Photoshop tips

Black-and-White Nirvana with Photoshop CS3

Photoshop CS3 is here finally! And with it comes some great new tools. One of my favorites shares a resemblance with a Photoshop cousin, Lightroom. It's the new Black & White adjustment layer tool. Not only can you create custom black-and-white mixes using color filters – similar to what you could achieve by placing a colored filter in front of the lens while shooting black-and-white film – but you can add warmth and toning in the same dialog box.
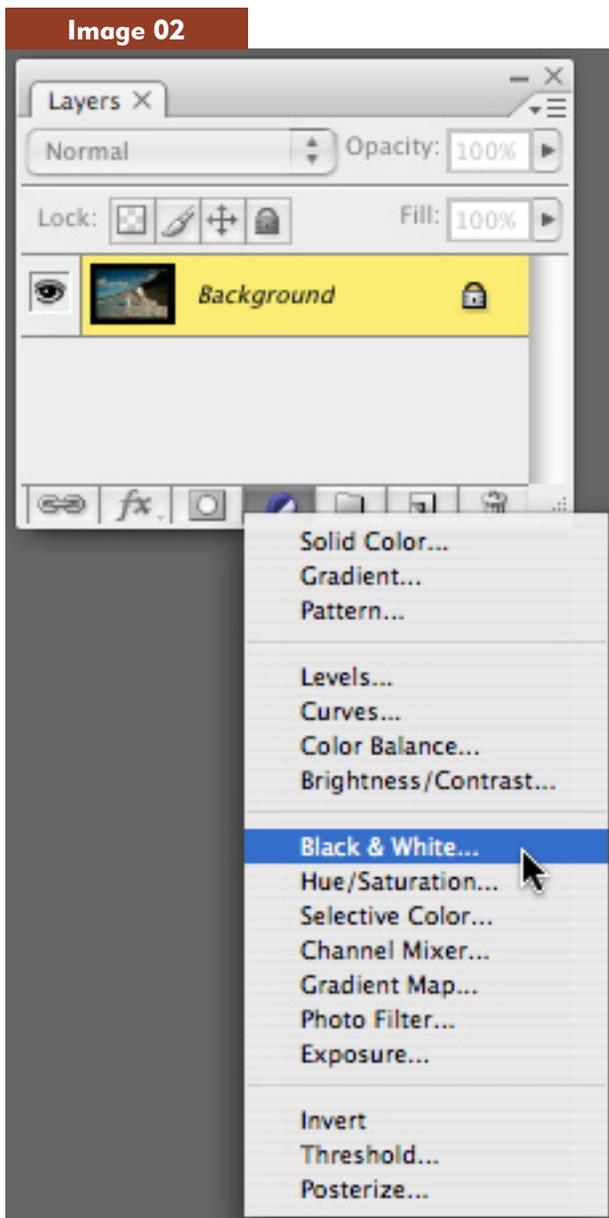
  Wait, that's cool, but it's not the trick I *really* want to share. The trick is in how absolutely, marvelously, magically easy it is to get exactly the black-and-white look you've always wanted! Let's take a look.

1) Open an original image.

Image 01

2) Then look at the layers palette. Add a Black and White adjustment layer as shown below.

Image 02

Layers ×

Normal   Opacity: 100%

Lock: Fill: 100%

Background

Solid Color...
Gradient...
Pattern...

Levels...
Curves...
Color Balance...
Brightness/Contrast...

Black & White...
Hue/Saturation...
Selective Color...
Channel Mixer...
Gradient Map...
Photo Filter...
Exposure...

Invert
Threshold...
Posterize...

3) Next, try the Auto button to see what Photoshop comes up with for a black-and-white mix. Hmm, not bad, but we're "tweakers" and it has to be custom, baby!
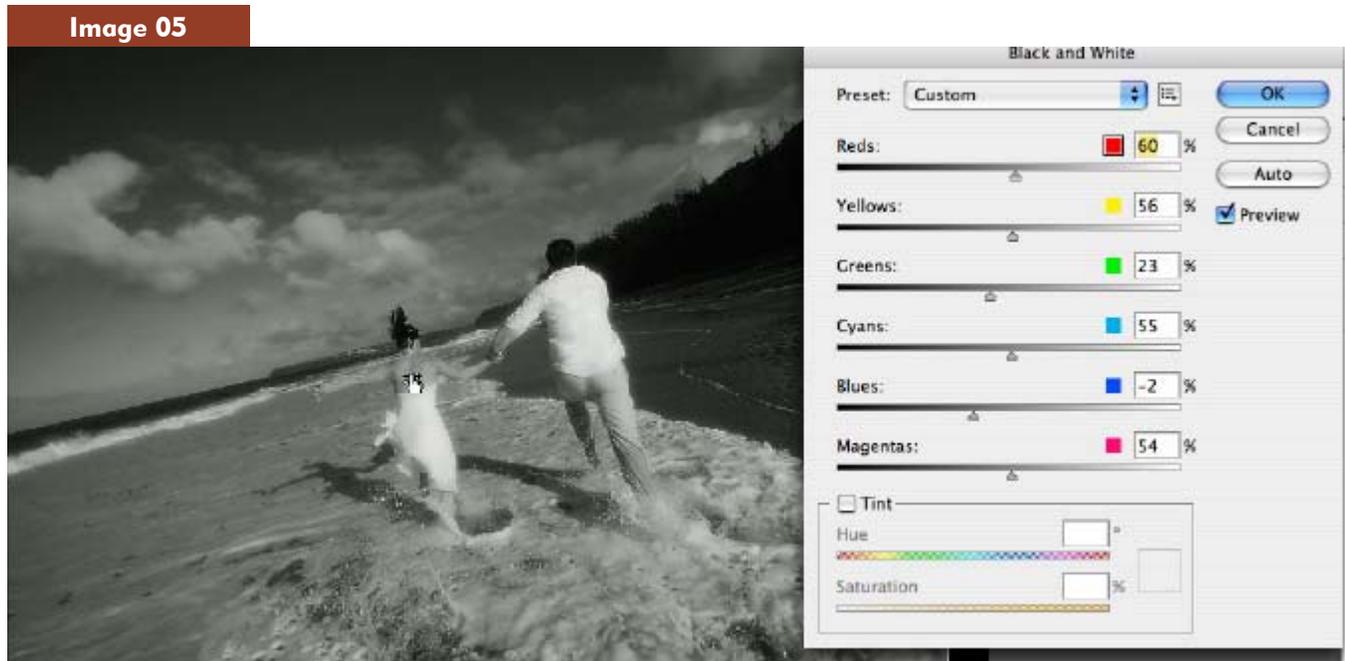

Image 03

4) So … here's the cool part. Just move the mouse over any part of the image. Find a color you want to lighten or darken. Then just click, hold, and drag left or right … voila! That specific color range is automatically targeted in the filters, and the tones lighten or darken. In the following example, I clicked in the sky and dragged to the *left* to darken it.

Image 04

5) Next, I clicked on her skin and dragged to the right to lighten it to make them contrast more with the dark sky:

Here's the finished image after just a few clicks and drags.

   What a great way to get just the black-and-white look you've been searching for; Photoshop couldn't have made it any easier!

*Kevin Kubota is a nationally recognized photographer and educator. He teaches workshops on workflow, Photoshop techniques, creativity, and good karma. He is the creator of the Digital Photography Bootcamp workshop and his current book, under the same title, is published by **Amherst Media**.*
*Visit **www.KubotaImageTools.com** for more information and some of the best Photoshop actions in the world.*