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How to create a clipping mask in photoshop 7.0

By David Weedmark If you want to put a photo inside some text, or make your artwork take on the shape of any form, Photoshop clipboard masks are the way to go. Clipping masks are made up of two layers. A photo or artwork layer is placed above a mask layer. When you connect the two layers to a clipping mask, only those parts of the photo that have the corresponding pixels in the mask below are visible. Any empty pixels in the mask - the space around the letters of a word, for example - are cut from the photo. Open any image in Photoshop, such as a photo or other artwork. Select the Type tool from the Toolbox and type the text you want to mask the photo with. This appears as a new layer in the Layers panel. You can also use any shape, such as a rectangle, ellipse, or something you created yourself, to use as a mask. Resize the object in the mask layer so that it is in the ideal position for the mask effect. If you're using text on a photo, use a thick, bold font and make it as large as possible. This will make more of your photo appear inside the text when you use the mask. Rasterize the mask layer while it is still selected in the Layers panel by selecting Rasterize from the layer menu and selecting Layers. This converts the vector text or shape to pixels. Clipping masks are not an option until the mask layer is rasterized. In the Layers panel, drag the mask layer below the layer that contains the photo or artwork. If your photo is a Background Layer, first drag the Background layer to the New Layer button at the bottom of the Layers panel. Drag the Master Layer into the Trash or hide it by clicking the Eye next to its thumbnail in the Layers panel. Now you can drag the mask layer below the Background Copy layer. Select your Background Copy Layer in the Layers panel. Click the Layers menu and choose Create Clipping Mask. You can also create a clipping mask by placing the cursor between the Background Copy layer and mask the layer in the Layers panel, holding down the Alt key, and then left-clicking. The mask is applied to the photo, and an arrow between the two layers appears in the Layers panel, indicating that a clipping mask was used. Zoom in and out of the workspace as needed to make sure your clipping mask appears the way you want it. If you need to make adjustments, press Ctrl-Z to undo the clipping mask. You can also remove a clipping mask at any time by alt-clicking the line between the two layers in the Layers panel, or by selecting Free Clipping Mask from the Layers menu. Apply effects to the clipping mask, such as a drop shadow or outer glow, just as you would with any other layer. Note that these effects are applied to the mask layer, not the layer that contains your photo. Personally, I can't understand why someone wouldn't use layer masks in Photoshop. On basic level, layer masks simply mask away of a slide so that you can place backgrounds behind them or use them as floating elements in, for example, InDesign layouts. Save yourself valuable time with these free Photoshop brushesSS than to remove all the information that you do not need, if you use the copy and paste method, layer masks are non-destructive and simply hide that information. This gives you much more flexibility if you ever want to go back and edit the original file or if you make a mistake. Over the next five steps I'll run through the basics of setting up and working with stock masks and also show how they can be used to achieve some pretty striking effects in product photography.01. Basic layer mask policiesBegin by opening any image from your hard drive and making sure the layer it is on is unlocked. Now press the add layer mask button at the bottom of the layers panel and you will notice that a small white thumbnail is linked along with your layer image. You may also have noticed that the fore and background colors in the toolbar have switched to black and white. Layer masks work by using black or white to either subtract or add to the layer mask. Experiment by brushing black to erase elements in the image, and then add elements back in with white brush strokes. You can switch between the two easily by keeping shift + x. Always make sure that the layer mask thumbnail is selected in the Layers panel, or you should paint black or white on the actual layer.02. Working with selector masks works brilliantly with choices as well, you can either simply use the selection tools in Photoshop for simple rectangular or ellipse choices or you can import your own graphics to make choices from. For example, if you have a vector graphic that you want to make a selection of simply copy and paste it into Photoshop, hold the cmd and click on the layer to make a selection of it, then select the layer you want to mask and hit the layer mask button. To invert the mask, simply select the layer mask and dial the cmd +I to invert it.03. The Color Range Tool Color Range tool is a powerful ally when used in conjunction with layer masks. if you have complex detail areas like hair and the subject is on a fairly flat background then you can simply use the color range tool to make a selection and then create a layer mask from the selection. In this headshot you can see that areas of the background show through and now all you have to do is brush back in these areas while keeping the fine details of your hair.04. Color overlay (A)Next I'll show you a neat trick that I use quite often with product photography. Sometimes you will shoot something without knowing what color background it will be placed on or simply be provided with images that have been shot on white This may look a little unnatural when placed on a colored colored but there is a quick trick that can help. Start by masking the product completely. Hold the cmd and select the layer mask to make a selection, then copy and paste the image into a new document. Convert the doc to grayscale and then to duotone. Choose a color that matches the lightest shade of the color used in your background, in this case a magenta blend.05. Color overlaysNow copy the duotone and paste it back into the original file so that it sits just over the top of your original product. Set the blending mode to overlay and adjust the opacity until you are satisfied. Now for the really cool part. With a large soft round brush begins to brush off at the duotone layer so that only the colored areas remain in the highlight areas of the image. You can adjust the opacity of the brush to create more subtle blending effects. Now simply place the image on top of your chosen background and you will notice a world of difference in the way it gets together. Words: Luke O'NeillLuke O'Neill is the art editor at T3 magazine. Like this? Read these... Masking is a term used to describe the process of removing part an image from the background in Photoshop. You can then use the masked object in a different composition. Masking can be quite complex and time consuming, especially if the foreground image is mixed with the background (as with fur or hair). Here are five ways to speed things up.01. Add a high-contrast layer A high-contrast layer helps define the edge Before you start, save a copy of the original image. If something goes wrong with the copy you have a backup. And when you start the masking project, make a copy of the background layer. This also preserves the original image. When working with the mask, add a high-contrast layer (RGB: 0 255.0) below the image you mask. This will help define the edge and will also show holes in your mask. You can see how the green high contrast mask works in the mask above.02. Use Magic Wand ToolThe Magic Wand Tool works especially well with large patches of sky One of the easiest forms of masking is to use magic wand tool. This works well with large patches of sky or backgrounds of similar color. To mask an image like the one above, make sure you copy the background layer and create a high-contrast layer underneath. In the copied background image, select the Magic Wand tool in the left toolbar. This will bring up the tools for the Magic Wand in the top toolbar. Set the Selection size to 3 with 3 Average, tolerance to 40 (default value is 32), Anti-aliasenabled, and Contiguousenabled. Note: When you enable anti-aliasing it creates a transition at the edge of the mask so it will help to blend in with the background of a new image, but sometimes it is not enough and lint or refining edge will be needed (more on that soon). At this point, hold down the wrench and start clicking the sky. What It Just take a few clicks to mark the whole sky. (If the shift key holds down, each click can be added to the selection.) It should only take a few clicks to select the whole sky The next step is to go to Select>Inverse (Ctrl+Shift+I). At the bottom of the Layers panel, click the Add Vector Mask icon. This creates a mask for our image. At this point the image can be considered finished but a potential problem persists, which is the edge of the image. If the edge is too sharp, the image will look like it is pasted into a new scene and will not appear naturally. To fix this problem, we use lint, which softens the edge of the image and makes some of the pixels semi-transparent. This allows for a gentler transition into the background. Feathers soften the edge of the image In the Layers panel of the previous screen, click the mask icon in the Background Copy layer. This opens the Properties dialog box. To soften the edge, drag the spring slider to the right. In this case, I've set it at 30 pixels, which is a high setting, but it clearly shows fluff as a ghosting around the edge of the image.03. Using the Quick Selection Tool gives you a brush size that can be controlled by the mounts on your keyboard Another way to create masks is to use the Quick Selection tool. Unlike the Magic Wand, it has no tolerance. What it has is a brush size that can be controlled by the mounts on the keyboard. This time we're going to mask this friendly Bassett Hound. As with any other image, make a copy of the original image and use a high contrast layer underneath it. Now we're ready to start masking. Make a copy of the original image and use a high-contrast layer under the Select Quick Highlight Tool, set the brush size to 30, and start dragging the brush around the image. You will notice that it is quite easy to mask and you will also see that some areas, like those below the ears are not selected. To adjust the mask, click the Alt key, which creates a negative selection, go inside the mask where the ears are and move the selection outward. You may find this a bit clumsy and if so, zoom in and reduce the size of the brush. When you are satisfied with the mask, go to Select>Inverse (Ctrl+Shift+I). After that, go to the layers panel and click Add Layer Mask. After that, you can further refine the mask and any necessary lint by clicking the Layer Mask icon in the Layers.04 panel. Use Refine EdgeAnother way to fine-tune the mask is to work with the Refine Edge option. This applies to both the Magic Wand tool and the Quick Selection tool. To activate it, click the Refine Edge button on the main toolbar. Refine Edge gives you a great control over your edges This takes up the Refine Edge dialog box. Here you have a large control over the edge. A setting of 4.7 pixels was used for Feather and 7 for Smooth. In the screenshot, you can see the effect on the edge of the mask. Click OK to accept your changes.05. Use the Color Area commandRemoving the background from a tree can be tricky Sometimes you have an image that is difficult to hide. An example is to remove the background behind a tree. A good solution is the Color Range dialog box. To access it, click Select>Color Range.What you see in the preview box will be reflected in the actual image As a starting point, set the Fuzziness setting to 40, then under the preview box, set the radio button to Image and from selection preview popup, click Black Matte. By doing this, what you see in the preview pane will be reflected in the image itself, allowing you to fine tune the mask. To add to the selection, select the plus pitt and click in the preview area of the dialog box or the image itself. To remove parts of the selection, click minus the eyedropper, then click in the Selection Preview or in the image. To extend the selection, drag the fuzziness slider to the right until you have the selection you want and hit OK. This completes the selection. The Color Range command is a quick way to create detailed masks in a hurry. You now have a five different ways to mask and check your masks for consistency. These techniques will save you a considerable amount of time. Word: Nathan Segal Segal