

Imaging Techniques – Using the Dodge and Burn Tools

Better control using the Dodge and Burn tools:

The Toolbox Dodge and Burn tools are useful tools but offer control limitations. The following tutorial will make use of the Dodge and Burn tools but with a level of control just not possible using them directly. Also you will not damage the image pixels in anyway.

It's often necessary to tweak Highlights and Shadows within the image. Using blend modes is a great alternative but the Dodge and Burn tools can be used directly to lighten or darken some selective regions of the image and using the next imaging technique makes this easy.

Using the Dodge and Burn tools:

1. Open an image that you want to Dodge and Burn.
2. Open the Layers palette and click the pop-up menu (right facing triangle top right of Layer palette).
3. Choose New Layer from the list. Or hold down the Alt key and click the 'Create new layer' icon to bring up the same New layer dialog box.
4. In the New Layer dialog box change the Mode to **Overlay** and then click the '**Fill with Overlay-neutral color (50%) Grey**'. This will normally be greyed out.
5. This will create a new layer, filled with 50% grey that is placed immediately above your background layer.
6. You will see a grey thumbnail in the layers palette that currently is having no effect on your image.
7. Select a Brush from the Toolbox, choose a large soft-edge brush.
8. Move to the Options bar and lower the brush Opacity to around 25% to 30%. (gives better control).
9. Change the Foreground/Background colours to default by either clicking the colour picker bent arrow or press the letter '**D**' on the keyboard.
10. Then press the '**X**' key so your Foreground colour is set to **White**. Pressing '**X**' is a great shortcut for switching Foreground and Background colours.
11. Move into your image and start to paint over areas that you want to **Dodge** (make lighter). As you paint you will see marks appear on your 50% grey layer thumbnail and in the image window you will start to see light image detail where you have painted.
12. You can release the mouse at any time and restart painting to apply further dodging to the same area to tone it down further. Having the brush opacity set low allows for greater control that can be changed at anytime.
13. You can also fine tune your dodging by dragging the layer (grey thumbnail) Opacity slider to lower the intensity of the effect.
14. If you have areas within the image that need to be darkened (Burn) then switch to **Black** as your Foreground colour. Press '**D**' to do this or click the bent colour picker arrow.
15. Now paint over areas within your image that need darkening. Again adjust the thumbnail Opacity as required and also keep the brush opacity low so the effect is applied gently.
16. You can switch back and forth from Dodging to Burning during a single session. Just change the Foreground and Background colours from White (to Dodge) and Black (to Burn).