

Dark Images

Every now and then we will come across a photo, that is just way too dark. Now the easiest way to fix this is to well, avoid taking photos that will come out like this. One rule you can go by is never take a photo where your light source is behind your subject. The reason being is that if the light source (sun, lamp, professional lighting) is behind your subject then it will cast a shadow on your subject.

Sometimes we will come across photos that we really counted on seeing, but they are just way too dark and it is too late to take them over. Well, you would be amazed at how much information is still there though we do not see it. We can have Photoshop lighten images so that you can see more, though because of poor lighting, your image won't be picture perfect. Although, it is not picture perfect and crisp, you can still see things you may have not been able to before.

Curves

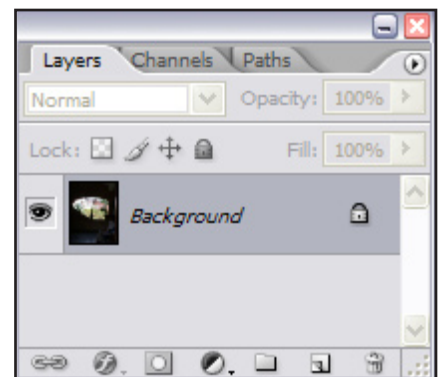
We will open a file and alter the “curves” on it to affect the lighting.

- 1) In Adobe Photoshop's Menu, click on File > Open
- 2) Open “nepaldark2.jpg”


Notice that this image is very dark, the reason is that the light source is behind my subject, therefore it is casting a shadow on my subject. Now what we will do is use the curves to see hidden information.



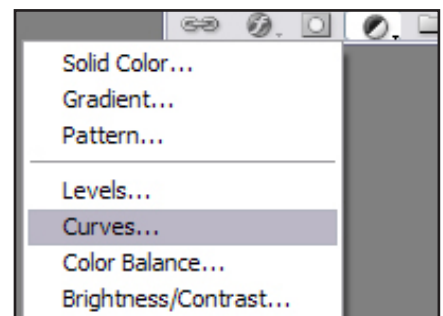
Next we will go to our “Layers” window to add an adjustment layer to the image. An adjustment layer is simply a layer that applies an effect or adjustment to the layers under it. So if we add a curves layer to lighten, it will lighten anything below it.



The layers window looks like the image to the right. If you do not have it open press F7 on your keyboard to open it.

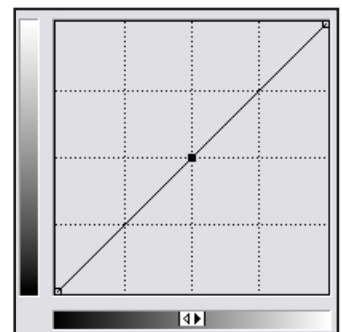
At the bottom of the layers window there is a button that we will use to add an adjustment layer. The button is called the “Create Adjustment Layer” button and it's button looks like this. 

- 1) Click on the Adjustment layer's button
- 2) On the menu that appears click on curves

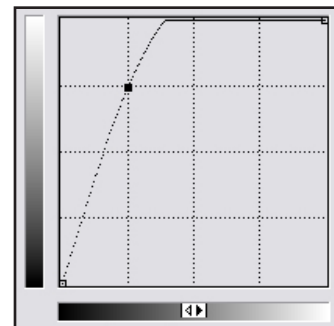


The Curves window will appear. It contains a graph with a line across it leaning towards the right..

- 1) Move your mouse to the center of this line

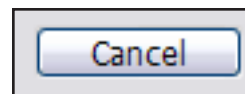


- 1) Click and Hold and guide your mouse toward the upper left.
 - 2) Stop and Release your mouse click at the next intersection of lines.
- (As shown in the image to the right)



While you do this you should pay attention to how your image is changing.

Notice how much detail you can see that was not there before. You can now see the man's face the details of the bricks, you may even notice a tack board in the upper right with papers attached to it. So much information is now shown.



One of the not so good things though, is that it lightened the whole image, including anything outside of the window. We do not want to keep this effect so let's click on the cancel button.

Layers and Adjustment layers

Okay, so now we are back to where we started, except now we know how to lighten our image. When we did lighten the image, we noticed that the adjustment layer lightened everything outside of the window as well. This was a problem, because we gained a portion of the image but lost another.

One of the answers of the solution, is to select the window alone and paste it on to it's own layer. We would then apply the adjustment layer only to the original photo and not the new layer.

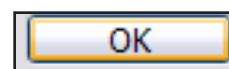
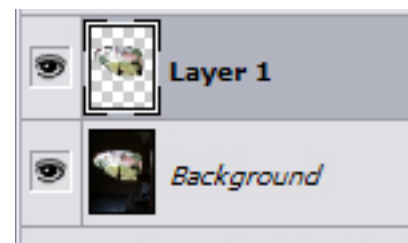
Selecting the window

1) Use the Polygonal Lasso tool to select the window. (At one point you must select around part of his face. You must also ignore the potted plants select the outline of the window only) If you do not recall how to use the polygonal lasso tool, go back to that part of the lesson.



- 2) In Adobe Photoshop's Menu Click Edit> Copy
- 3) In Adobe Photoshop's Menu Click Edit> Paste

It looks as if nothing has happened, but in fact what you have done is selected the window, then pasted it onto it's own layer. If you look at your layer window now, you will notice that the image of the window now exists on "Layer 1".



- 1) Click on the "Background" layer, which holds your original image. It will become dark grey, which indicates that it is highlighted
- 2) Click on the "Create Adjustment Layer" button
- 3) Add a Curve Layer
- 4) Repeat the steps indicated in the previous lesson
- 5) Click on the OK button to finalize the effect.

Now what you have done is applied the adjustment layer to the original layer, and it does not affect the window because it exists on it own layer above the adjustment layer.