ART 130 / Photography I
Selections & Masking | Mulligan

Making Selections

A selection is a part or segment of your image that you choose to isolate and edit within your image. Instead of making ‘global’ changes (adjustments that affect the entire photograph), you make a selection to create ‘local’ changes (adjustments that only affect the area or pixels you have selected). There are several selection tools in Photoshop, each one is different and works best within given situations.

*Magic Wand:* selects pixels based on tone and color. When you click on an area in the image with the tool, Photoshop looks at the tone and color of the area we clicked on and selects pixels that share the same color and brightness values.

*Quick Selection:* the Quick Selection Tool is somewhat similar to the Magic Wand in that it also selects pixels based on tone and color. But the Quick Selection Tool goes far beyond the Magic Wand’s limited abilities by also looking for similar textures in the image, which makes it great at detecting the edges of objects.

*Lasso:* you simply drag a freehand selection around the object or area you want to select, in a similar way to how you would outline something on a piece of paper with a pen or pencil. With the Lasso Tool selected, your mouse cursor will appear as a small lasso icon, and you
simply click at the spot in the document where you want to begin the selection, then continue holding your mouse button down and drag to draw a freeform selection outline.

*Polygonal Lasso:* Begin by clicking somewhere along the edge of the object or area you need to select, then release your mouse button. This adds a point, commonly called an anchor or fastening point, to the document. As you move the Polygonal Lasso Tool away from the point, you’ll see a thin straight line extending out from your mouse cursor, looking a bit like a spider weaving a web, with the other end of the line attached to the anchor point. Click again to add a second point, then release your mouse button. The line will become "fastened" to the new point, with both points now joined together by the straight line.

*Magnetic Lasso:* unlike the standard Lasso Tool which relies entirely on your own ability to manually trace around the object the Magnetic Lasso Tool is an edge detection tool, meaning that it actively searches for the edge of the object as you’re moving around it, then snaps the selection outline to the edge and clings to it like a magnet. Keep the CAPS lock on for a more accurate guide when using this tool.
Masking

A mask is a selection outline expressed as a grayscale image. Selected areas appear white, deselected areas appear black (remember: white reveals, black conceals) and partially selected areas or feathered edges appear in shades of gray. When you create a mask, you isolate area of an image that you wish to apply changes to while protecting the rest of the image. You can easily remove and add areas to your mask by erasing or painting, then saving the selection as a separate layer that you can return to for new adjustments.

A: Opaque mask used to protect the background and edit the butterfly.
B: Opaque mask used to protect the butterfly and edit the background.
C: Semitransparent mask used to edit the background and part of the butterfly.

A: Protect the Badge; Edit the Background
B: Edit the Badge; Protect the Background

How to Create a Mask:

1) Use one of the selection tools (such as lasso tool) to make a rough selection of an area in your picture that you would like to adjust. This selection can be refined later.
2) Click on an adjustment layer icon (such as Curves). A new adjustment window will appear and your “running ants” selection will disappear.
3) As you adjust the image, you will see your selected area start to change.
4) To view your mask as a rubylith overlay, go to channels and click on the mask channel or use the keyboard shortcut “\".
   a. To change your mask view to black, click on the mask icon in your adjustments window → click on the row of lines at the top right side of the
Properties window → click on Mask Options and choose black from the color wheel with an Opacity of 100%.

**Alternate Version to Create a Mask: Paint It In**

1) Add a new adjustment layer (Curves). You will notice that there is a white frame to the right of your curves icon in the adjustments panel; this is a mask and the white is telling you the entire frame has been selected and will be adjusted.
2) Focus on the area you want to adjust and use Curves to adjust your image (note the entire image is going to change).
3) Now you will invert the mask making the entire mask icon appear black (masking the changes you have made) by hitting Control + I.
4) Use the Brush Tool with a Hardness of 0 and start with a low Opacity of 30% to brush in the area you want to adjust.

![Brush Tool](image)

5) Continue to increase Opacity until the adjustment is where you want it to be; you can also make changes in Curves to adjust the selection you have made with your Brush.
6) To remove areas you have brushed in, paint with black to add to the mask.

**Gradient Mask**

Sometimes an area of your photograph that gradually fade from normal density to too dark or too light. In other cases, the fall off from the camera lens will create edges that are too dark. In such cases you can create a gradual selection using a gradient mask, a selection that fades gradually from the foreground color to the background color.

![Gradient Mask](image)

1) Set the foreground and background colors to their default settings (black & white). Keyboard Shortcut = D
2) Click on adjustment layer (Curves)
3) Click on the Gradient Tool (see above). In the option bar (also above), choose Linear Gradient for the Gradient Style, Normal for the Mode and 100% for the Opacity. Click the boxes for Dither and Transparency.
4) Click inside your image and drag across the area you want to adjust. The point at which you begin dragging defines the location of the first color in the gradation. The point at which you release defines the location of the last color. By selecting White to Black you begin with a reveal and end with a conceal. In other words, the point where you begin the gradient will be affected most and the adjustment will subtly fade at the end point.
5) View your mask by using the \ shortcut.
6) Hide your mask and make your adjustments.

**Tips/Shortcuts:**

- Sometimes it is easier to select the opposite of what you want to change and then inverse your selection: Keyboard Shortcut command + I

- B: Brush Tool

- X: Switch background/foreground colors

- W: Quick Selection Tool

- [: Increase or decrease the size of your brush