

## How to retouch photos

Other than correcting color, one of the most common tasks you will perform in Adobe Photoshop is retouching photos to correct imperfections, edit out undesired parts of the photo, and correct problems that result from the photo-taking process. This guide covers several ways to retouch photos, including use of the Clone Stamp tool, the Spot Healing Brush tool, and the Red Eye tool.

### Using the History panel

Because retouching can require trial and error, you should know how to use the History panel to undo steps.

Like most computer users, you're probably aware of the Undo command available in many applications. This command lets you undo the effects of whatever command you've just applied.

Photoshop takes the Undo command several steps further with the History panel. The History panel keeps track of the last 20 commands you've applied to an image, allowing you to revert to any one of these. When you execute a command, such as transforming an image or adding text, these are added to the History panel. The commands appear in the list in the order in which you performed them. Each command is listed with the name of the tool or command you used to change the image.

You can also take a "snapshot" of a particular set of commands, allowing you to revert to this snapshot later.

**Note:** Although the History panel is great, it does consume memory (RAM). Layers also consume memory, so if you're working with a complex, multilayered image, you may want to reduce the number of History commands saved. You can do so by choosing Edit > Preferences > Performance (Windows) or Photoshop > Preferences > Performance (Mac OS).

*To use the History panel:*

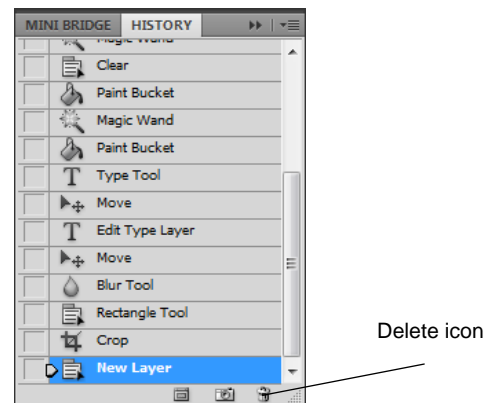
1. Open an image in Photoshop.
2. Execute several commands—such as selecting a part of the image, applying a filter, and adding a layer.  
The point is to add some commands to the History panel (**Figure 1**).
3. Click one of the earlier commands, such as Move (**Figure 2**).

Observe that the image reverts to its appearance at the time this command was executed. Any commands executed afterward are temporarily discarded and appear dimmed. In **Figure 2**, for example, the Paint Bucket and Rectangular Marquee are dimmed and the effects no longer appear in the image.

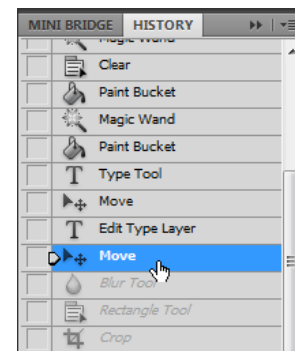
At this point, the Paint Bucket and Rectangular Marquee commands are still available in the panel (if you select either). However, if you execute another command, the dimmed commands will be permanently discarded.

4. To delete a command, select it and then click the Delete icon (**Figure 1**).

The image permanently reverts to the command prior to the deleted command.



**Figure 1** The History panel



**Figure 2** Earlier command selected

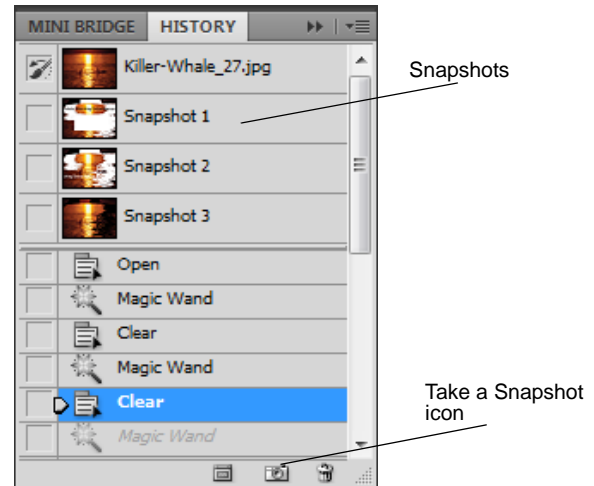
### Taking a snapshot

You can use the Snapshot feature to capture the image as it appears at any point in the list of History commands. Once you're satisfied with an image, it's a good idea to take a snapshot.

*To take a snapshot:*

1. Click the History command you want to capture.
2. Click the Snapshot icon (**Figure 3**).
3. Scroll to the top of the History panel as necessary to view the snapshot (**Figure 3**).
4. To revert to the snapshot, click it as you would any other History command.

You can compare different snapshots by clicking on them.



**Figure 3** Snapshots in the History panel

### Using Content-Aware fill

Content-Aware allows you to quickly and automatically fill a selection with similar image content from nearby. It is effective for removing a large unwanted portion of a photo and as a starting point for more fine-tuned retouching.

*To use Content-Aware fill:*

1. Identify the object you want to remove from an image.

For example, you can remove the blurry cyclist from the image in **Figure 4**.

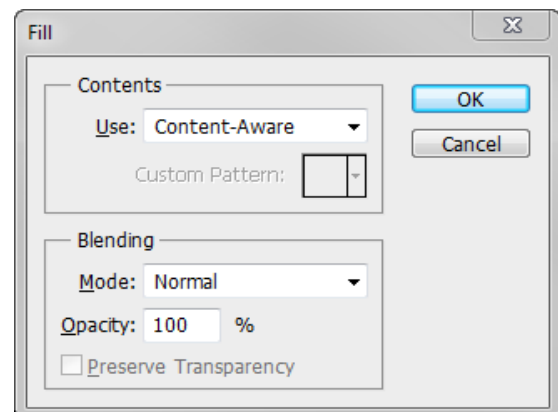


**Figure 4** Initial image to be retouched

2. Select the part of the image you want to fill (**Figure 5**).
3. Choose Edit > Fill.
4. From the Use menu, select Content-Aware (**Figure 6**).
5. Adjust Blending parameters as desired and Click OK.
6. The unwanted object is removed from the image (**Figure 7**). Use additional retouching tools to further fine-tune the image.



**Figure 5** Unwanted object selected



**Figure 6** Fill dialog box



**Figure 7** Image with unwanted object removed

## Using the Clone Stamp tool

You can use the Clone Stamp tool to remove minor blemishes from a photo. It is most effective with small, distinct features.

*To use the Clone Stamp tool:*

1. Identify the object you want to remove from an image.

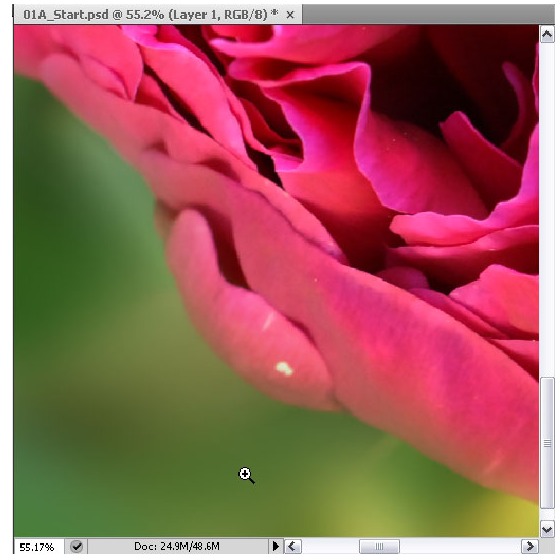
For example, you can remove the marks from the flower pictured in **Figure 8**.



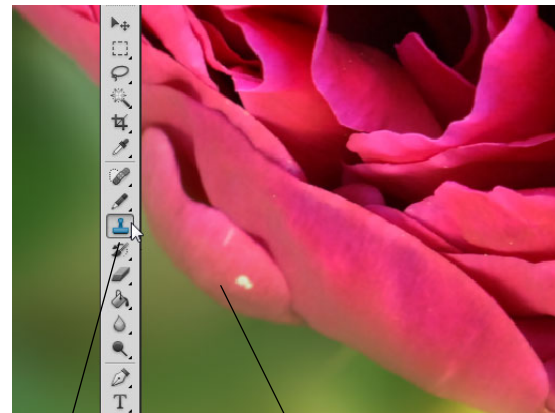
Area to be retouched

**Figure 8** Initial image to be retouched

2. Use the Zoom tool to magnify the object (**Figure 9**).
3. Identify an area of the background that will blend with the problem area.
4. Select the Clone Stamp tool in the toolbar.
5. Hold down Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac OS) and click the area to be cloned (**Figure 10**).
6. Release Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac OS) and move the Clone Stamp tool over the object you want to remove (**Figure 11**).

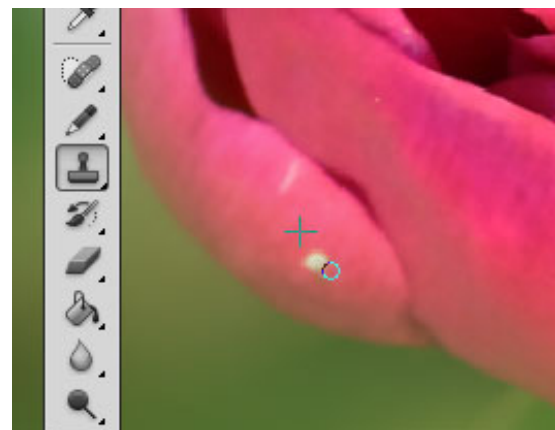


**Figure 9** Object magnified



Clone Stamp tool      Area to be cloned

**Figure 10** Clone area selected



**Figure 11** Cloning the area

7. Drag the Clone Stamp tool over the object until it disappears, and then release (**Figure 12**).
8. When you finish with the Clone Stamp tool, you can switch to another tool by clicking the new tool in the toolbar.



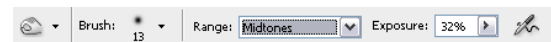
**Figure 12** Cloning complete

### Using the Spot Healing Brush tool

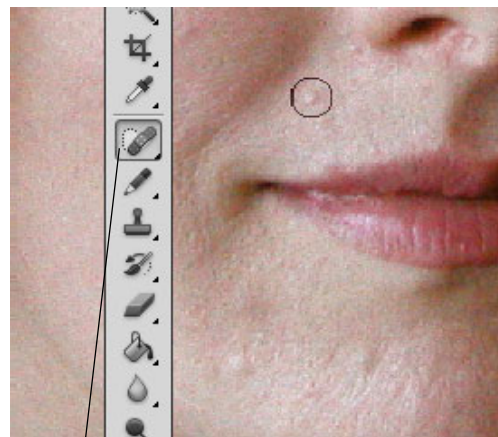
The Spot Healing Brush tool makes touchups even easier for small areas. The Spot Healing Brush tool automatically samples pixels from the surrounding area and applies these to the selected area. The Spot Healing Brush tool makes changes quickly to a small area. You do not need to select a sample area.

*To use the Spot Healing Brush tool:*

1. Click the Spot Healing Brush tool in the toolbar.  
The pointer changes to a brush. Usually the brush appears as a circle.
2. You can change the size or shape of the brush in the Options bar (**Figure 13**).  
The brush should be large enough to cover the entire spot, with some room around the edges
3. Position the Spot Healing Brush tool over the area you want to correct (**Figure 14**).



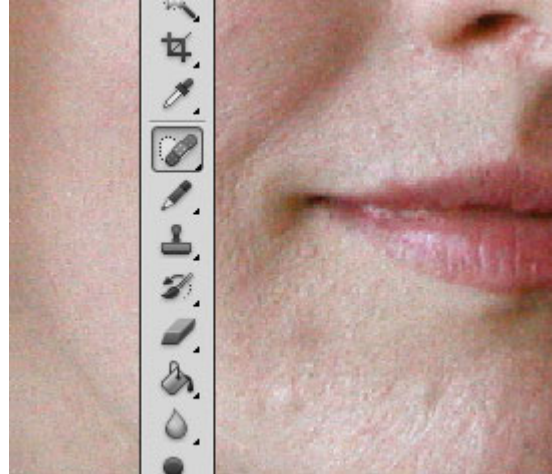
**Figure 13** Brush options



Spot Healing Brush tool

**Figure 14** Spot Healing brush positioned over a blemish

4. Click to apply the correction (**Figure 15**).



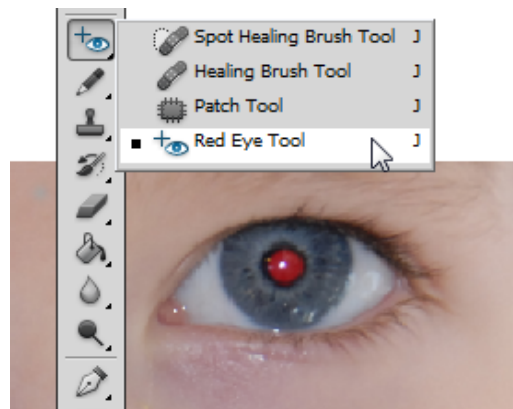
**Figure 15** Spot Healing brush applied

### Using the Red Eye tool

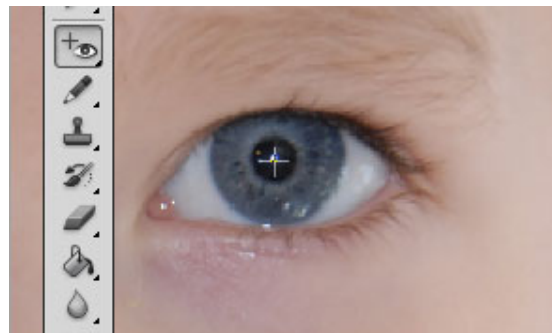
When you take photos with a flash, red eye can often result. You can quickly correct red eye with the Red Eye tool.

*To use the Red Eye tool:*

1. Click the Red Eye tool in the toolbar (**Figure 16**).
2. Position the Red Eye tool over the pupil you want to correct.
3. Click to apply the correction (**Figure 17**).



**Figure 16** Red Eye tool



**Figure 17** Red Eye tool applied