

A Quick Method for Salvaging Very Dark or Light Images

By Jerry Koons

The following tutorial outlines a method for salvaging our very dark or very light images. These images can probably not be printed in very large sizes or become a “Prize Winner” but simply having the ability to salvage the image instead of throwing it away can be rewarding.

Step One

Open the desired image in the Adobe Elements 4 program.

Step Two

Press the *Ctrl and J* keys to create a new layer via copy.

Step Three

Change the *Layer Mode* to *Screen* for very dark images or to *Multiply* for a very light image. See Figure One below.

Note that the dark image has now become much lighter or that the light image has become much darker. Refer to Figures Two and Three below.

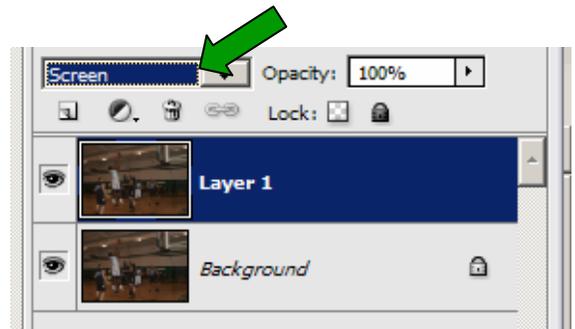


Figure 1

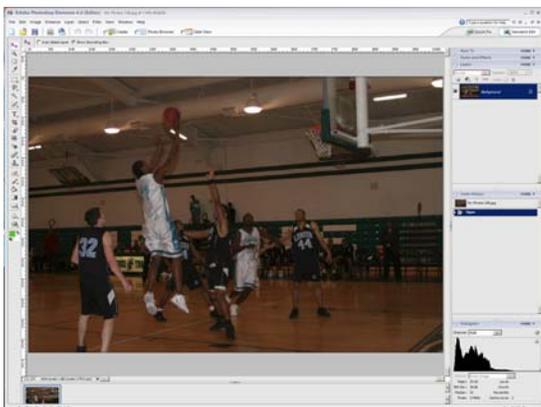


Figure 2
Original Image

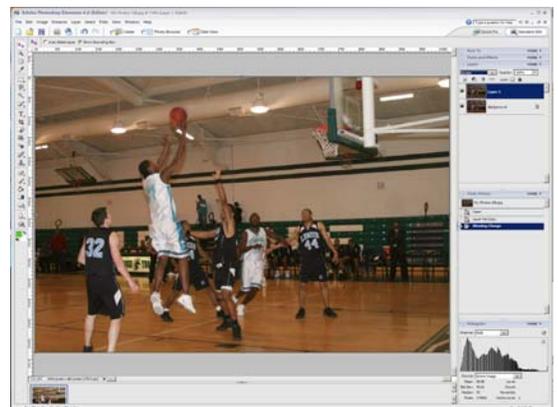


Figure 3
“Screen” Mode

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Step Four

If the image brightness looks correct, skip to Step Five.

If the image is still too dark (or light), Press the *Ctrl and J* keys again to create another new layer via copy to make the image more acceptable.

Repeat this procedure until the image looks correct or has been lightened (or darkened) slightly too much.

Note that the image may now be too light (or dark) but that is OK because we will correct it in the next step.

Step Five

Lower the *Opacity* of the *Layer* until the image has achieved the correct brightness. See Figure Four below.

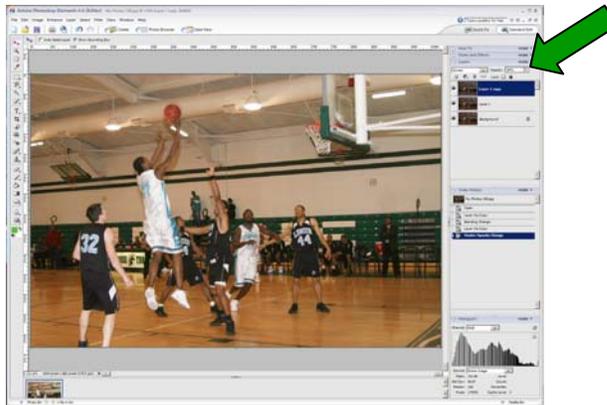


Figure 4

Step Six

Click on the small *Right Arrow* near the *More* option on the *Layers Palette* to open a side dialog box and choose *Flatten Image* to merge all of the layers into one. Refer to Figure Five and Figure Five_a, below.



Figure 5



Figure 5_a
(Flattened)

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Step Seven

The image should appear much better than the original but additional adjustments can improve it even more.

Click on *Enhance > Adjust Lighting > Shadows and Highlights* on the upper toolbar to open the *Shadows and Highlights* dialog box.

Step Seven

Press the *Number Zero* key to make sure that no unwanted adjustment is made to the image. Refer to Figure Six below.

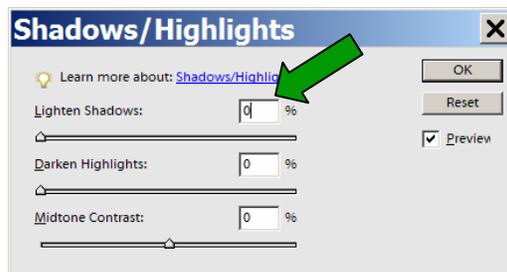


Figure 6

Step Eight

Move the *Lighten Shadows* (or *Darken Highlights*) slider control until the image has achieved the desired appearance and then click OK to apply the adjustment. See Figure Seven below.



Figure 7

Note that in this image, the background shadow areas have been lightened and the photograph has been improved.