



GSCCC



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How to Use Soft Light Blend Mode in Photoshop to Improve Exposure and Contrast

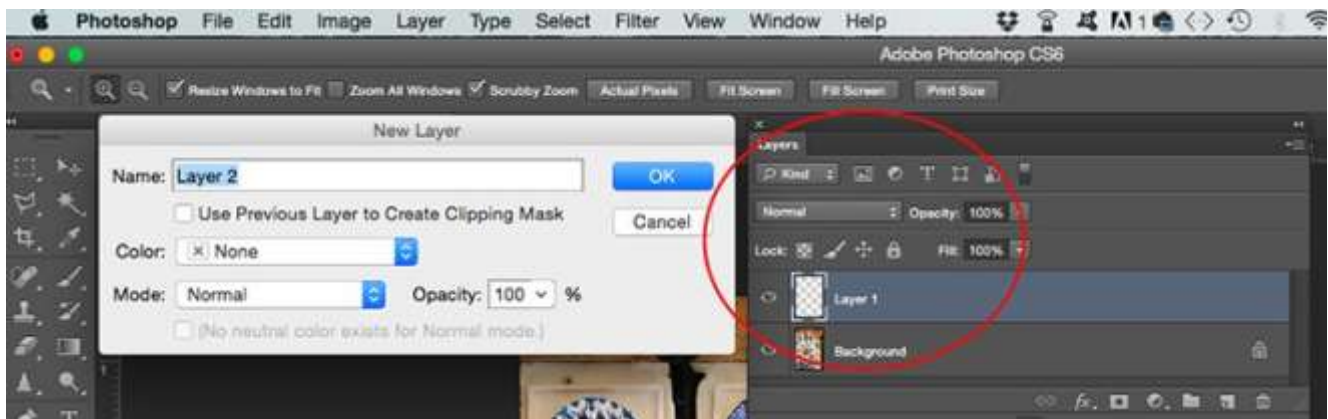
By: [Ana Mireles](#)

Do you have an overexposed sunny side and an underexposed shadow on the other side of your image? Or maybe a well-exposed photo that needs more vibrancy? There's a tool so versatile that can help you fix any of these problems and more: the Soft Light Blend Mode.

What are Layers?

Imagine your photo as a printed one. Then you take a sheet of acetate and draw on it. Then you take another sheet and you put it on top of the others and obscure a part of it; and so on, and so forward. Each acetate sheet is a layer and you can make as many alterations as you want on top of your original this way.

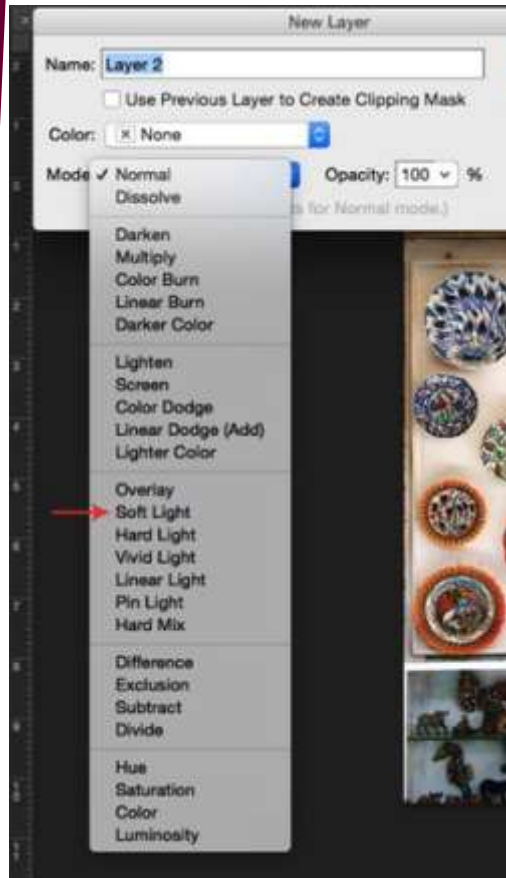
To create layers in Photoshop you need to go to Menu > Layers > New. A pop-up window will appear where you can name your layer, choose the color, the blending mode and the opacity. When you



click OK the new layer will appear on the Layers panel window on top of the background, which is the original image.

What is the Blend Mode?

The default setting of a new layer is normal blending mode. This covers the background or the layer underneath. However, Photoshop gives you the option of choosing a different Blend Mode, which changes the way your edit affects the pixels. You can change it in the pop-up window of the new layer.



In the case of the Soft Light blending mode it is similar to using the dodge or burn tool. In other words, every color that is lighter than 50% grey will get even lighter, like it would if you shine a soft spotlight to it. In the same way, every color darker than 50% grey will get even darker. However it will never reach pure black.

So, why not use dodge and burn instead?

First of all, when you work in layers you don't lose any information. You can always discard the layer and start over because there is no damage to the original image.

With layers, you can change the opacity or transparency of each one, which allows you to control how evident your edit is in the final image. You will find the opacity tool on the Layers panel with a slider that goes from 0 to 100 %.

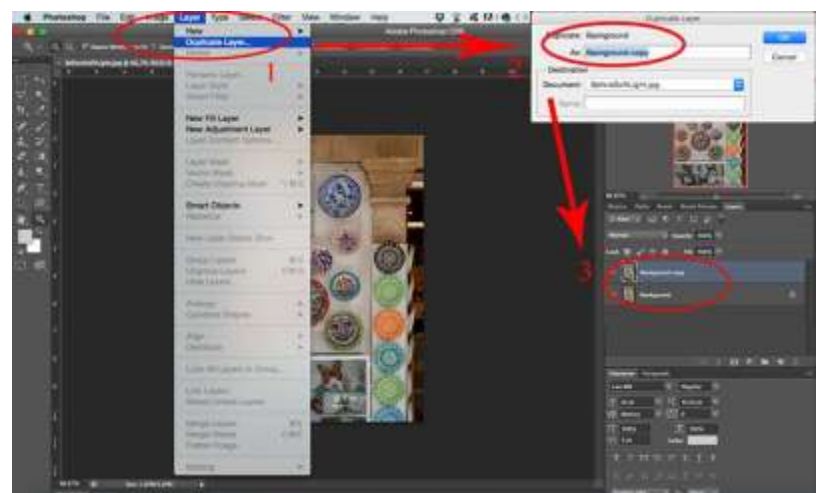
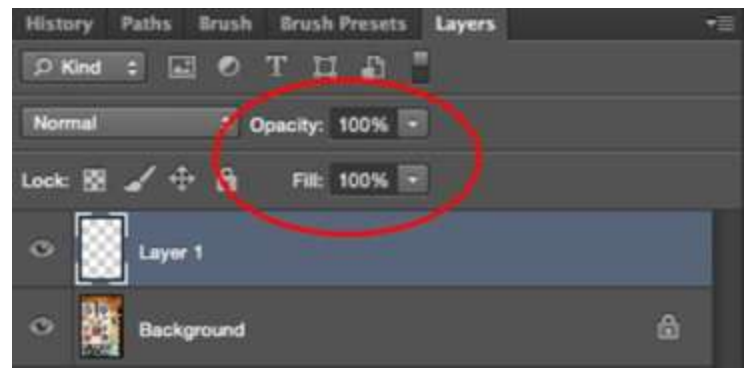
Note that there is another slider next to it called Fill. There are 8 blending modes in which these two sliders make a difference, however, Soft Light is not part of these "special 8" so the Fill opacity and Standard opacity have the same result when using this Blend Mode.

Another advantage is that you can change the blending mode of each of the layers. In this article, we are exploring the use of Soft Blend, however, each mode offers different possibilities. One blending mode can have different uses, here are three of them.

3 ways to use Soft Light Blending Mode

1. Add punch to your image

Increase the contrast and saturation to have more vivid colors and give a punch to your image. You can do this by duplicating the background layer: Menu > Layer > Duplicate Layer and changing the blending mode from normal to Soft Light. Finally adjust the opacity until you are happy with the result.





(left)
Before Soft Light
Blending



(right)
After Soft Light
Blending

2. Gradient tool to balance the lighting

If you have an image that is underexposed on one side and overexposed in the other you can easily even it out with a Soft Light blend layer. First go to Menu > Layer > New Layer. Pick the Gradient tool and draw a line from the brightest side to the darkest one. The gradient will look like this:



Then change the layer blending mode to Soft Light and lower the opacity to find the best results.

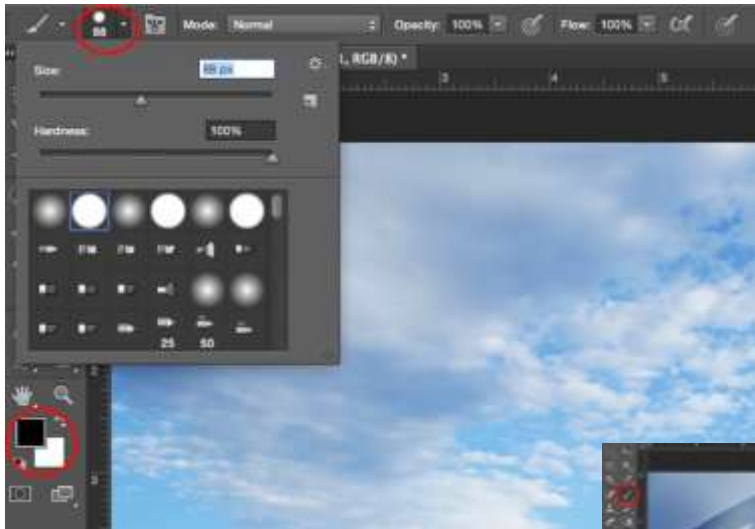
Before Gradient

After Gradient



3. Dodging and burning with a Soft Light layer

The past workflows altered the entire image, however, if you need to do a more precise job you can also do that using Soft Light. First, add a new layer with Soft Light blending mode like you did in the previous procedure. Only this time instead of the gradient tool, you are going to use the brush tool. When you select it you can choose the size of the brush on the top menu and the color on the bottom.



If you paint with black you will darken the image:



Painting with white will lighten certain areas, and with different shades of grey, you can also control tones of your image.



Keep going until you are happy with the contrast and exposure of your image.

Conclusion

Now you know that blending modes have a lot of potential, so keep exploring

After Soft Light Blending (right)

Two images using the layer and Soft Light Blending Mode

(left) Before Soft Light Blending



Judged September 2017
Color Prints
Judged by Slidell CC

Title	Maker	Club	Score	Award
Night Shift	Linda Medine	Louisiana PS	13	1st
Home Plate	Anne Stevens	Lafayette PS	12	2nd
Romance in Venice	Earl Arboneaux	Louisiana PS	12	3rd
The Last Day of School	Houston Brown	Dallas CC	11	1st HM
Steer Wrestling Art	Carol McCreary	Oklahoma CC	11	2nd HM

Monochrome Prints
Judged by Slidell CC

Title	Maker	Club	Score	Award
Mountain Top	Barry Lamia	GNOCC	12	1st
Beautiful Belle	Cindy Lewis	Lafayette PS	12	2nd
Cowboy	Pat Leger	Lafayette PS	12	3rd
Tired Soldier	Terry Barnes	Oklahoma CC	11	1st HM
Lunch Time	Randy Carr	Oklahoma CC	11	2nd HM

Nature Prints
Judged by Heard Nature PC

Title	Maker	Club	Score	Award
Spoonbill, It's What's for Dinner	Brian Fesko	Cowtown CC	14	1st
Nice Catch	George Williams	Oklahoma CC	13	2nd
Robber Fly Closeup	Troy Taylor	Oklahoma CC	13	3rd
Momma Rosy	Jane Patterson	Louisiana PS	12	1st HM
Morning Light on Turret Arch	Dee Overtruf	Cowtown CC	12	2nd HM

Nature Projected
Judged by Heard Nature PC

Title	Maker	Club	Score	Award
Approaching Storm	Bill Hayes	Dallas CC	14	1st
Black Paper Wasp Feeding	J. D. McClung	Oklahoma CC	13	2nd
Beach Time	Michael Blachly	Dallas CC	13	3rd
Fast Food	David Morgan	Cowtown CC	13	1st HM
Cypress in Summer	Dennis Fritsche	Plano PC	12	2nd HM

[Ana Mireles](#)

is a photographer and artistic researcher. She has been awarded and exhibited in Mexico, Italy, and the Netherlands. Through theory and practice, she explores the cultural aspect of photography, how it helps us relate to each other, the world, and ourselves. She has also a passion for teaching, communication, and social media. You can find more about her and her work [at her website](#) or [acquire some of her works here](#).

Color Prints

1st Place

“ Night Shift ”

**By Linda Medine
Louisiana PS**



**Color Prints
2nd Place**

“ Home Plate ”

**By Anne Stevens
Lafayette PS**

**6 Clubs
Participating**

**Color Prints
3rd Place**

“ Romance In Venice ”

**By Earl Arboneaux
Louisiana PS**





Monochrome Prints

1st Place

“ Mountain Top”

**By Barry Lamia
GNOCC**

**6 Clubs
Participating**

Monochrome Prints

2nd Place

“ Beautiful Belle ”

**By Cindy Lewis
Lafayette PS**

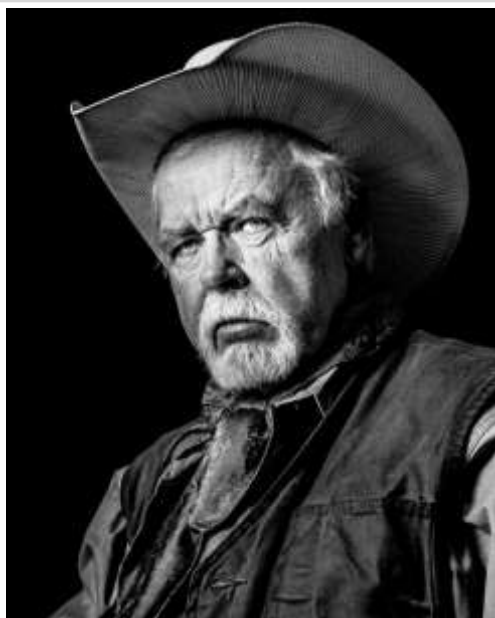


Monochrome Prints

3rd Place

“ Cowboy ”

**By Pat Leger
Lafayette PS**



NATURE Prints
1st Place

**“ Spoonbill, It’s What’s
For Dinner ”**
By Brian Fesko
Cowtown CC



NATURE Prints
2nd Place

“ Nice Catch ”
By George Williams
Oklahoma CC

6 Clubs
Participating

NATURE Prints
3rd Place

“ Robber Fly Closeup ”
By Troy Taylor
Oklahoma CC





**NATURE Projected
1st Place**

**“ Approaching Storm ”
By Bill Hayes
Dallas CC**

12 Clubs Participating

**NATURE Projected
2nd Place**

**“ Black Paper Wasp Feeding ”
By J. D. McClung
Oklahoma CC**



**NATURE Projected
3rd Place**

**“ Beach Time ”
By Michael Blachly
Dallas CC**

LARRY BLACKWELL'S NOTE TO MEMBERS:

We are updating competition rules, and if anyone has suggestions, please email to me now at larryblackwell@sbcglobal.net.

Competition Club Totals

Color Prints	
Cowtown CC	35
Dallas CC	37
GNOCC	34
Lafayette PS	39
Louisiana PS	46
Oklahoma CC	37

Mono Prints	
Cowtown CC	40
Dallas CC	38
GNOCC	36
Lafayette PS	43
Louisiana PS	39
Oklahoma CC	42

Nature Prints	
Cowtown CC	47
Dallas CC	36
GNOCC	42
Lafayette PS	28
Louisiana PS	40
Oklahoma CC	45

Nature Projected	
Central Texas PC	33
Cowtown CC	43
Dallas CC	50
GNOCC	39
Houston CC	34
Houston PC	45
Lafayette PS	42
Louisiana PS	41
Oklahoma CC	40
Plano PC	42
Slidell PC	39
West Bank CC	37



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/260653404312222/>

THANK YOU!

Thanks to all the participants in the competitions and Congratulations to the winners for those magnificent images. Special thanks to last months' competition judging clubs:

Heard Nature Photo Club
Slidell Camera Club

And last, but not least, thanks to our collaborators, your ideas keep this Newsletter interesting.

GSCCC Reps, please keep digital files of all prints submitted for competition. If your image is granted a 1st, 2nd or 3rd Title, please email the digital files to Temporary Editor, Carol McCreary [tcmccreary@cox.net]

Thank You.

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