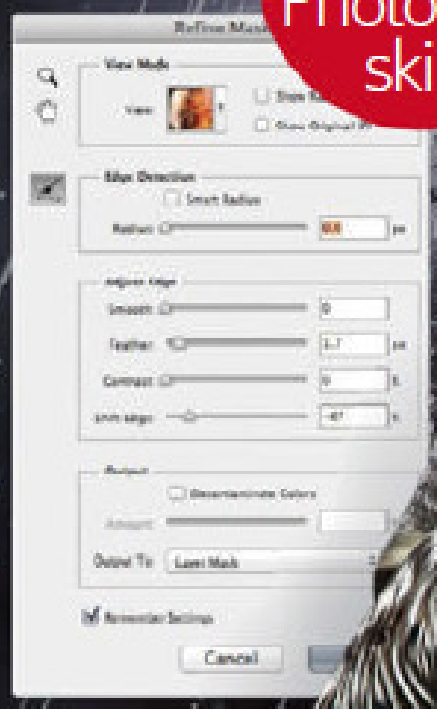
NEW

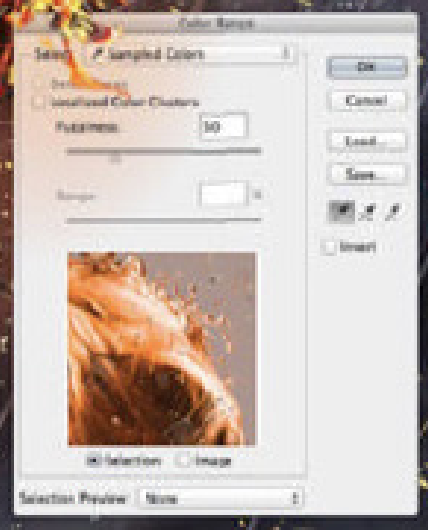
1000 FREE TOOLS

The Professional Photoshop Book

- Manipulate photos
- Create stunning graphics
- Develop retouching skills

Master advanced Photoshop skills





MASTER THE PERFECT RETOUCH WITH PRO TIPS

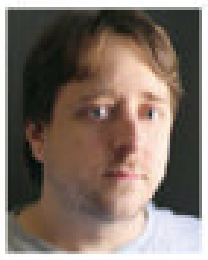
LEARN HOW TO CREATE A BEAUTY RETOUCHED IMAGE, WITHOUT OVERWORKING THE DETAILS

From smoothing out the pores to removing the fine details, beauty retouching is easily overworked – don't find yourself caught in this trap. The key to success is often leaving some impurities and letting the natural beauty come through. True success comes from a balance between perfection and imperfection.

When you are working with the details, don't forget to work in an overview as well. Zooming in and out as you go will help refocus your attention and draw you to more pressing issues that you need to correct.

The type of portrait you are working on will dictate the type of details that will need to remain. For example, in beauty retouching anything distracting needs to be taken out. However, in portrait retouching where the subject is known, then any birthmarks identifying the subject must remain. Sometimes it becomes difficult to decide what needs to stay in, or come out, what is an imperfection and what is a distinguishing, characterful feature.

As with any retouching, keep the viewer's eye focused on the areas that are most important. Keep them engaged in the subject, and interested in the imagery. Keep your work grounded, and create the perfect image. Remember, you will have done your best work when no one knows you have done anything at all.



OUR EXPERT

JOHN ROSS
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John educates photographers and retouchers by helping them expand their creativity through Photoshop, from his website and the classes he teaches from New Haven, Connecticut.

SOURCE FILES

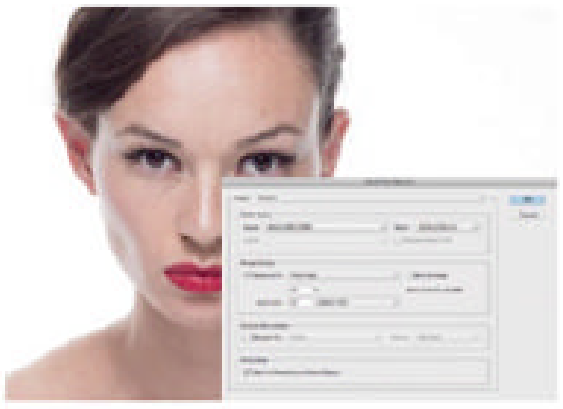
On FileSilo, you can find the model and iris images. Any additional images and brushes for references can be found at www.deviantart.com and www.shutterstock.com.

RETOUCH THE MODEL

START WITH BASICS LIKE CLONING, COLOUR AND TONAL CHANGES

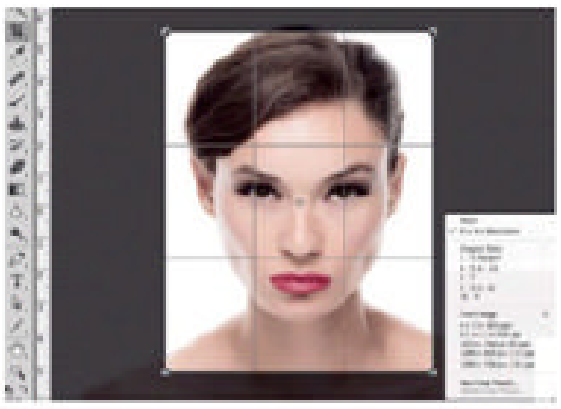
01 ADOBE CAMERA RAW

When you open the Raw file in Photoshop, it will open with Adobe Camera Raw. This will allow you to make any general colour and tone changes. Make sure the printable area is large enough for the final print size. Be sure the image preferences (blue text under the image) reflect a size that is large enough to print with.



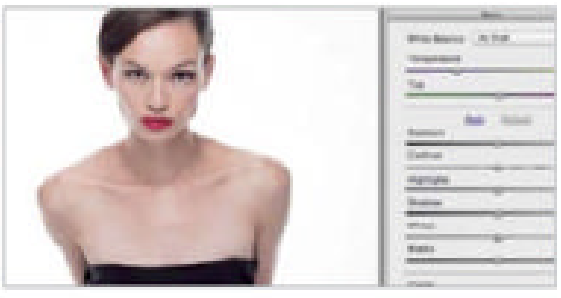
02 WHEN TO CROP

Ensure that you work on, and archive, the full image. Cropping can happen later, at the end of the project. One day you may need a different crop of the image. Therefore, it makes more sense to start and finish at its full size. Cropping for a website or print is much easier after the work has been completed.



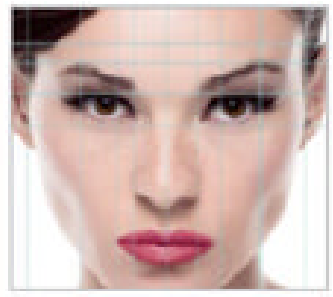
03 OPEN IMAGE OR OPEN OBJECT

When finished, either click Open Image, or hold down the shift key for Open Object. When using a Smart Object on the Raw file, you will be able to freely jump between Photoshop and Camera Raw. Working this way will preserve your original Raw settings, should you want to edit them again later.



WORK IN PROGRESS

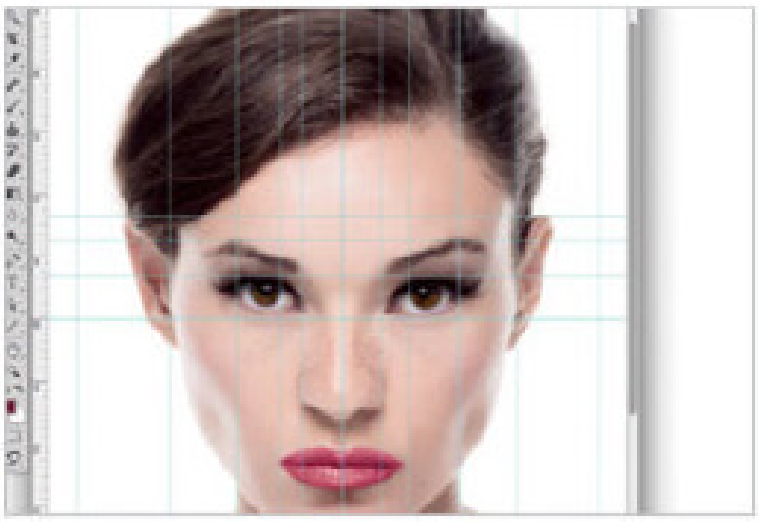
FROM STUDIO TO FINISHED RETOUCHED PORTRAIT



Progress 1: **Technical changes**

Progress 2: **Detailed work**

Progress 3: **Refinements**



04 USE GUIDES

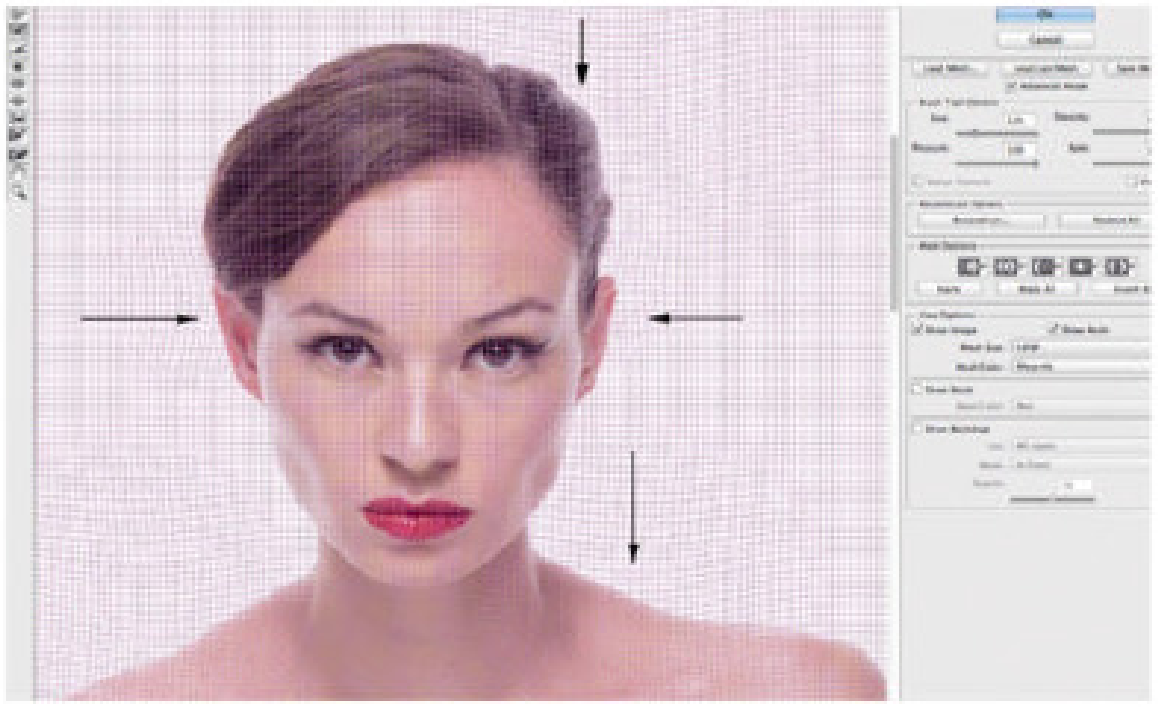
Once in Photoshop, use guides to check that the perpendicular and other lines of symmetry are even and balanced. It's best to do these types of technical corrections before getting into the details of actual retouching. It can become frustrating after doing all that work, only to realise the tilt of the camera is distorting something. What could have been one layer of correction, later requires many layers be fixed. With proper planning, extra work can be avoided. Use Edit>Free Transform for any general corrections.

05 SHARPENING

For greater control, do your sharpening in Photoshop with Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen, preferably on a separate layer or Smart Object so you can mask out areas as needed. This will allow for sharper eyes, but softer hair and background. This image is quite sharp, but you may want to add a little something to it. Some prefer to sharpen as a first step, others prefer it to be last – it's up to you. Set the Amount to 150%, Radius to 1.0px, and Reduce Noise to 0%.

06 LIQUIFY FILTER

Once again, as part of fixing the technical issues first, use Filter>Liquify and the Forward Warp tool to push in the ears, as they are hanging out too far. Also bring the hair down on the right side as it appears too high. Lower the right shoulder as well so it is a bit more even with the left side. Because of the camera lens, she appears to have an elongated forehead. Use Liquify to bring her hairline down. Lastly, her chin can be dropped a bit lower as well.

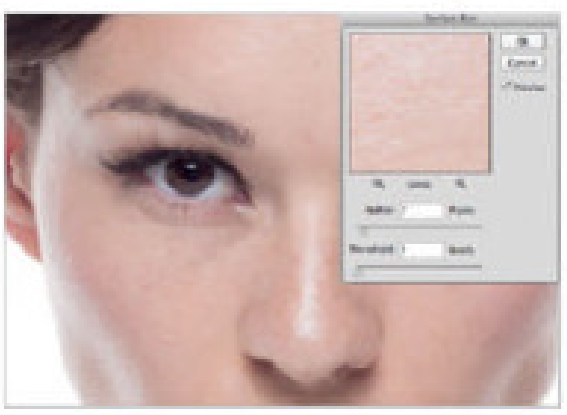


07 TONAL CHANGES

It's easier to fix the technical issues like perspective, noise, and sharpening first. Target these types of items before thinking about the minor blemishes. There is extra work in fixing these after you have already started cloning. Tonal Range and colour are also general items that might need adjusting. This image only needs some contrast. Use Layers>New Adjustment Layer>Curves to make a simple S-shaped curve to boost the contrast a little. The overall colour is already correct right out of the camera because of the proper lighting.

08 SMOOTH TEXTURES

A common area of correction is the lighting on a model's skin. This image appears to have over-detailed pores with the lights and shadows across her forehead. Create a duplicate layer and use Surface Blur with a Radius of 7 and Threshold of 5 to remove the shine's excess contrast on her forehead. You will also need to create a Layer>Layer Mask>Hide All. Click on the black layer mask and use a white brush to reveal the effect exclusively on her forehead.



QUICK TIP

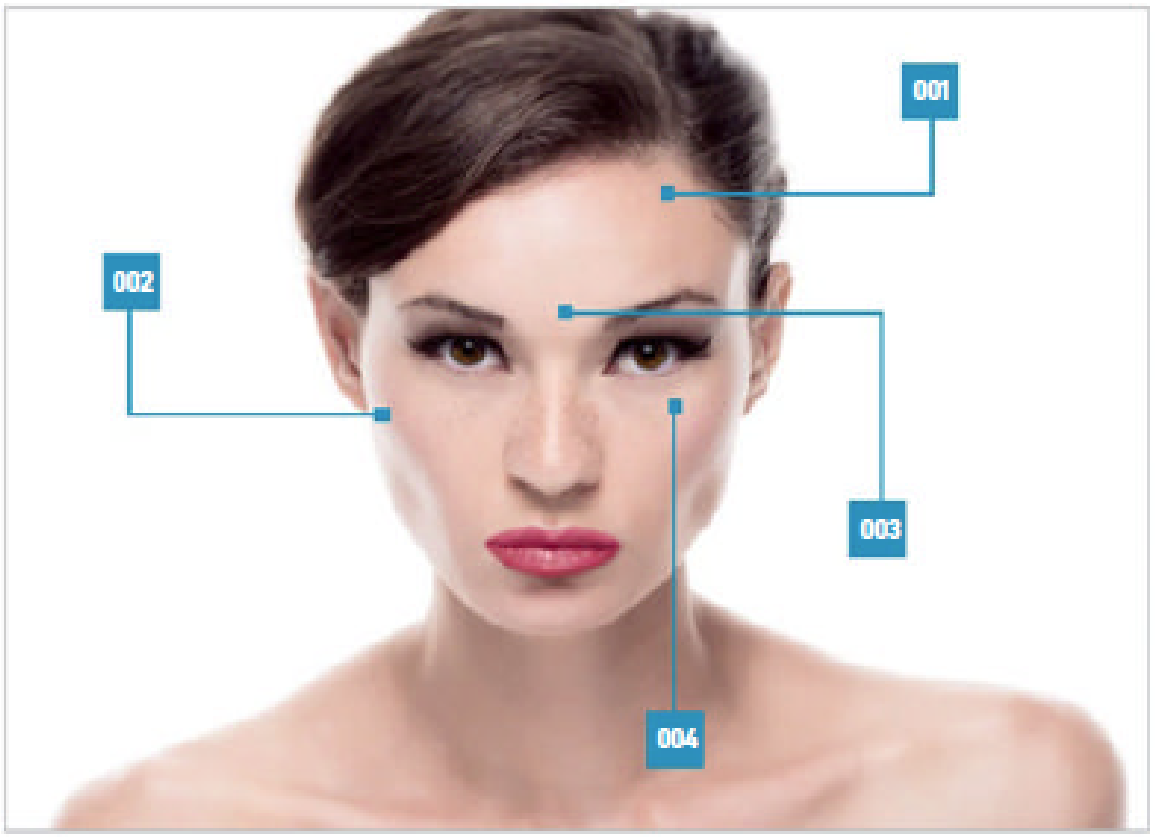
Remember that it is an easier workflow to tackle the technical issues first, like perspective, de-noise and sharpening. Follow up with issues like tone and colour second. Only after is when you should focus on the retouching details like cloning, dodge and burn, and other light-sculpting techniques.

WORK ON THE SKIN

REMOVE THE BLEMISHES WITH CLONING AND HEALING

09 | MACRO BEFORE THE MICRO

Don't just work on one topic at a time. Keep moving around and fixing things as you go. If you do all the skin work at once, you will likely do too much. By using multiple layers for each pass, you will have greater flexibility when it comes to revising previous changes.

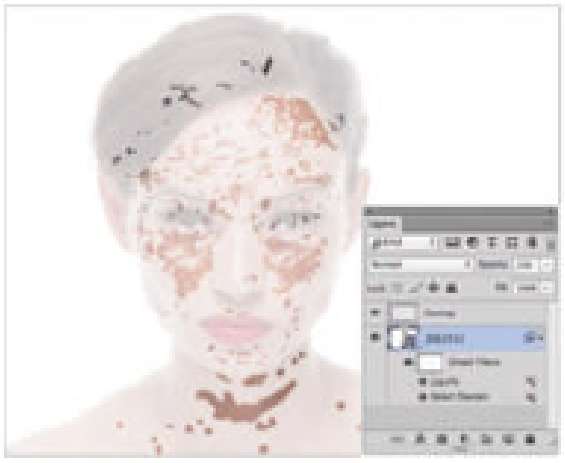


001 | PREPARE FOR SUCCESS
Start with getting the technical details right. It's best to do things like sharpening and alignment before getting into details

002 | MAKE GENERAL CORRECTIONS
Adjust the tone and colour with adjustment layers before giving the image a first round of cloning and healing

003 | FURTHER ENHANCEMENT
Add depth to the image by correcting the eyes, lips, eyelashes and eyebrows before another round of healing the skin

004 | THE PERFECT PORTRAIT
Work on the details, removing even the smallest flaw. Leave a few minor imperfections to help make it look real



10 | CLONE WITH THE HEALING BRUSH

When satisfied, you can get started on the cloning of the skin. Using a small Healing Brush, at about 8px, will yield great results without sacrificing the details in the skin. For professional work, skin cloning can take an hour or significantly more. Just take it slow and steady. Rushing or using a big brush can lead to repeating patterns or blotchy skin areas. This is where most of your time should be spent. As a first pass, focus on the larger, most obvious blemishes.

> "Your work will be at its best when no one knows you have done anything at all"

11 | LEAVE IMPERFECTIONS

Contrary to what you may think, it's best to leave some imperfections. They will help the believability of other areas that would otherwise look too polished. Common areas to keep in mind are birthmarks, eyebrows and hair. Choose the right imperfect areas to leave in a balanced, orderly fashion. When done properly, they will go unnoticed, and yet add a believability that will allow the viewer to accept the remaining areas as fact.

12 | WHITES OF THE EYES

When it comes to cleaning up the whites of the eyes, the best tool is the Spot Healing brush. When set to Content Aware, it will remove the minor blemishes like the veins without much trouble at all. This is because it works great in these types of small, tight spaces. Use it sparingly though, as it has a tendency to smear the pixels and make things look worse. Keep the curved gradients, and be sure not to make the eyes pure white, as they will look strange.

13 | DARKENED EYES

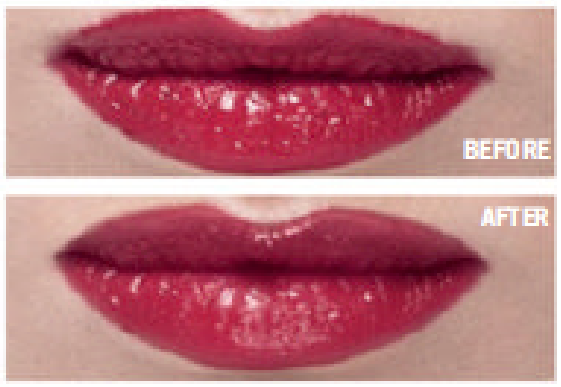
There are many different styles when it comes to retouching the iris. While some prefer them to remain dark, beauty retouching often requires them to be bright and colourful. However, the lighting may be too dark, or reflections in the eyes may not give the best results from the existing iris. With this image, the eyes are very dark, and also have the reflector showing at the bottom. This is when you need to use a similar coloured iris, but shot much brighter to reveal all the details.

REFINE THE DETAILS

CREATE THE PERFECT PORTRAIT

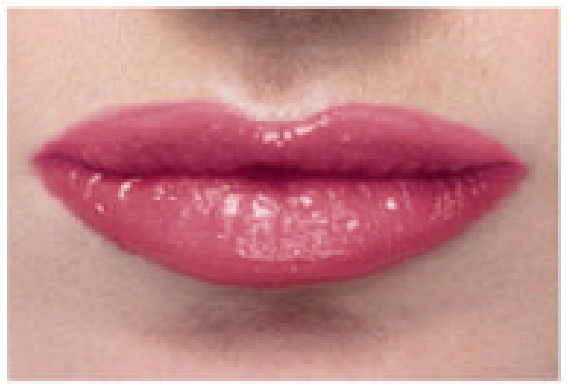
14 REPLACE THE IRIS

Use the Iris.tif image included on FileSilo, and drag the eye layer onto the portrait. Set the eye layer to 75% Opacity, and scale to fit. Bring the Opacity back up to 100%, and apply a layer mask to paint in the areas you want to use, while concealing the rest. Use a Curves adjustment layer on top to adjust the density as desired. You will want to flip the iris for the other eye or rotate so that the pattern is not the same.



15 RETOUCH THE LIPS

For the lips, you will want to keep the details, only soften them. Duplicate the background layer and use a simple Gaussian Blur of 3px. Use a Pen tool to define the outline shape, then turn it into a selection with 5px feathering. After applying the selection to a layer mask with a Layer>Layer Mask> Reveal Selection, you can paint in and out the existing details as desired. With another layer on top, you can also paint in more shine by using a brush with different opacities.

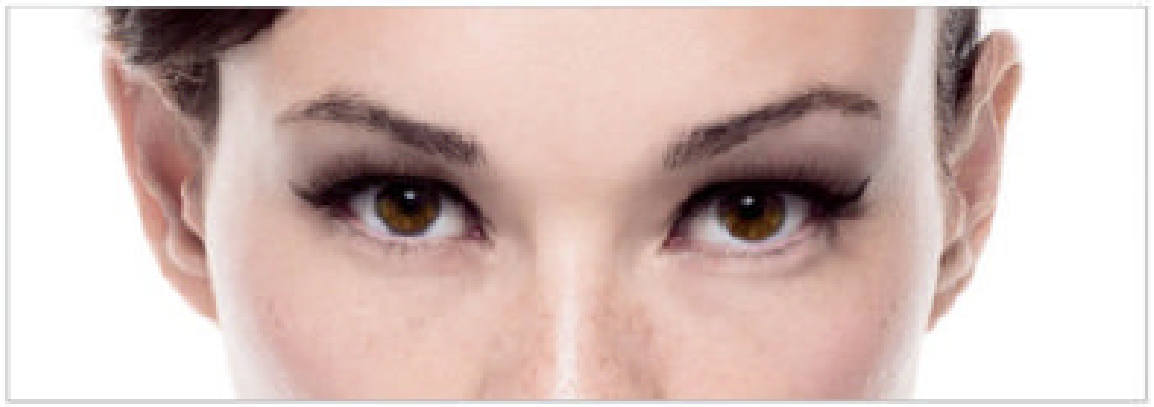


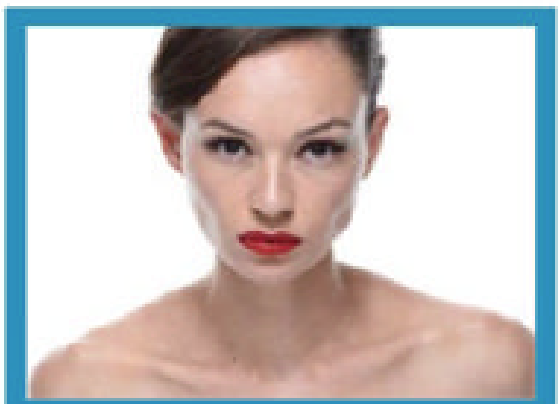
16 COLORIZE THE LIPS

With brushwork for the shine, and cloning to even the outline, the depth and shape are created. Mix up the lipstick colour with Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. By enabling the Colorize checkbox, it's easy to try many different colours in seconds. You may use the same mask as before by holding the Cmd/Ctrl key and clicking on the layer mask previously created around the lips. Click on the Colorize button, and choose a colour that you think looks best.

17 FIX THE EARS

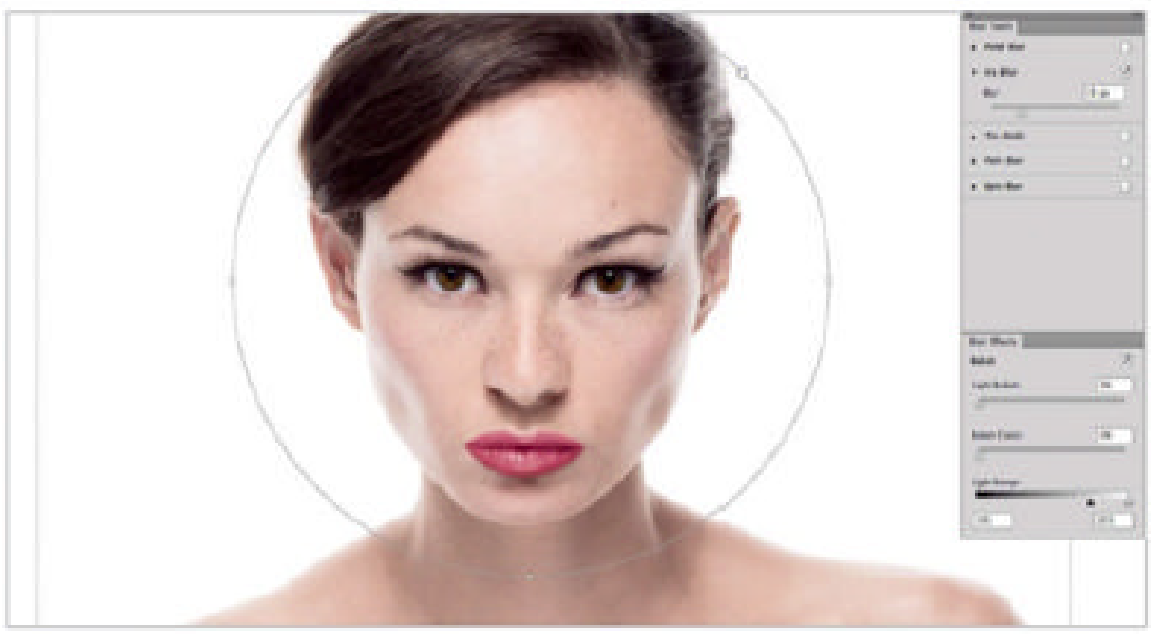
Because the ears are so thin, any light from behind will give them a red cast. The easiest way to correct this is by using the Lasso tool with a 10px feathering to trace around the ears. Then go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Selective Color to create the new adjustment, and apply your selection as a layer mask. With the colour, select the reds, and depending on previous adjustments in Camera Raw, adjust the cyan to be +8, magenta to be -21 and yellow to be -11.





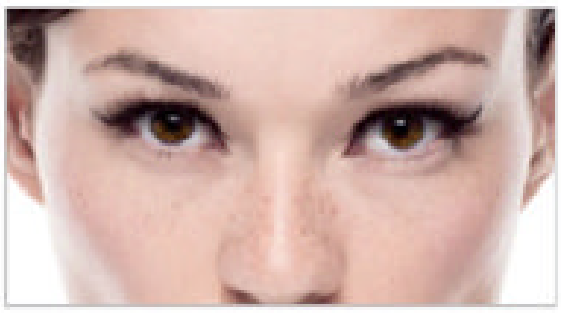
VIDEO TUTORIAL

Retouching portraits involves many different steps, and comes in many different styles. Fashion, beauty, and studio are just a few of the different ways portraits can be retouched. Each one has its own unique look and feel. Would you like to view a behind the scenes video of how this image was actually created? With the link below, you will be taken through all the various steps, layers and techniques involved with creating this image. Please go to **www.TheArtofRetouching.com/APM132** for more details.



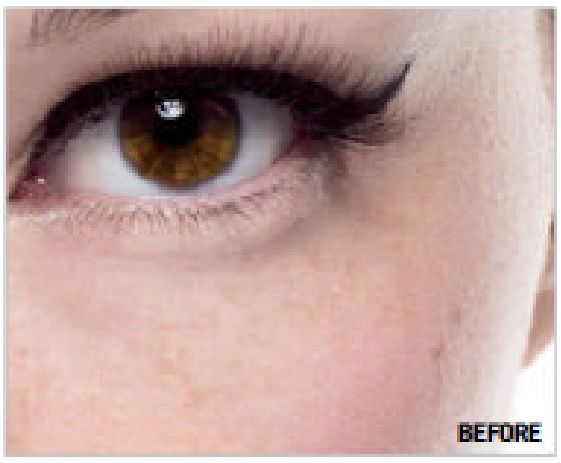
18 DEPTH OF FIELD

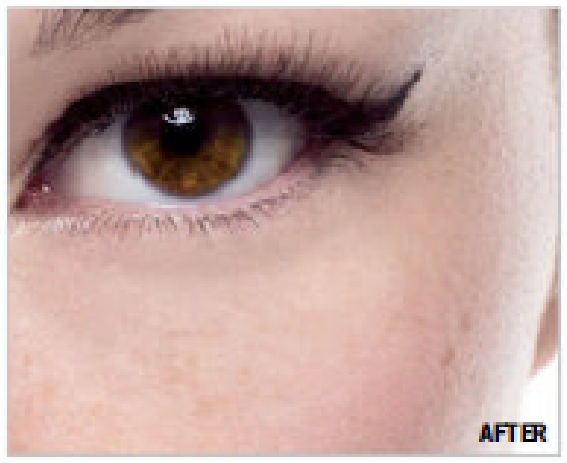
When the image allows it, get a little creative. On the background layer, apply an Iris Blur of 15px. Make it centered on the bridge of her nose, and large enough to come halfway through her hair. This does three things. First, it adds depth of field around the back of the model's head and gives visual interest. Next, it eliminates excess details below the shoulders that could be distracting. Finally, it greatly reduces the amount of time needed to remove random flyaway hairs.



19 ELIMINATE BLEMISHES

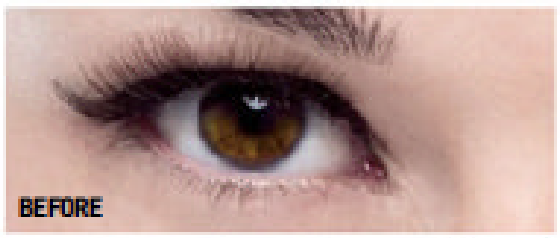
In a previous step you worked on general cloning for the obvious blemishes on the skin. Now it is time to go back in and do some more, but with a finer level of detail. Start cloning on a new blank layer, and move around the skin with the Healing Brush to eliminate the some more of the blemishes. Try to avoid making the image look overly processed. Leave some impurities, so that the overall results will look more natural.

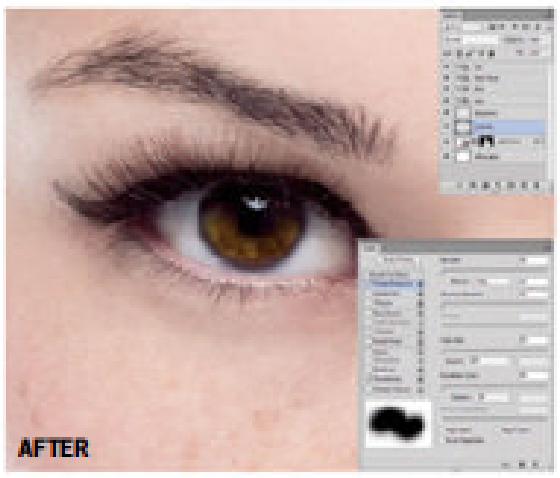




20 DETAILED CLONING AND HEALING

It's time to really evaluate the finer skin-related issues. The best results will likely come from zooming in at 200%-400%, and using a 1-3px Clone Stamp brush at 10% Opacity; your source being a light area, and your destination being a darker pixel. By slowly lightening the darker pixels, you will gradually lighten the overall darker section. Do the same with overly bright pixels. Source a darker area, and slowly build up the density. Doing this at a professional level is incredibly time-consuming, but worth the effort.



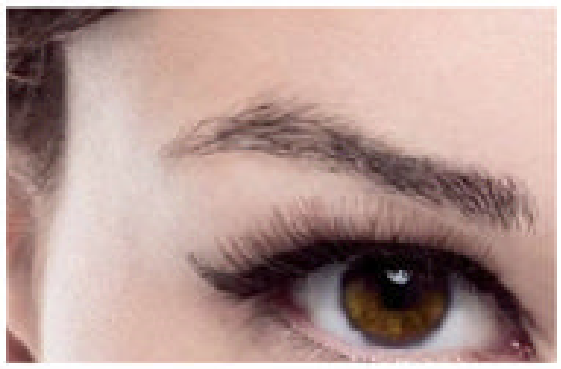


21 ADJUST THE EYELASHES

For the eyelashes, set your brush to a size of 3px and hardness of 80%. Select a dark grey/brown colour from the existing lash area. Open your Window>Brush Palette and select Brush Dynamics. Change Control to Fade, set to 40. This will allow you to draw in some additional eyelashes, filling in the spaces. Adjust the value of 40 to be higher or lower as needed. You may also want to adjust the brush Opacity as well. When finished, be sure to change Control back to Off.

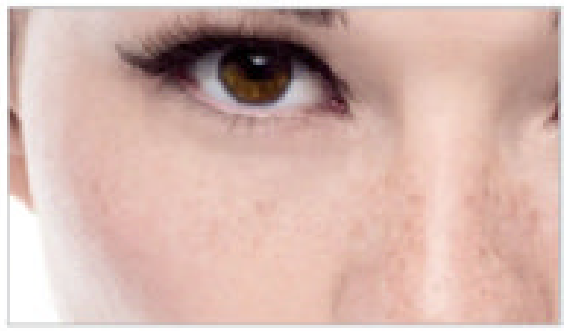
QUICK TIP

Which facial features need to be kept, and which should be removed? When faced with imperfections in beauty retouching, take them out. The same imperfections in portrait retouching might be left in. Be careful what you take away though. Temporary blemishes can be removed, but lifelong marks should be retained.



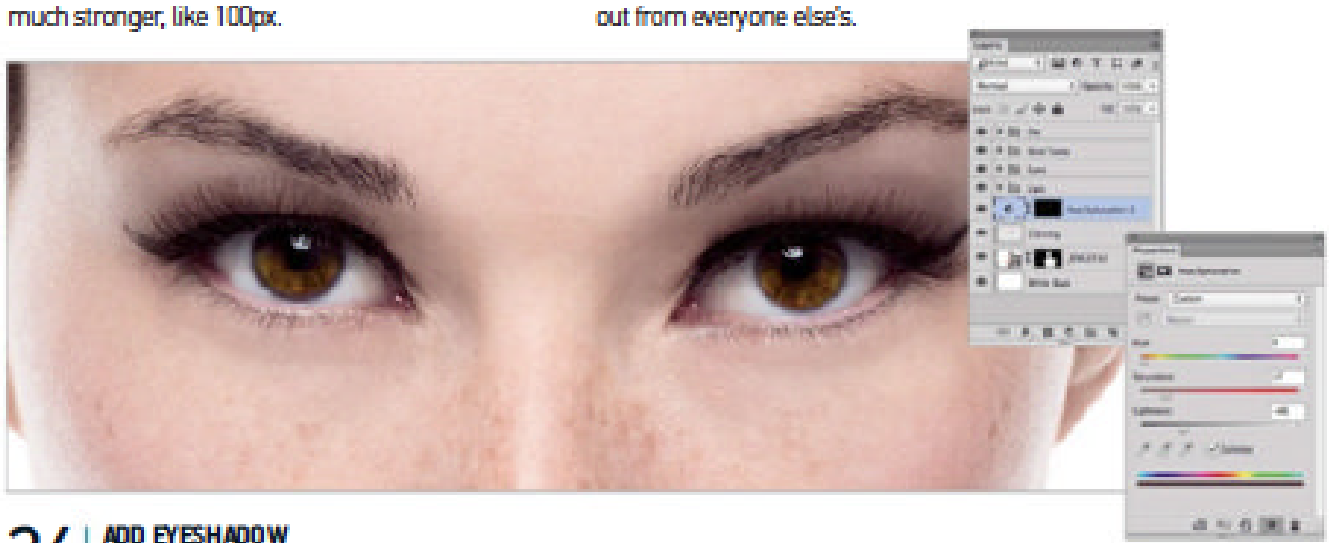
22 CORRECT THE EYEBROWS

You may find that the eyebrows need refinement as well. Before starting, look at some images to find examples of what well-manicured ones look like. Use this as reference while you work. Various techniques can be employed. Often, you will want to use the Clone Stamp to remove any random hairs to help define the overall shape. Similar to the eyelashes, you can use a brush to paint back in missing hairs. This time you can make the Fade much stronger, like 100px.



23 FINE DETAILS

A true test of patience is the final detail work. Now that the image looks mostly complete, rest a few minutes, then come back with fresh eyes. As you correct the image, the more other areas become obvious. Which sections look over-worked, and which ones still look undone? Decide if anything still looks uneven. Removing darkness under the eyes and other discolourations pixel-for-pixel can get very tedious. But it's this high attention to detail that will make your work stand out from everyone else's.



24 ADD EYESHADOW

Something retouchers need to do once in a while is to add extra makeup. It helps if you have some training, even if you are male! Like anything else, it is a skill and an art that requires practice. To add some eyeshadow above her eyes, use a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer like you did for the lips. Using the same techniques described earlier, softly paint on the layer mask with a 20% Opacity brush set to 20% Feathering, and reveal the shade of colour you created.