

## Applying Shadows/Highlights (PE4)

### Working on Problem Photos

This tutorial will focus on adjusting pictures that suffer from highlight and shadow problems.

### Shadows/Highlights

One very common problem people have with their snapshots is that the pictures tend to have strong variations between the shadows and the highlights in the picture. Take a look at this picture of a little girl standing on a beach. The girl is in the shadows, and there is a very strong glare from the sky and the ocean in the background.



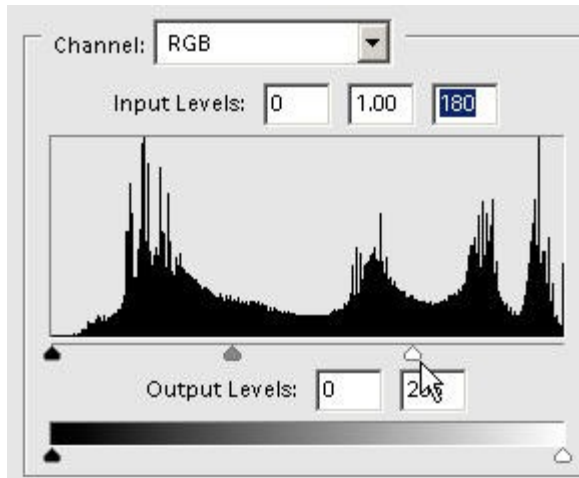
We will clean this up using a two step process. First we will apply a Shadows/Highlights tool. Before we do that we **make a copy of the photo's background layer** by clicking on the background layer and dragging it over the New Layer icon at the bottom of the layers palette. Then, with the copy of the layer active, we select **Enhance > Adjust Lighting > Shadows/Highlights**. Basically what this tool does is lock in the Highlights and increase the brightness of everything it thinks is in the shadows. Shadows/Highlights gives us this screen.



For this picture I raised the level of Lighten Shadows up to around 70% to bring up the colors in the boat. But notice that the girl is still pretty shaded.



To enhance the girl, we go to step two of this process. **Add a Levels adjustment layer** by clicking on the black/white circle at the bottom of the layers palette and selecting Levels. Now, **click on the white triangle on the right side of the layers palette, just below the histogram, and drag it left until the face of the girl looks lighter**. I moved the white triangle to the 180 position, and clicked ok.



Everything else in the picture is all blown out and way too bright. Don't worry for now. We take care of that next. **Select a paint brush and choose a hard brush (size 13 works here) and make the Foreground Color black.** Now, with the Levels layer active, **paint with that brush** everywhere but on the little girl. In this case it would take some time to paint everything with this small brush. So we take a **shortcut**. With the Foreground Color in Black and with the Levels layer still active, fill the mask with black by typing the **Alt+Backspace keys**. The photo turns dark again and the mask on the Levels layer just filled with black. The magic is that when you paint on an adjustment layer with black, it prevents the adjustment from affecting the picture wherever you cover the picture with black.

And the contrary is true. Where you paint with white, the adjustment is allowed through. So **switch the colors** in the Foreground Background color icons by **typing X** so you **have a white Foreground color**. **Paint over the girl with the brush**. You will see the lighter girl against the background. If you make an error and expose too much, say part of the beach, just change the color of your brush to black and paint over the beach to

cover it up again. Notice that the mask on the Layers level is totally black except for the outline of the little girl. Here is the final result.



This technique is a great way to balance out the highlights and shadows in pictures that we normally take.

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