

Tip:
Making selections using Channels

Reason we do it:

Just this year I have been learning Channels and I now believe it is THE best way to make tough selections as well as these basic ones. This technique works best with high contrast photos at the basic level.

Method:

- Step 1: Open the photo you want to use. Remember, higher the contrast, the better.
- Step 2: Open your Channels Palette and choose the channel with the most contrast. (In this case, Red)
- Step 3: Duplicate the channel with the most contrast by dragging that channel to the Create New Channel icon. (Figure A)
- Step 4: Press Control (Command-Mac) L to bring up the Levels dialog box. In the dialog box, grab the Shadow slider (top left) and drag it towards the right. This will make everything dark, darker. (Figure B)
- Step 5: Grab the Highlight slider (top right) and drag it to the left. This will make everything light, lighter. (Figure C) Our goal is to make everything in this channel black or white. (Figure D)
- Step 6: As you can see we still have some black in our white so we need to get rid of it. Press Control (Command-Mac) B to select the Brush tool. Then Press D to select the default color settings. Then press X to make white the foreground color you are going to paint with.
- Step 7: Use the brush tool to paint out all the black in the white area. Then press X to make black your foreground color and paint out all the white in any black areas. You can make your brush larger or smaller by clicking the bracket ([or]) keys. Don't go too close to the edges.
- Step 8: Change your brush mode from Regular to Overlay in the Control Palette and paint over the edges of the figures in black. Once you are all done painting in black and white it should look like this. (Figure E)
- Step 9: Click the Load Channel as Selection icon at the bottom of the Channels palette. (Figure F) It looks like a dotted line circle.
- Step 10: Press Control (Command-Mac) J to make a new Layer with just your selection in it.
- Step 11: Press Control (Command-Mac) ~ to make the Master Channel visible and your Red Channel copy invisible.
- Step 12: Click the eyeball icon in the layer's palette next to the original photo layer (probably Background).
- Step 13: You can now save just people if you want them to be a COBed photo or you can add a background by dragging one in from another photo and dragging that layer behind the people layer.

