



INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHICS

HOLLYWOOD STYLE SPOTLIGHT

Information
Sheet No.

PS805

Whip up a Hollywood-style spotlight effect with realistic-looking beams of light in Photoshop CS3.

Step 1

Begin with a new document. You can either use an existing photo, or create a background yourself, as in this gradient.



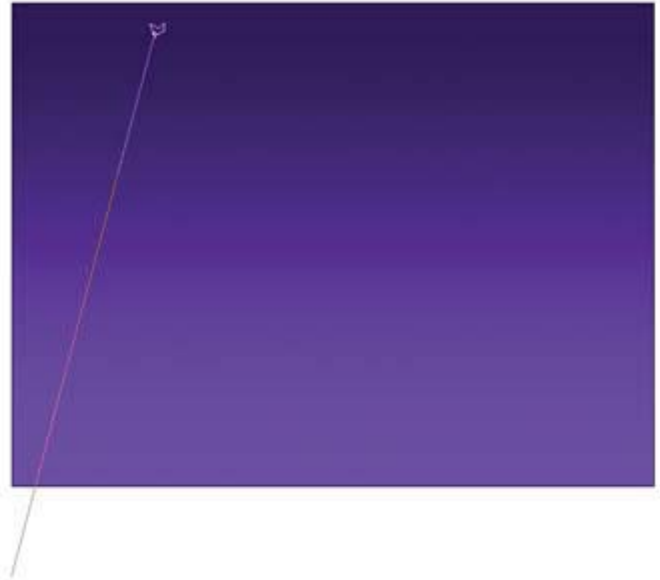
Step 2

Choose the polygon lasso tool. Hold down your mouse on the lasso tool to reveal the polygon option.



Step 3

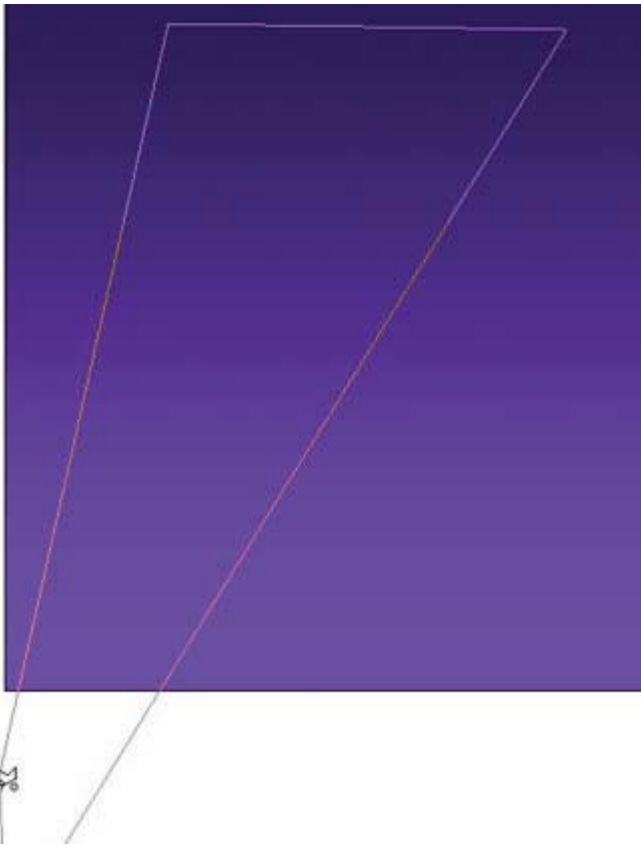
The Polygon Lasso doesn't work with dragging. Instead, you click at the origin. As you move your cursor, a line will follow it (kind of like gum on the sole of your shoe.). Click again to create a line.



Tip: To quit dragging gum, press the *Esc* key.

Step 4

Keep clicking in the shape of a triangle (sort of). To complete the selection, hover your mouse over the origin (The first place you clicked). You will see little circle. This circle means that you will complete the selection if you click on the start point. Do it!

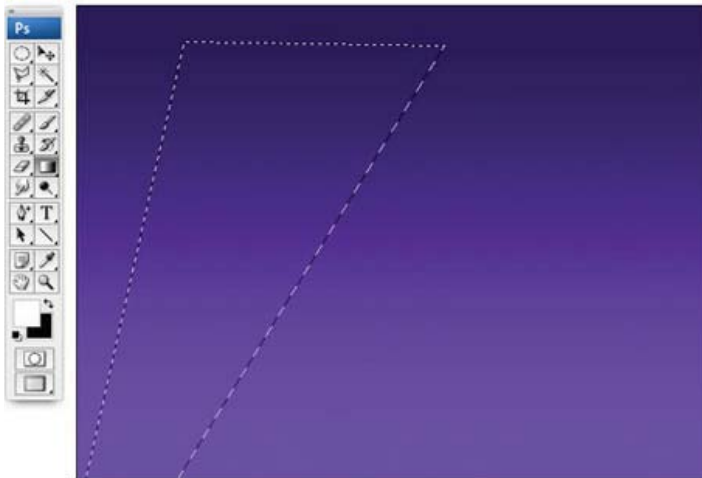


Step 5

As soon as you click on the start point, you will notice the marching ants selection (and the gum isn't stuck to your shoe anymore).

Now, we are ready to fill with color. Press the D key to reset the Foreground/Background colors.

Press the x key to swap the color. White is now the foreground color.



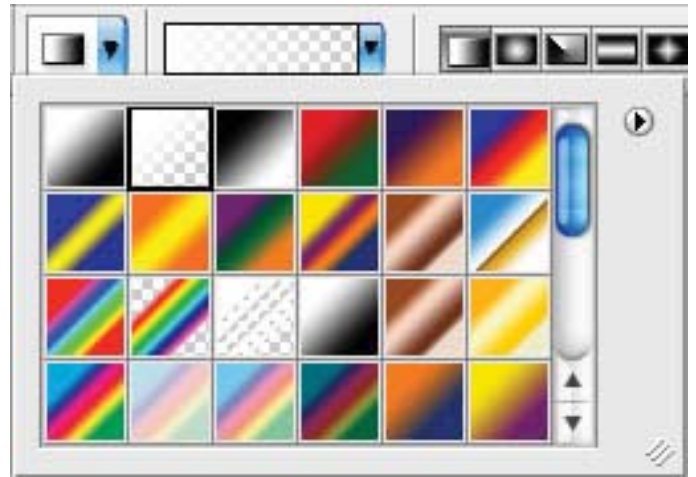
(You could just choose white as the foreground color and avoid all the shortcuts, but it's good to learn them, right?)

Step 6

Choose the Gradient tool. Go to the options bar at the top and choose two things.

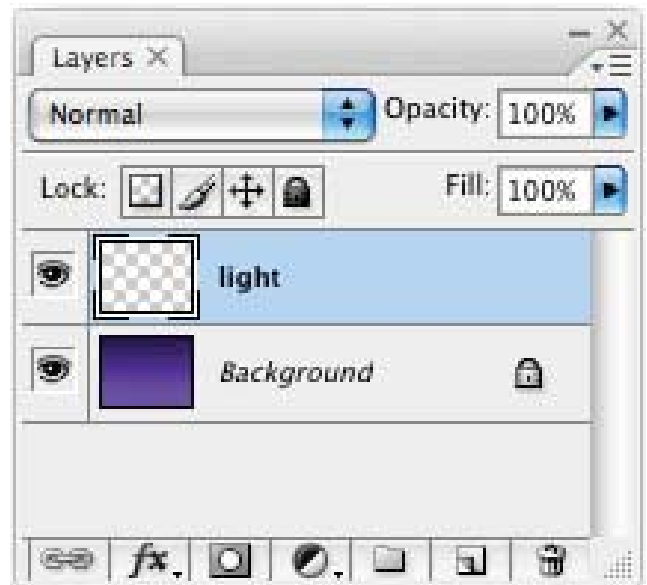
- Click the gradient to open the options, select the foreground to transparent option as shown.
- Make sure that you choose the linear gradient option.

Finally, make sure that the transparent option is turned on in the options bar at the top and reverse is off.



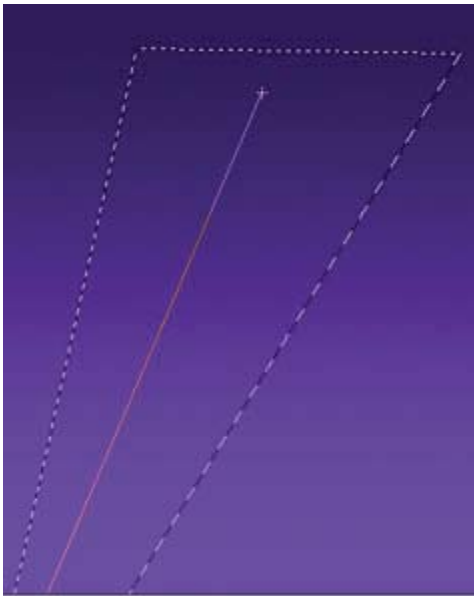
Step 7

Create a new layer and select it, so you don't add pixels to the background.



Step 8

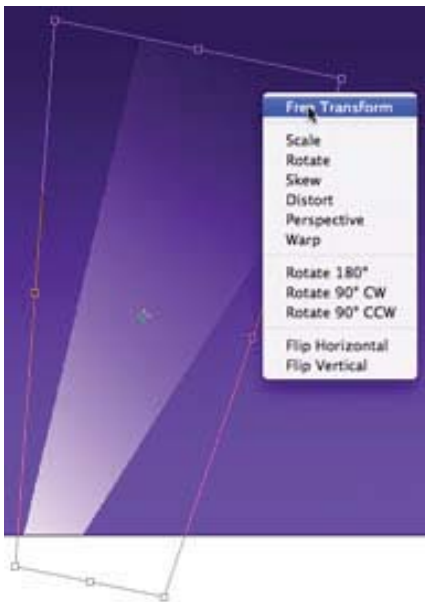
Click at the bottom of the selection. Drag the gradient along the selection, but not past the selection.



Step 9

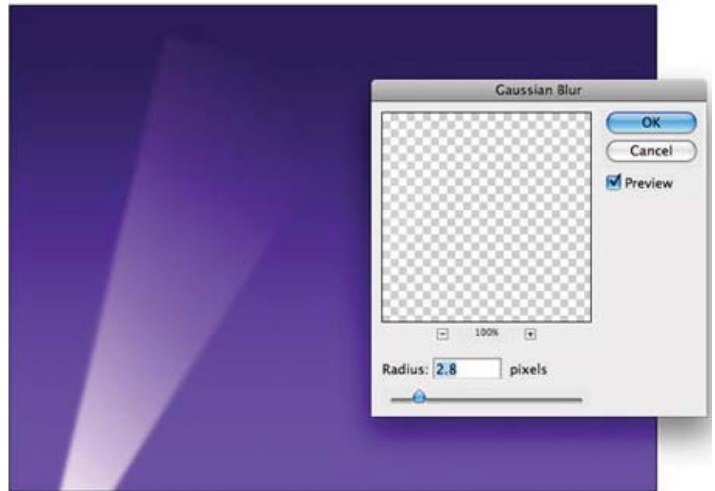
Release the mouse and you now have a gradient. Turn off the selection by pressing ctrl/cmd+D or clicking away with the selection tool.

To change the shape, press Ctrl/Cmd+T for the free transform tool. Right click for additional options such as perspective. Change the shape to suit your needs by dragging any of the little squares (adjustment handles).



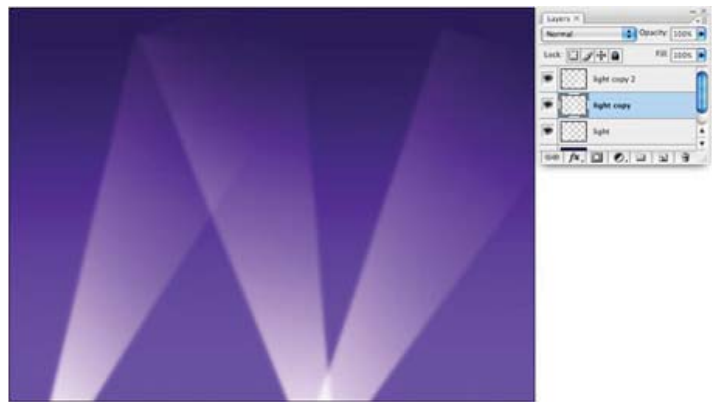
Step 10

You now have a spotlight, but it lacks realism because the beams have hard edges. To soften the beams, choose Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur. Enter a setting to suit your needs and click OK.



Step 11

To add more beams, Duplicate the layers and use free transform to change the angles.



Step 12

Here the word Hollywood was added, so that you can see the transparency effects.



Step 13

Try adding the effect to different backgrounds. In the image below, some stars were added to the spotlight. This shows the gradients off really well. You can reduce the opacity if you want to lessen the effect.



Step 14

You don't have to limit this effect to vertical spotlights. Here's a futuristic cityscape. Notice the effect in the sky.

