

COVERS  
PHOTOSHOP

3.0

033

# Photoshop Techniques

How to

## CREATE A DIGITAL FIRE.

This is one of the more creative use of filters I have run across. The effect itself may be more frivolous than useful, but this technique does show off how experimenting with Photoshop's different filters can produce some interesting results.

The basic steps of this technique has been floating around the Internet and on different online services for a couple years. The first version of this technique I remember reading was a small text file titled "Sal's Flaming Text Effect." Since then the basic steps have been covered in a variety of different places.

This issue starts with the step-by-step procedure for creating the basic flaming effect. Then we add a technique to allow you to lay your flames over another background image. Finally you can combine several layers to create the example at the bottom of the page.

*Example of the original  
"Sal's Flaming Text Effect."*



*The same example with an  
added technique for layering on  
a lighter background.*



*This example shows a possibility using several layers (see diagram on Page 4).*

## Creating flames

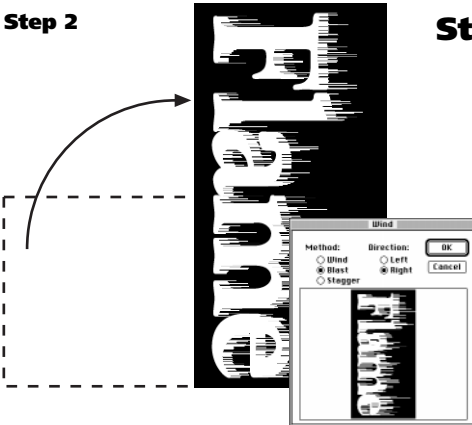


Step 1A-B



Step 1C

Step 2



### Step 1

#### Start with a grayscale document.

**A:** Choose New from the File menu.

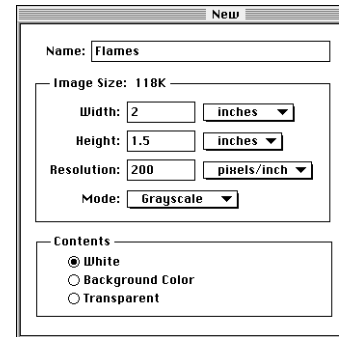
**Width & Height:** Set as needed.

**Resolution:** (200 in example) See note below.

**Mode:** Grayscale.

**Contents:** White.

*Note:* Resolution greatly affects the look of this technique. The higher the resolution, the shorter the flames will appear.



**B:** Create the graphic you want to set on fire.

This example is a placed Adobe Illustrator file. Simple black and white artwork works best for this technique.

**C:** Choose Map 1 Invert from the Image menu.

*Shortcut:* x-I (PC: CNTRL-I)

The invert command creates a negative image of our graphic.

*Note:* Make sure nothing is still selected from the previous step. Choose None (x-D) from the Select menu if you are unsure.

### Step 2

#### Rotate the graphic and use the wind filter.

**A:** Choose Rotate 1 90° CW from the Image menu.

Photoshop will rotate the whole image 90° clockwise. This is necessary because the Wind filter only works left to right.

**B:** Choose Stylize 1 Wind from the Filter menu.

The Wind filter creates irregular streaks to the right of the letters. This creates the base of our flame effect.

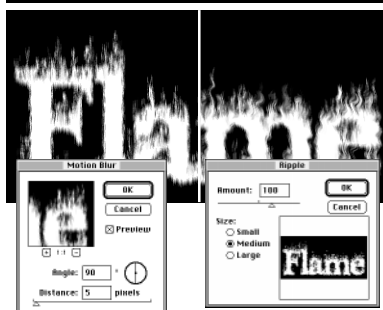
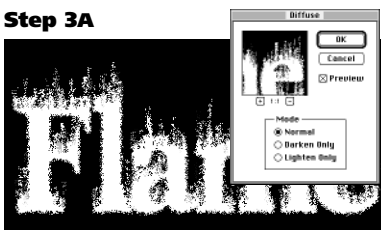
**Method:** Blast

**Direction:** Right

**C:** Choose Rotate 1 90° CCW from the Image menu.

To finish this step, we rotate our graphic back into place.

Step 3A



Step 3B

Step 3C

### Step 3

#### Roughen up the flames.

**A:** Choose Stylize 1 Diffuse from the Filter menu (twice).

The Diffuse filter adds a random texture to the flames.

*Shortcut:* To run the filter again, press x-F. (PC: CNTRL-F)

**B:** Choose Blur 1 Motion Blur from the Filter menu.

Motion Blur softens and extends the streaks of flame.

**Angle:** 90°

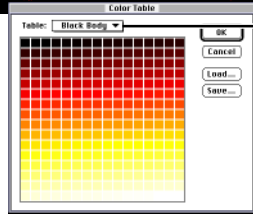
**Distance:** Blur to taste (example: 5 pixels).

**C:** Choose Distort 1 Ripple from the Filter menu.

The Ripple filter creates subtle wisps of flame.

**Amount:** 100.

**Size:** Medium.



**Indexed Color Note:**

Indexed Color mode is primarily used when working with screen images for Web publishing or Multimedia work. We use it here as a quick trick for coloring the flames.

**Step 4**

**Add color to the flames.**

You can use Photoshop's indexed color mode to quickly color the flames.

**A: Choose Indexed Color from the Mode menu.**

When we convert from Grayscale to Indexed Color, Photoshop defaults to a standard grayscale color table.



**B: Choose Color Table from the Mode menu.**

Photoshop brings up the Color Table dialog box.

Choose Black Body from the Table pop-up menu.

This color table colors our image with reds, yellows and black.

**C: Choose RGB from the Mode menu.**

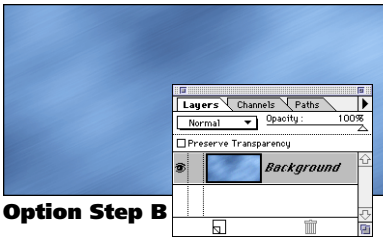
You do not want to leave your graphic in an indexed color mode unless that is the form you need. (Indexed color mode is used primarily for creating images for World Wide Web publishing)

*Note: Switch to CMYK if you plan to print color separations.*

**Option: Layering the Flames**

**Question:** What if you don't want your flames on a black background?

**Answer:** Use the following steps to layer the flames on top of any other background you wish.



**Option Step B**

**A: Copy the flames to memory**

Choose All from the Select menu (x-A);

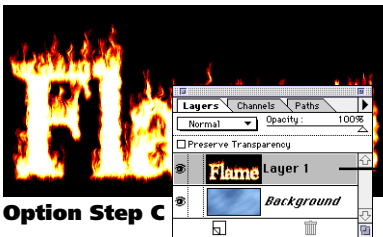
Choose Copy from the Edit menu (x-C).

**B: Open a new background document.**

In this case we have used a generic blue background.

**C: Choose Paste Layer from the Edit menu.**

Photoshop will bring up the New Layer dialog box. Name the new layer and click OK.



**Option Step C**

This will place the copied image onto its own layer.

**D: Double-click on the flame's layer in the Channels palette.**

This brings up the Channels Options dialog box. Notice that in the bottom half of there is now a section called Blending options.

**E: Option-drag part of the black triangle to the right.**

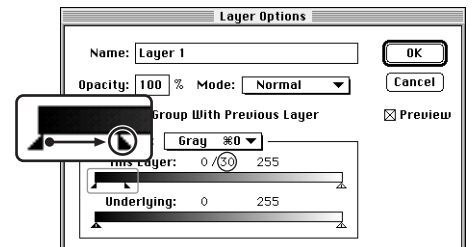
PC: ALT-Drag

Dragging the whole black triangle to the right would let the background show through the black background. By option-dragging the rightmost half of the triangle the edges of our fire will appear slightly softer



**Option Step E**

*Note: For this example, drag the right triangle to 30.*

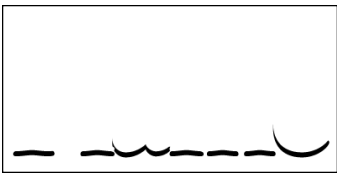


## Exercise: Creating the cover image

To create the cover example, we sandwiched a piece of type between two layers of flames.



- A** The first layer contains the basic flaming effect.
- B** Layer 2 holds the type that we set on fire. In this example we used *Technique #005* to give our type a beveled edge.
- C** The topmost layer is another flaming effect. For this layer, we erased all but the bottom edges of our type before creating the flaming effect (see the example at left). We used the technique on the bottom of Page 3 to layer the flames over the type.



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