

Applying Local Corrections to a Photograph (or Beyond Dodging and Burning)

The idea is that you may only wish to change the way part of your image looks rather than affecting the whole image. This is one of many ways to do this, so I encourage you to experiment. This technique works equally well for both color and b/w images. The only difference is that you would only be adjusting tones for a b/w image, but for color you may adjust tones as well as color correct just one area.

1. Make a rough selection around the area you want to change. The regular Lasso tool works well most of the time.
2. Press the Quick Mask button on the tool bar, or simply press Q to enter Quick Mask mode.
The selection will now be visible as Red & Transparent.
3. Apply the blur filter to the edges of your now visible selection.
Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur
4. Change the Radius until you have the right amount of blurring, and then press the OK button.
5. Press the Standard Mode button on the tool bar, or simply press Q this time to exit Quick Mask mode.
The selection will now be visible again as “marching ants”.
6. Make a Curves adjustment layer and press OK, without making any changes.
7. Rename that adjustment layer with a name describing the area of the image, (i.e tree trunk, or background, etc).
8. Double Click the adjustment layer and you’ll be able to make changes to its curve.
As you do, notice that only the previously selected area is being changed.
9. These local adjustment layers can be stacked on top of your global adjustment layer. Make as many as needed.