

COVERS
PHOTOSHOP
3.0

015

Photoshop Techniques

How to

EXTEND A PHOTO'S BACKGROUND.

As with removing objects, extending a photo's background requires an artistic touch and some imagination. No single solution will work for every photo. In this issue we cover a few of the most common approaches.

As before, photos with out of focus backgrounds are the easiest to deal with. Often you can copy sections of the background to cover the added space. With certain photos, it may be possible to stretch the needed background without adversely affecting your image.

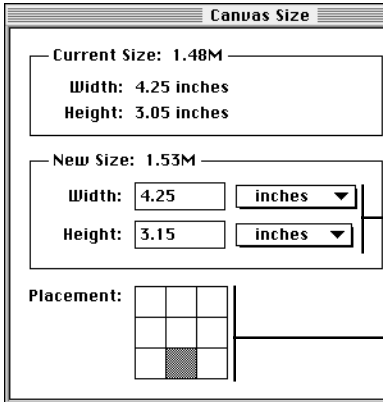
This issue's techniques are broken into three main sections:

- Preparing the canvas size.
- Stretching the existing background.
- Replacing the background with another photo.
- Copying feathered sections.





Step 1



Steps 2-6

Preparing the canvas size.

Before you can work with any of these techniques, you must add space for your extended background.

1. Open your photo.

In this case we have opened a photo based on our work in Issue #014, "How to Remove Objects from Photos."

2. Confirm your photo is set to the final resolution.

Choose Image Size from the Image menu to change the size of your object. Make sure that your image has been sized appropriately and is set to the *final* resolution you plan to use.

Note: As a rule, the final resolution should be between 1.5 to 2 times the line screen you plan to print with. For example a photo to be printed at 150 lines per inch should be set to a resolution of about 225 to 300 pixels per inch. If you have any questions regarding the resolution of your job, it is best to discuss them with your printer.

3. Choose Canvas Size from the Image menu.

The "Canvas Size" dialog box should appear (see at left).

4. Enter the size you need.

In this example, we have added to about a half inch to our photo's height.

5. Set the placement of your original image.

This controls where the extra space will be added. In this example, we want to add space at the top, so we place our original image on the bottom.

6. Click OK

Photoshop should process. The result should be a larger image with white space at the edge.

Stretching the existing background

This works well for general backgrounds with low detail.



Option 1: Step 1, 2



Option 1: Step 3

1. Select a rectangular area of the background.

Select a rectangular section of the photo. If possible look for a natural seam or break on the horizon.

Note: When you select your rectangle, make sure it completely crosses the width of your image. This is important. If you do not the edges will become rounded when you feather your selection.

2. Choose Feather from the Select menu.

Feathering creates a soft edge to your selection. This example uses a feather of 6.

3. Choose Effects > Scale from the Image menu.

Four corner points should appear around your selection. Drag a corner to stretch your selection to fit the empty space.

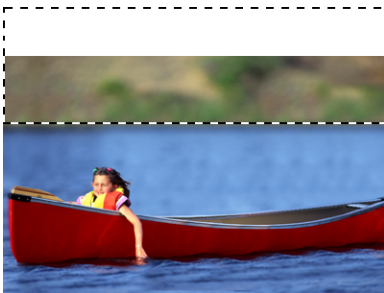
Note: To apply the effect click inside the selection; to cancel the effect click outside.

Replacing the background with another photo

This can be one of the easiest solutions to a tricky background. If you keep a variety of stock photos available, it is fairly easy to find a replacement background that will fit your image. Look for a match that has a similar color scheme and setting. You can also improve a drab photo by picking an exotic sunset or skyline for the background.



Option 2: Step 1



Option 2: Step 2A,B



Option 2: Step 2C



Option 2: Step 3

Step 1

Copy the new background to memory.

A: Resize the background photo to fit the final image.

Choose Image Size from the Image menu to change the size of your object. Use the approximate size and resolution for the destination image.

B: Copy the new background to memory.

Choose All from the Select menu;
Choose Copy from the Edit menu.

Step 2

Paste the background into a selection window.

A: Select a rectangular area of the background.

Select the upper rectangular section of the photo. If possible position your selection on a natural horizon line.

B: Choose Feather from the Select menu.

Feathering creates a soft edge to your selection. If you are creating a horizon line, do not blur it too much. This example uses a feather of 2.

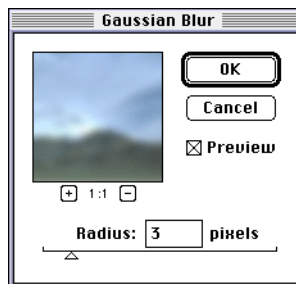
C: Choose Paste Into from the Edit menu.

The copied background will appear trimmed within the selection window. Drag to position your new background appropriately.

Step 3

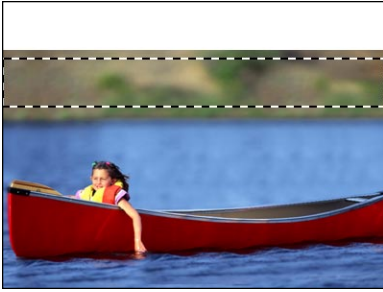
Apply blur or noise filters to make background fit.

The new background must make artistic sense in its new environment. Often new backgrounds will be sharper and more focused than the photo's original background.



In this example, we choose Blur > Gaussian Blur from the Filter menu to make this background fit better. A blur of 3 pixels makes it appear more natural in the photo's setting.

Copying feathered sections



Option 3: Step 1,2



Option 3: Step 3,4

This is very similar to the technique we used to remove objects in Issue #014.

1. Select a rectangular area of the background.

Note: When you draw your rectangle, make sure it crosses the width of your image completely. If it does not, the corners will become rounded when you apply the feather command.

2. Choose Feather from the Select menu.

Feathering creates a soft edge to your selection. Feathering the selection is critical to create a smooth blending between the copied background and the original image. This example uses a feather of 6 pixels.

3. Hold down Option and drag the selection.

PC Users: Hold down ALT key.

With this key held down, you make a copy of the selection you are moving. If you do not hold down Option, you will leave white where your selection outline was dragged from.

4. Flip your selection to avoid a pattern (optional).

To avoid a repetitive pattern in your duplicated selection, you might try flipping it. Choose one of the options from the Flip command in the Image menu. (*This example has been flipped both horizontally and vertically to avoid an obvious pattern*)



www.swansontech.com