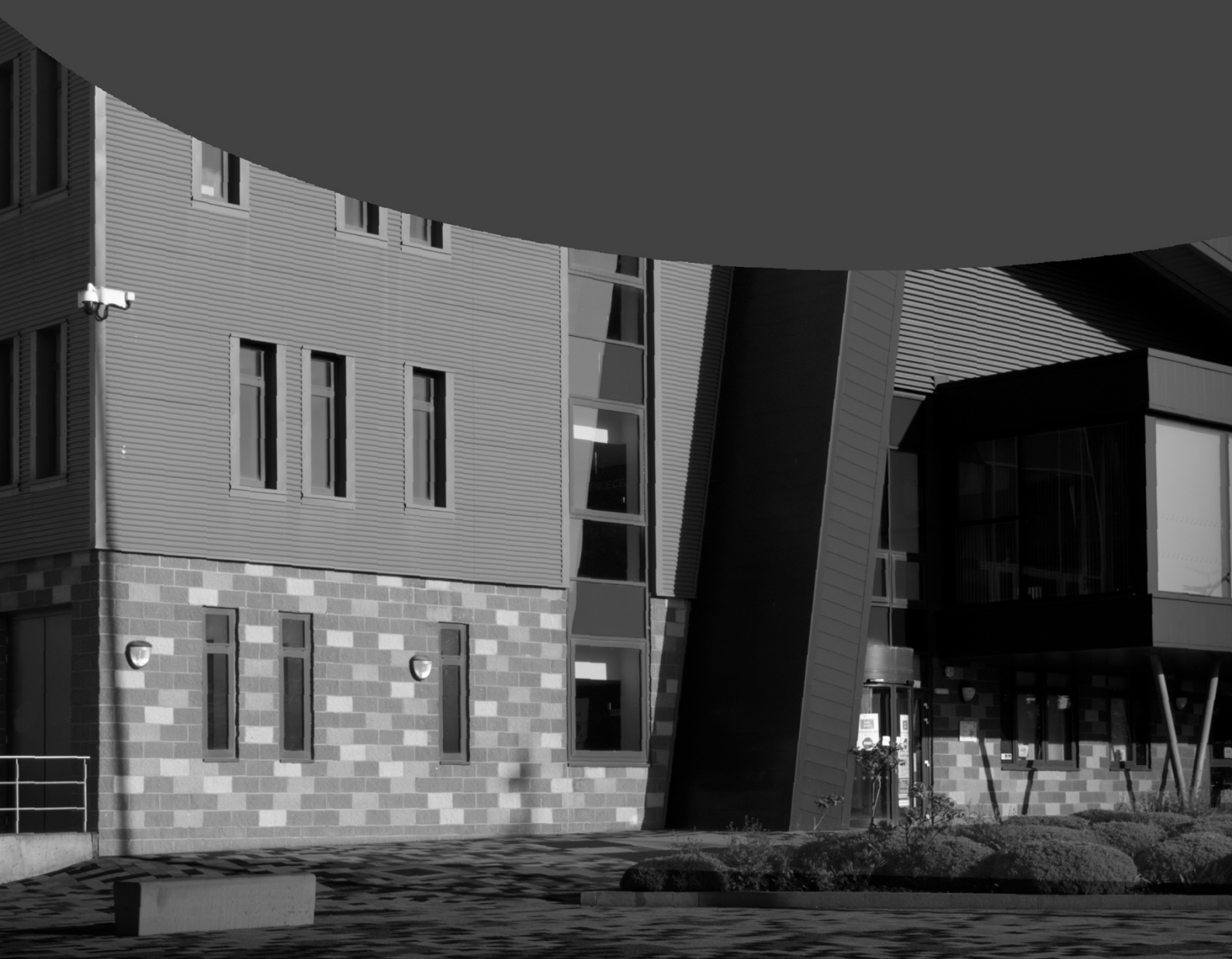


Creating Actions For Dodging and Burning



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A Guide to Creating Actions in Photoshop for Dodging and Burning

Dodging and burning is a processing technique used by photographers to lighten and darken areas on an image. By enhancing and sculpting light and shadow, the eye of the viewer can be led through the image to be drawn to its key features.

Within Photoshop there are Dodge and Burn tools available which can be used directly on an image. The big disadvantage of dodging and burning straight onto a pixel-based layer is this method is known as a destructive process, as it affects the pixels on the layer resulting in permanent changes to the image.

There are, however, various non-destructive methods that can be utilised for dodging and burning and involve the use of layers. Using these methods normally involve a series of steps to prepare the image for dodging or burning and whilst this process is not complicated or time consuming, it can be regarded as repetitive. To reduce the monotony of manually repeating the same steps each time you need to dodge and burn, using the Actions function in Photoshop provides a means to record and save these steps that can be automatically used again and negate the need to repeat these steps manually. This guide will detail how to record actions for different non-destructive dodging and burning methods

Creating Brush Presets

Before setting up the Dodging and Burning Actions, it will be necessary to create two brush presets. The settings used in the following examples can be customised and saved accordingly or additional presets can be created using different settings.

- To create a brush for Dodging, select a Soft Round Brush with the following settings: Size 250px, Opacity 10%, Flow 100%, Smoothing 100%, Hardness 0%. Change the foreground in the colour swatch to White (If White is not the foreground colour, press D to set swatch to default black and white then press X to switch the colours so white is now the foreground colour)
- To save these brush settings as a preset, go to the Brushes Panel (if panel not visible, navigate to WINDOW>BRUSHES to open the Brushes panel) and then click the top right of the panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select New Brush Preset. Give the preset a name e.g., Soft Round 250 White 10%. Ensure the 3 boxes for Capture Brush Size in Preset, Include Tool Settings and Include Color are all ticked, then click on Ok
- Change the foreground colour to Black and then save as a preset as per the previous step and give this preset a name e.g., Soft Round 250 Black 10%. Ensure the 3 boxes for Capture Brush Size in Preset, Include Tool Settings and Include Color are all ticked, then click on Ok

The creation of the Dodge and Burn layers will utilise the brush presets as a default starting position. The brush size, opacity or flow can be adjusted at any time should it be deemed necessary when being used. Alternatively additional brush presets and Dodge and Burn actions can be created utilising the afore-mentioned steps to create additional Dodge and Burn layers with brushes of varying size and/or opacity and/or flow.

Dodging and Burning Using Overlay and Soft Light Blending Modes

With the White and Black brush presets created, the next step is now to create Dodge and Burn Actions utilising these presets.

- Go to the Actions panel (if not visible, navigate to **WINDOW>ACTIONS**) and click on the Create new set icon (located along the bottom of the Actions panel) and name the new set **Dodge and Burn**
- Got to the top right of the Actions panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select **New Action**
- Name the action **Dodge 10%** and ensure the Set drop down dialogue box displays **Dodge and Burn** (this will store the recorded action in the newly created set), then click on the **Record** button (this will now record all steps taken until stopped)
- Hold the **Alt** key and click on the new layer icon and in the pop-up dialogue box, name this layer **Dodge 10%**. Change the Mode to **Overlay** and tick the box beside **Fill with Overlay-neutral color (50% gray)** then click on Ok
- Add a white mask and then standing on this mask navigate to **IMAGE>APPLY IMAGE**. Change the Blending option to **Normal** and ensure the Invert box is unticked then click on Ok
- Select the grey pixel-based layer (not the mask) and reset the colour swatch to default by pressing the **D** key then switch the default colours around by pressing the **X** key so White is now the foreground colour.
- Go to the Brushes panel and select the **White** brush preset that was previously created e.g. Soft Round 250 White 10%
- Go back to the Actions panel and then hold the **Alt** key and click on the layer mask
- Press the **Stop** record button (along the bottom of the panel)

When the action is run this will create a 50% Gray layer and apply the image as a mask to this layer with a white brush selected as per the preset used. The action concludes by selecting the layer mask which can then be refined by opening a Levels Adjustment by going to **IMAGE>ADJUSTMENTS>LEVELS** or by using the keyboard shortcut **Cmd L** (Mac) or **Ctrl L** (PC). Use the Output sliders to refine the mask to define the areas to be dodged and the areas to be protected from the dodging process (White areas can be dodged whereas black areas will protect the image from the dodging process). When the mask has been refined, click Ok on the Levels Adjustment dialogue box then hold the **Alt** key and click on the mask to deselect it. Stand on the Grey pixel-based layer and then dodge the image as required.

The action for Dodging has now been created, so it is now time to create an action for Burning.

- Got to the top right of the Actions panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select **New Action**
- Name the action **Burn 10%** and ensure the dialogue box displays **Dodge and Burn** (this will store the recorded action in the newly created set), then click on the **Record** button (this will now record all steps taken until stopped)
- Hold the **Alt** key and click on the new layer icon and in the pop-up dialogue box, name this layer **Burn 10%**. Change the mode to **Soft Light** and tick the box beside **Fill with Overlay-neutral color (50% gray)** then click on Ok
- Add a white mask and then standing on this mask navigate to **IMAGE>APPLY IMAGE**. Change the Blending option to **Normal** and ensure the Invert box is ticked then click on Ok
- Select the grey pixel-based layer (not the mask) and reset the colour swatch to default by pressing the **D** key (black should now be the foreground colour)
- Go to the Brushes panel and select the **Black** brush preset that was previously created e.g. Soft Round 250 Black 10%
- Go back to the Actions panel and then hold the **Alt** key and click on the layer mask
- Press the **Stop** record button (along the bottom of the panel)

When the action is run this will create a 50% Gray layer and apply the image as a mask to this layer with a black brush selected as per the preset used. The action concludes by selecting the layer mask which can then be refined by opening a Levels Adjustment by going to **IMAGE>ADJUSTMENTS>LEVELS** or by using the keyboard shortcut **Cmd L** (Mac) or **Ctrl L** (PC). Use the Output sliders to refine the mask to define the areas to be burned and the areas to be protected from the burning process (White areas can be burned whereas black areas will protect the image from the burning process). When the mask has been refined, click Ok on the Levels Adjustment dialogue box then hold the **Alt** key and click on the mask to deselect it. Stand on the Grey pixel-based layer and then burn the image as required.

Dodging and Burning Using Colour Range to Target Highlights, Midtones and Shadows

The next set of Dodge and Burn actions will be created to target either Highlights, Midtones or Shadows within the image utilising a 50% Gray layer and a layer mask using the Color Range feature.

- Got to the top right of the Actions panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select **New Action**
- Name the action **Dodge 10% Highlights** and ensure the Set drop down dialogue box displays **Dodge and Burn** (this will store the recorded action in the newly created set), then click on the **Record** button (this will now record all steps taken until stopped)
- Hold the **Alt** key and click on the new layer icon and in the pop-up dialogue box, name this layer **Dodge 10% Highlights**. Change the Mode to **Overlay** and tick the box beside **Fill with Overlay-neutral color (50% gray)** then click on Ok
- Reset the colour swatch to default by pressing the **D** key then switch the default colours around by pressing the **X** key so White is now the foreground colour.
- Go to the Brushes panel and select the **White** brush preset that was previously created e.g. Soft Round 250 White 10%
- Stand on the Grey pixel layer and go to **SELECT>COLOR RANGE** and at the top of the Color Range dialogue box, open the **Select** drop down menu and choose **Highlights** from the options then click Ok. Add a white layer mask then click on the Gray pixel layer
- Go back to the Actions panel and press the **Stop** record button (along the bottom of the panel)

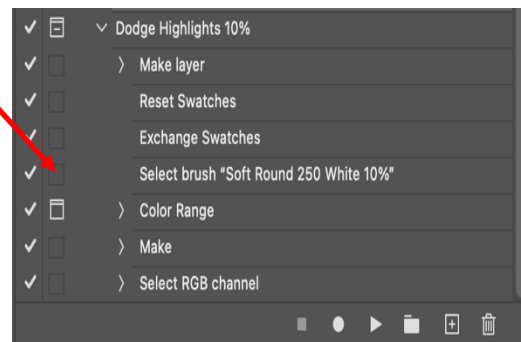
Create a further 2 Dodge actions using the afore-mentioned steps (name these actions **Dodge Midtones 10%** and **Dodge Shadows 10%**) and at the Color Range stages of the actions change the Select drop down menu to Midtones and Shadows for the respective actions.

With the three Dodging actions created for Highlights, Midtones and Shadows it is now time to create the corresponding Burning actions.

- Got to the top right of the Actions panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select **New Action**
- Name the action **Burn 10% Highlights** and ensure the Set drop down dialogue box displays **Dodge and Burn** (this will store the recorded action in the newly created set), then click on the **Record** button (this will now record all steps taken until stopped)
- Hold the **Alt** key and click on the new layer icon and in the pop-up dialogue box, name this layer **Burn 10% Highlights**. Change the Mode to **Soft Light** and tick the box beside **Fill with Overlay-neutral color (50% gray)** then click on Ok
- Reset the colour swatch to default by pressing the **D** key (black should now be the foreground colour)
- Go to the Brushes panel and select the **Black** brush preset that was previously created e.g. Soft Round 250 Black 10%
- Stand on the Grey pixel layer and go to **SELECT>COLOR RANGE** and at the top of the Color Range dialogue box, open the **Select** drop down menu and choose **Highlights** from the options then click Ok. Add a white layer mask then click on the Gray pixel layer
- Go back to the Actions panel and press the **Stop** record button (along the bottom of the panel)

Create a further 2 Burn actions using the afore-mentioned steps (name these actions **Burn Midtones 10%** and **Burn Shadows 10%**) and at the Color Range stages of the actions change the Select drop down menu to Midtones and Shadows for the respective actions.

When all actions have been created, open the respective action's instructions by clicking on the > symbol beside the action name. Click on the **Toggle dialog on/off** box beside the Color Range instructions to switch this on. When the action is subsequently run a dialogue box will open at the Color Range stage of the action which will allow the mask to be refined as required by adjusting the Fuzziness and Range sliders. Areas of the mask that are white can be painted on (reveal), whereas areas that are black cannot be painted on (conceal).



Using Dodging and Burning Tools with Linear Light Blend Mode

An alternative to using the Overlay and Soft Light blend modes when dodging and burning is to use the Linear Light blend mode which is part of the Contrast group of blend modes in Photoshop. Using this blend mode assists in the prevention of extreme dodging and burning results by preventing white areas becoming pure white and similarly, black areas from becoming pure black. The strength of the dodging and burning effect can also be controlled by adjustment of the Fill slider and the exposure setting for for the dodging and burning tools.

- Got to the top right of the Actions panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select **New Action**
- Name the action **Dodge Linear Light** and ensure the Set drop down dialogue box displays **Dodge and Burn** (this will store the recorded action in the newly created set), then click on the **Record** button (this will now record all steps taken until stopped)
- Hold the **Alt** key and click on the new layer icon and in the pop-up dialogue box, name this layer **Dodge Linear Light**. Change the Mode to **Linear Light** and tick the box beside **Fill with Overlay-neutral color (50% gray)** then click on Ok
- Add a **White Mask** to the Gray layer and adjust the **Fill slider** to **15%**
- Stand on the Gray layer (not the mask) and then select the **Dodge** tool
- Press the **Stop** record button (along the bottom of the panel)

To create a linear light burn layer

- Got to the top right of the Actions panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select **New Action**
- Name the action **Burn Linear Light** and ensure the Set drop down dialogue box displays **Dodge and Burn** (this will store the recorded action in the newly created set), then click on the **Record** button (this will now record all steps taken until stopped)
- Hold the **Alt** key and click on the new layer icon and in the pop-up dialogue box, name this layer **Burn Linear Light**. Change the Mode to **Linear Light** and tick the box beside **Fill with Overlay-neutral color (50% gray)** then click on Ok
- Add a **White Mask** to the Gray layer and adjust the **Fill slider** to **15%**
- Stand on the Gray layer (not the mask) and then select the **Burn** tool
- Press the **Stop** record button (along the bottom of the panel)

After running these actions go to the horizontal tool bar settings and select the range to be dodged or burned (Highlights, Midtones or Shadows) and select an exposure intensity and then apply over the image as required

Dodging and Burning Using Curves Adjustment Layers with Linear Light Blend Mode

An alternative to using the dodging and burning tools in conjunction with linear light is to use a Curves Adjustment layer to make the necessary adjustments to the image.

To create a Dodging action for this method

- Got to the top right of the Actions panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select **New Action**
- Name the action **Dodge Linear Light Horizontal Curve AL** and ensure the Set drop down dialogue box displays **Dodge and Burn** (this will store the recorded action in the newly created set), then click on the **Record** button (this will now record all steps taken until stopped)
- Add a **Curves Adjustment** layer and in the properties, box pull the black point straight up until the **Output** is displaying **128**. Pull the white point straight down until the **Output** is displaying **128**.
- Change the blend mode to **Linear Light** and then rename the layer **Dodge** then **Stop** record button (along the bottom of the Action panel)

To create a Burning action for this method

- Got to the top right of the Actions panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select **New Action**
- Name the action **Burn Linear Light Horizontal Curve AL** and ensure the Set drop down dialogue box displays **Dodge and Burn** (this will store the recorded action in the newly created set), then click on the **Record** button (this will now record all steps taken until stopped)
- Add a **Curves Adjustment** layer and in the properties, box pull the black point straight up until the **Output** is displaying **128**. Pull the white point straight down until the **Output** is displaying **128**.
- Change the blend mode to **Linear Light** and then rename the layer **Burn** then **Stop** record button (along the bottom of the Action panel)

This method adds a Curves Adjustment layer and the mask is initially grey due the histogram being completely horizontal following the adjustments to the black and white points to 128. The mask subsequently is turned white when the blend mode is changed to Linear Light.

At this point by standing on the curves layer the image can then be lightened or darkened by adjusting the horizontal line. As this affects the whole image, the white mask should be inverted to mask out the adjustment. Thereafter use a white brush (start with a low opacity e.g., 30%) and paint back in the adjustment selectively and gradually as required.

Dodging and Burning Using Curves Adjustment Layers (Mask in Mask)

An alternative dodging and burning method which doesn't utilise the use of 50% grey layers is to use a Curves Adjustment layers within a group with an inverted black mask (mask in mask technique)

- Got to the top right of the Actions panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select **New Action**
- Name the action **Dodge Curve Adjustment Layer** and ensure the Set drop down dialogue box displays **Dodge and Burn** (this will store the recorded action in the newly created set), then click on the **Record** button (this will now record all steps taken until stopped)
- Add a Curves Adjustment layer and then place this layer within a Group. Add a mask to the group and invert the mask (make it black) and name the layer Dodge. Right click over the mask and select Disable Layer Mask (a red cross should now appear over the mask) then **Stop** record button (along the bottom of the Action panel).
- Close the Group and stand on this layer, then go to the top right of the Actions panel (4 vertical lines) and left click to open the pop-up dialogue box and select **New Action**
- Name the action **Burn Curve Adjustment Layer** and ensure the Set drop down dialogue box displays **Dodge and Burn** (this will store the recorded action in the newly created set), then click on the **Record** button (this will now record all steps taken until stopped)
- Add a second Curves Adjustment layer and then place this layer within a Group. Add a mask to the group and invert the mask (make it black) and name the layer Burn. Right click over the mask and select Disable Layer Mask (a red cross should now appear over the mask) then **Stop** record button (along the bottom of the Action panel)

In this method these actions, create a Curves Adjustment layer which is then contained within its own group with a Black mask. For the Dodge layer, push up on the curve to brighten the area of the image that requires adjustment and then right click on the mask and select Enable Mask. Use a White brush and paint on the mask where the dodge adjustment is to be applied. Size of brush will be dependent on area being painted in. Opacity can also be adjusted example by starting at 30% and refine as required.

For the Burn layer repeat the process by pulling down on the curve to darken the image prior to enabling the Black mask, then enable the mask and use a White brush to paint in where the dodging is to be applied. Size of brush will be dependent on area being painted in. Opacity can also be adjusted example by starting at 30% and refine as required.