



## INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHICS

# PERFECT MATTES WITH PS CHANNELS

Information Sheet No.

PS868

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Using a selection tool alone in Photoshop might not capture all of the pixel data that you need to cleanly cut out an image from your photo. Instead, you can use Photoshop's Channels to extract the data you need.

Here are some simple steps to follow so that you can get a perfect matte using some great tools that Photoshop offers.

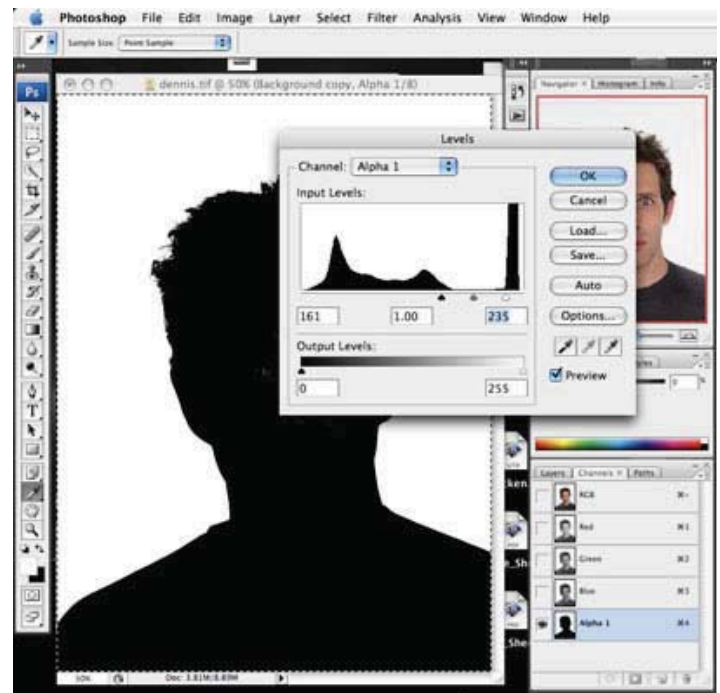
#### Duplicate the image

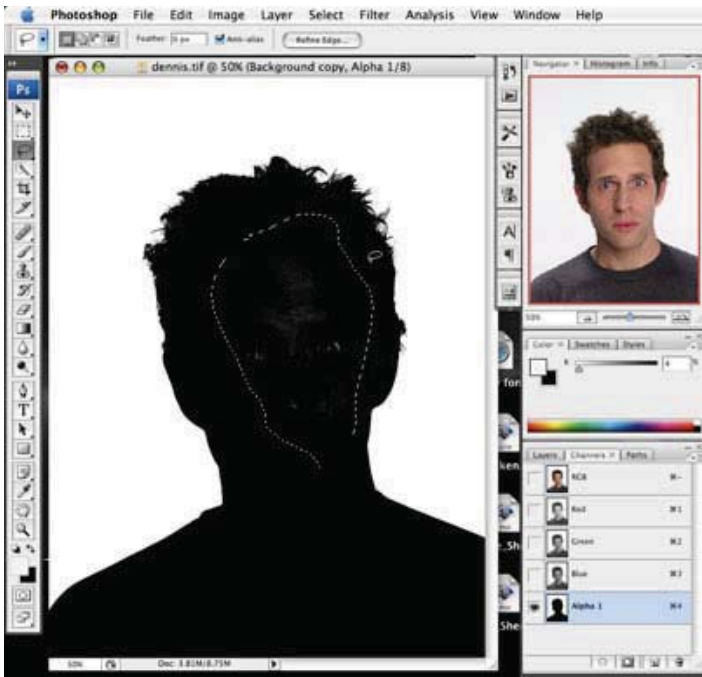
1. Select Layer>Duplicate.
2. Select Edit>All.
3. Click the Channels tab and Select Layer>New>Layer to create a new channel.
4. Paste the selected layer in the new channel. A black and white alpha channel will appear. Select Select>Deselect to deselect the information in the new channel.



#### Crush the blacks

1. Select Image>Adjustments>Levels to adjust the levels. Move the left slider to the right to crush the blacks. Move the right slider to the left to restore the white background.
2. Use the lasso tool to remove any remaining detail inside your image. Press <Backspace> to delete the remaining information.
3. Select Select>Deselect to deselect your image.





## Create a mask

1. Select Image>Adjustments>Inverse to create the mask for your image.
2. <Ctrl>-Click the image icon in the Channel tab to select the alpha channel outline.
3. Click the Layers tab and select Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal Selection. If you turn off the background channel, you can see that the white background has been masked out.



## Do the hair

Not ending up with blocky hair can be the hardest part of creating a clean mask. Using Levels and Masks can make life a lot easier than working with a Bezier or erasing a mask.

Here a colored background has been added so that it is easier to see the hair of the subject.

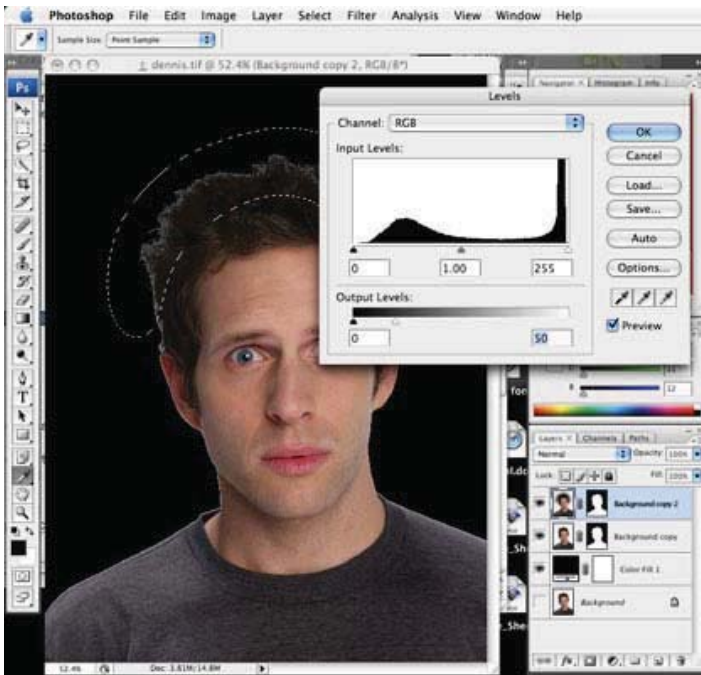
1. Select Layer>New Fill Color>Solid Color. Select a color to help see. Make sure to drag the fill layer below the image layers.
2. Select Layer>Duplicate Layer to duplicate the image layer. This ensures that your original mask remains unchanged. The aim is to edit the masks only and not the layer.
3. Set the Duplicated mask layer to Normal and set the original Mask layer to Multiply.

Make sure to select the Mask for the duplicate image.

1. Select the Lasso tool and select the washed out areas of the hair.
2. Select Select>Modify>Feather. Start with a range between 5 and 50 depending on how high resolution your image is.

## Crush the Whites

Select Image>Adjustments>Levels.  
Move the white Output Levels slider to the left, until the white highlights disappear.



You can now experiment with additional layers to correct the colors, etc. further.

This method is quite useful if you have multiple images shot on a white background and have to quickly matte them.

Combine a Color Fill Adjustment layer, Gradient onto Layer Mask and warp the mask in Photoshop CS2 to create effective page curls.

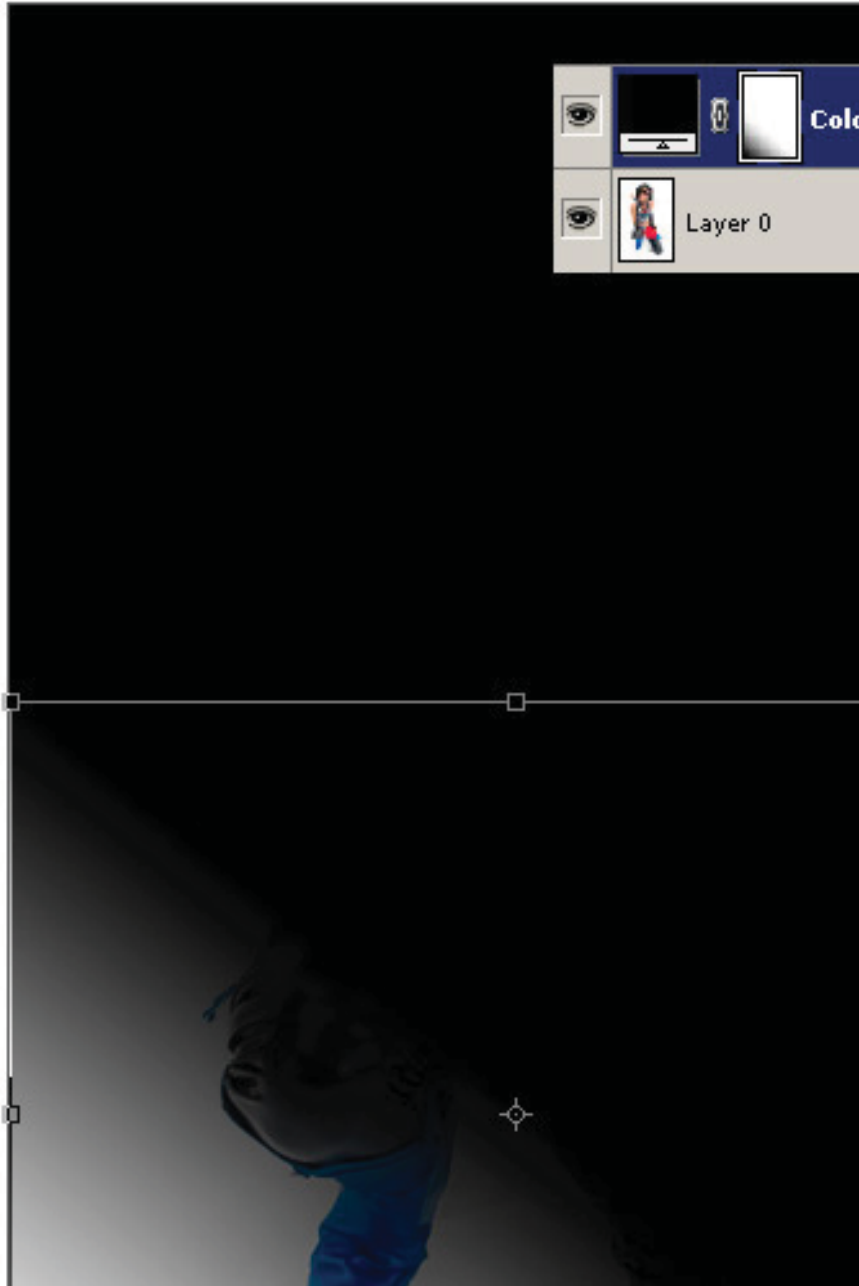


Below is the starter image.

## Apply Solid Color Adjustment Fill Layer

Copy and paste the above image into Photoshop to follow along. The initial Layer name is not that important (mine is Layer 0) as long as it remains the bottom most layer in the stacking order.

Activate that image Layer, then from the Layers Palette footer icon menu commands, choose the New Adjustment Fill icon, and from the list select the Solid Color... option as captured below.



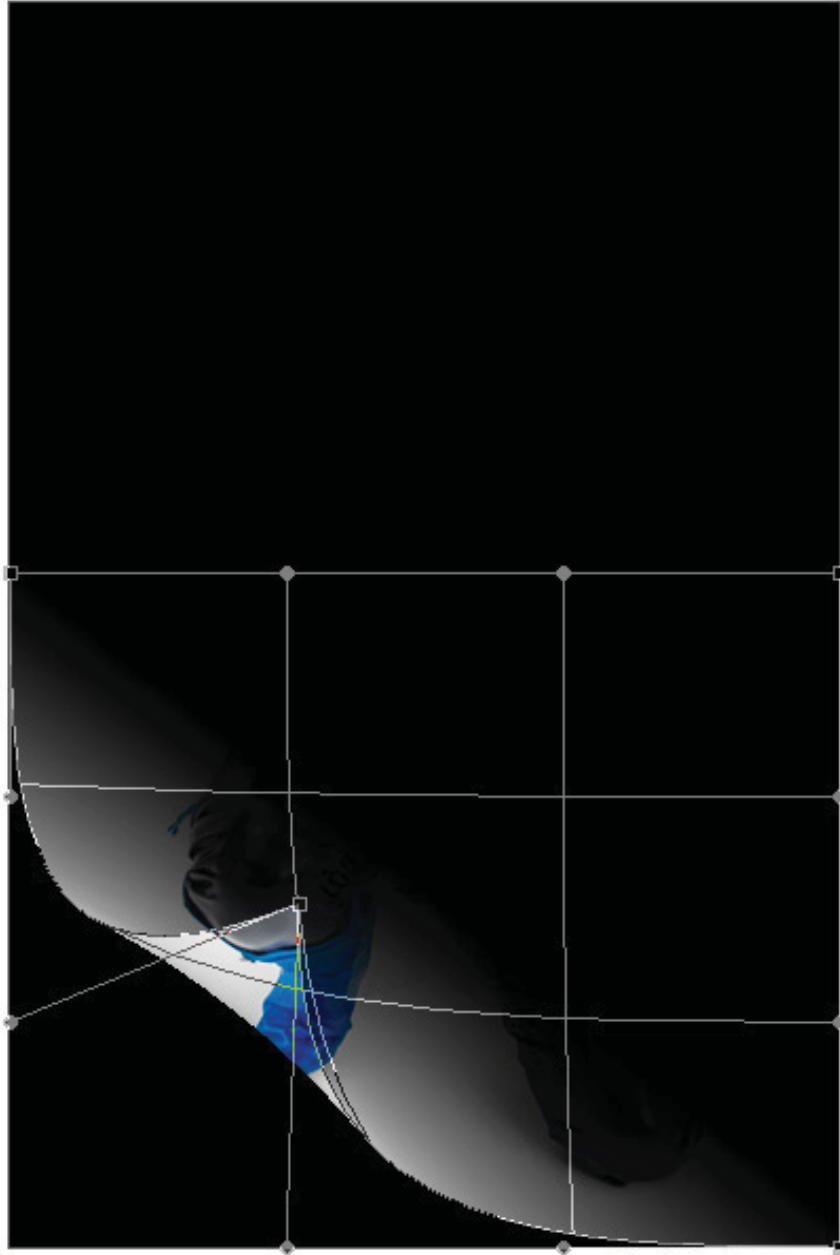
From the Color Fill, you can select any color, but try Black (#000000) then click OK to commit changes.

This simply creates a new Color Fill 1 Layer directly above the image Layer.

## Apply Foreground to Transparent ONTO the Color Fill Mask

Next...

1. ... Activate the Color Fill 1 Layer in the Layers Palette.
2. Set the Foreground Color swatch to Black.
3. Activate the Gradient Tool (G) from the Toolbar.



4. Set Options Bar features for the Gradient Tool.

Foreground – Transparent Gradient, Linear Style, Normal Mode, 100% Opacity, Dither & Transparency active.

5. Then from the lower left corner click and drag to draw the Gradient stopping short mid center as captured below.

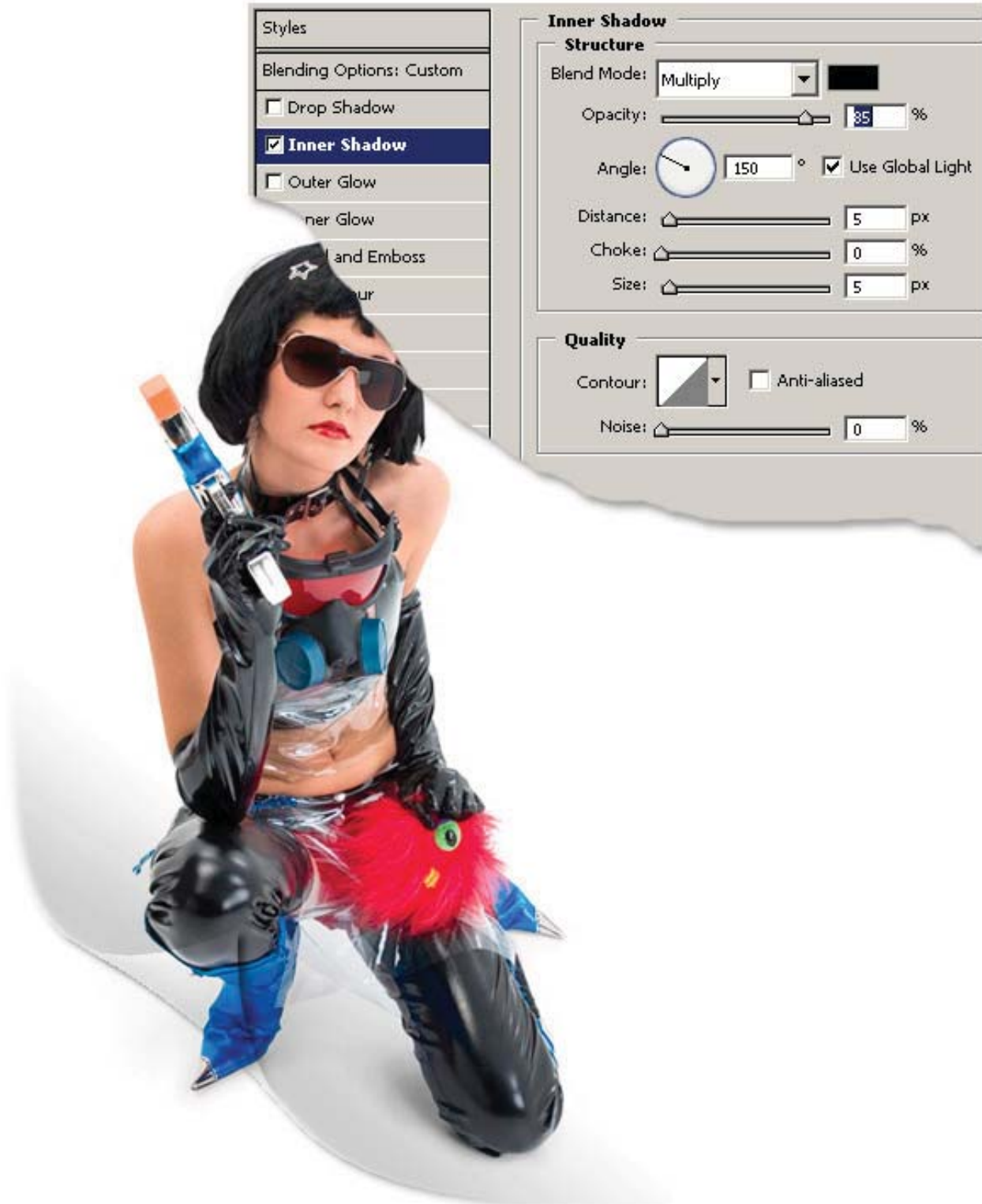


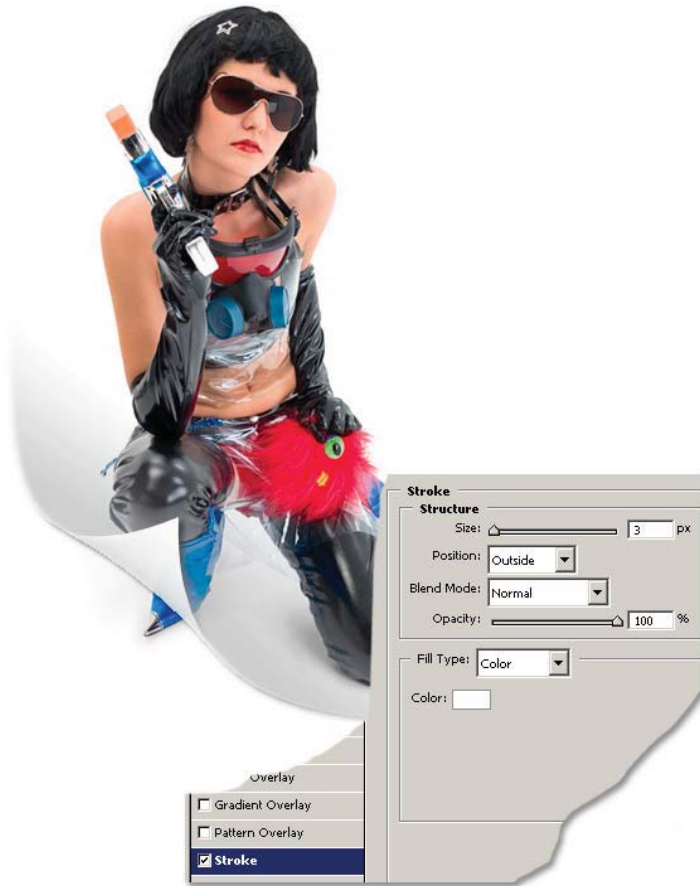
The resulting Gradient is now applied to the Mask of Color Fill 1 Adjustment Layer allowing some of the underlying image Layer to be visible.



# Warp Layer Mask

Still





(Encircled in red)

As pictured on the next page, the mask with the Color Fill 1 active,

Command + T (PC: Ctrl+ T) to activate a Free Transform.

Notice it just selects the Layer Mask.

While Free Transform is still activated,

contents are now ready to be warped into a position.

Click and drag the lower left anchor point and pull it towards mid center, as shown on the left.

Then press the Green checkmark icon command to commit the Warp changes.



go to the Options Bar and select the Warp icon command.

