

Adobe Photoshop

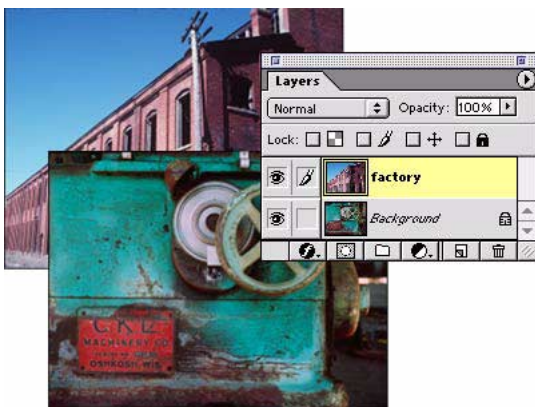
Become a layer-blending expert

If you're already familiar with applying blend modes and changing the opacity of layers, did you know that Adobe® Photoshop® provides an additional set of blending options? Advanced blending options give you precise control over layer blending and allow you to create new and interesting effects. In this tutorial, you'll learn how to use a variety of blending options to composite a multiple-layer image.



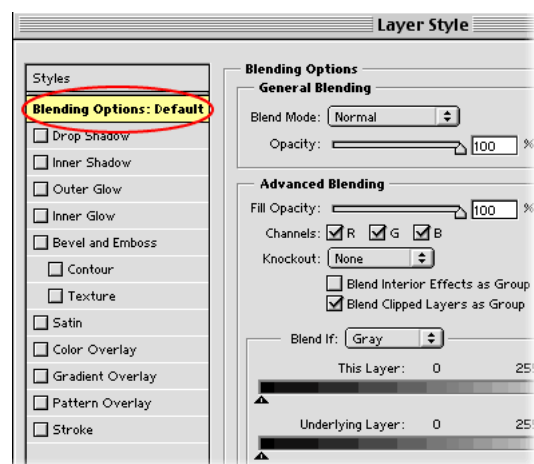
1. Choose your source art.

Create a Photoshop file that contains a few images you want to work with. Place each image on a separate layer. We'll be combining two scanned photographs with other elements to create an image with an industrial theme.



2. Get familiar with the Blending Options section of the Layer Style dialog box.

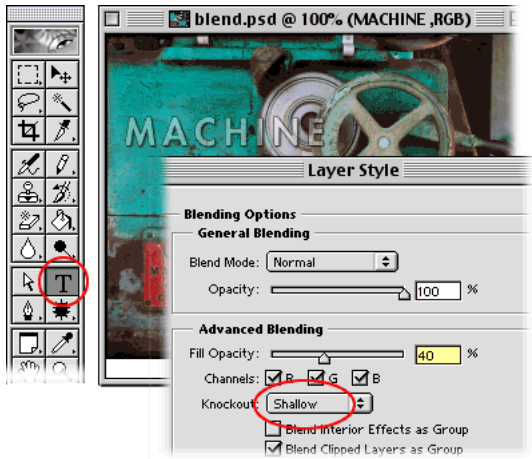
Photoshop unifies all blending options in the Layer Style dialog box, making it easier for you to locate and apply blending effects. Choose Blending Options from the Layers palette menu to display the dialog box. If you've already opened the Layer Style dialog box to apply a layer effect, you can access the blending options by clicking Blending Options: Default at the top of the Styles list.



3. Create a knockout effect with type.

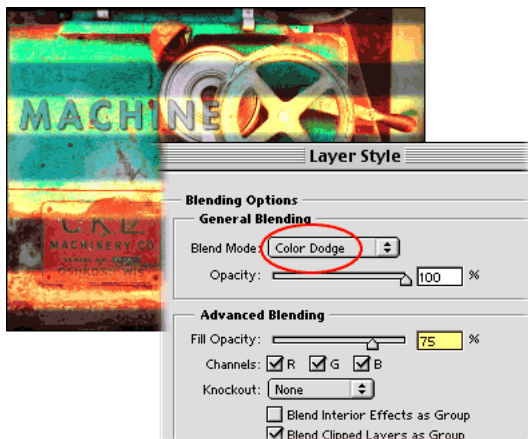
Use the type tool to create a new type layer. We chose a heavy, sans serif font so that more of the image could show through. Now go to the Blending Options section of the Layer Style dialog box. Choose Shallow from the Knockout pop-up menu, and reduce the Fill Opacity. We chose a Fill Opacity of 40%. You can also apply a drop shadow and stroke to the type as we did.

The Knockout option uses the pixels in the active layer to reveal pixels from other layers. A shallow knockout punches through to the next layer; a deep knockout punches through to the Background layer. (If you don't have a Background layer, a deep knockout punches through to transparency.) You'll see more of the underlying layer as you reduce the fill opacity of the knockout layer.



4. Change the blend mode of one or more layers.

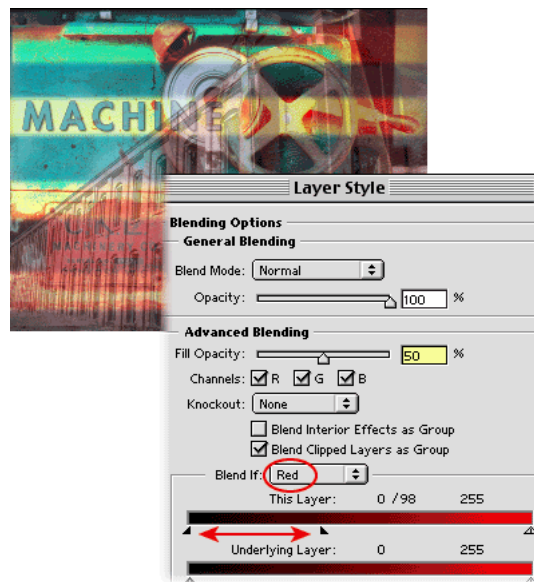
Blend modes let you specify how Photoshop mixes a pixel's color with that of every pixel directly beneath it in a layered image. To demonstrate the effect of using a blend mode, we added feathered yellow stripes to our image and changed the blend mode for each stripe to Color Dodge. Then, we changed the Fill Opacity for each stripe layer to 75% in the Layer Style dialog box.



5. Drop colors out of a layer using a Blend If range.

The Blend If sliders in the Blending Options section of the Layer Style dialog box let you drop colors out of an active layer and force colors to show through from underlying layers. You can set a Blend If range for each color channel separately, or select Gray to affect all color channels equally.

We chose to set a Blend If range for the brick building layer. First, we selected the layer in the Layers palette. Then, we set the Fill Opacity to 50% in the Layer Style dialog box. Finally, we chose Red from the Blend If pop-up menu and set a range using the This Layer slider. We wanted to exclude dark red pixels in the image, so we adjusted black triangle at the left of the slider. To soften the color transition, we defined a graded blending range by Alt-dragging (Windows) or Option-dragging (Mac OS) the slider triangle.



6. Use a knockout effect to reveal part of the bottom layer.

In the process of compositing our image, an interesting element in the bottom image (the red label on the machine) was obscured. We used a deep knockout to bring it back into the composition. First, we created a new layer at the top of the Layers palette. Then, we made a selection where we wanted the bottom image to come through and filled the selection with a color (any color will do). With the top layer still active, we set the Fill Opacity to 0% and chose Deep from the Knockout pop-up menu in the Layer Styles palette. The red label on the machine is visible again.

