

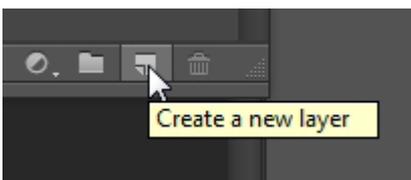
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Layer masks as a creative tool

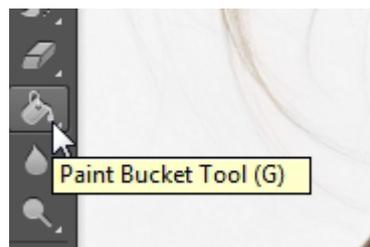
Layer Masks are a powerful tool in Photoshop. They are used for selecting parts of the image or hiding parts of the image. In this lesson we will be using a layer mask to **reveal** parts of the image by hiding and obscuring the other parts of the image. This tutorial will demonstrate the power of using layers and layer masks and may inspire you to think about other applications using the same technique.



1. Create a new Layer
2. Select the paint bucket
3. Change the foreground colour of the new layer to black and then drop the colour black on the new layer so it no longer transparent.



1.



2.



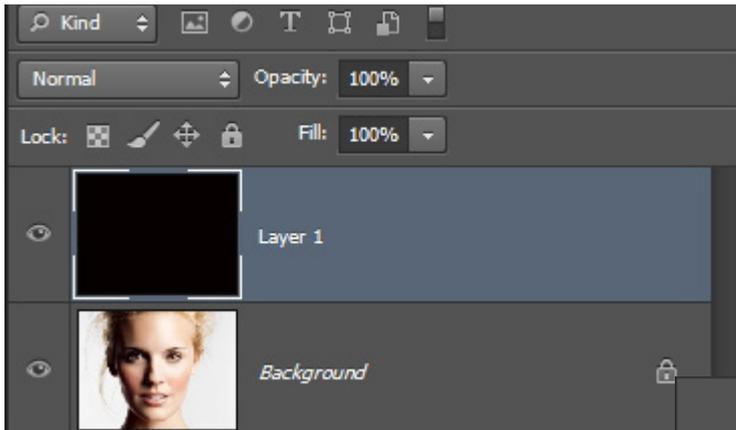
3.

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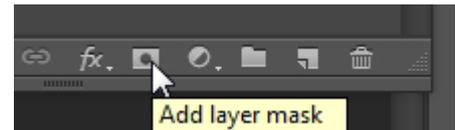
Layer masks as a creative tool

Now that we have two layers, we are going to **'reveal'** the image below the black layer, creatively. To do this we are going to use a layer mask with a brush.

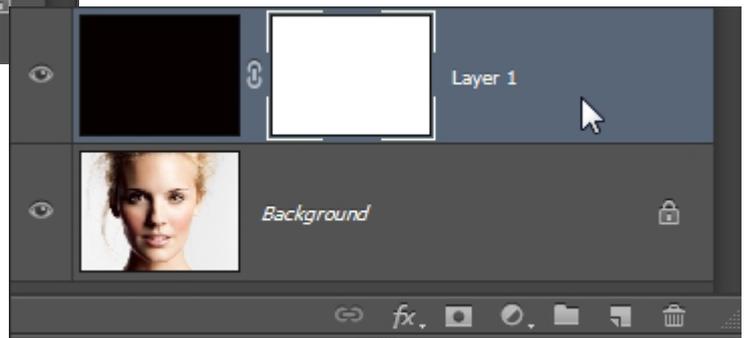
NOTE: We use a mask because it is a form of non-destructive editing. This means that the layers themselves are always preserved.



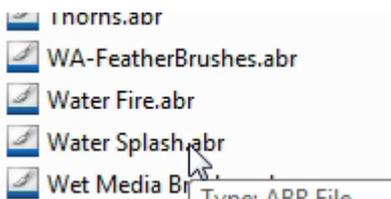
The layer mask is **'white'** which tells photoshop to **'reveal'** the whole black layer (remain black). This means that if we paint with **Black** onto the **White** Mask it will **'conceal'** areas of the black layer, thus **revealing** the image underneath.



4. Whilst the layer is selected click the layer mask button at the bottom of the layers panel.



Notice the white frame around the 'layer mask'. This means that the mask is selected. (Automatic default)



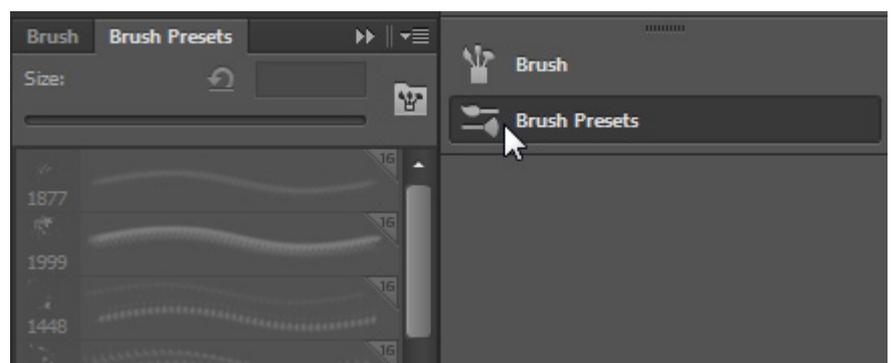
5. We are now going to use a brush to paint into the layer mask, which will **'conceal'** areas of the **Black** layer - allowing the image underneath to show through.

NOTE: .abr files are brush files and can easily be loaded into Photoshop by double clicking on them. they can also be installed directly into the Photoshop Brushes folder to access everytime Photoshop opens.

Here I have selected a **Water Splash** brush.

Here is the Brush preset window. It can be accessed by the 'window' menu or by the icon on the side panel.

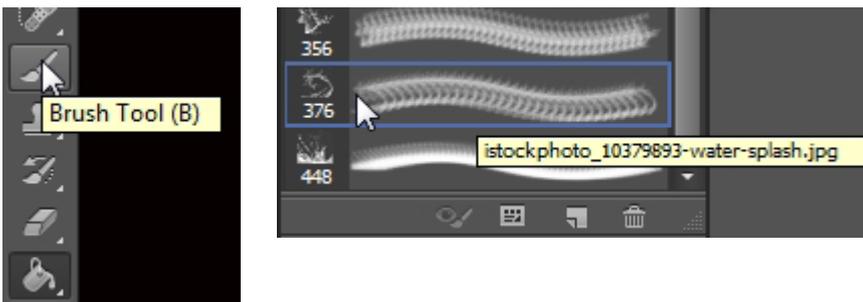
This dialogue gives us access to the newly loaded brushes, which usually appear under any other loaded brushes you might have. (scroll down)



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6. Select the Brush tool from the Toolbar and then select a Brush Preset from the menu. Expand the size of the brush using the [] keys on the keyboard (near the return key) to the desired size. Gently press the shape into the Mask without moving the mouse 3 times or more. If you make a mistake you can delete the mask and create a new one (under the layers palette).



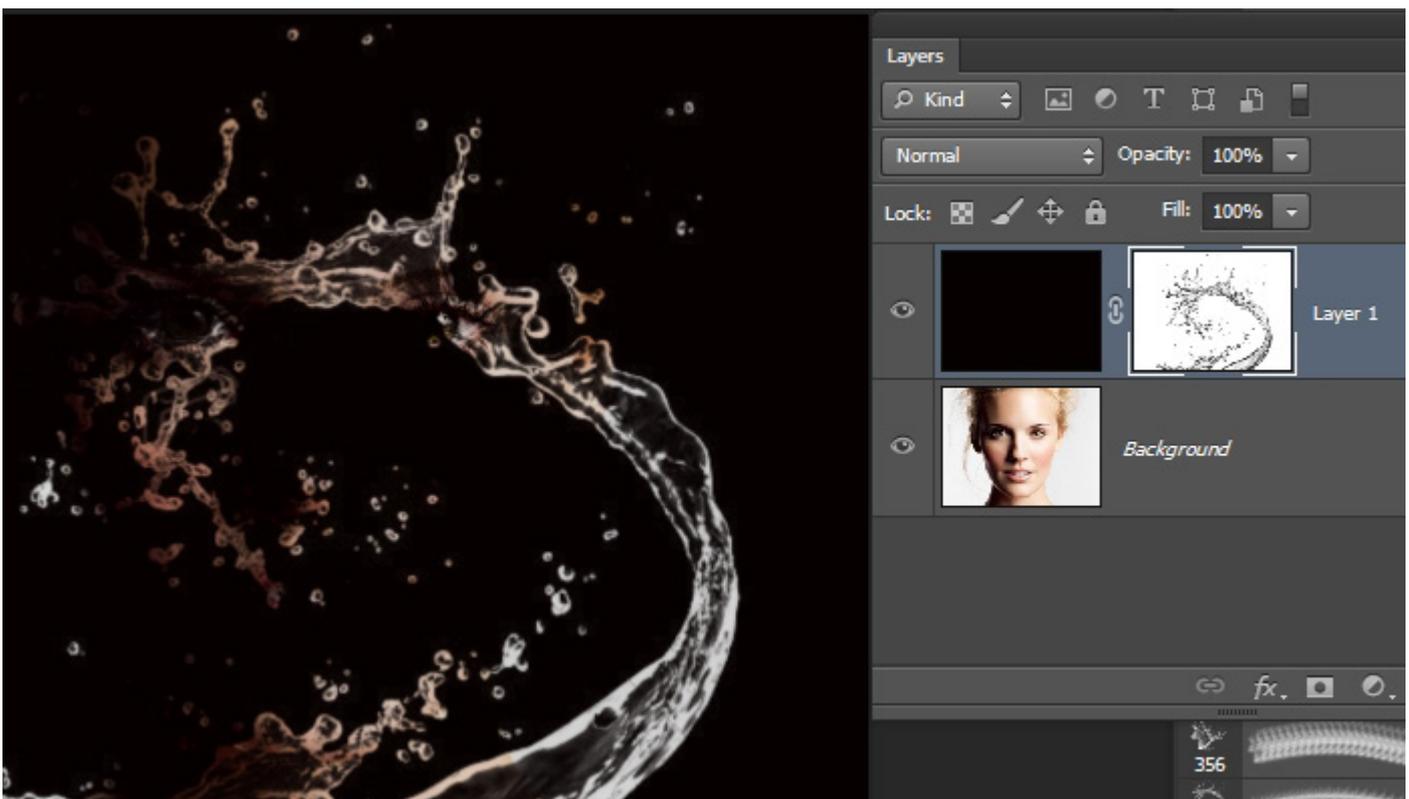
By stamping the brush subtly onto the mask, we punch a hole in the **black** layer. Imagine burning a hole in fabric or cutting out a stencil. That's what we are doing here.

If you look at the layer mask you will see the shape of the brush has been embedded but no alteration has been made to the black layer itself (non-destructive editing).

When a mask is White it will **'reveal'** the layer it is attached to

When a mask is black it will **'conceal'** the layer it is attached to

We have used a brush with areas of transparency, not solid black but with shades of grey, which gives a more subtle effect.



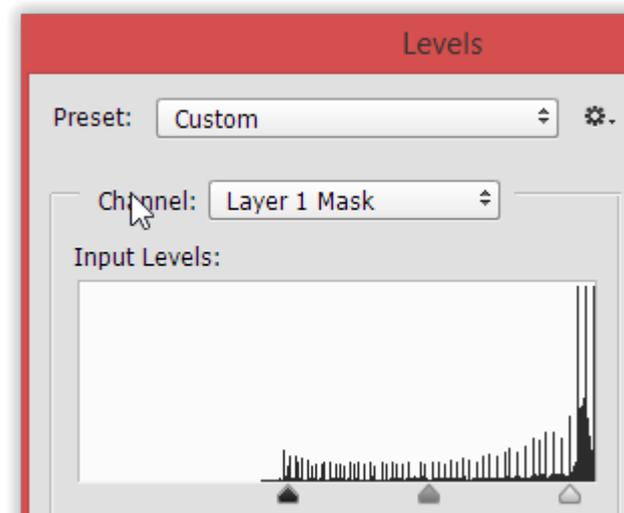
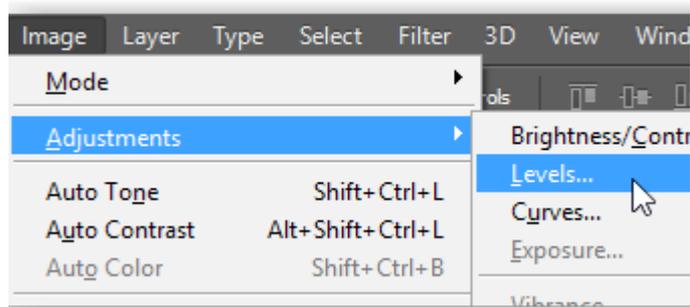
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Layer masks as a creative tool Finishing Touches

Finishing Touches:

The brush itself contains some slight artefacts, this is because the brush is actually a JPG image which we have enlarged. **This process degrades the quality of the image.** Luckily we can correct this pretty easily by editing our layer mask.

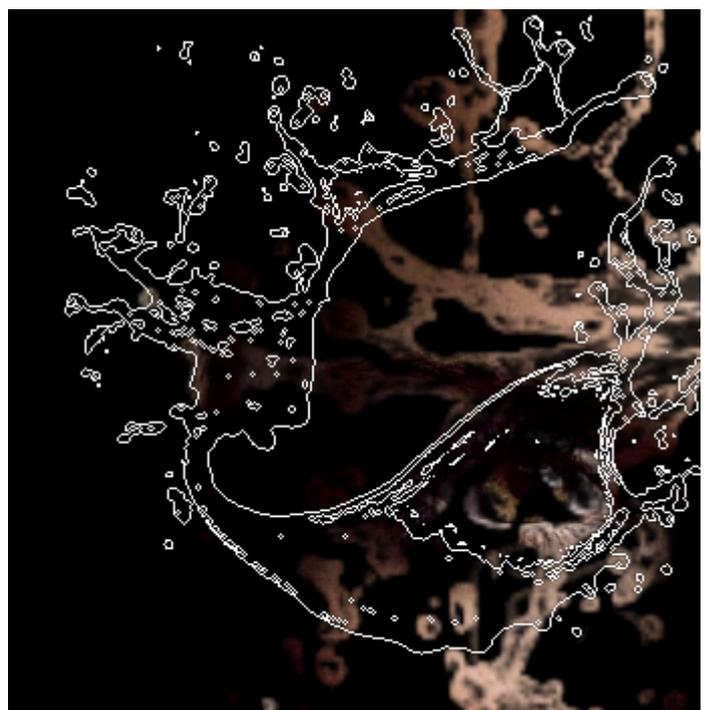
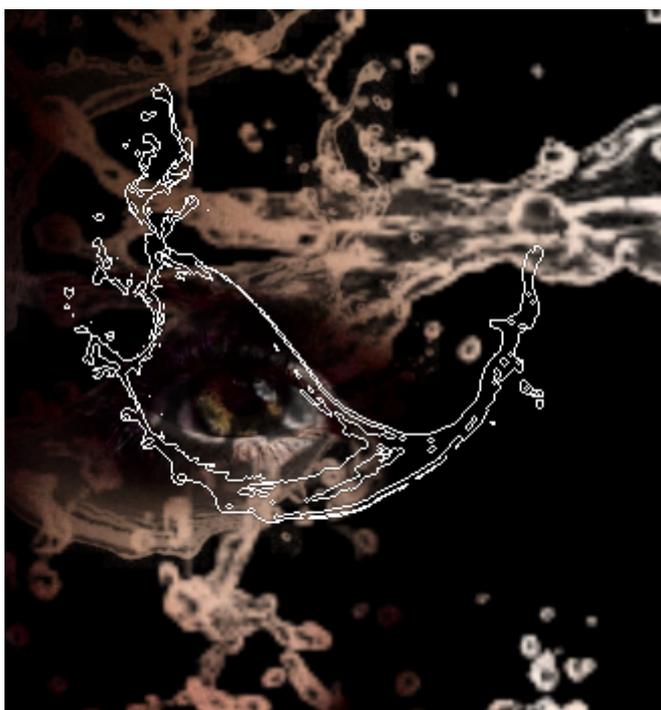
1. With the Mask selected go to image - adjustments - levels and correct the image.



2. Creative license: Use some of the brushes to reveal more detail in the eye. **See example below.** Remember to be subtle.

Tip: Try to avoid revealing the ear because it will give away the effect.

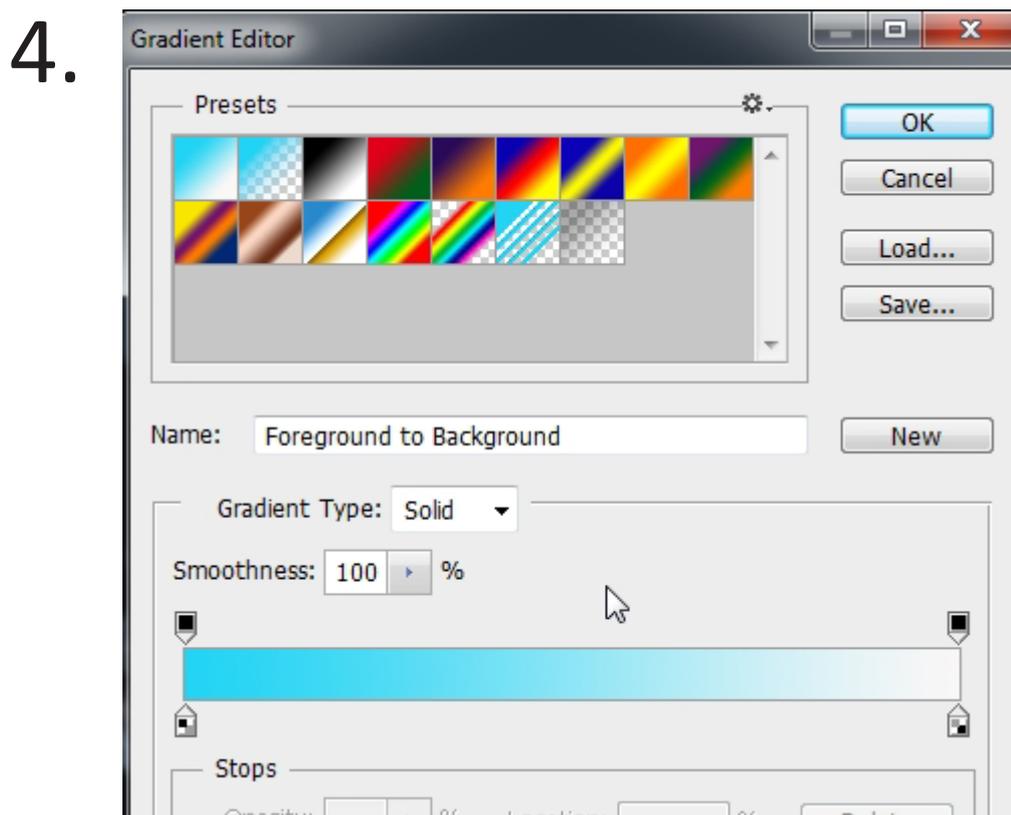
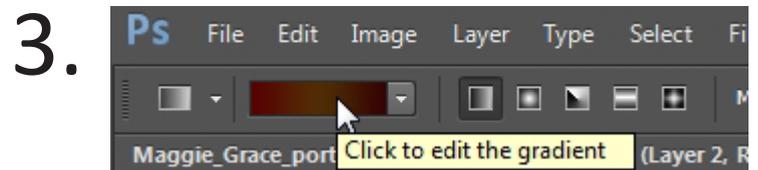
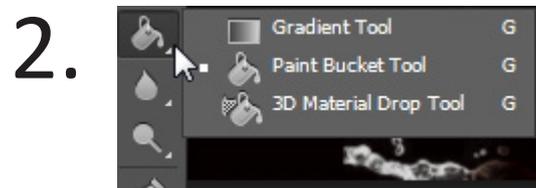
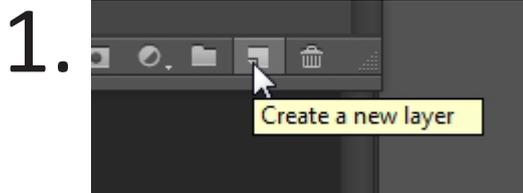
Push the black and the white slider to obtain the desired result.



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We can now colour tone this image to give it a 'watery effect' with a new layer gradient and the 'color' blend mode.



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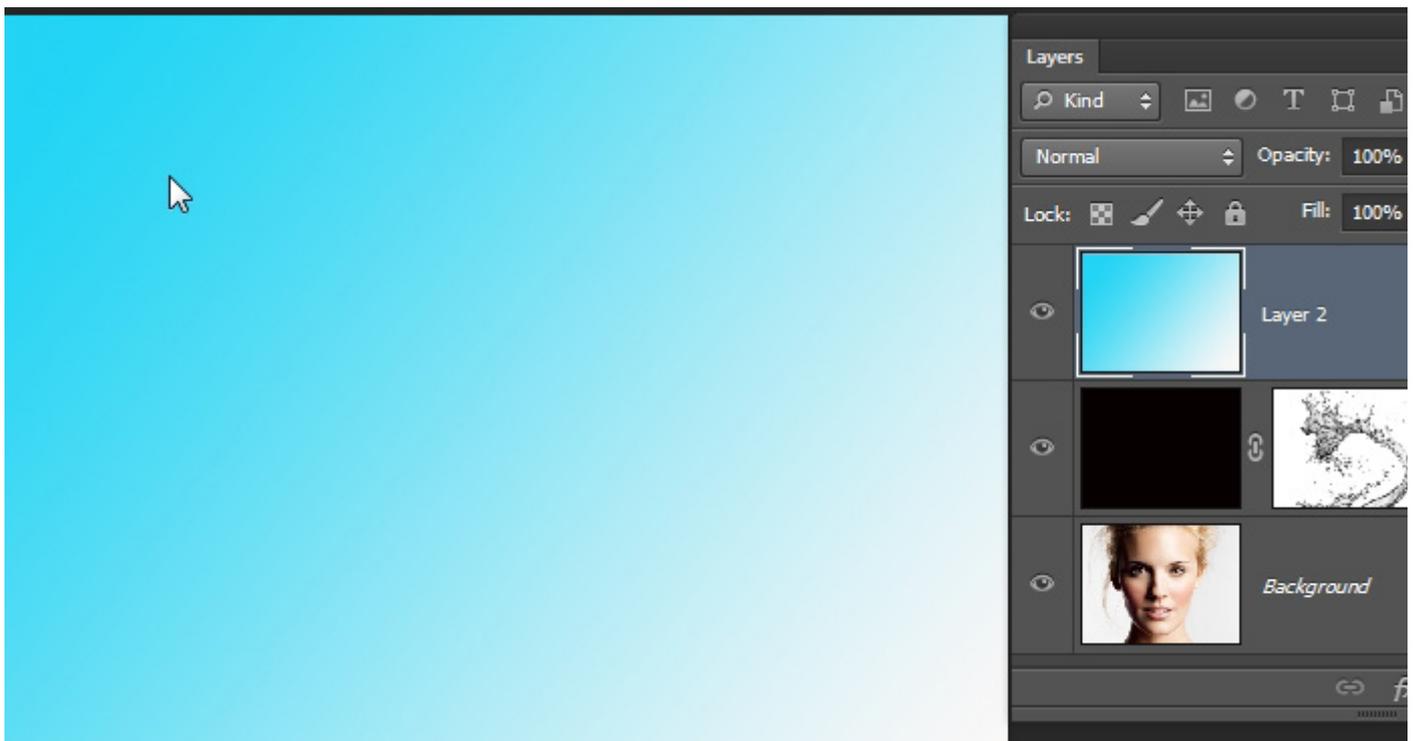
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Drag the tool across the image, however you want the gradient to be displayed.

5.



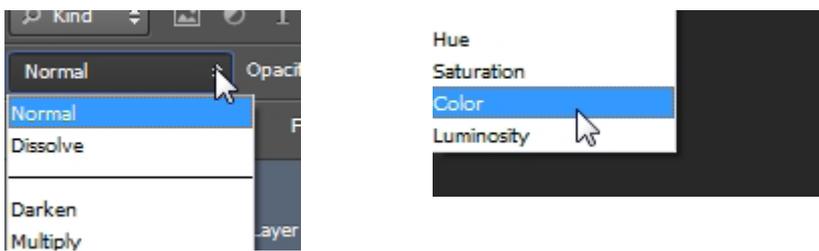
6. With this layer selected, choose the blend mode options changing 'Normal' to 'Color'. This blend mode will use the colour of this layer on all the layers underneath. We will call this layer our 'toning' layer.



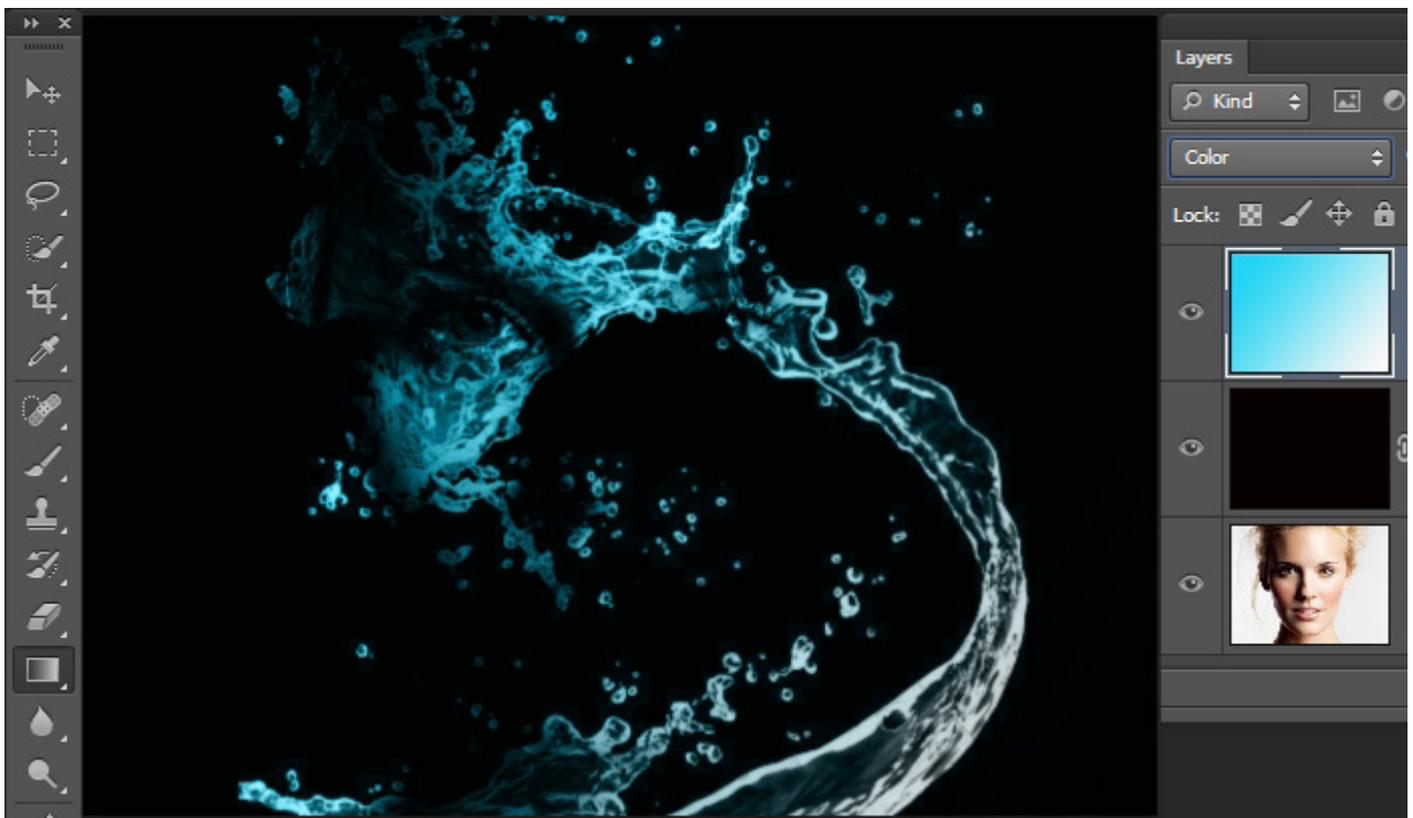
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6. Colour tone with a blend mode.
by defining the colour blend mode from the drop down menu, we can make Photoshop use only the colour from this layer to tone the image.



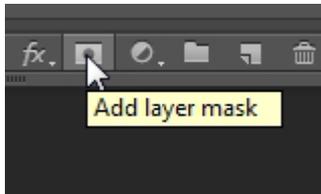
You can also lessen the effect of the colour toning with the opacity slider to get the desired result.



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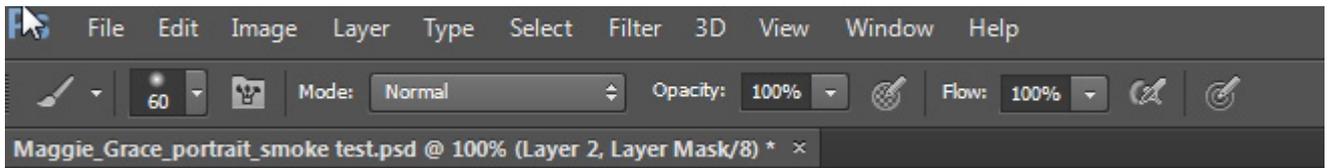
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7.



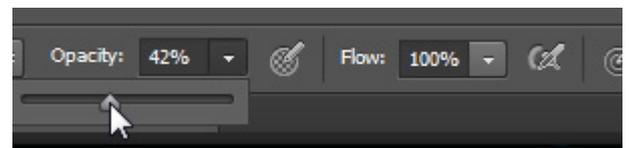
Why not create another 'layer mask' on the 'toning Layer' and paint through to **reveal** parts of the original image colour.

Using the same technique try revealing the original image colour.

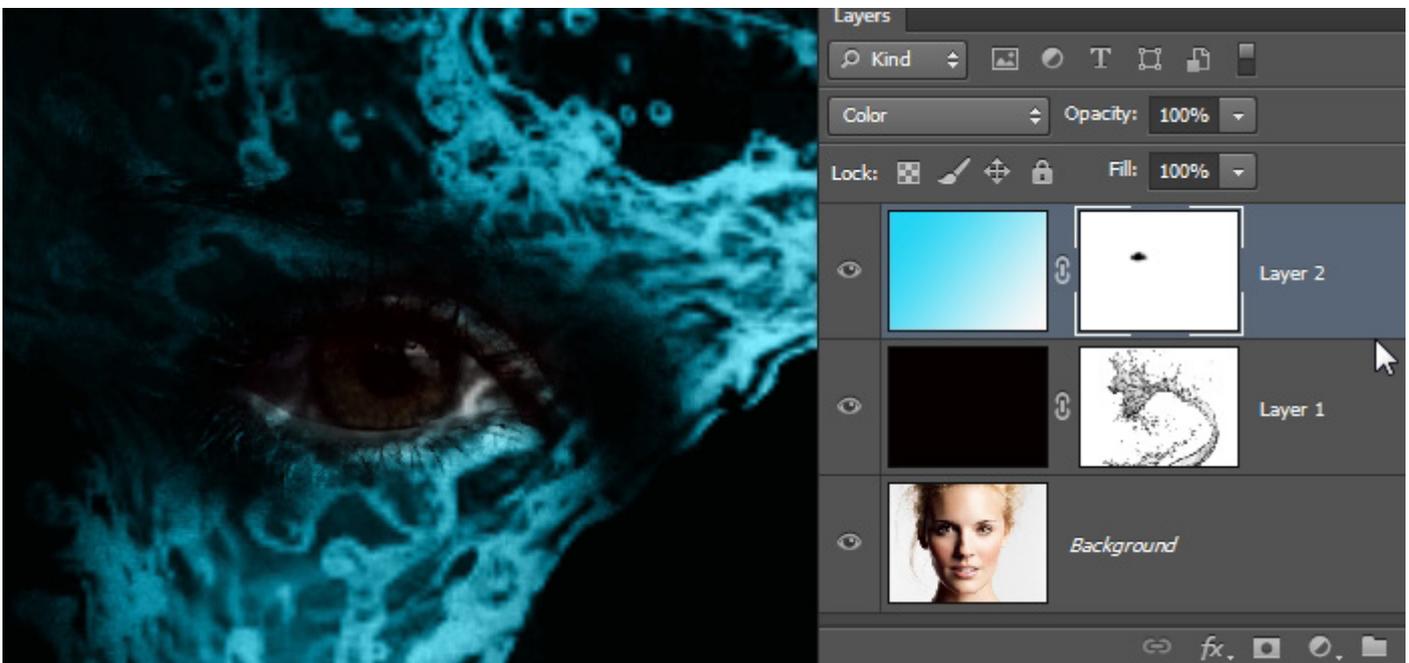


By selecting a low opacity you can control how much of the original layer you wish to **reveal**.

Now Paint into the area of the eye.



Remember: the Black Part of the Mask '**Conceals**' the layer it is attached to
the White part of the mask '**Reveals**' the layer it is attached to



In this lesson you have learnt:-

1. how to work with layers
2. how to use a layer mask for non-destructive image editing.
3. how to open and use brushes in Photoshop.
4. how to colour tone an image using the 'color' blend mode.