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Photoshop Elements >

Clone Stamp Tool > 1 - Basics

Cloning versus Healing

The Clone Stamp tool and the Healing Brush tools do similar actions.

What's the difference between the two tools?

The Clone Stamp tool **covers** another part of the photograph with the sampled area.

In contrast, the Healing Brush tools **blend** the sampled area with an area on the photograph.

Do You Need to Cover or Blend?

Use the Healing Brush tool when you're retouching a face.

You'll probably want to blend the sampled area with the retouching area.

The blending helps to camouflage the retouching.

If the area to be retouched is unsightly, then it should be covered up completely.

Use the Clone Stamp tool to cover an area with the sampled area.

The Clone Stamp tool can be used to cover:

- Dust marks, rips, and fold marks.
- Distracting objects, such as stray hairs and telephone wires.
- Distracting areas, such as brown grass, a bright patch of sky in trees, glare on a face, and lens flare.
- A closed eye with an eye from someone else in a group photograph, or from the same person from another photograph in which he or she isn't blinking.

Use Both

The edges of cloned areas may be apparent.

If so, use the Healing Brush to blend these obvious edges with the rest of the photograph.

Mulch Example

Let's replace the mulch in the background of the photograph below with green grass.

Be sure to check off as you go along.



The above photograph is by RHP.

Preparation

- 1) Preserve your original file.

If you haven't already done so, go to [Preserve Your Original File](#).

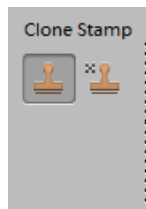
- 2) Create a Background copy layer.

If you haven't already done so, go to [Create a Background Copy Layer](#).

- 3) Zoom in to enlarge the section where retouching is needed.

Setting Up

- 4) Select the Clone Stamp tool.



- 5) Select a brush size that's smaller than the area to be retouched.

Again, use a small brush.

The Clone Stamp tool works best when you click the brush many times on the area to be retouched.

- 6) If needed, use a feathered brush.

You'll probably need little or no feathering.

If you haven't already done so, go to [Feathered Brush](#).

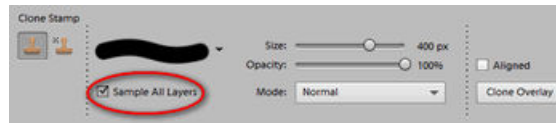
- 7) Usually, make sure **Aligned**, in [options bar/Tool Options](#), is **deselected**.

When **Aligned** is selected, the sampled area moves in tandem with the cursor.

When **Aligned** is deselected, the sampled area doesn't move with the cursor.

If you haven't already, go to [Aligned](#).

- 8) Usually, make sure Sample All Layers, in options bar/Tool Options, is selected.



Occasionally, you may have something on a layer that will interfere with cloning.

If so, deselect the eye icon of the offending layer.

Or, deselect Sample All Layers in options bar/Tool Options.

Blank Layer Above Levels

- 9) Make sure the Levels adjustment layer is active (highlighted).

- 10) Create a blank layer.

Layer 1 appears above the Levels adjustment layer.

Layer 1 (Blank layer)
Levels adjustment layer
Background copy
Background

Layer 1 (Blank layer)

The cloned pixels will be pasted onto Layer 1, a blank layer.

There are many advantages to using a blank layer.

If you haven't already done so, go to [With Blank Layers](#).

Important

When you create the blank layer for cloning, make sure it's above the Levels adjustment layer.

If the blank layer is below the Levels adjustment layer, the cloning will get a double dose of the Levels.

Go to [Clone Stamp Tool Problem](#).

Rename

- 11) Rename Layer 1 as Cloning.

Cloning

- 12) Make sure the Cloning layer is active (highlighted).

- 13) Center the brush (the black circle) on the photograph where you want to sample.

- 14) Press Alt (Option on a Mac) and **hold**.

The cursor will change to a bulls-eye when your press and hold Alt (Option).

- 15) Click.

You've sampled the area.

- 16) Release the mouse button.

- 17) Position the brush (the black circle) on the area of the photograph that you want to retouch.

- 18) Click.

The sampled area is pasted on the photograph.

- 19) Repeat the above cloning steps as needed.

Before & After

Here's the original and the retouched photograph.



Before



After

Tips

Sample Often

Sample often!

Sample Nearby

Sample near the area to be cloned!

Small Brush

As mentioned, a small brush produces better results than a large brush.

Click & Drag?

You can click, hold, and drag the Clone Stamp tool brush.

However, a second copy of the photograph may start to appear in the area being retouched.

When you click and drag, it's as if Aligned is selected in options bar/Tool Options.



Saving the Photograph

If you haven't already done so, go to Saving Files.

The next section discusses ways to refine the operation of the Clone Stamp tool.

1 Next

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