

# Ultimate Retouch Guide

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You can find base videos and all Ultimate Retouch Tutorials in

[Video Tutorials PDF Guide](#)

**Notice:** You can slow down the speed of the videos in settings of YouTube  
if you think that the videos are too fast

[To watch tutorial](#)

## 1. Introduction:

This panel is an amazing tool for a retoucher and for a photographer. It keeps you away from boring technical Photoshop settings and gives you more time to focus on your work. Panel includes seven blocks. Bellow you will find the detailed description of each block. In last block you can link your favorite actions to the panel buttons.

This manual describes 'Frequency Separation' and 'Dodge & Burn' technics. I've tried to explain them here as detailed as possible, however I would recommend to see YouTube lessons to get a better overview of those technics.

In addition, to use this tools you required simply to understand what the Layer Mask is.



Mask is drawing only with white and black color by a simple brush. Above the layer with a girl there is a red layer, which attached to a mask. White mask allows to see the red layer. Black mask hide the affect of red layer, therefor we can see the bottom layer.

When we use the black mask, we kind of deleting areas of the current layer, and anytime we can return back what we deleted, what is impossible to do when we use deleting tool.

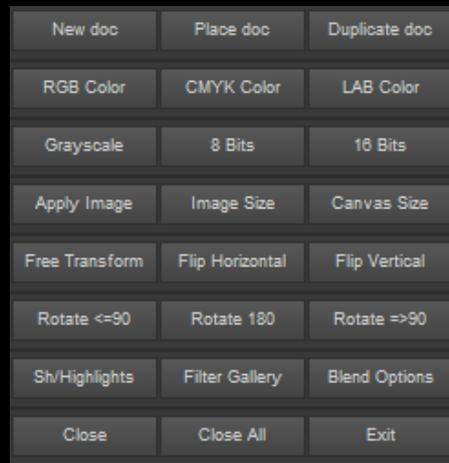
You just need to change the color of the brush from black to white and draw on a black area. Fast switch of colors controlled by key "x" on your keyboard. When you draw by retouched brush, you will get smooth transfer from one layer to another.

## Tutorials:

- How work with masks [link](#)
- Changing Brush Size and Hardness (convenient for use in retouching) [link](#)

## 2. Description of the panel's functions:

### 2.1 Block : Basic Work



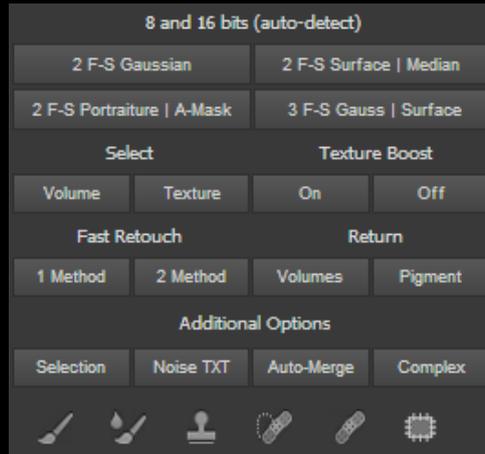
Represents a set of basic operations for the image.

### Tutorials:

- Basic Work and bonuses panels

[link](#)

## 2.2 Block : Frequency Separation



Is a block for retouch by frequency separation methods.

**Frequency Separation** - a way to retouch, in which the image is separated into two frequencies (low and high or in other words: texture and volume) that allows you to work on each frequency separately. Together with Photoshop tools, this method provides a very flexible application and high quality results.

[Introduction to the Frequency Separation \(to watch tutorial\)](#)



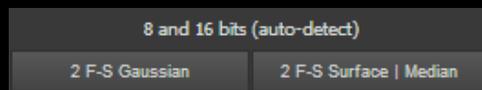
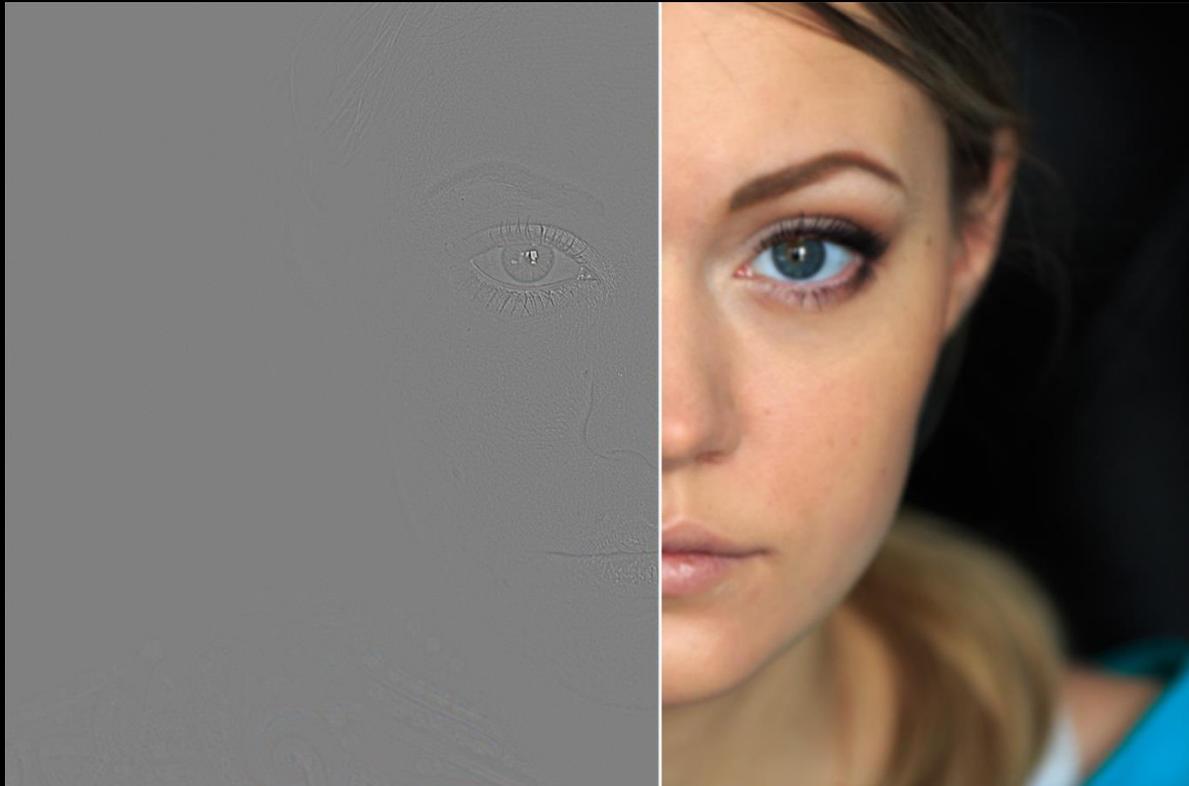
1 - high frequency (texture layer)  
2 - Low frequency (volume)

High and low frequency together will show you the original picture.

With the **Radius** parameter we set what values will have a low and high frequencies. The more we set the radius, the more blurred the lower frequency and the more small and medium-sized parts is beginning to shift to a higher frequency. This is the flexibility of this retouching method.

For example:

The image is separated with a radius of 7 pixels. Accurate texture now lies on the one layer and all the spots, color and volume on the another.



The block of buttons allows you to set the radius of the frequency decomposition manually. In addition to the separation into two frequencies, you have also option to separate it into three frequencies, you just need to find the right radiuses.

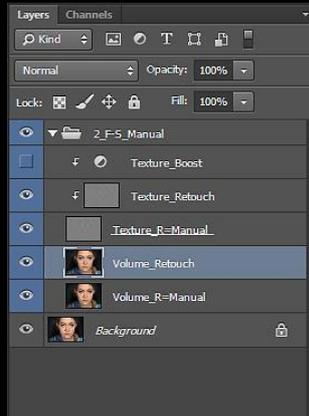


Separation of the image into two frequencies:  
Buttons 2 F-S Gaussian, 2 F-S Surface | Median

Choosing the radius, you must understand that this image will be your low frequency, and all the little details that got blurred will be in your upper frequency. [Tutorial video](#)

In addition to the Gaussian Blur to separate on the frequencies you can use the Surface Blur. Surface Blur allows for large blur radius not create halos. Means that in case of contrasting borders blur with Gaussian Blur, Surface Blur allows you to save a contrasting border. Disadvantage of this method is that using Surface Blur require to spend a lot of resources of your computer. If you move the Threshold's slider to the right, then you will almost have blur of Gaussian Blur. Gradually shifting it to the left, we remove blur near the contrasting borders.

Here is the structure of the frequency separation on two frequencies with a manual selection of the radius:



The name of each layer already describes itself, but still I would like to note few points:

- Volume\_Retouch** – this is a duplicate layer which is used for retouching. If you make a fatal error on this layer, you can always delete it and make a copy of the bottom layer.
- Texture\_Retouch** - the same, but it's for a layer of texture..
- Texture\_Boost** – temporarily increases the visual texture appearing. With this option enabled, all the texture problems are easily noticeable, with no effect on the retouched layer.

Frequency Separation by a plugin 'Portraiture' ([Tutorial video](#)).

2 F-S Portraiture | A-Mask

**Notice:** **SHIFT** + Portraiture - using this method with an automatic mask.

Due to the update of the panel version this function is now renamed to '2 F-S Portraiture | Auto Mask'.

For the method required plugin 'Portraiture'. You can find it yourself => [find](#).

3 F-S Gauss | Surface

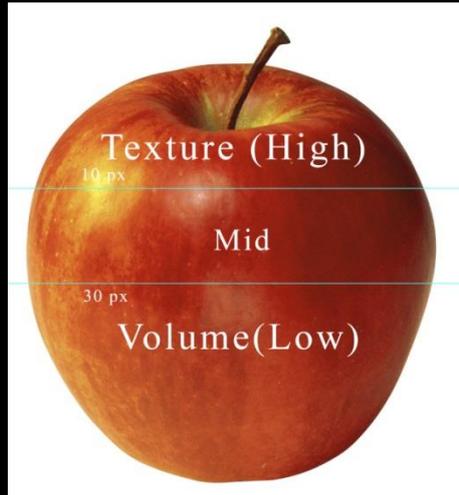
The separation of the image on the three frequencies.

**Notice:** If you want to use the algorithm of Surface blur then hold **SHIFT** button and click the button '3 F-S Gauss | Surface'.

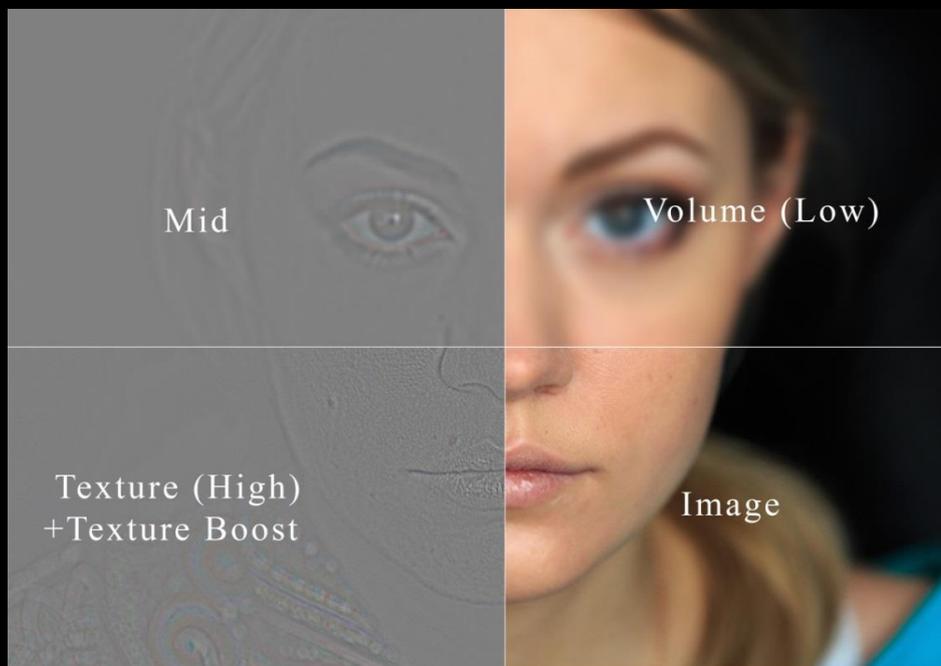
Happens that the separation into two frequencies is not always enough and need another frequency.

At first, everything happens as usual, you choose the radius of the lower frequency and then you have to choose the high frequency radius. Thus, what is left between them will be an middle frequency. If you imagine all of this abstractly, it would look something like this: you cut an apple and by radius parameter you specify the depth of the lower and upper cut.

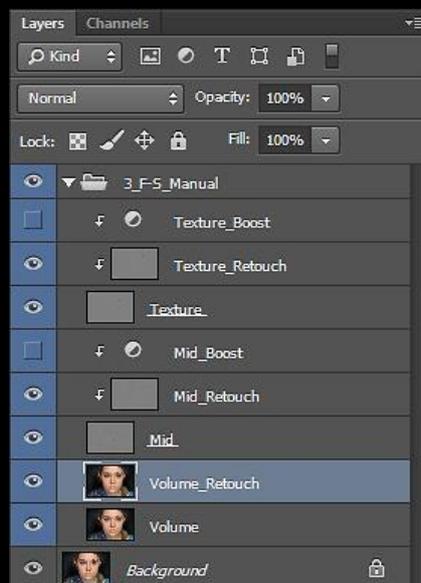
To properly understand this image with an apple, you must first imagine the cuts along the lines, and then look at an apple on top. Each piece of it will be as appropriate frequency.



Three frequency of separated image:



The structure of the frequency separation into three frequency with manual chose of the radius:



Tools with which you can retouch at frequencies in the separation into two and three frequencies:

- a. On the layer [Texture\\_Retouch](#) you can retouch by using Clone Stamp Tool.

Settings: Clone Stamp



Brush must be 100% Hardness and 100% Opacity otherwise texture will be blurred. Look for a source with good texture, hold Alt and copy, replace the bad texture. But if the texture is bad in joint, then it makes sense to lower the setting Hardness.

- b. On the layer [Volume\\_Retouch](#) you can retouch by Mixer Brush and Clone Stamp tools.

Settings: Mixer Brush



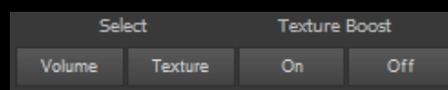
If you want to change the force of brush impact, then change the setting Flow, make it higher or lower. This tool takes a bit of time to get used to it. Point to the color spot and holding the left mouse button start to make point movement, color spots and skin will gradually start to mix. With this method you can make point smoothing of low frequency spots.

Settings: Clone Stamp Tool



Hardness should be 0-90% and the Opacity vary from 10-40%. Our task is to take a portion of good piece at a low frequency and gradually copy it to a bad sector to make smoothing. In the same manner you can retouch the Mid\_Retouch layer by when separated into the three frequencies.

Quick option of rough retouch is a blur of Volume\_Retouch layer with radius, which will smooth the contrasting spots. Then you cover layer with a black mask and wipe with a white brush on mask in the appropriate places.



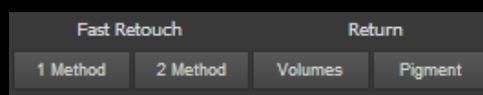
[Select](#) block allows you by one-touch get to a layer for retouching, while other layers will be turned off. If you click it again, all the layers will be turned on and retouching is done kind of in the original image, but it is on its own frequency.

Block [Texture Boost](#) allows you to enable or disable visual display amplifier of the texture layer. Power of the amplifier can be adjusted by reducing the opacity of the layer [Texture\\_Boost](#) or by it's duplication.



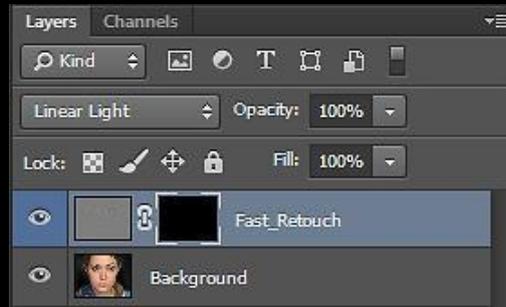
In addition to the face retouch by this method can be retouched anything: hair, different materials, subject shot and the most interesting is to get rid of folds on clothes.

The main thing is to find the right radius and remove the clothes defect in all separated frequencies. [Tutorial video](#)

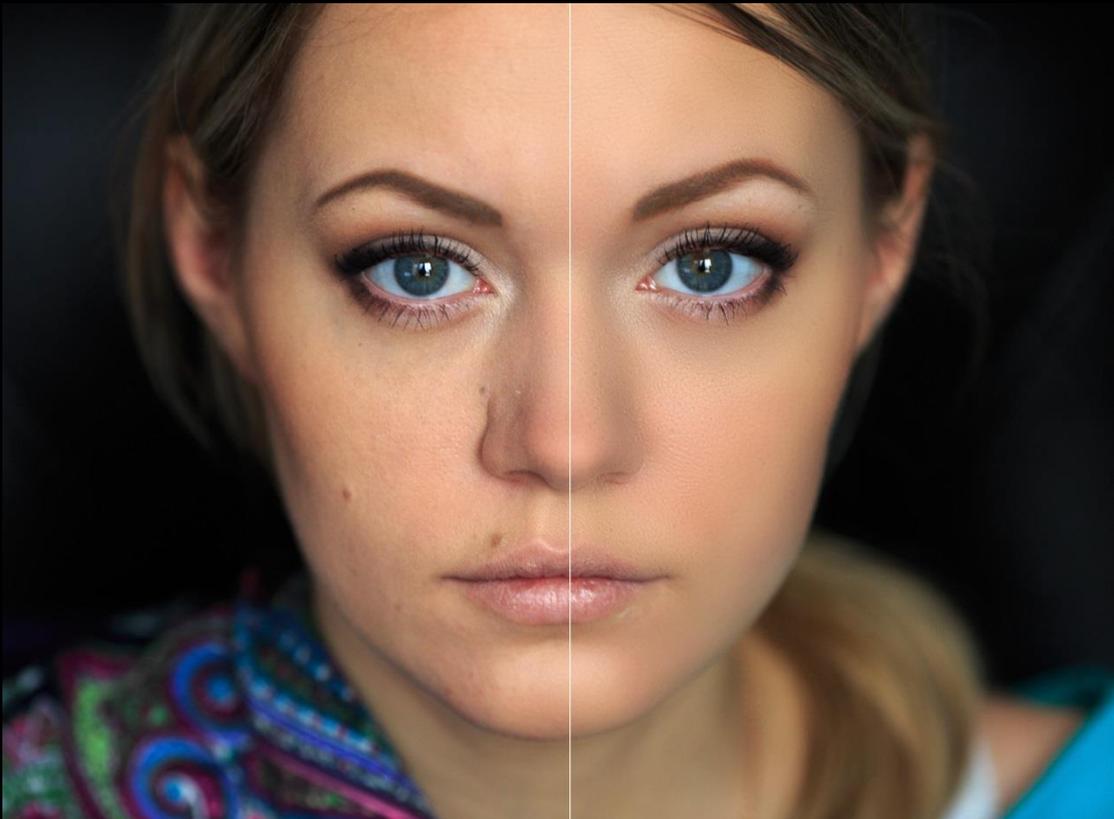


**Fast Retouch (1 Method)** function lets you quickly retouch photos, but it wouldn't be a best quality of retouch. This function works as well as the separation into the three frequencies, the difference is that the middle frequency, which we define, will be completely cutted. [Tutorial video](#)

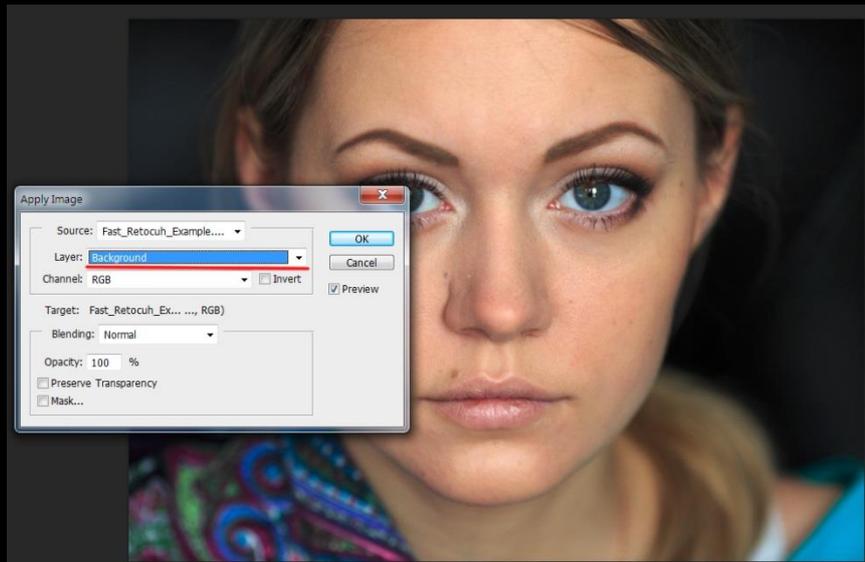
To get the best from this method, you need to move to the middle frequency as much as possible skin imperfections. For the low frequency, we select a radius in a way that would leave only neat volumes, and for the high frequency we leave only a neat texture. After that, in the appropriate places to wipe black mask by the white brush.



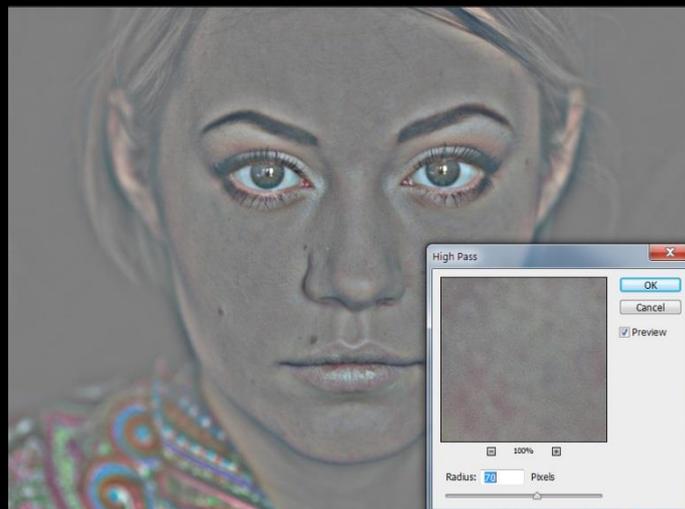
The first phase of retouching is as follows:



The average frequency is removed, but along with it the needed volumes are removed too - the right side of the face looks like plastic. To fix this, we need to use the function Return Volume. When pressed, you will be offered to select the layer from which we have to take the lost volume. In our case it is a Background.



Then you must specify the radius, make it around 50-80. Now you see, that only volume remains from Background layer, pigment and texture are disappeared.

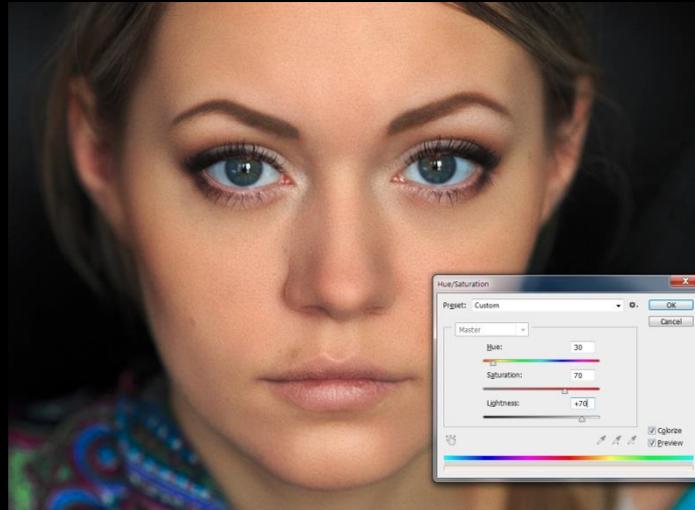


Next, increasing the Threshold slider contrasted borders are getting blurred. Wipe by the white brush on the black mask and reduce the opacity to 50-75%. The second phase of retouching:



Lost volumes returned.

The final stage. When we removed the middle frequency, we removed also the bad pigment together with it. Now we need to get it back, and make it smooth. Press Return Pigment. It only remains to adjust the color, saturation and brightness. And also to wipe the mask with the white brush.

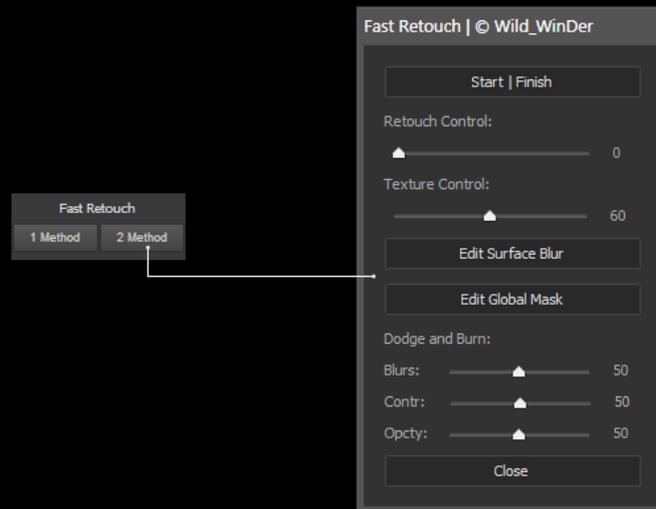


Slider Hue - is responsible for the color of the pigment  
 Slider Saturation - it's saturation  
 Slider Lightness - it's brightness.

Also this operation can be used if you need to add freckles to a person.  
 The final result:



Undoubtedly, for a good result this retouching method requires manual rework. But it can be used when you don't have enough time for quality retouching, or you can use as a base template for retouching.

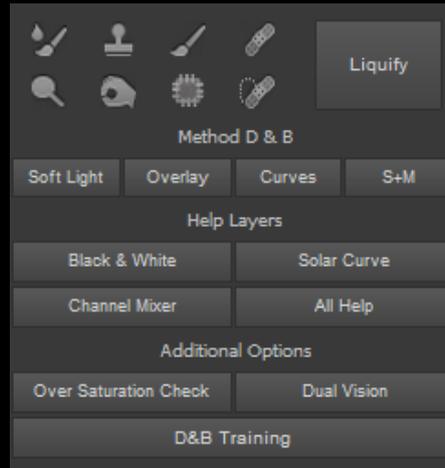
Fast Retouch (2 Method) [Tutorial video](#)

1. **Start** - creates the layers structure for further retouching. To **Finish** the retouching process and merge group of layers into a layer hold **SHIFT** and press this button.
2. **Retouch Control** – allows you to control the level of retouching.
3. **Texture Control** – It increases or reduces the skin's texture.
4. **Edit Surface Blur** – allows you to change the basic blurring of the skin using the Surface Blur method.
5. **Edit Global Mask** – allows you to go to the layer with a mask and edit it with a black and white brush.
6. **Dodge and Burn** – rapid increase in basic contrasts of the face.
  - Blurs – blurring of the halo map.
  - Contrast – increase the radius of the halo map.
  - Opacity – change the opacity of the halo map.

### Tutorials:

- Introduction to the Frequency Separation [link](#)
- Retouch I method: Frequency Separation and Mixer Brush tool [link](#)
- Retouch II method: Frequency Separation by a plugin 'Portraiture' [link](#)
- Notice:** For method II required plugin 'Portraiture'. You can find it yourself [find](#)
- Fast Retouch 1. Retouch by inverted High Pass, Return Volume, Return Pigment [link](#)
- Fast Retouch 2. An alternative way of fast retouching [link](#)
- How to get rid of cloth's folds [link](#)

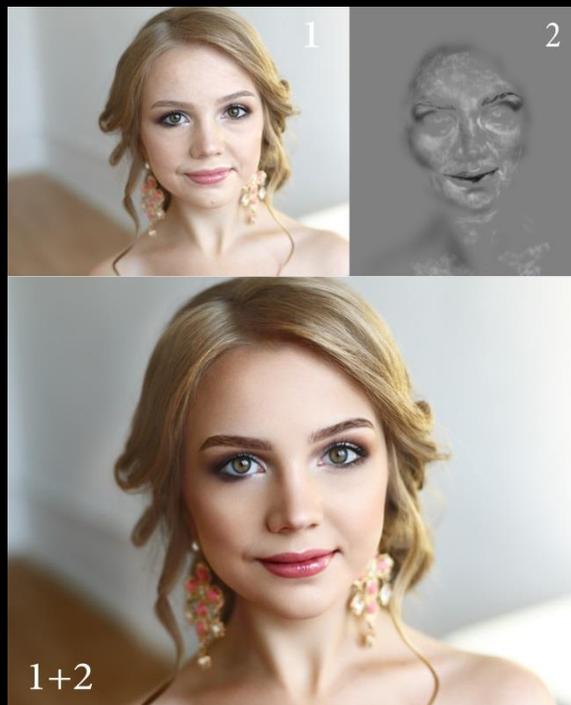
## 2.3 Block: Dodge & Burn



**Dodge & Burn** - a method of retouching that works with dimming and brightening tools. By using this method you can emphasize the volume or you can make a full face retouching, because all imperfections are just incorrect shadows and lights. If we can make it properly lighten and darken, then eventually we will get a clear picture. This method return a very high quality results, but it also take a lot of time to process each image.

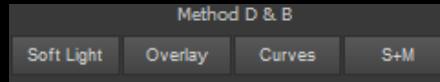
### [Dodge & Burn with Help Layers](#)

The most splendid results are achieved by combining the two techniques [Frequency Separation](#) and [Dodge & Burn Tutorial Video](#)





Block of standard tools for retouching and Liquify



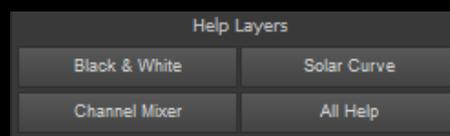
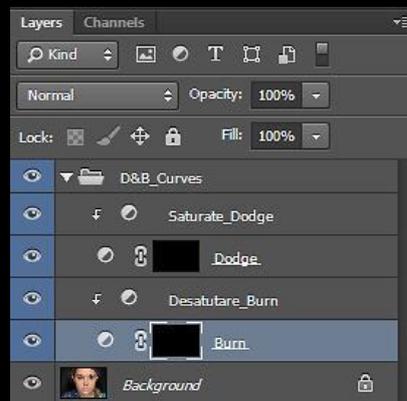
Methods of Dodge & Burn:

**Soft Light** – creates a layer filled with 50% gray color that is neutral (clear) for this blend mode. On the result layer we working with tools Dodge and Burn in the Midtones range. The strength of the tool is determined by the parameter Exposure. Instead of constantly switching from Dodge tool to the Burn tool you can use key Alt, but firstly you must configure both tools alike.



**Overlay** – repeats the work of Softlight mode, but acts on the image more aggressively.

**Curves** – creates layers with curves that are covered with a black mask. With the white brush we wipe on the white masks, which lightening and darkening the spots we need.



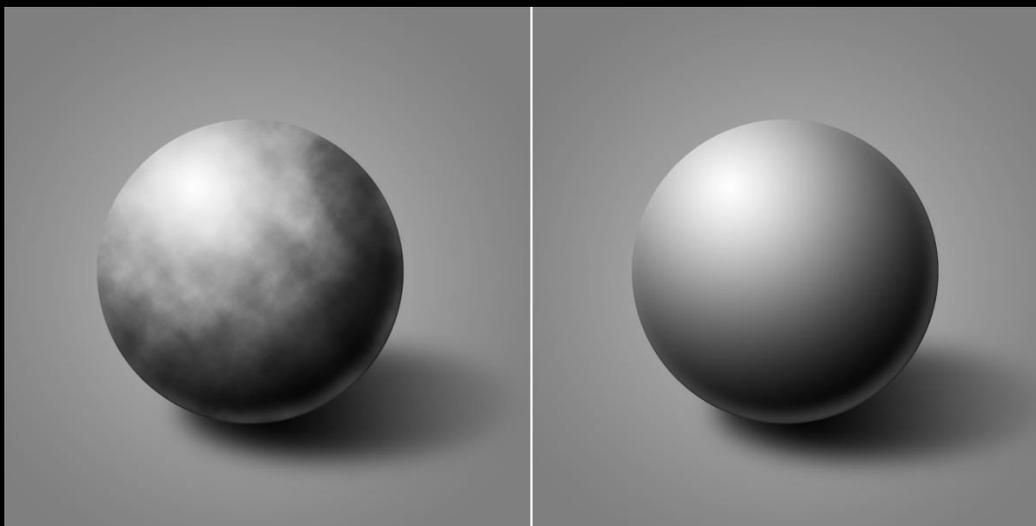
**Help Layers** - allows you to boost the visual appearance of imperfections. You can call assistants one by one or all at once (button All Help).



We should also mention the layer assistant [Solar Curve](#) - its goal is to show unevenness of gradient transitions that need to be smooth to get a good result.

D&B Training

In order to get a best quality from retouching method [Dodge & Burn](#) you have to practice. This button creates a document with the scope for exercises. This scope is contaminated, same as contaminated a human skin on a face. Your task make it clear by using only the tools Dodge & Burn.

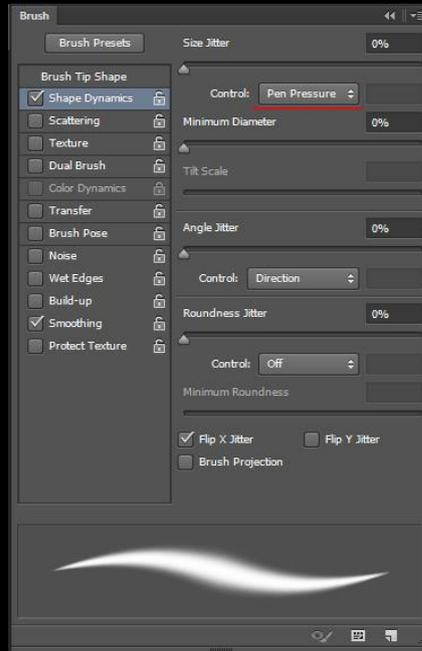


In the beginning it wont be very good. But if you will exercise every day, the quality of your retouching with this method will improve.

We make retouch on gray layers by using tools Dodge & Burn. Every time you create an exercise file, the pigment is always created unique.

For this method, you must have a tablet, because it's much easier to make retouching with it. As an option you can use a mouse, but after long use your hand will get tired. Tablet provides more accurate positioning and not require clicks.

Brush settings for the tablet should be as follows:



## Tutorials:

- Dodge & Burn with Help Layers [link](#)
- Combination techniques Frequency Separation and Dodge & Burn [link](#)
- Dual Vision for easy managing of Dodge & Burn [link](#)
- Exercises the Dodge & Burn technics [link](#)

## 2.4 Block: Tools

Anti-Highlights	Tan Skin	Iris Enhancer	
Volume	Remove Pores	Eyes Tool	
Volume HRLA	Face & Lips	White Teeth	
Manual HRLA	HDR Kit	Skintone	
Noise Texture	Film Grain	Skin Pigment	
Curves			
Contrast	Matte	3 Points	4 Points
RGB Channels			
Red	Green	Blue	Invert
R-Mask	G-Mask	B-Mask	Make Mask

The block includes a variety of support tools for retouching, curves and work with channels.

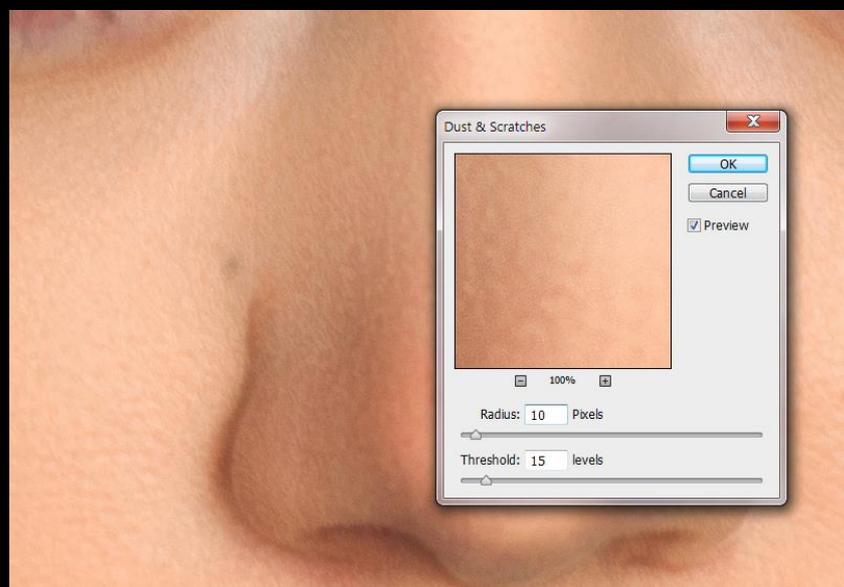
**Volume** – a tool to enhance the existing volumes in the image.

**Volume HRLA** – increase the volume of the entire image. This tool is based on Unsharp Mask - High Radius Low Amount. You need to wipe on mask in the appropriate places and to reduce the opacity of the layer to make an effect of this layer smaller.

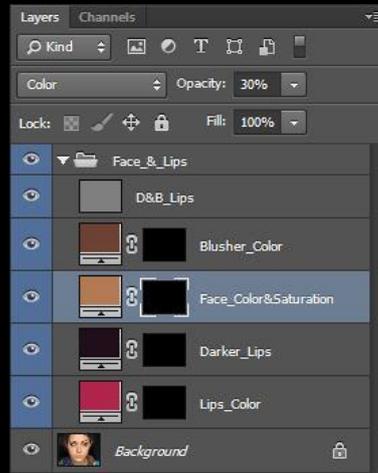
**Anti-Highlights** – restores overexposed areas on the image. You just need to arrange the mask curves, blur and wipe on the mask in bright areas.

**Tan Skin** – gives a tan for a skin. The impact force is controlled by the opacity of the layer.

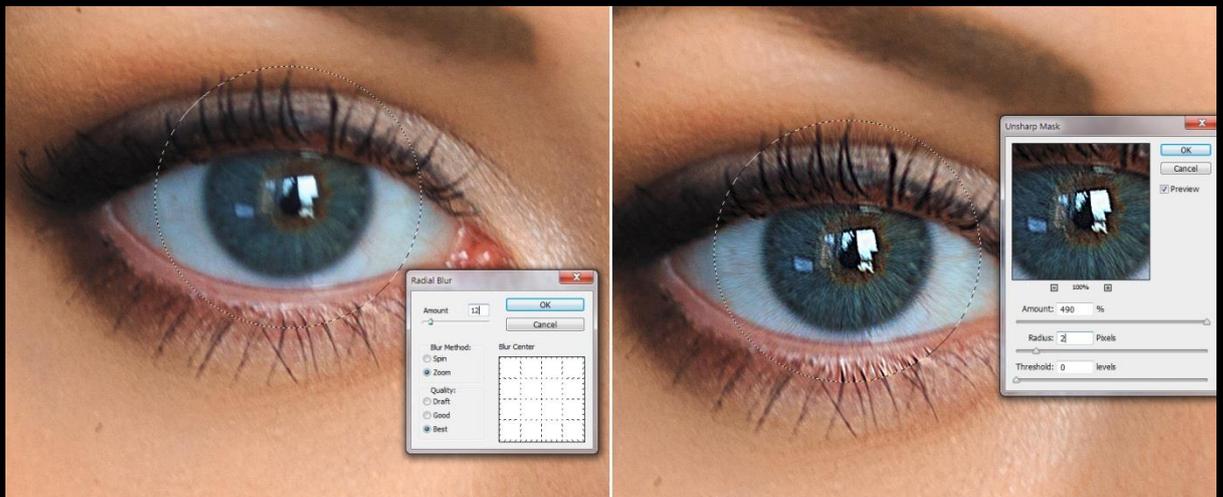
**Remove Pores** – removes black dots, as well as the little pores, making the skin velvety. Set the impact by the slider Radius, then wipe by the white brush in the appropriate areas.



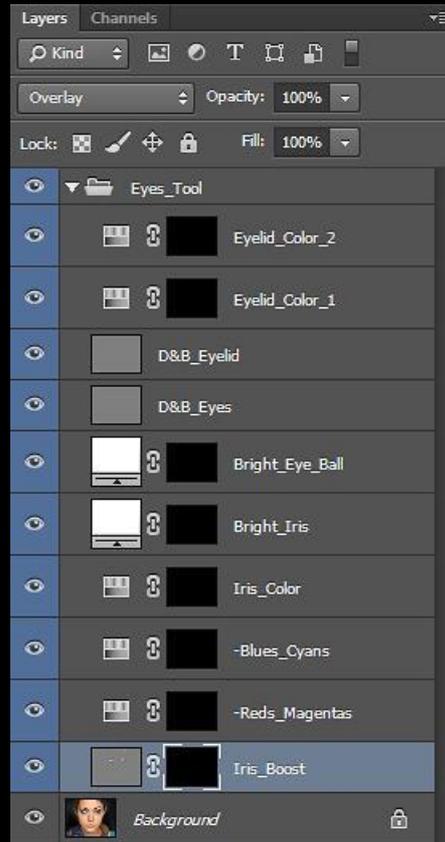
**Face & Lips** – first you choose the color of the lips, then the color of the face (choosing color vertically changes the brightness of the color, and if the horizontal, its saturation). Then wipe by the white brush on masks. To make lips more saturated use **Darker\_Lips** layer, on the gray layer you can make for lips the necessary volume. Also at any time you can change the color as you like.



**Iris Enhancer** – enhance the iris of the eye. Must be done for each eye separately. Impact is set by Amount slider in the first window and by Radius in the second.



**Eyes Tool** – multifunctional tool for complete eyes retouch. It makes iris clearer, removes red and blue shades from eyes, change a color of the iris, bright the iris and enhances the glare from the light source. Also creates layers for the Dodge & Burn, and allows to change the color of eyelids. To change the color, move the Hue slider to the right direction.



**White Teeth** – tool which makes your teeth white. You just need to wipe by the white brush on a black mask.



**Noise Texture** – creates a small noise on the current layer. To enhance the effect, press more times.

**Skin Pigment** – tool to add freckles. Sliders Hue, Saturation, Lightness set up the way they look.



**Contrast** – creates a curve which enhancing contrast

**Matte** – create a curve which make a cut-off in the shadows and highlights.



Tool for working with channels.

[Red](#), [Green](#), [Blue](#) – creates a new layer with a given channel.

[Red Mask](#), [Green Mask](#), [Blue Mask](#) – creates a mask from the channel on the current layer (To make tool work correctly, you must stand on the mask)

[Invert](#) – allows you to invert the current layer or mask

[Make Mask](#) – lets you create a mask of the layer.

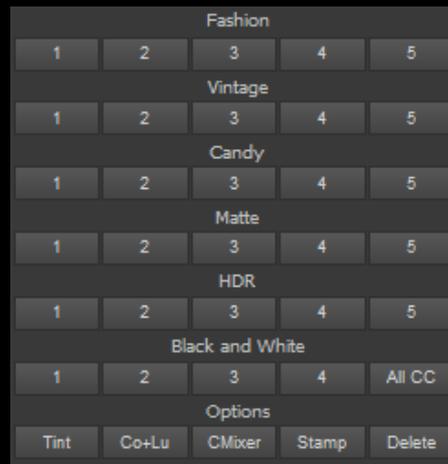
### Tutorials:

You can [slow down the speed of the videos](#) in settings of YouTube if you think that the videos are too fast

[To watch tutorial](#)

- Part I: Manual HRLA, HDR Kit, Tan Skin, White Teeth, Anti-Highlights [link](#)
- Part II: Face and Lips (5 in 1), Skintone Gradient Map [link](#)
- Part III: Skin Pigment, Noise Texture, Manual Noise, Eyes tool (10 in 1) [link](#)

## 2.5 Block: Color Correction

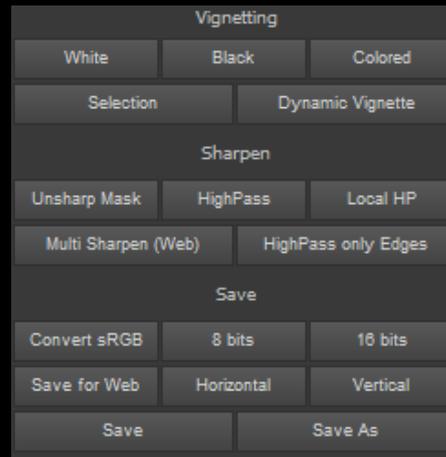


### Tutorials:

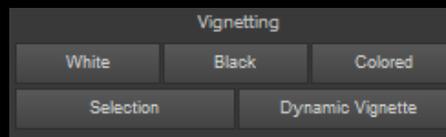
- Color Correction and options

[link](#)

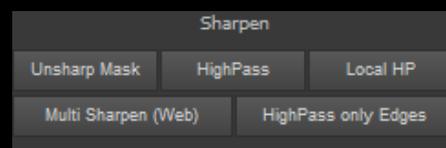
## 2.6 Block: Vignetting, Sharp & Save



This block is made for the final processing of the image.



Each button creates a [vignette](#) of the selected type, you just need to make a selection in any way you know. Change vignette effect by changing the opacity of the layer.

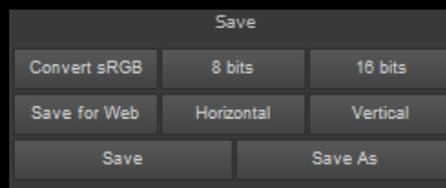


[Unsharp Mask](#) – standard sharpness of Photoshop

[HighPass Sharp](#) – sharpness through the High Pass, you just need to choose the force of sharpness (parameter Radius)

[Local HP Sharp](#) – the same sharpness, but covered with a black mask which allows you to make sharp just chosen areas of the image

[Multi Sharpen \(Web\)](#) - qualitative method of sharpen for social network. Reduce or enhance opacity of three groups for flexible adjustment of sharpen



[Save](#), [Save As](#), [Save for Web](#) – standard features of Photoshop.

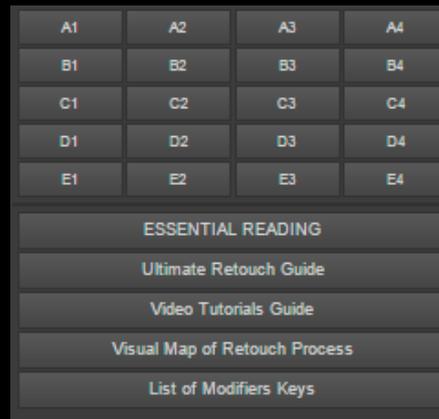
[Horizontal](#) и [Vertical](#) – Resize your image up to 1300 pixels on the selected side. This type of saving is best for uploading pictures into social networks.

### Tutorials:

- Vignetting, Sharp and Save

[link](#)

## 2.7 Block: Custom Buttons, Information:

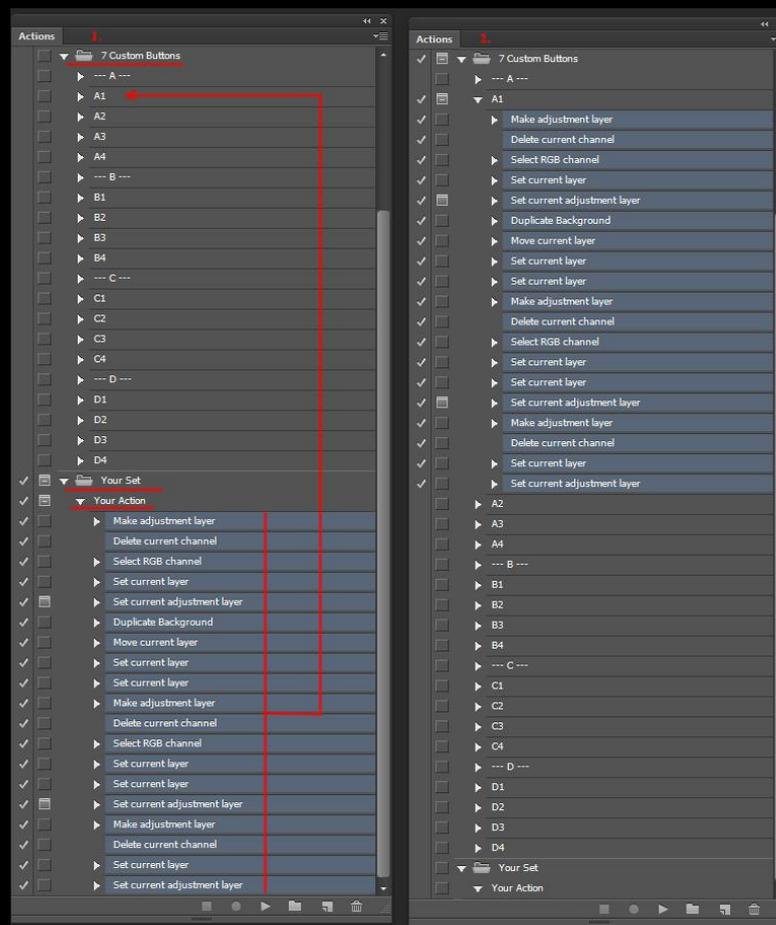


For those buttons you can link your favorite actions. To do this, open Photoshop and click Window - Actions. Then find your action and disclose it, select the first action press and hold "Shift" and select the last action. Now transfer all actions into the action "A1". Action is now linked to the button "A1".

### Tutorials:

- Custom Buttons and record actions

[link](#)



### 3. Shift-keys Modifiers:

There are modifiers in the panel now. A modifier is a secondary function when you hold Shift and press one other key. [link](#)

#### I Basic Operations: 0 keys

#### II Frequency Separation: 9 keys

1. Shift + 2 F-S Surface/Median - run frequency separation with 'Median' algorithm
2. Shift + Select Volume - show all hide layers in folders '2 F-S'
3. Shift + Portraiture - using this method with an automatic mask
4. Shift + Select Texture - show only 'Texture' layer with 'Texture Boost'
5. Shift + Return Volumes - create gray layer in overlay blend mode for quick Dodge & Burn
6. Shift + Return Pigment - create blank layer in color blend mode for edit colors
7. Shift + Selection - select 'Rectangular Marquee Tool'
8. Shift + Noise TXT - using three times 'Noise TXT'
9. Shift + Auto Merge - standard command 'Merge down'

#### III Dodge & Burn: 4 keys

1. Shift + Patch Tool - select 'Eraser Tool'
2. Shift + Soft Light - create blank layer in 'Soft Light' blend mode for alternative method D&Burn
3. Shift + Overlay - create blank layer in 'Soft Light' blend mode for alternative method D& Burn
4. Shift + Over Saturation Check - delete this layer

#### IV Local Tools: 7 keys

1. Shift + Anti-Highlights - run this function with the ability to change settings
2. Shift + Volume - run this function with the ability to change settings
3. Shift + 3 Points - create '3 Points'function' with special settings for gain highlights
4. Shift + 4 Points - create '4 Points'function' with special settings for gain highlights
5. Shift + Red - create image from red channel and set it in 'Soft Light' blend mode
6. Shift + Green - create image from green channel and set it in 'Soft Light' blend mode

7. Shift + Blue - create image from blue channel and set it in 'Soft Light' blend mode

#### V Color Correction: 1 key

1. Shift + All CC - create preview file for all color presets with manual resolution. After that create all color presets

#### VI Vignetting, Sharp & Save: 1 keys

1. Shift + Colored - create colored vignette in 'Normal' blend mode

#### VII Custom Buttons: 0

### Tutorials:

- Using shift-keys Modifiers

[link](#)

