

The logo features a stylized white star or arrow shape pointing to the left, composed of several overlapping triangular segments. To its right, the text 'TOPAZ LABS' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with 'TOPAZ' on the top line and 'LABS' on the bottom line.

TOPAZ LABS

MERGING AND BLENDING TUTORIAL

Merging & Blending

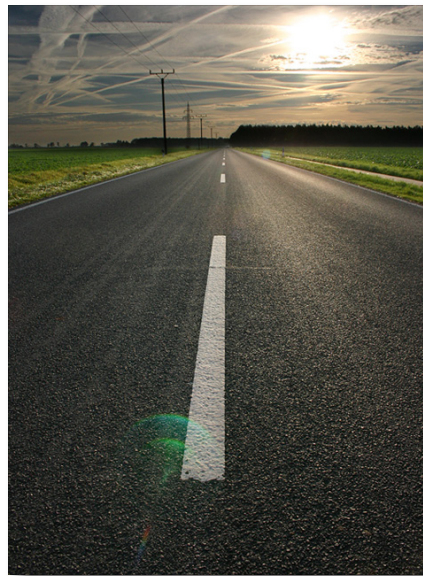
Masking is the hard part, but merging and blending are also key parts in making your two (or more) images look like they were made for each other. In this section, we will show you how to take your newly masked image and create a whole new scene with a new background.

Please note: adding new backgrounds is done in Photoshop (or other editing program). This is a quick overview..for additional, more in-depth information please refer to your Photoshop user guide.

To connect with other Topaz users, participate in Topaz Contests and to see the latest tips, tricks and tutorials sign up for the new Topaz Forum online at: www.topazlabs.com/forum



Go from Masked Image 1



to new background image 2



and create image 3

Merging

We will cover two different ways of merging your images.

The first way to merge your two images is by manually dragging the new background image into the project file that has your mask in it.

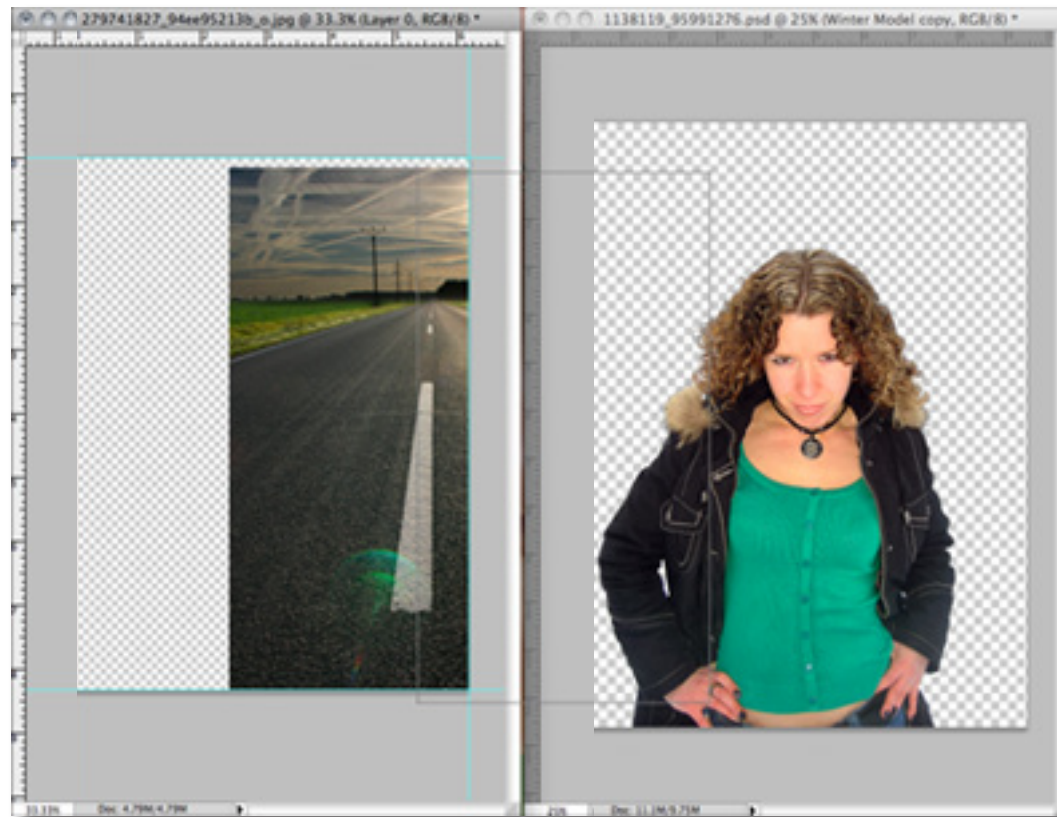
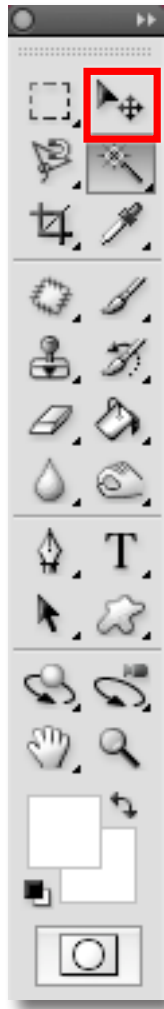
To do this go to File -> Open and select the image you want and then click OK to open it in Photoshop. (You should still have your newly masked image open in Photoshop.)

You will also want to make sure to unlock the layer if it is locked before you try moving it.

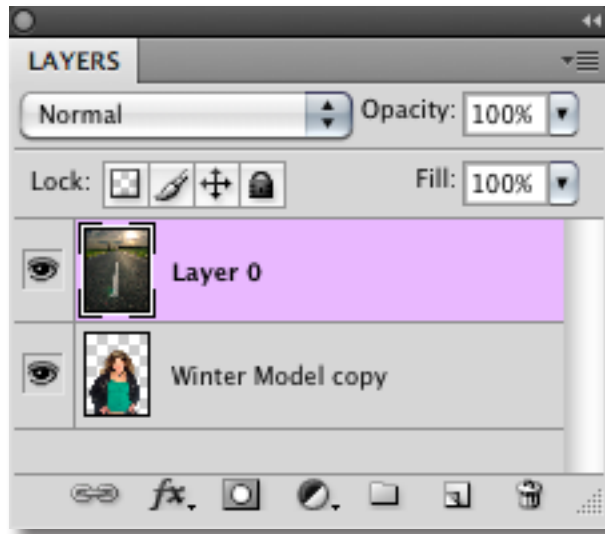


Then, go to your Photoshop toolbox and select the Move tool and drag your new background

image into the the project that contains your new layer mask. Adding the new background will create a new layer in your project.

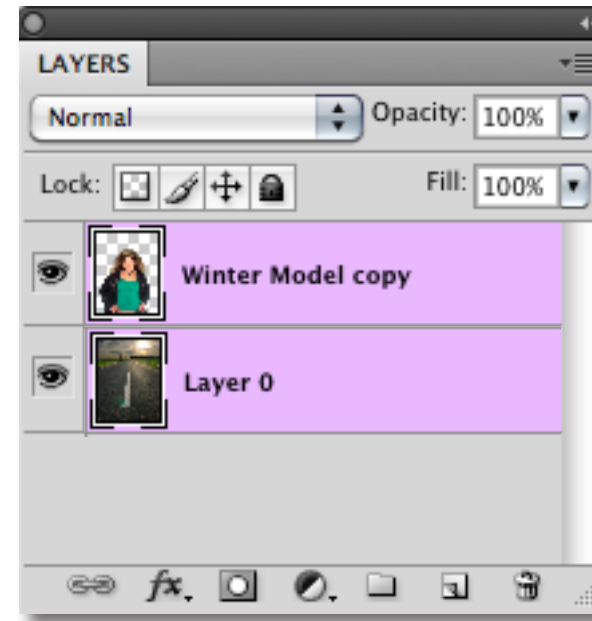


Now that you have successfully added your new background into your project file you will notice that it is on top of your masked image. However it needs to go behind your masked image.



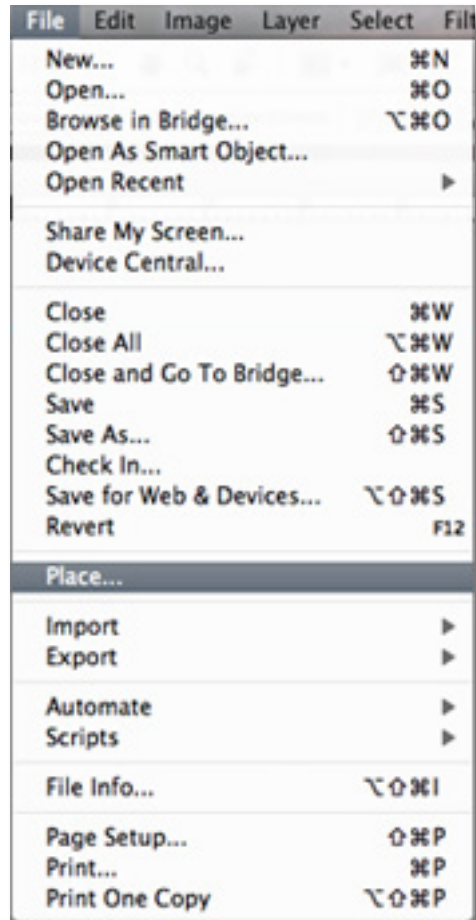
To put the background behind your masked image so that it looks like the background you will need to go to your Layers Palette. If your Layers Palette is not loaded you can access it by going to Window -> Layers and it will come up.

Click on the layer that has the thumbnail of the new image that you just added to the project and drag it below the layer that has the thumbnail of your masked image.

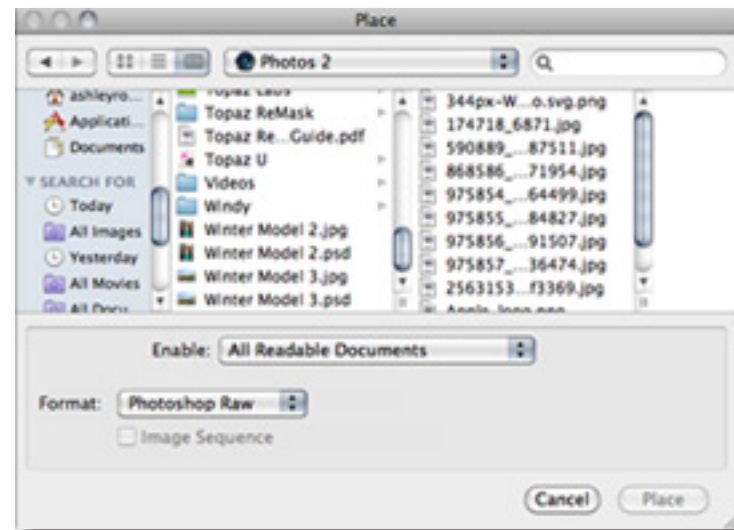


To resize either your masked image or your new background image, select the appropriate layer in the Layers Palette. Then go Edit -> Transform -> Scale. Grab the corner of the image and scale it up or down. You can also use the following shortcut keys: CMD + T (Mac) or CTRL + T (Win)

The second merging method that you can use is to place the new background file into your project using Photoshop's place feature.



To do this, you will need to already have your newly ReMasked image open and then go to File -> Place. Select the new background image that you would like to add and then click "Place". This will automatically add the new image into your open project file.



You can then go to your Layers Palette to see that your image has been added as a new layer. You can rearrange your layers to put the newly added background layer behind your masked layer.

Blending

Blending makes the transition of your masked image into your new background image seamless. There are many ways and various tools that you can use to do this. We will review just a few.

If desired, you can incorporate the use of any of the basic Photoshop tools including:

Blur Tool - Blurring softens edges and blend transitional areas.

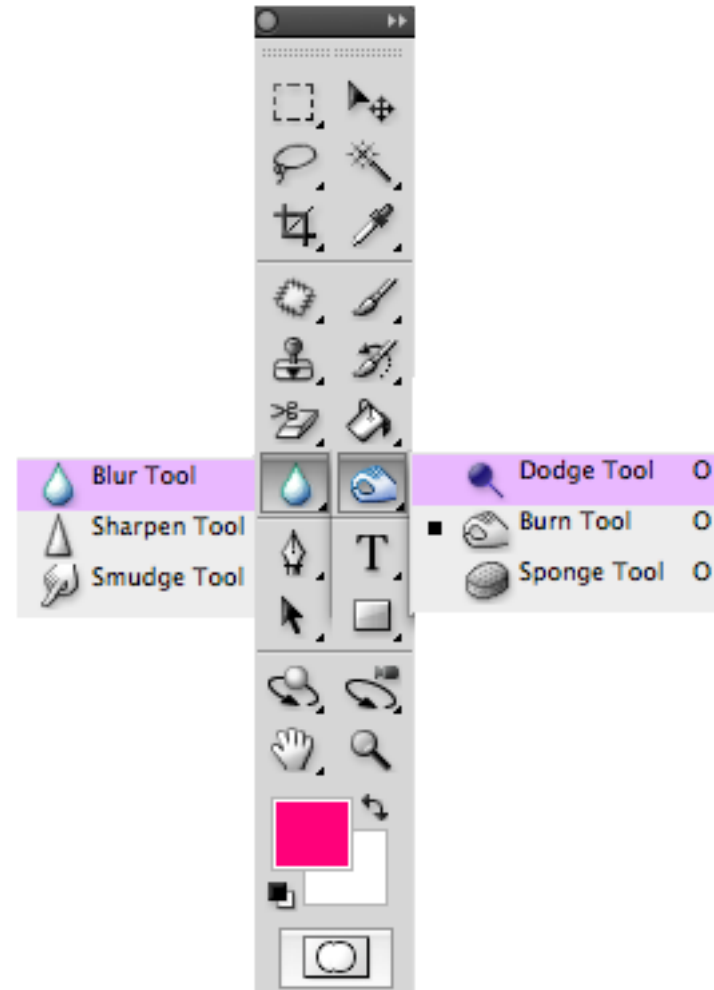
Sharpen -Sharpening increases contrast in the painted areas.

Smudge - Smudging blends the pixels where you paint simulating the action of dragging a finger through wet paint.

Dodge Tool - Dodging lightens areas lighter and harden edges

Burn Tool - burning darkens areas darker and harden edges,

Sponge Tool - changes the level of saturation of colors for an area of an image.



Lets look at the following example to get a better idea of how to use your Photoshop tools to perfect your image blending.

The tool that you will find most useful is the Sponge Tool. It will always be a good option to use when doing final touch ups on your blending work. It will fix mismatched image colors.

The Sponge Tool adjusts the saturation of the area that you paint. When you change the level of saturation of colors for an area of an image you are essentially draining color intensity (Desaturate) or infusing color intensity (Saturate). You can change the mode to Desaturate or Saturate at the top of your Photoshop interface.



1. Desaturated

2. Original

3. Saturated



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Blur Tool - Blurring softens edges and blend transitional areas.

Sharpen -Sharpening increases contrast in the painted areas.

Smudge - Smudging blends the pixels where you paint simulating the action of dragging a finger through wet paint.

Dodge Tool - Dodging lightens areas and softens the appearance of edges.

Burn Tool - Burning darkens areas and hardens the appearance of edges.

Sponge Tool - changes the level of saturation of colors for an area of an image.

You can also use the tools under Photoshop's Modify option to finesse the border of your masked image. You will first need to make a selection around the part of the image you want to work on before you can access the Modify menu options.

Border - Takes the border of your selection and turns it into a two lined selection with soft edges.

Smooth - Smooths out corners and jagged lines.

Expand - Enlarges the selection.

Contract - Reduces the selection.

Feather - Feathering gives a smoother fill around the edges of your masked image.

Another option for blending and matching colors within your masked image and your background image for a smoother transition would be to use Topaz Adjust to enhance the image exposure, color and saturation.

