THE DIGITAL DARKROOM – 07
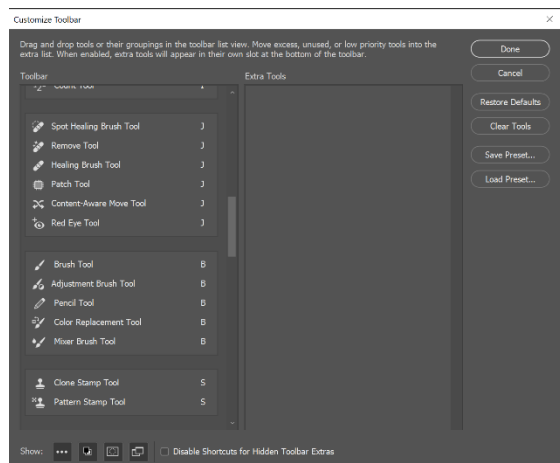
ADJUSTMENTS

It is important to note that there are global and local adjustments. Global adjustments affect the whole image and are usually done first. Local adjustments affect a certain designated area only and add the wow factor to images.

THE (NEW) ADJUSTMENT BRUSH IN PHOTOSHOP

This new tool was added in Photoshop's latest release – May 2024. Previously it had been available in the beta edition of Photoshop.

If the adjustment brush is not shown on your tool bar or in the brushes group of tools, then select the icon with three dots in the tool bar. This will open the edit toolbar option. Click on

this and the customize toolbar appears. There are two panels – one indicates what tools are currently present in your tool bar and the second panel shows what extra tools may be added. Find the adjustment brush tool in the extra tools panel and drag it to the left-hand panel. It is a good idea to group it with the other brush tools. Now click Done and you will find the adjustment brush has been added to your selections of tools.

Using the Adjustment Brush

Select the adjustment brush

The tool options for the adjustment brush open and also the contextual toolbar opens. (If this doesn't open, select the contextual tool bar from the windows menu).

Tool options   Contextual toolbar

Clicking on the down arrow next to the words 'brightness and contrast' in the contextual toolbar reveals a list of adjustments that may be made with the adjustment brush. As an adjustment is used further options will appear on this bar.

Dodge and Burn with the Adjustment Brush

Select brightness and contrast from the contextual toolbar.
Set the flow of the brush to about 5-7%, so that the effect may be built up slowly.
Adjust the size of the brush to suit the area you wish to burn. Use a soft brush so that the edges of the strokes are not so harsh.

As soon as the brush touches the image, a brightness contrast layer with a black mask is added to the layer panel. The properties panel will open.

Lower the brightness slider all the way as far as it will go.). Move the contrast slider to just below midway. (These may be adjusted later).
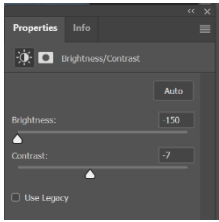
Brush the area you wish to burn (in this case the sky)– build it up slowly. Don't worry if it looks dark as when you have finished this step, then you may adjust the brightness and contrast sliders to get your desired effect.

The contextual toolbar will now show the extra options.

To accomplish the dodging part, click on the add new adjustment button.

Select 'brightness and contrast' and once you tap with the brush on the image, another brightness and contrast layer with a black mask will appear in the layers panel.

In the properties panel set the brightness slider to the far right and the contrast slider to the left.
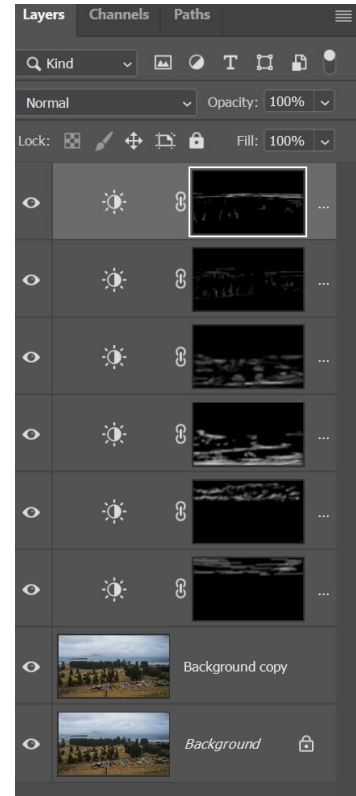

The dodging of the sky has been done as well as the burning.

You may use more adjustment brush layers for other parts of the image.

The image now has several layers of dodging and burning.

When using the adjustment brush, you can see the area that will be affected by toggling this button on the contextual toolbar. It will show the area in magenta that will be affected.

A specific area to dodge and burn may be isolated by the object selection.

Use the *add new adjustment* button to get a new brightness/contrast layer. Then select the apply to object button. You will then be able to draw a rectangle around the desired object and the brightness/contrast will be added to this object. You will be able to see the adjustment area by toggling the button on and off.

Shows the area where the adjustment brush has been applied.

To make this same adjustment to the other buildings in this image, click the button, then the apply to object button and draw a rectangle around the next building. The adjustment will be applied to that building. In a similar way the button may be used to subtract an area.

Adding another adjustment brush layer to a selected area

In the previous image one building was isolated and a brightness/contrast adjustment brush layer was added to it. If a different adjustment brush eg. the vibrance adjustment brush is need then click to add a new adjustment brush and hold the ALT (Option for Mac) key and drag the mask from the underlying layer to this new blank mask to replace it. The vibrance adjustment brush will now be applied to that previously selected area.

In experimenting with this adjustment brush, I have found it best to use separate adjustment brush layers for different areas as it allows for more variation and control. This is especially so for skies – doing the exposure of the clouds and sky in two layers rather than one.