HOW TO CHEAT IN PHOTOSHOP®

The art of creating photorealistic montages

THIRD EDITION

Fully updated for Photoshop CS2

Steve Caplin
1 Natural selection

Selection: the fundamentals
The Lasso and Magic Wand
QuickMask 1: better selection
QuickMask 2: tips and tricks
QuickMask 3: transformations
The Pen is mightier...
The Pen tool by numbers
Putting the Pen into practice
Losing the edges
Lock and load
Find and replace
Color by numbers
Brush-on color
Interlude: The perfect setup

2 Transformation and distortion

The Free Transform tool
Step and repeat rotation
Introducing Image Warp
Image Warp presets
Image Warp in combination
Transformation in practice
Interlude: The freelance artist

3 Hiding and showing

Texture with layer modes
Layer masks 1: intersections
Layer masks 2: transparency
Layer masks 3: soft edges
Layer masks 4: smoothing
Blending 1: fire power
Blending 2: plane view
Interlude: Graphics tablets

4 Image adjustment

Shadows and highlights
Learning Curves
Matching colors with Curves
Major color changes
Multi-layer enhancement
Sharpening: Unsharp Mask
Natural healing
Interlude: Getting started
Test yourself 1

5 Composing the scene

Location is everything
Relative values: interaction
I only have eyes for you
Game, test and match
Back to the foreground
Playing with perspective
An object lesson
Composition tips and tricks
People and cars
Interlude: Digital cameras

6 Getting into perspective

Establishing the horizon
Introducing vanishing points
Two point perspective
Three point perspective
Correcting perspective .............. 118
Using existing perspective .......... 120
Boxing clever: doubling up ......... 122
Vanishing Point filter 1 ............. 124
Vanishing Point filter 2 .......... 126
Vanishing Point filter 3 .......... 128
Cropping in perspective .......... 130
Interlude: Photomontage ethics ... 132

Light and shade .................. 134
Shadows on the ground .......... 136
Shadows on the wall .......... 138
Mood, light and emphasis .......... 140
Multiple shadowed objects ...... 142
Concealing the evidence .......... 144
Visible light sources .......... 146
The romance of candlelight .... 148
Turn the lamp on ................ 150
Shading using Dodge and Burn .. 152
Shading using light modes .. 154
Lighting up: perfect neon .... 156
Images on screens .......... 158
Interlude: Sourcing images .... 160

Heads and bodies ................. 162
Making the head fit .......... 164
Matching skintones .......... 166
Matching picture graininess ..... 168
Combining body parts .......... 170
The perfect haircut .......... 172
The solution for flyaway hair .. 174
The problem of hair loss .... 176
Beards and stubble .......... 178
The ageing process .......... 180
A change of clothing .......... 182
It's all in the eyes .......... 184
A change of expression .......... 186
Sleep and the art of healing .... 188
Coloring black and white images 190
Working with animals .......... 192
Interlude: Sourcing images for free ... 194

Shiny surfaces .................. 196
Introducing... Miracle Wrap .... 198
Blood and gore, no sweat .... 200
Getting hot and sticky .... 202
Water, water everywhere ... 204
Making water from thin air .... 206
Snow and icicles ........ 208
A cool glass of water .......... 210
Getting the glazing bug .... 212
Glass: refraction .......... 214
Glass: reflection .......... 216
Complex reflections .......... 218
Putting things in bottles .... 220
Distortion with backgrounds ... 222
Glass: putting it all together .. 224
Through grimy windows .... 226
Multiple planes of action ..... 228
Interlude: The photographic studio ... 230
Test yourself 2 ................. 232

Metal, wood and stone .......... 234
Instant metal using Curves .... 236
Metal with Adjustment Layers ... 238
Metal with Layer Styles .... 240
Metal with Lighting Effects ... 242
More on Lighting Effects .... 244
Rust, grime and decay .... 246
The truth about cheating
I’ve used the word ‘cheating’ in the title of this book in two ways. The most obvious is that I’m describing how to make images look as much as possible like photographs, when they’re not. In this sense, it simply means creating photographic work without the need for a studio.

The other sense of ‘cheating’ is finding shortcuts to help you work more quickly and more economically. Too often you’ll see Photoshop techniques explained using long-winded, complex operations that take an age to complete. Wherever possible, I’ve used quicker solutions to achieve the same results. For the artist on a deadline, the difference between a perfect work of art and one that’s turned in on time means the difference between a happy client and one faced with a blank page in the next day’s newspaper.

Workthroughs and examples
Each workthrough in this book is designed as a double page spread. That way, you can prop the book up behind your keyboard while going through the associated file on the CD. Some of the workthroughs take the form of case studies, where I dissect an illustration I’ve done as a commissioned job; many of the sections open with one of my illustrations as a real-world example of the technique I’m talking about. One reason I’ve used my own artwork is that I know how it was created, and have the original files to dissect.

Messing about in Photoshop can be the most fun you can have without breaking the law, and it’s tempting to experiment with filters and special effects. But it’s not until you produce an illustration to a specific brief that you realize the issues and problems involved – and then find a way around them. Almost all the techniques I describe in this book have been learned out of necessity; there’s nothing like a tight deadline to concentrate the mind. Adrenaline is sometimes the best drug there is.

At the end of each chapter you’ll find an Interlude, in which I discuss an issue of relevance to the Photoshop artist. Think of them as light relief.

Photoshop terminology
In Photoshop 7, a collection of layers in a folder was called a Layer Set, and using one layer to mask those above it was called Grouping. In Photoshop CS, the word Grouping was replaced with the cumbersome ‘Make a Clipping Mask’;
in Photoshop CS2 the term Layer Set was replaced with the word Group. I’ve updated all the references so they apply to the latest version, CS2; and I’ve used the term ‘clipping’ to refer to making a clipping mask with the underlying layer. It’s bound to cause some confusion for those using earlier versions, but it was necessary to update the terminology as the program has evolved.

**What’s on the CD?**
I’ve included most of the workthroughs in this book on the CD, so that after reading about them you can open up the original Photoshop files and experiment with them for yourself. I’ve reduced the image sizes to make them more manageable, so you’ll find yourself working with screen resolution images. There are also some movies showing specific techniques in action.

In a few cases, I haven’t been able to provide the examples on the CD. These tend to be workthroughs that are case studies, in which I’ve used images of politicians and other celebrities for whom it was impossible to get clearance to include them for electronic distribution. All the other images have been either photographed by me or generously provided by the various image libraries concerned, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. For full details of what’s included, see the back pages.

**Spelling and metaphors**
I’ve tried to use American spelling wherever possible. First, because we’re more used to reading US spelling in England than Americans are to reading English spelling; and second, because Photoshop is an American product. Initially I tried not to use any words that were spelled differently in the two languages, but I found it impossible to get through the book without mentioning the words ‘color’ and ‘gray’. My apologies if I’ve employed any phrases or vernacular that don’t work on both sides of the Atlantic. It’s a wide ocean, and some expressions don’t survive the journey.

**Going further**
Visit the book’s website at [www.howtocheatinphotoshop.com](http://www.howtocheatinphotoshop.com) and you’ll find the user forum. This is where you can post questions or problems, and exchange ideas with other readers: you can also take part in the weekly Friday Challenge, to pit your wits against a wide variety of Photoshop users.

Steve Caplin
London, 2005
This book is dedicated to Carol, of course.

I'm immeasurably grateful to the following:

Marie Hooper of Focal Press, for her patience and persistence

Keith Martin, for helping me create the keyboard shortcuts font

David Asch, Becky Fryer, Tabitha, Glen Morgan, Brian Garrison, AtomicFog, BobbyJo, Julie, Pooch, CubanPete, NW Rain, MJ, Martin Kimeldorf, johnwhite, Dezolat0r, Paul, raymardo, eaglepi, Russ Davey, Einstein D Kid, Eventer, Jeff Scranlon, Wendy W, Neal, John-BoB, Ryun, Paul McFadden, joshspazjosh, African, danyuld, Shelbie, and all the other regulars on the Reader Forum who have made writing this edition so enjoyable.

Adobe Systems Inc., for making Photoshop in the first place.

I'm indebted to the art editors of the newspapers and magazines who commissioned the artwork I've used as examples in this book:

Jonathan Anstee, Dan Barber, Kevin Bayliss, Julian Bovis, Roger Browning, Zelda Davey, Miles Dickson, Robin Hedges, Paul Howe, Lisa Irving, Alice Ithier, Ben Jackson, Jasmina Jambricic, Vicky McManus, Fraser McDermott, Garry Mears, John Morris, Doug Morrison, Lawrence Morton, Martin Parfitt, Mark Porter, Stephen Reid, Tom Reynolds, Caz Roberts, Caroline Sibley and Matt Straker.

A couple of the tutorials in this edition have previously been published, in a slightly different form, in the magazines MacUser and Total Digital Photography. My thanks to their editors for allowing me to repurpose my work here.

Many of the images in this book are from royalty-free photo libraries. Their websites are:

Bodyshots www.digiwis.com
Corel www.corel.com
Hemera www.hemera.com (digital image content © 1997-2002 Hemera Technologies Inc. All rights reserved.)
Photodisc www.photodisc.com (digital images © 2001 PhotoDisc/Getty Images)
PhotoObjects www.photoobjects.net
Rubber Ball www.rubberball.com (all images © Rubber Ball Productions)
Stockbyte www.stockbyte.com
How to use this book

I doubt if any readers of this book are going to start at the beginning and work their way diligently through to the end. In fact, you’re probably only reading this section because your computer’s just crashed and you can’t follow any more of the walkthroughs until it’s booted up again. This is the kind of book you should be able to just dip into and extract the information you need.

But I’d like to make a couple of recommendations. The first four chapters deal with the basics of photomontage. There are many Photoshop users who have never learnt how to use the Pen tool, or picked up the essential keyboard shortcuts; I frequently meet experienced users who have never quite figured out how to use layer masks. Because I talk about these techniques throughout the book, I need to bring everyone up to speed before we get onto the harder stuff. So my apologies if I start off by explaining things you already know: it’ll get more interesting later on.

The techniques in each chapter build up as you progress through the walkthroughs. Frequently, I’ll use a technique that’s been discussed in more detail earlier in the same chapter, so it may be worth going through the pages in each chapter in order, even if you don’t read every chapter in the book.

A CD icon on a page indicates that the Photoshop file for that tutorial is on the CD, so you can open it up and try it out for yourself. The Movie icon indicates that there’s an associated QuickTime movie on the CD.

If you get stuck anywhere in the book, or in Photoshop generally, visit the Reader Forum, accessed through the main website:

www.howtocheatinphotoshop.com

This is where you can post queries and suggestions. I visit the forum every day, and will always respond directly to questions from readers. But expect other forum members to weigh in with their opinions as well! It’s also a great place to meet other Photoshop users, and to take part in the weekly Friday Challenge – of which you’ll see a few examples in this edition.
There are only three elements in this simple montage: the background, the bike, and its shadow. But there’s a world of difference between the crudely selected version, top, and the careful cutout, right. Making accurate selections is the key to working in Photoshop successfully.