

Creating “Silky Waterfalls” with The Motion Filter

By Jerry Koons

Have you ever taken a picture of a beautiful waterfall and wished later that you had also captured the image with a slow shutter speed to have that silky look?

Well, this tutorial is for you if you answered yes. Normally, a slow shutter speed of $\frac{1}{4}$ of a second or less is used to provide the silky look, while much faster speeds capture the falling water detail.

You can have the best of both worlds by applying this procedure on your waterfall scenes in the Adobe Elements program.

Step One

Open your waterfall image and make the necessary corrections. See Figures One and Two.

Step Two

Click on the *Lasso Tool icon* and select the regular Lasso and make a selection around the waterfall. This selection doesn't have to be exact so be certain to include extra area around the waterfall. See Figure Three.

Step Three

Hold the *Ctrl* key down and tap the *J* key to create a new via copy. The selected area will appear on a new layer above the Background layer.

Step Four

On the Upper Toolbar, click on *Filter > Blur > Motion* to open the Motion Blur dialog box. See Figure Four.

Step Five

Click and drag on the line within the circle and rotate it until the line is approximately parallel with the flow of the waterfall to make the blur more realistic.

Step Six

Move the *distance* slider until the desired amount of blur has been achieved and click OK to apply the filter. Note: It is usually better to slightly exaggerate the motion to permit more flexibility in final adjustments later.

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Step Seven

Select the *Eraser Tool and appropriate size brush* and erase the blurred areas around the waterfall. **Hint:** Reducing the brush opacity and making multiple passes provides much better control, especially when erasing close to the water.

Note: If you erase too much and reveal the water, you can press the *Ctrl and Z* keys to undo the last action.

Step Eight

You can reduce the opacity of the layer to reduce the blur effect to achieve the desired amount of blur. See Figure Five.

Step Nine

Select the *Save As* option from the *File* header and save the image with a different name to preserve the original image.

If you save the image as a PSD file with layers, you can always open it later and adjust the opacity, if desired, or even turn off the blurred layer for future use.

If you flatten the image, it can be saved as a JPG file to save a smaller file size and you lose the future adjustment capabilities.

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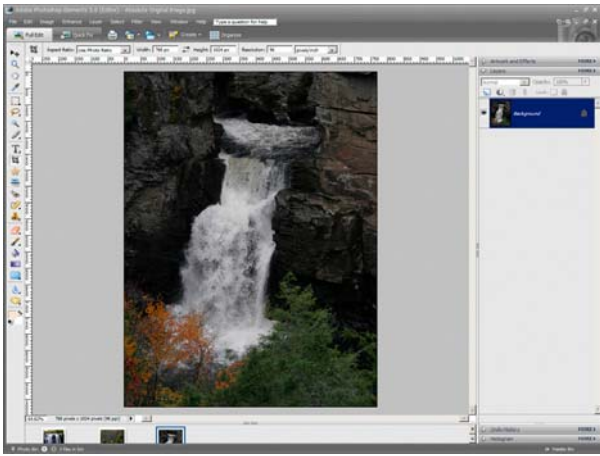


Figure 1 (Original)

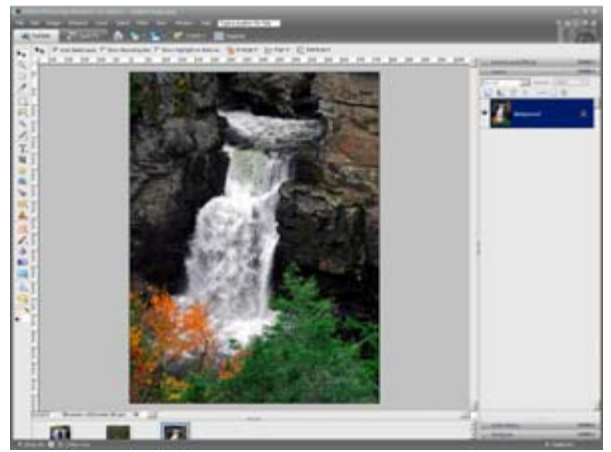


Figure 2 (Corrected)



Figure 3

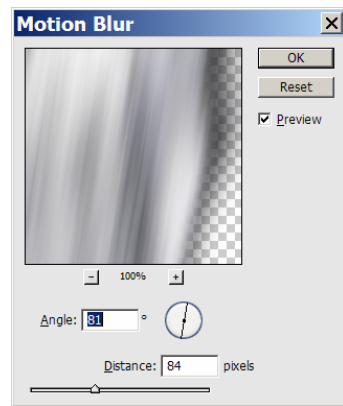


Figure 4



Figure 5