

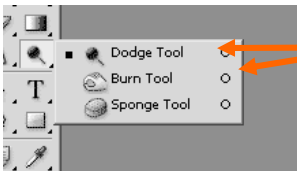


Lets talk Photoshop

Dodge and Burn

It is very hard to control the natural lighting of an outside scene. You can spend hours waiting for the right light or perhaps need to get up very early or come back on another day sometimes however that's just not possible.

Dodge and Burn is a technique used in the darkroom almost since the beginning of photography. It is used to darken some areas of the image and make others brighter. By masking parts of the image (Dodge) during the exposure time, you lighten it and by exposing other areas longer (Burn), you darken the image. So Dodge & Burn can help adjust the lighting of the scene during post processing improving the composition and leading the viewer's eye through the image.



In Photoshop, Burn and Dodge are two separate tools found in the Tool Box.



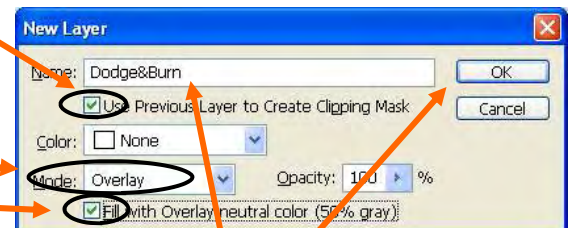
Using the tools is easy, select the one you want, adjust your exposure (use around 10%), adjust your brush size (shortcut is { to decrease or } to increase) and select the range then paint away. If you don't like what you have done then undo it (Ctrl+Alt+Z) and start again.

There are however several drawbacks to this method; it modifies your image directly so if you decide later that it is not quite right it is difficult to restore it and it will cause unwanted digital noise and colour shifts. (don't believe me— zoom in on a shadow area and use the dodge tool to brighten).

A better method: Dodge & Burn in a layer.



Add a new layer by clicking the "New Layer" button (at the bottom of the layer palette), keep the Alt (PC) or Option (Mac) key pressed while you do. This displays a dialog where you can make some settings:

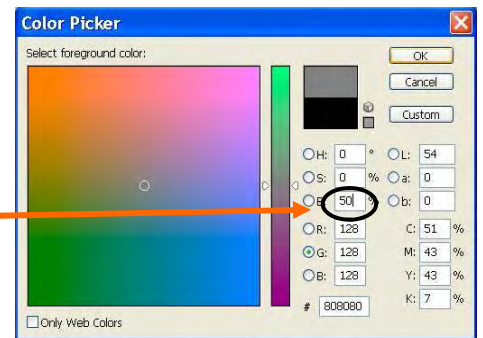
- Tick the box next to "Use Previous Layer to Create Clipping Mask". This makes sure your burn/dodge treatments only show on the layer we're working on.
- Set the mode to "Overlay"
- Tick the box next to "Fill with Overlay-neutral colour (50% grey)". The "Overlay" blending mode works by brighten the image if there's a value brighter than 50% grey, and darken it if it is darker than 50% grey.



Name this layer Dodge&Burn so it is easy to identify later. Click OK when finished.



- Select the Paint Brush tool and choose a normal brush with soft edges, then reduce the opacity to 10% (or less). This lets you gradually paint in your changes.
- Reset the colour swatches to black and white by pressing the D key (this icon shows the foreground & background colours). 
- Make sure you have the newly created layer selected then paint away. Wherever you paint black, the image will become darker, and wherever you paint white, it'll lighten up the image. If you find that you want to go back, you can paint over the offending area with 50% grey and it will restore the image to the brightness it had before. To achieve this click on either the foreground or background colour box in the Tool Palette. This launches the Colour Picker, set the HSB (Hue, Saturation, Brightness) values to 0,0,50: and click ok. Don't forget to press D when you have finished to set the foreground & background back to black & white. 



Below is an example of what can be achieved using this method. I burnt (ie darkened) the sky, the building in the background and areas of the street to the left & right of the lamp post. I then dodged (ie lightened) the foreground building, the lamp post and part of the footpath. Now the eye is no longer drawn to the sky or the painted arrow on the road, it is drawn to the lamppost and the building beyond.

Before



After

