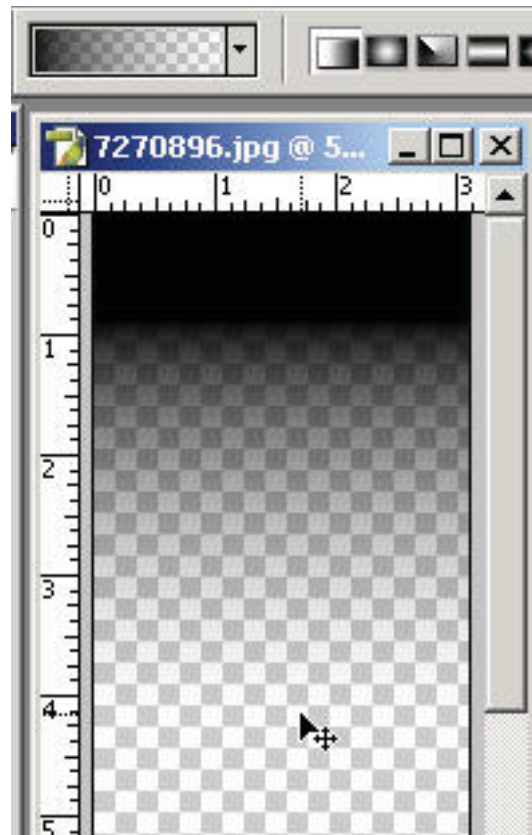
Alt backspace is the easiest way to fill a layer (or selection) with your foreground color.

Create another blank layer and choose

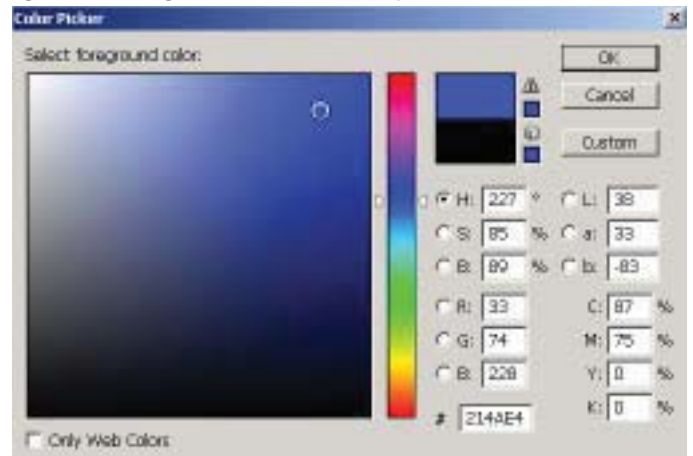
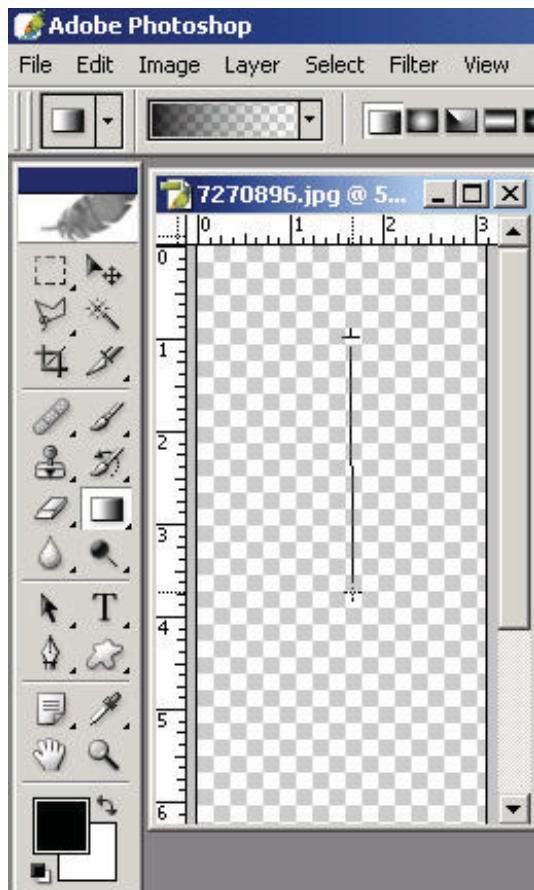
black as your foreground color and foreground to transparent gradient. Hide the other layers so you can see the effect you're doing.



Just swipe on down with a medium stroke. You can hold the Shift key to get a perfect straight line while using the tool.

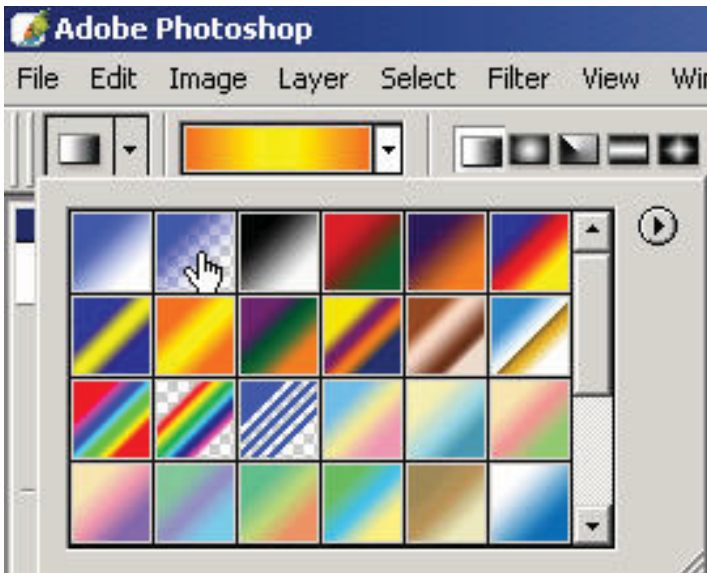


Here you can see the nice fade it creates. Try this in your Photoshop.



Choose another color from any of the color selection methods (here the Color Picker). . .

. . . and note again how your colors apply to the gradient dialog box.



Choose foreground to transparent and swipe again (on a new layer). With foreground to transparent, it is more natural to work in or 'build up' around an area when you start combining say the radial after using the linear.

