

Topic 1 - Photoshop – Cloning Tool

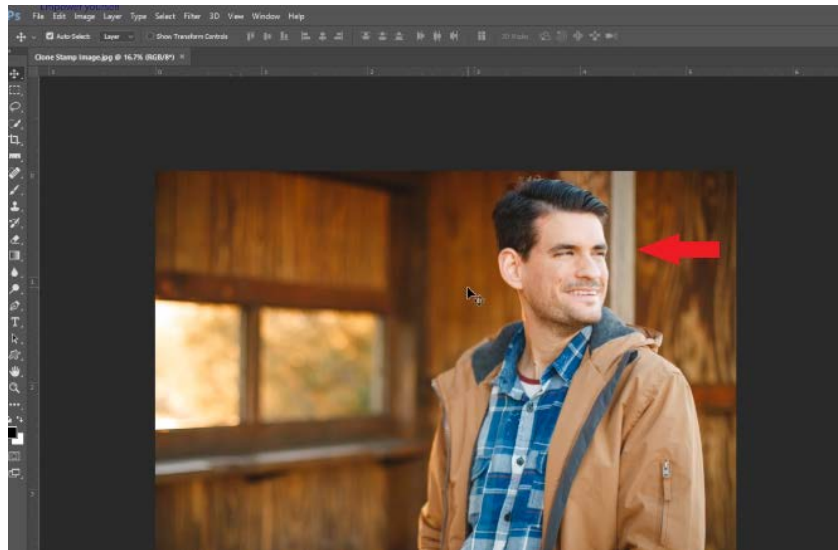
Learning Outcomes

In this lesson, we will look at retouching a portrait photograph by using the clone stamp tool to get rid of any distractions. By the end of this lesson, you will know how to use the clone stamp tool and you will be able to identify the benefits of using it when you carry out your post-processing work.

Advanced Photography

Photoshop – Cloning Tool

Let's take a look at the photograph here. We have a portrait shot of a man standing inside a wooden shelter.



Portrait photographers are very fond of a particular camera technique and we mentioned it earlier in another module. This technique is when we capture an image with a shallow depth of field. Why do we love this so much as photographers? Well, it's because it draws the viewer in to the subject. This is like what we have here; you can see his eyes are in focus, even though he is looking off to his left. Also, the background's is a blur because of that shallow depth of field. However, even when the background is a blur, you can still sometimes have distractions in your frame. When this happens, we need to minimise or reduce it.

In this photograph, we have this strange cream-colored line running parallel to this man's head, and this is very distracting. Instead of this man being our primary focus, this line is taking some of the attention away from our subject. So, let's look at two different techniques for dealing with an issue in a background, so that we can reduce or minimize that specific issue.



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So, in order to clean that area up, we're going to create a new layer. Let's click on the new layer icon. We'll call this new layer, clone 1, and then we'll select one of our retouching tools. Of course, we are going to use the clone stamp tool. We can find it right here on our toolbar. We can select it by clicking on it, or we can use our keyboard shortcut. The shortcut for this is the S key. So, tap the S key, to choose it. Now, in the options bar, we want to define our brush size, and the hardness. For the purpose of this task, we want to leave the hardness at zero. We also have an opacity setting, which we'll talk about in a few moments. We want to make sure we have Align turned on, and then sample all layers. So once more, the first step is to create a new layer. The second step involves selecting the clone stamp tool, and then we go up to the options bar to key in our options. Most importantly, we need to have aligned ticked and sample all layers turned on.

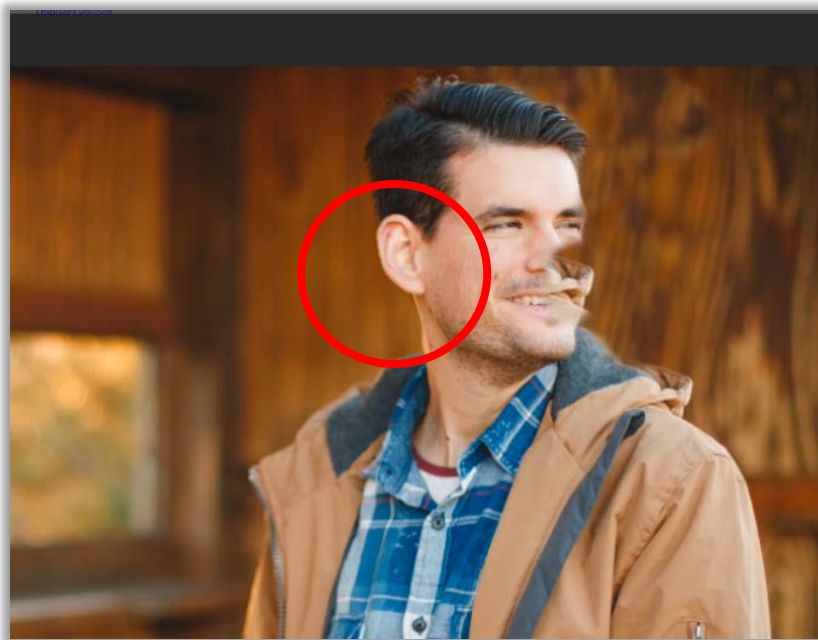
With this tool, you position your cursor over an area that you want to clone. Let's pick this area here and we want to replicate it. Hold down the option key on a mac, or alt on windows, and click on the selected area. Then, reposition your cursor to another area, and paint or stroke your brush. You can see how we are bringing or cloning that content over. Now, with the align option ticked, regardless of where you click, you're only going to have one section sampled. If you turn aligned off, you can then go ahead and paint and move around, like so. You can notice how it's always going back to that original source. So, in our case, rather than doing that, what we want to do, is to make sure aligned is turned on, so then it's always going to be consistent with the original source area.

The next thing that we want to look at is opacity. Naturally, with 100 percent opacity, 100 percent of the image will be cloned. You could take this down to, let's say 45 percent opacity, and do the same steps as before, option or alt, click on the area, and then bring it over, and you can see how it's a very faded version of that area. If we keep clicking, it will eventually build it, all the way up to 100 percent.



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Let's bring the opacity above 50 percent. Make sure that Align is turned on and sample all layers. Then we will option or alt click to set our source area, and we begin to paint or brush this over and over. It's better to option or alt click from another area, to ensure that we hide, or disguises exactly what we're doing. Remember that subtlety is the most important thing in Photoshop. You want to ensure that you're creating what's called a repeating pattern. This will be very obvious to the viewer and it will reflect badly on your work. By option or alt clicking from different areas, you are creating a new pattern each time. This is what we are doing here, as we go through the image. Again, option or alt click, and then sample a new area, and you can see how we've pretty easily removed that distracting problem that we had in our background.



Now, what happens if we're working on an area of the photograph, for example, if are working here, beside the man's face, and as we paint in the background, but as we realise that we have made a mistake. What can we do? Well, don't panic, this can be easily solved. Due to the fact that all of this retouching is on a separate layer, what we can do, is simply, choose the erase tool. To do this, tap the e key, or just click on that tool, which you see here located on our toolbar.



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Again, we have options for our brush size, hardness, and opacity. We want 100 percent opacity, and we simply just erase what's on this layer. This is one of the reasons why it's really nice to do all of this work on a separate layer.



Advanced Photography

What have we learned in this lesson? A Summary

We have learned how to use the clone stamp tool in Photoshop. Remember, it's important to ensure that you try to avoid repeating any obvious patterns when you are working with the clone stamp tool. As always, practice is key.

