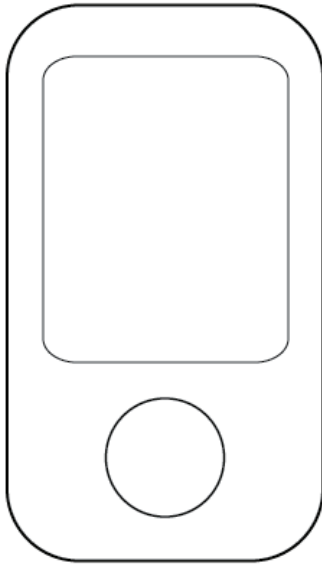# Creating a Brushed Aluminum Look in Photoshop

There are many ways to create material textures in Photoshop. In addition to using primarily the blending tool, you can also use filters to create textures. In this tutorial, the objective is to create a brushed aluminum look from a basic line drawing using Photoshop filter patterns such as noise and blur.
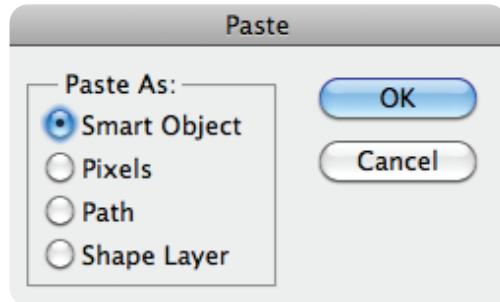
Vector Line Drawing

Photoshopped Image

prepared by Allison Hwang for T. Purdy

ID@GT

Creating a Brushed Aluminum Look in Photoshop

For this tutorial, we will start off by placing an Illustrator vector into Photoshop. One method by which you can do this is to just copy and paste your vector directly from your Illustrator file to a new file in Photoshop.

When you perform this action, Photoshop will prompt you this box. Both the Smart Object or Pixels choices are fine. Click OK.

Go ahead an make any changes to your Smart Object now, whether it is resizing or location placement. Once you are satisfied, hit enter. (If you ever want to go back and change the size or location, you can always hit Ctrl + T)

We now have our vector drawing placing into photoshop. You screen will probably look similar to this screenshot on the right.
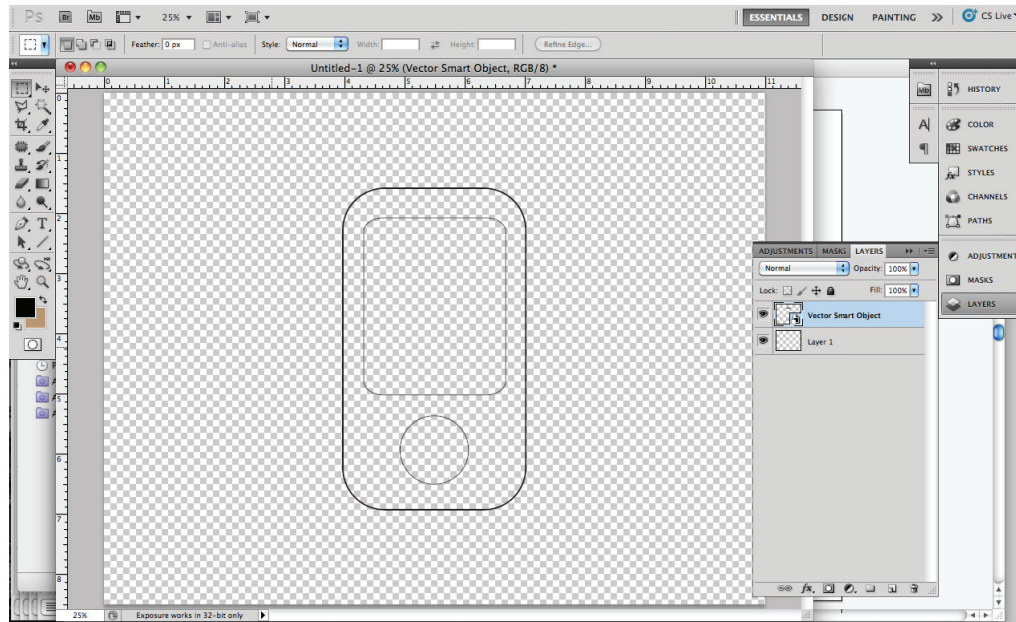
Creating a Brushed Aluminum Look in Photoshop
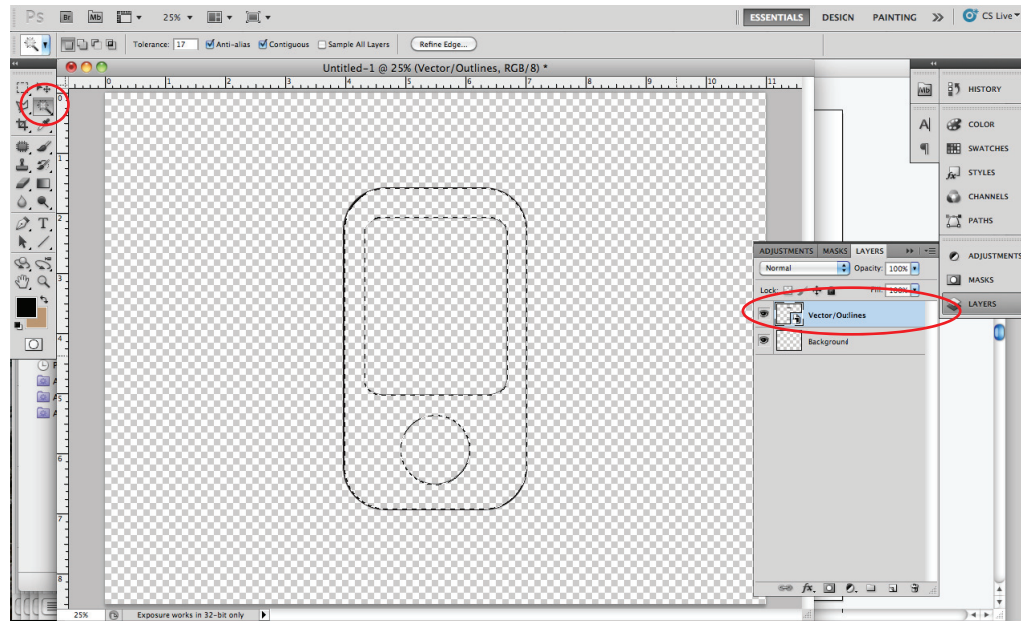
Next, we want to select the area in which we would like to apply the aluminum look to. Make sure you are on the correct layer. Using the Magic Want Tool (W), select the face plate area. Dotted ants will indicate the area you have selected. Create a layer mask with the selection.

Fill the selected area with any color. The color will not matter as it does not affect the final look.

(Sidenote: if you would like to have a colored aluminum piece, go ahead an select that color)

Next, select Blending Options. You can access this by either 1) going to the upper right hand icon in the layer's tab or 2) double-clicking on your layer.

Check Gradient Overlay and click on the tab to access the settings.

Select Normal as your Blend Mode (or Multiply if you want colored aluminum). For my two-color gradient, I have used 10% and 50% gray.
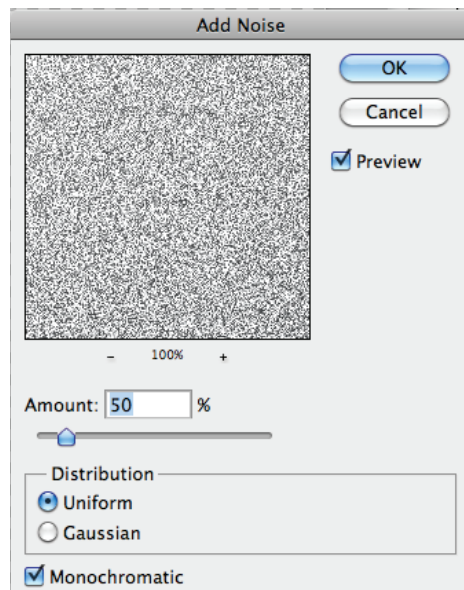
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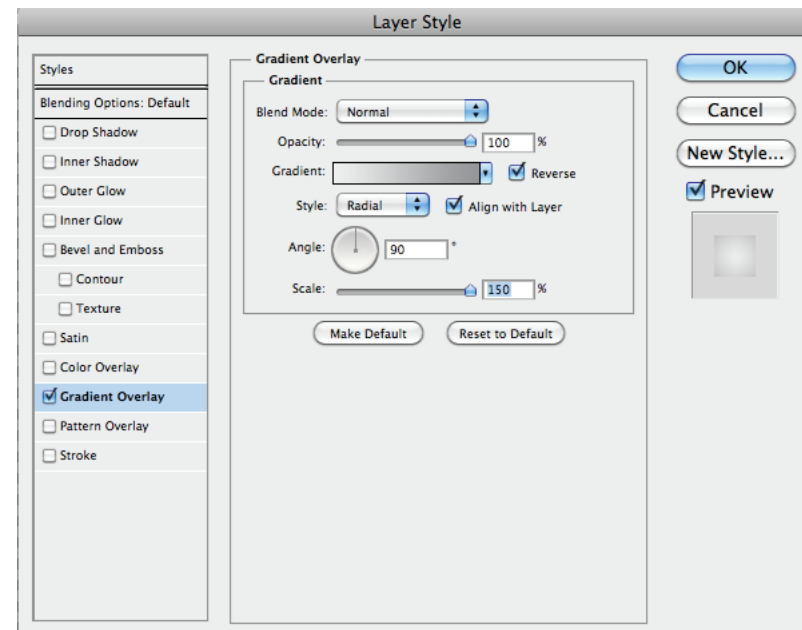
Creating a Brushed Aluminum Look in Photoshop

Next, duplicate the Face Plate layer and add a new layer underneath the Face Plate Copy.

Clicking on Face Plate Copy, press Ctrl+E. This will merge your empty layer and the duplicate copy together.

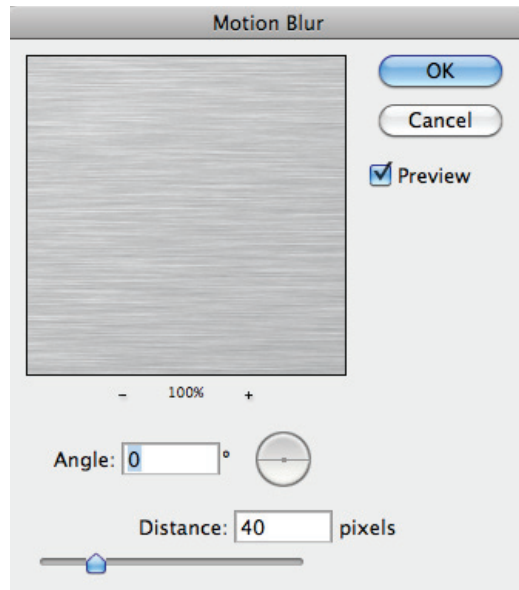Now we are able to apply filters to the copied layer.

To add noise, go to Filter > Noise> Add Noise

Adjust the amount of noise to your desired level. Make sure "Uniform" is selected and check "monochromatic"

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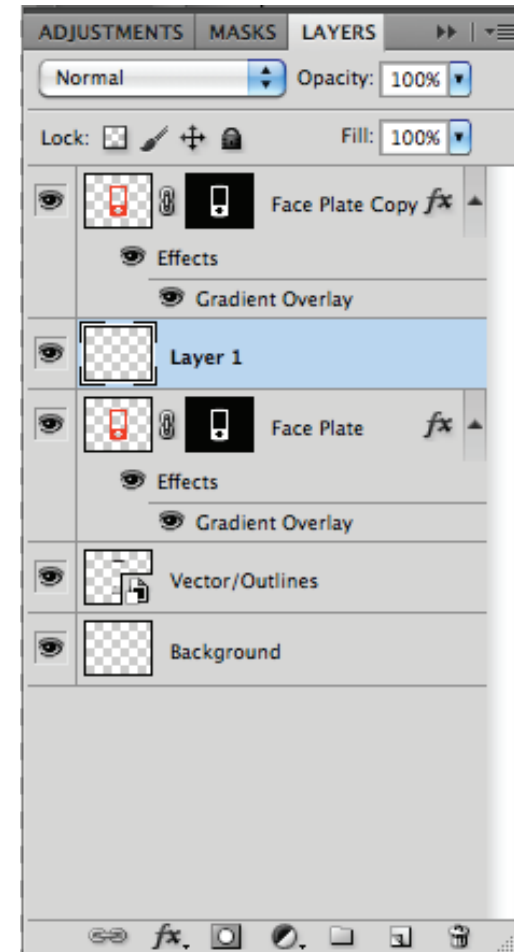
Creating a Brushed Aluminum Look in Photoshop
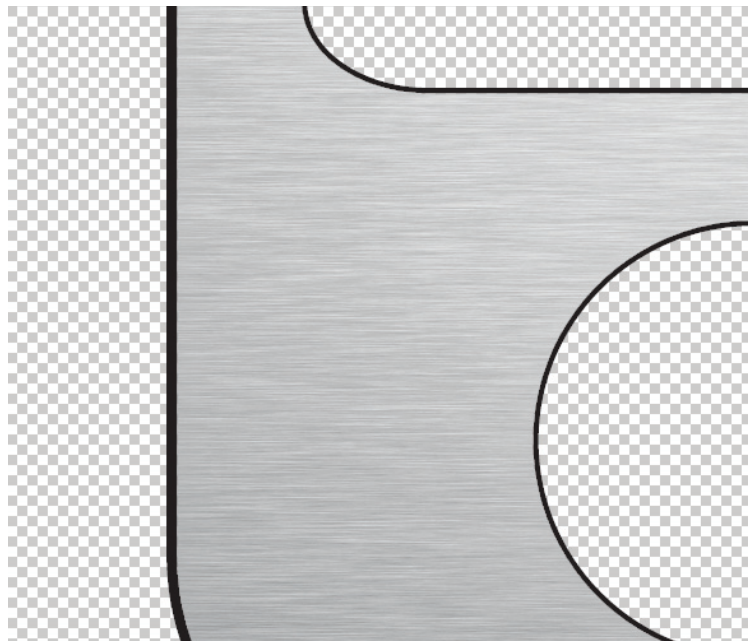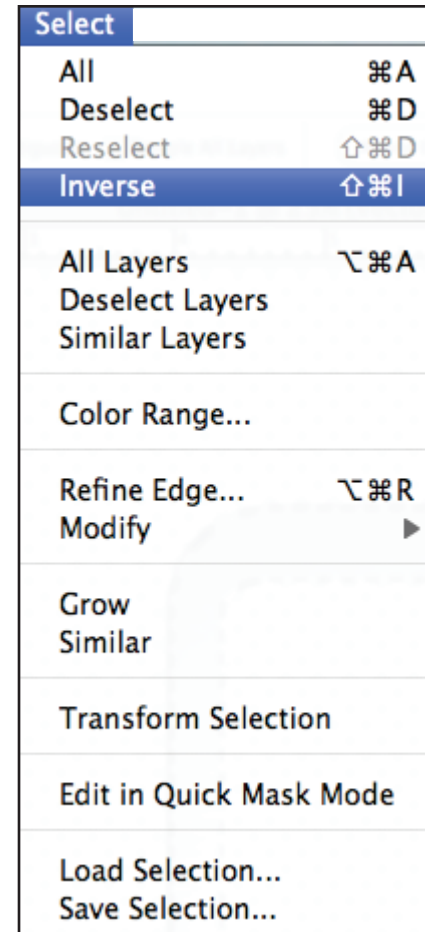
Now we want to add a motion blur.
Filter> Blur> Motion Blur
You can adjust the amount of blur to your desire.

You might notice now that your motion blur effect also shows outside your vector lines.

To clean up, select the inverse area.
Select > Inverse

Once the area outside of the face plate is selected, you can hit Delete or Edit> Clear.

This is what your brushed aluminum area should look like (or similar to).
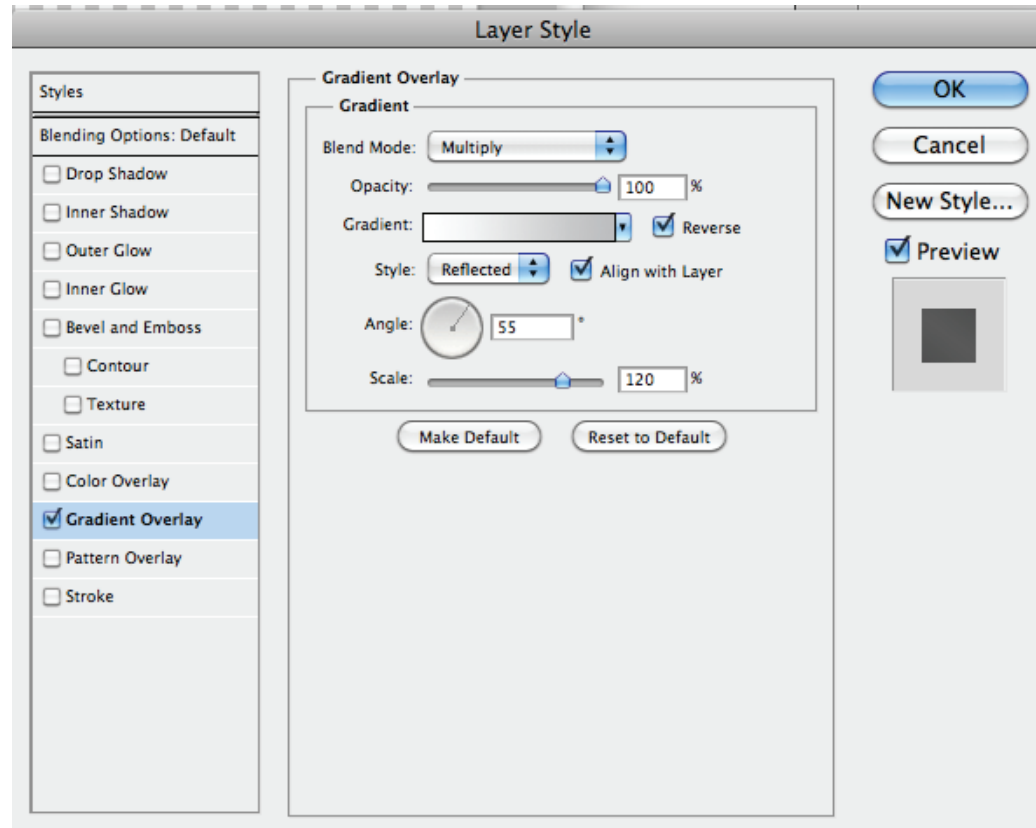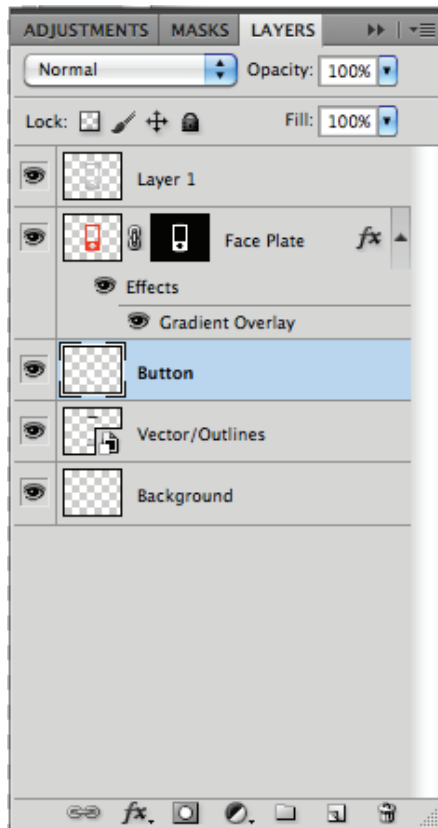
Creating a Brushed Aluminum Look in Photoshop

Now we are going to create a contrasting aluminum look for the button/dial area.

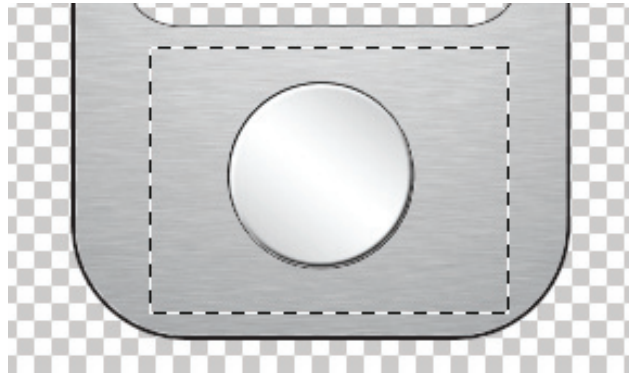Make sure you are on the original vector layer. Next, select the button area with the wand tool.

With the area still selected, create a new layer for the button and fill it with any color.

Then go the Blending Options and apply a gradient overlay.

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Creating a Brushed Aluminum Look in Photoshop

Create a separate layer called "Button Noise" ABOVE the button layer and fill the area with white. Change the blending mode to Multiply.

Highlight the area around the button/dial. Next, go to Filter > Pixelate > Mezzotint. Select Grainy Dots and hit OK. After you have apply the pixelation, go to Filter > Blur> Radial Blur.

Finally, change the layer opacity to 50%

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Creating a Brushed Aluminum Look in Photoshop

prepared by Allison Hwang for T. Purdy
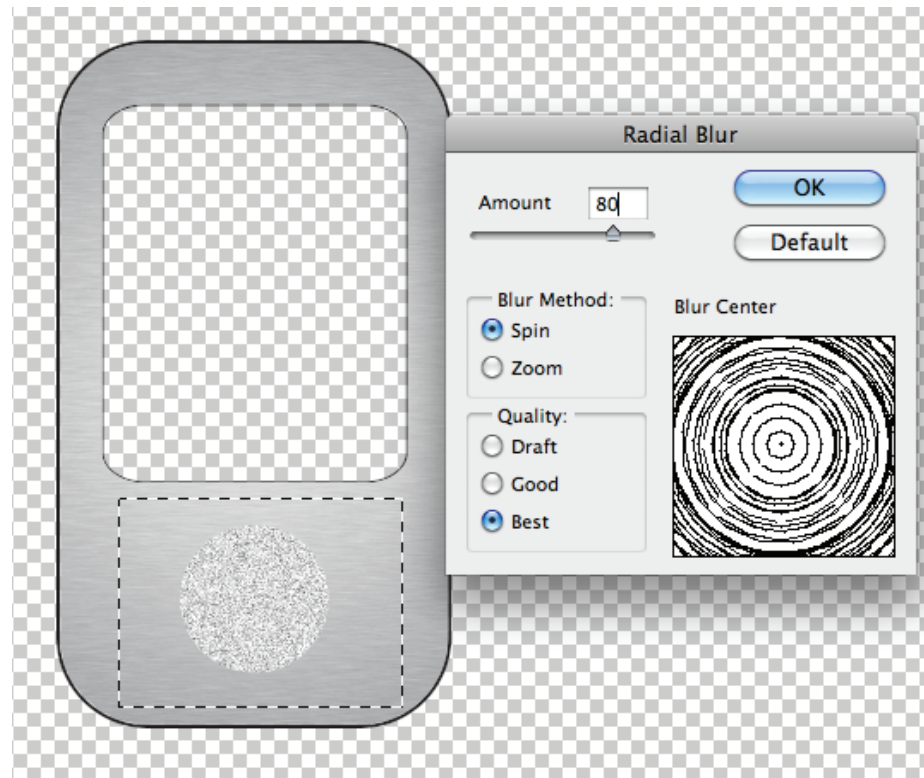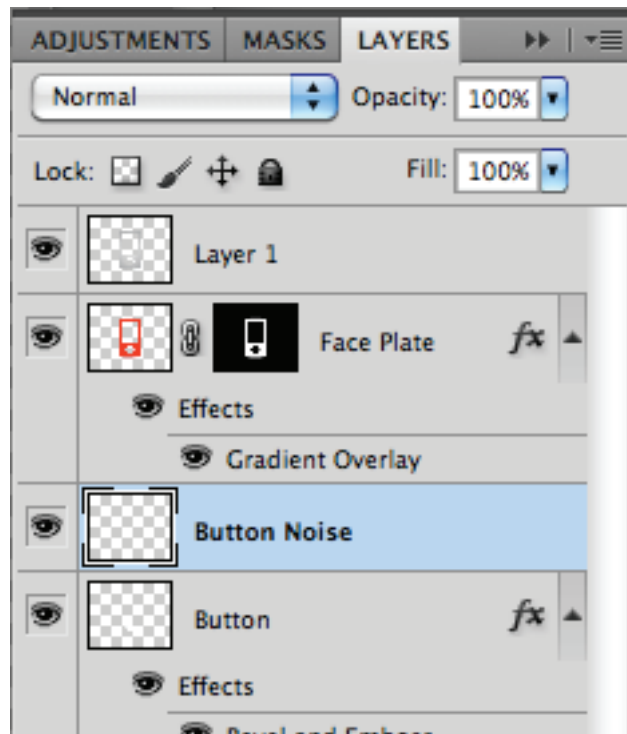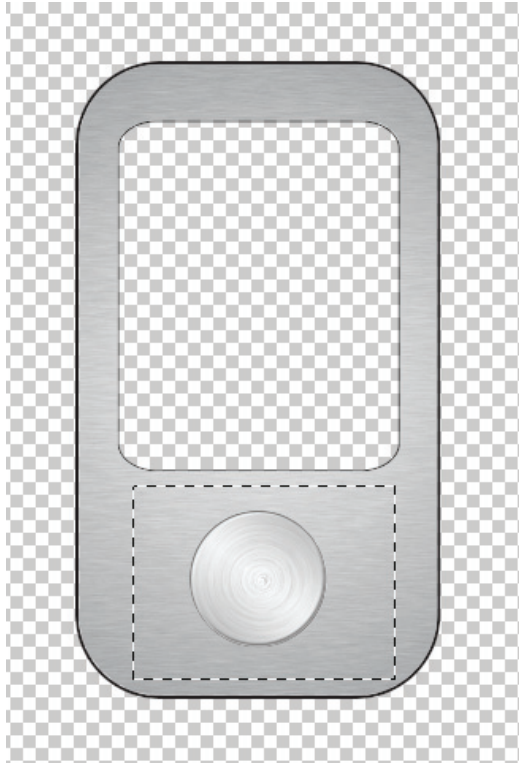
We now should have a product similar to the one on the left.

To give our button the appearance of being shiny, create another new layer at the top of the layers list. Select the new layer.

Next, use the pen tool to draw a shape similar to the rays below. After you have finished drawing this shape, we want to select this area.

To do so, make sure your path window is open. If it is not, Window> Paths.

Now select the third icon (Load path as selection) from the left at the bottom of the Paths window.
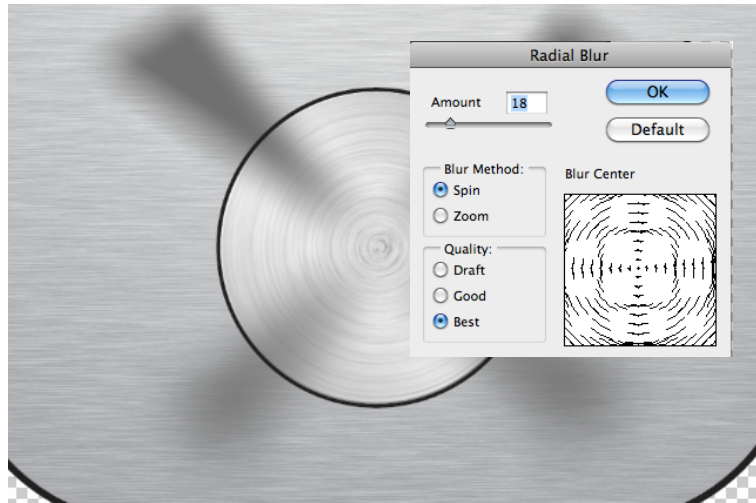
Your shape should be lined with the dotted ants.

Fill the selected area with a dark gray (ex. 80% gray) and then convert the layer to a smart object (right click on the layer).

Now apply a radial blur to the smart object. Select Zoom and Best. Adjust the amount to your desire.
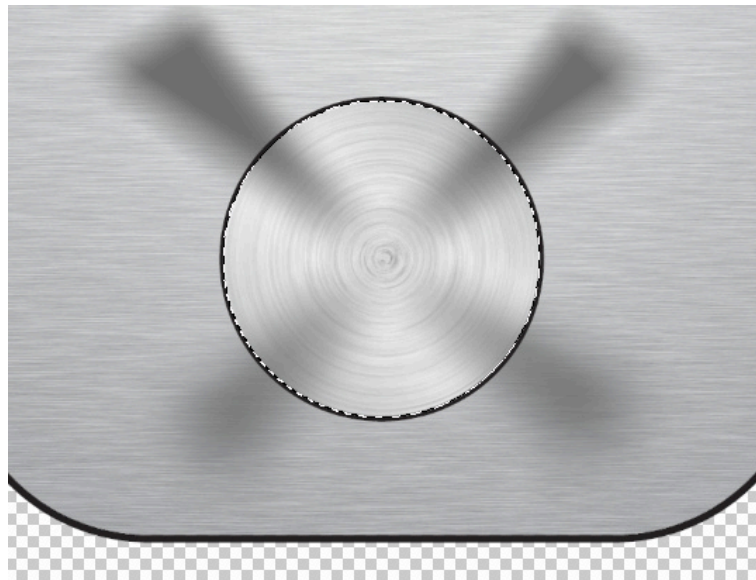
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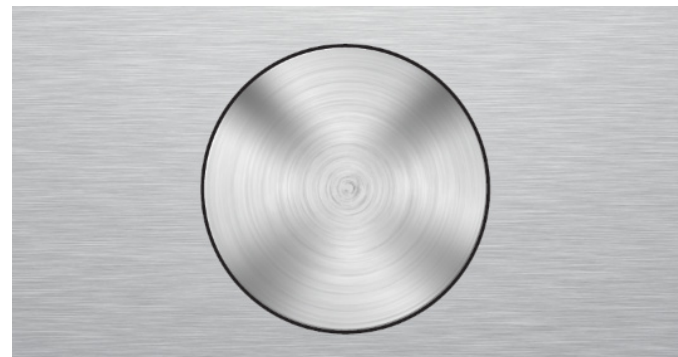# Creating a Brushed Aluminum Look in Photoshop

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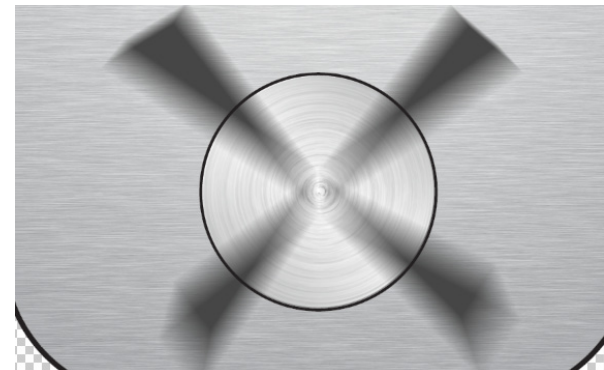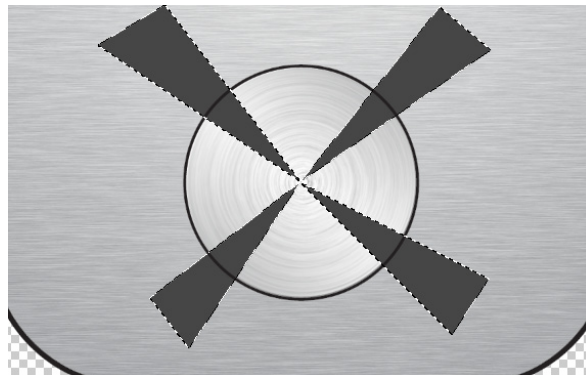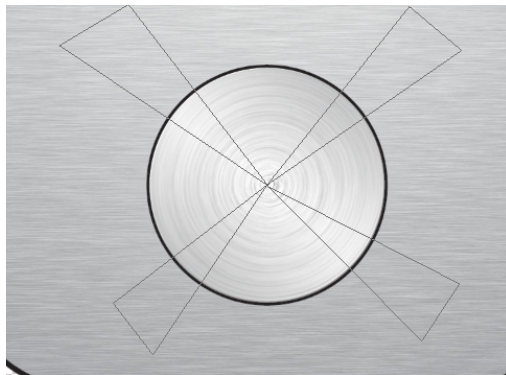
Again, apply another Radial Blur to the smart object.
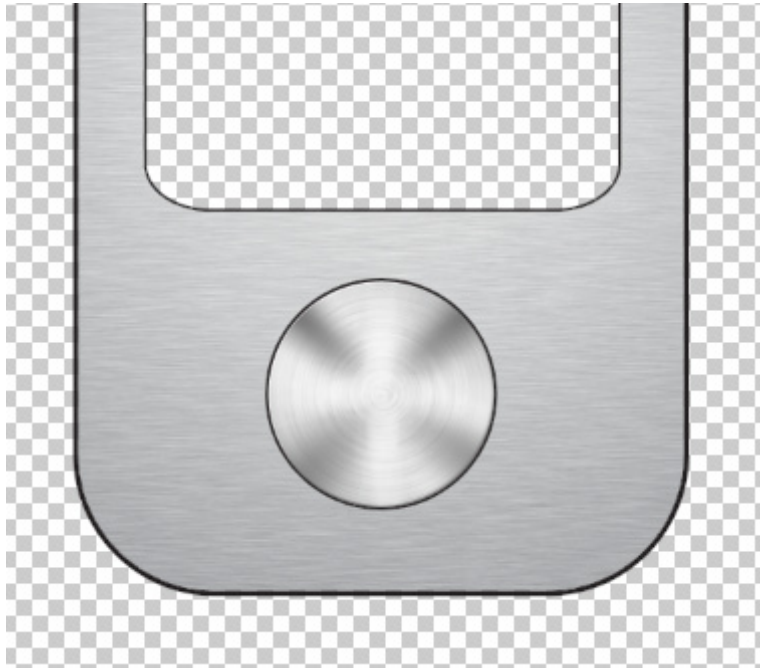This time select Spin instead.

Now, go back to your main button layer to select your button by clicking Layer > Layer Mask > Reveal Selection.

Now your button should be masked and look like the image below.

Creating a Brushed Aluminum Look in Photoshop

Lastly, create another button layer and add highlights to the button area using the brush tool. Once again, make sure only the button area is selected so you do not brush onto the face plate.

Use a white brush and lower the opacity and flow for better control.

You can add on other details such as a screen and or additional buttons to help achieve your effect.

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