

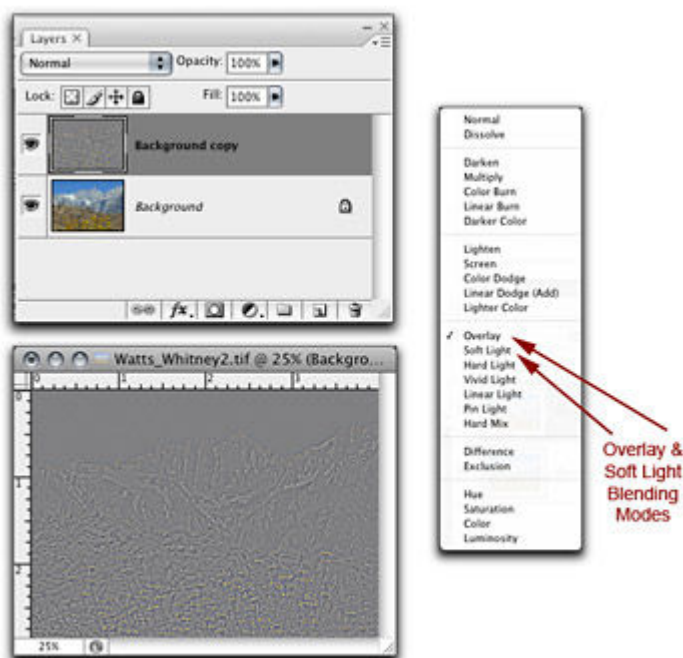
Apogee Photo Magazine

WATTS DIGITAL IMAGING

A Better Way to Sharpen in Photoshop - Part 2

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*Are you having
challenges
getting your
image
sharpened
properly in
Photoshop?*

[In my last column](#), I talked about one method that I use that involves using the “**Unsharp**” **Mask** and **Luminosity Blending Mode**. Now I want to show you another one that involves using the **High-Pass**

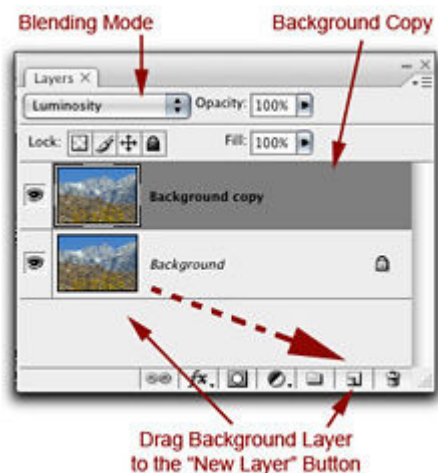
Filter. Both of these techniques are much better than the generic Photoshop Sharpening tools, which are not as effective and prone to over-sharpening, as well as being a bit destructive to your image.

In my opinion, Over-sharpening is one of the two most abused tools in Photoshop ([see this post on my blog](#)). Give yourself an edge and try these methods--it is much harder to accidentally over-sharpen your image.

So, which method should you use? High Pass Filter tends to be much easier and quicker, but is not as accurate. “Unsharp” Mask gives you lots more control, but is a bit harder to use. I tend to use “Unsharp” Mask a bit more than High Pass, but either method will be better than the

generic Photoshop sharpening tools.

So here's the High-Pass Filter method...



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Step 1: Create a New Background Layer. To create a Background Copy, simply drag the Background Layer to the “New Layer” button.

Step 2: Go to “Filter” menu -> “Other” -> “High Pass...”--this brings up the High Pass Dialog Box.

Step 3: Set the Radius to “4.0”, then click “OK”. By the way, the Radius can be adjusted to taste as you gain more experience: I have one client who always starts with a radius of “10”, then adjusts the Opacity to fine-

tune (See Step 6 below).

Step 4: You will notice that your image and your background copy thumbnail have a gray overlay. Don't worry, this is normal, and will disappear in the next step.

Step 5: Change the Blend Mode: Make sure that your Background Copy is highlighted, then change the Blending Mode to “Overlay” or “Soft Light”. The “Overlay” blending mode tends to make your image sharper, and may be too much. If that is the case, choose “Soft Light”.

Step 6: Change the Opacity, if necessary: Make sure that your Background Copy is highlighted, then change the Opacity Slider to “fine-tune” your sharpening--a higher Opacity percentage equals more sharpening and a smaller opacity percentage equals less sharpening.

And don't forget: You can selectively sharpen just part of your image by creating a Layer Mask on the Background Copy ([see this post on my blog](#)) and “painting out” those areas you do not want to sharpen.

That's it! Give both methods a try – you'll never use the generic methods again!

Until the next column, have fun and stay safe!

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*If you'd like to know more about these subjects or if you need copies of the other columns in this series, please contact me at [john@wattsdigital.com](mailto:john@wattsdigital.com). By the way, sign up for my [Free Newsletter here](#) and feel free to visit my Digital Imaging Blog at <http://www.wattsdigital.com/blog1>. You can also sign up for my [Free Photoshop Webinars](#).*

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