

Cleaning Up a Scanned Image in Photoshop

Importing a hard copy of an image to Photoshop using a scanner can be quite handy. However, scanning often degrades the image's quality. The digital version can look flat, washed out, or grainy. Blacks and whites can seem too grey and colors can appear "off". Fortunately, Photoshop has several tools that can address these issues and get your images looking sharp. All the tools are in the Image Menu.

Begin in the File Menu, select Import, and click on your scanner. When scanning, remember that the higher the resolution, the better the scan quality. This also increases the scan time. The higher the dpi (dots per inch) the more you can crop and still have a high quality image. Some people say to always scan at the highest resolution possible. Some people say that for print or web use, there is no need to go beyond 300dpi.

Scanned Image

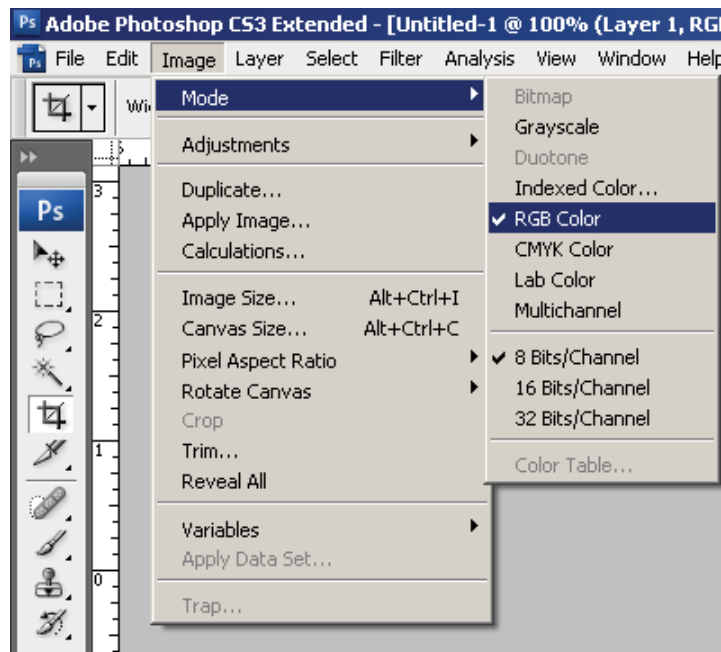


Retouched Digital Image



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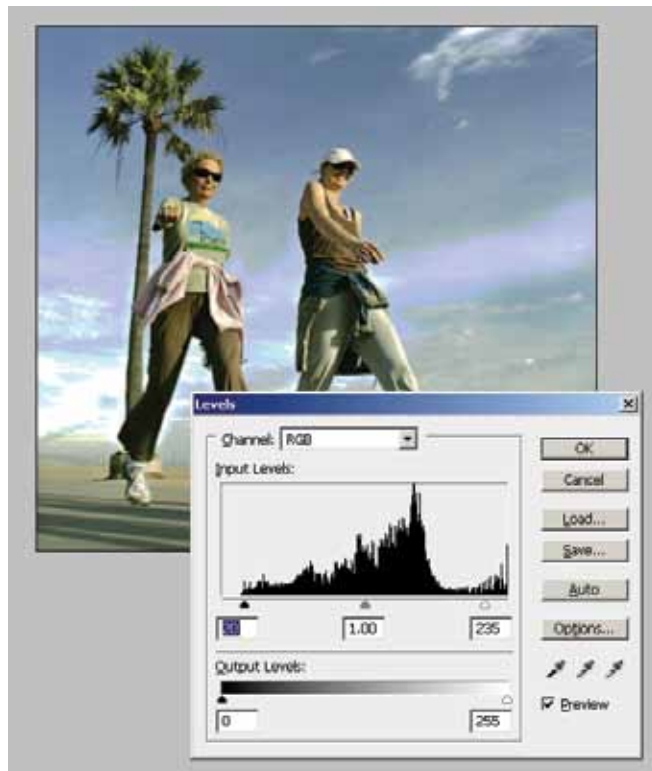
Once it has been imported to Photoshop, make sure the image is in RGB mode. Click **Image Menu>Mode>RGB Color**.



Now you can crop the image as you wish. The **Crop Tool (C)** is in the Tools Window. Click and drag to create a box around what you are keeping. While the ants are marching, you can make adjustments to the crop box. Hit Enter to make the crop.

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Now to adjust the levels. Go to the **Image Menu>Adjustments>Level**. This shows a histogram of the intensity of each tone in the image, from black to white. Our goal is to make your whites true white and your blacks true black by trimming away the noise. This is done by moving the sliders at each end of the histogram towards the center. You can also use the eyedropper to select, from the image, where the real black and the real white are. Be careful not to overexpose or over-darken the image.

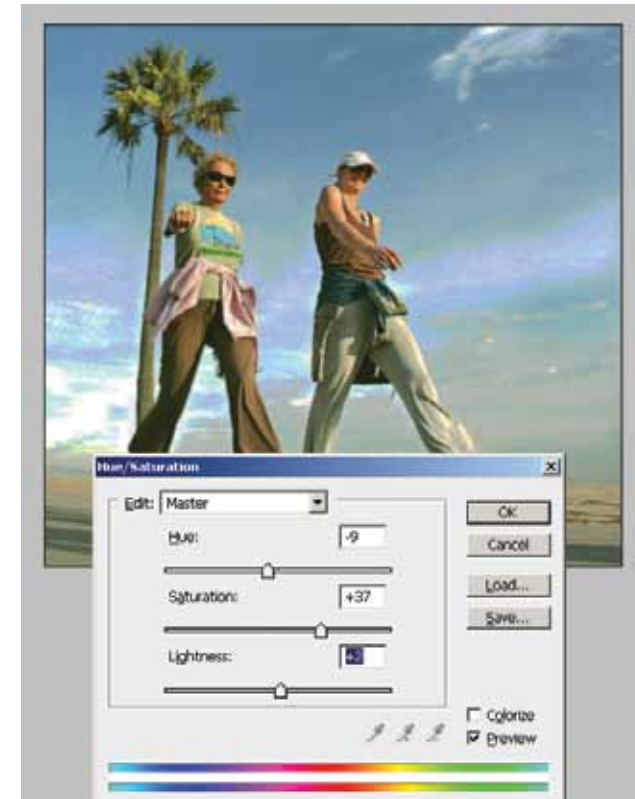


If your image is plain or desaturated, increase the amount of contrast in it. Click **Image Menu>Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast**. When adding contrast, it's good to have a light hand. Contrast can eat a lot of details.

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Colors change when you use a scanner. To fix this, there are several options. **Image>Adjustments>Color Balance** lets you change how the colors mix for Shadows, Midtones, and Highlights separately.

To increase the amount of color generally, use the Saturation slider in **Image>adjustments>Hue/Saturation**. The Hue slider will give you some control over the image's color temperature.



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To tune the amount of CMYK in each color in the image, including in the blacks, whites and neutrals, use **Image>Adjustments> Selective Color**. However, By far, the most powerful way to control your image is to use **Image>Adjustments>Curves**. With Curves you can make adjustments to the whole RGB channel, the Red, the Green or the Blue channel. In the Curves dialog box you can click and drag the default diagonal line that represents normal input and output values. Clicking towards the lower left adjusts shadows. Clicking towards the upper right adjusts highlights, the middle is for midtones. Dragging the line up increases intensity and pulling the line down decreases intensity. Feel free to experiment with all the tool in the **Image Menu**, but remember, when in doubt, you can always take the shortcuts provided by Photoshop: **Auto Levels**, **Auto Color**, and **Auto Contrast**.

