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Learn Photography

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Photoshop Elements >

Sharpening >

1 - High Pass Filter Sharpening

Four Advantages

High Pass Filter Sharpening has four advantages:

1) Fewer steps

2) Only the edges are affected, where sharpening is most needed.

Expanses of even tones and colors, where sharpening isn't needed, are ignored.

3) Noise is not sharpened.

4) Selective sharpening, applying sharpening to only certain areas, is easy.

How It Works

High-pass sharpening works like this.

1) Edges are located like the Find Edges filter (Filter > Stylize > Find Edges).

2) The Overlay blending mode lightens lighter edges and darkens darker edges.

The contrast is increased along the edges, which we see as sharper.

Be sure to check off as you go along.

☐

Preparation

☐ 1) Make a composite layer.

A composite layer contains all of the layers of your photograph.

Do the following.

a) Deselect the eye icons on the layers you don't want to merge.

b) Make sure the top layer is active (highlighted).

c) Select > All.

d) Edit > Copy Merged.

e) Edit > Paste.

If you haven't already done so, go to Composite Layer.

Sharpening

☐ 2) Make sure the composite layer is active (highlighted).

☐ 3) Remove the color (desaturate) from the composite layer.

Go to Enhance > Adjust Color > Remove Color, or press Shift + Ctrl + u.

☐ 4) Change the blending mode for the composite layer from Normal to Overlay.

Blending Mode?

At the top of the layers stack, look for the unlabeled Blending Mode box.

It's to the left of the Opacity box.

If you're new to blending modes, go to Blending Modes.

☐ 5) Go to Filter > Other > High Pass.

☐ 6) Enter a radius value of 3 and click OK.

3 is the maximum sharpening value.

You may need to reduce the sharpening.

Use Opacity

A landscape may look good with more sharpening.

If you're working on a portrait, reduce the sharpening.

☐ 7) To do so, lower the opacity of the composite layer.

Other Blending Modes

You can also reduce the sharpening by using Soft Light, or increase it with Hard Light, instead of the Overlay blending mode.

Evaluate the Sharpening

Go to Evaluating Sharpening.

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The next section discusses **selective** sharpening.

You can apply sharpening to parts of a photograph.

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