IMAGE ADJUSTMENTS IN PHOTOSHOP

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Adjustment Tools Covered

1. **Levels** - Changes the tonality of a photo, using a histogram (like you'd see on a digital camera).

2. **Curves** - Changes the color balance of a photo, allowing you to selectively increase the contrast.

3. **Hue/Saturation** - Allows you to control how individual colors appear in your photos.

4. **Black and white** - Lets you convert a color image to grayscale while maintaining full control over how individual colors are converted.

5. **Photo Filter** - Applies several common filters to touch up the colors in a photo. Can be used to warm up or cool down the tint of a photo.

FIRST THINGS FIRST...

Destructive vs. Non-Destructive

Destructive adjustments change the original image data, meaning once your image is saved, it is changed for good. Nondestructive adjustments do not change the original data, allowing you to revert back to the original photo at any time. All of the tools discussed here today will be done using non-destructive **adjustment layers.**
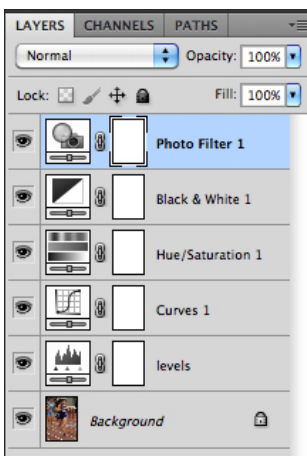
• Creating a new adjustment layer in a photo allows you to us the image adjustment tools without working directly on the photo.

• To create a new adjustment layer on a photo, go to
Layer --> New Adjustment Layer, and select which adjustment you want to apply.

• Each adjustment layer you add is shown in the layers panel above your photo. It also comes in with a built-in layer mask. Hit "B" to bring up the brush tool, allowing you to mask a part of the photo you may not want to apply the adjustment to.

• Double clicking on the adjustment layer image in the layers panel will allow you to bring up the options for your adjustment at any time. If the photo is then saved as a photoshop file, you will always have the ability to edit, hide or delete these adjustments.
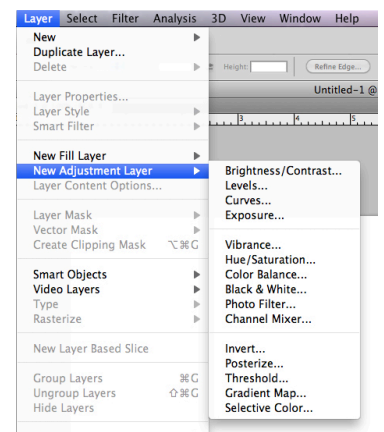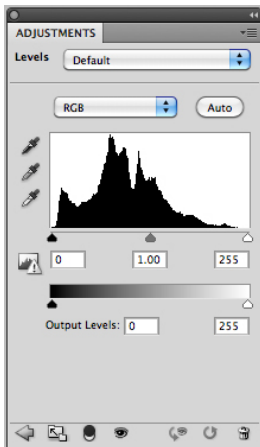
1 - LEVELS

• A levels adjustment layer shows a histogram, giving a graphical representation of the shadows (black), midtones (gray) and highlights (white) of a photo.

• A photo that shows peaks mostly in the center (midtone) portion of the histogram is flat and lacks contrast.

• Slide the triangles under the histogram to set new points in the photo. Brighten the highlights by setting a new white point, darken the shadows by setting a new black point. You can also lighten or darken the midtones in the image.

• Use the pulldown menu (displaying RGB) and select either Red, Green or Blue to use the histogram to control those individual color tones in the photo.
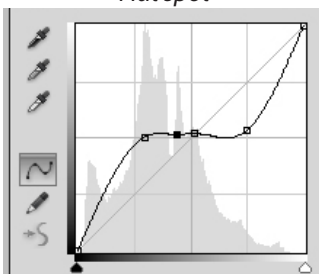
2 - CURVES

• The curves adjustment shows a visual representative of your photo in a grid form. The diagonal line shows darkest point of image in bottom left with the lightest part in top right.

• When you click on the line in the grid, you are selecting the tone of the photo that will be changed.

• The lower right side of the grid is darkness, meaning it will add adds darkness to whatever part of the photo you drag into it. The upper left side of the grid represents lightness, meaning whatever part of the photo you pull into it, will be affected and made lighter.

• Click the cursor button on the curves panel ( ) to bring up an eyedropper that you can use to select a certain color in the photo. As you mouse over your photo with the eyedropper, the curves panel shows you where on the diagonal line, that point is. Hold control and click to put a point on the line wherever you've sampled the photo.

• A curve that looks like an "S" is the most popular type. Use it to increase contest within the image. It increases the lightest part, and the darkest part --- intensifying the shadows and highlights. The steeper the curve, the more intense the change.

• Flat spots in the middle of a curve are bad news. It kills contrast in the photo, creating gray tones. Downhill slopes in a curve are also problematic. They turn the image into a negative.

• If you are editing several photos from one game and find a curve that works well, save it! The next time you are editing a photo from that game, load the curve to apply it to that photo. You can also load curves and apply them using a batch process.
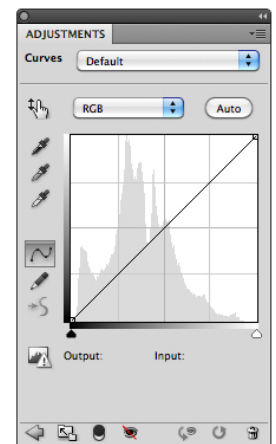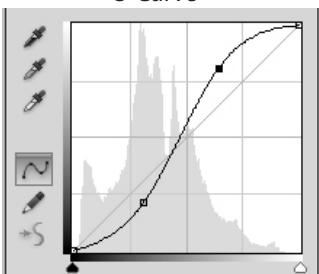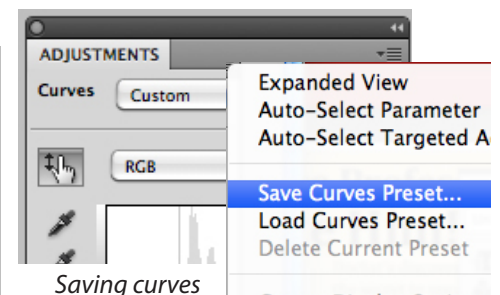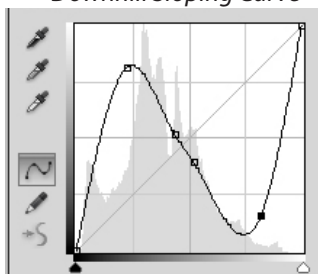
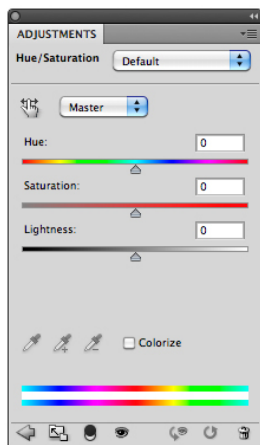*S-Curve*   *Flat spot*   *Downhill Sloping Curve*

Saving curves

3 - HUE/SATURATION

• Hue/Saturation allows you to change colors (hue) or enrich/dull colors (saturation). By default you are changing the master color (the whole image). Use the pulldown menu (displaying Master) to select just one set of colors that your changes will affect.

• The hue slider lets you re-map the photo's colors. The gradient lines at the bottom of the box show the new colors, while the one at the top shows the corresponding original color.

• Saturation is how pure or vivid hue is. A color with absolutely no saturation is going to be gray. A color that is 100% saturated is in its most intense form. To increase saturation, move the saturation slider to the right. To decrease it, move the slider to the left.

• Check the "Colorize" box to add a complete color overlay to your photo.

4 - BLACK AND WHITE

• Use the Black and White adjustment to change your photo to grayscale. This is the most advanced way make a photo black and white, because it lets you control color brightness.

• Not all black and white images are created equal! Use the sliders under each color category to adjust how light (slide to the right) or how dark (slide to the left) you want those colors to be.

• The pulldown menu (displaying Default) contains several presets that you can start from. Select one and then use the sliders below to adjust.

• Use the eyedropper on the image and you can drag the color to change as needed.

• Clicking the "Tint" box allows you tint the photo a certain color, over a black and white photo. It lets you adjusts each color category individually, underneath the color overlay, giving you rich tones.
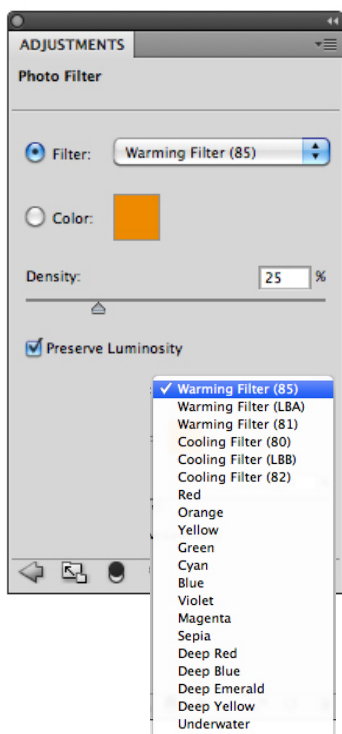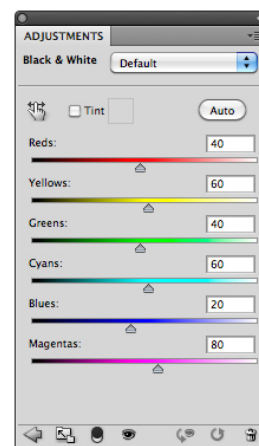
5 - PHOTO FILTERS

• Photo filters allow you to simulate putting a colored lense over your camera. Use this tool to adjust photos that may have an unwanted tint (often seen on photos taken in a gym) or to simply change the color cast of a photo.

• The density slider allows you to adjust how intense the filter is applied to your photo.

• Keeping the "Preserve Luminosity" box checked, lightens or darkens the color so that despite the changes you make, the apparent brightness of the photo remains the same.

• Like the black and white adjustment layer, photo filters come with several presets that are very useful. Select one and adjust as needed.

• A yellow or orange (warm) tint can be neutralized using a blue (cool) tint. The reverse is also true.

• Once you remove any unwanted color casts on your photo, use the other adjustments discussed here to finish enhancing the look of it.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

• Adobe Online - *http://help.adobe.com* - Go right to the source! The Adobe website has an extensive and searchable user manual for all products.

• You Suck At Photoshop - *http://www.mydamnchannel.com* (Click on channels to find it!) - A series of hilarious Photoshop tutorials that actually teach you something. The series is in its third season, combining a storyline and recurring characters with real Photoshop tutorials.

• Photoshop Lady - *http://www.photoshoplady.com* - A great resource that puts all the best Photoshop tutorials at your fingertips.

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