Lighting & Retouching for Headshots

notes

For each session, we will build a lighting setup. You'll see us build each lighting setup, do the shoot, and then do the retouching and finishing touches. Before we do, here is some information about what gear we will be using. We use gear that is the best value for the money. It's not super-expensive. Elinchrom BRX 500-watt lights. For about $100.00 more than a Nikon flash, you can get one of these lights. A couple of softboxes, a maximum of three lights, but mostly one or two lights for each lighting setup. These lights have the receivers built in, which makes it incredibly easy to adjust the power of the lights from the camera. On the back of the lights, there is a readout that tells you the power of the light. The range of the lights is about 2.3 to 6.3 on the 500-watt lights.

With thee light kits, you get a little matchbox-size transmitter, called a Skyport, that goes on top of your camera that transmits wirelessly to your lights. From the transmitter on the camera, you can adjust the power of the lights. I set the main light to channel 1, the secondary light is on channel 2, and a background light would be on channel 3. You can move them all or individually.

TODAY'S GEAR:
We use the same camera gear, tripod rig, and background support throughout the day.

TODAY'S CAMERA GEAR
- Canon 1Dx
- Canon 70-200mm f/2.8 with Really Right Stuff LCF-10 Foot
- Elinchrom Skyport Trigger

TODAY'S TRIPOD RIG
- Gitzo GT3451XLS Mountaineer Tripod
- Manfrotto 131DDB Accessory Arm
- Tether Tools JerkStopper
- Tether Tools 15 ft. USB Tether Cable
- Tether Tools Aero Traveler Laptop Plate
- Really Right Stuff BH-55 or BH-40 Ballhead
- Tether Tools Aero XDC Duo Hard Drive Compartment
- Tether Tools Secure Strap (secures laptop to plate)

TODAY'S BACKGROUND SUPPORT
- (2) Avenger A635B Stands
- Manfrotto 2983 Adjustable Crossbar

notes

Lighting & Retouching for Headshots

You'll see three different ways to shoot close up headshots and beauty style or glamour head-shots, all using just one or two lights (the key to this day is using simple, proven, repeatable lighting setups that work every time). Then you'll learn the secrets of how to retouch this type of shot, including how to create amazing eyes, luscious lips, and perfect skin.

LIGHT IT & SHOOT IT

STEP ONE: In this first setup, we are going to do the classical beauty shot. It works great for any headshot, as well. A beauty dish creates a very beautiful light and fills the face just beautifully. It is equally great on women and men. There's a small reflector that goes inside the beauty dish which the strobe fires into, then bounces the light back into the beauty dish. This keeps the light from having a hot spot in the middle and being harsh. For women, we add a diffusion sock over the beauty dish. Position directly in front of the model, about one foot over her head, set at a 45-degree angle. Keep the power low. The great thing about this light is that it lights the face great and then falls off, so we are not seeing any light on the background.

SHOOTING TETHERED
GO STRAIGHT FROM YOUR CAMERA, RIGHT INTO LIGHTROOM

So you can see what I'm shooting during the day, I'll be tethering straight into Lightroom, so when I take a shot you can see it on the big screens. I also do this teth-ering in the studio (though I just tether to my laptop), but I highly recommend it for shooting in the studio (or on location if you can).

STEP ONE: The first step is to con-nect your camera to your computer using that little USB cable that came with your camera. It's prob-ably still in the box your camera came in, along with your manual and some other weird cables that come with digital cameras.

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STEP TWO: Now go under Lightroom's File menu, under Tethered Capture, and choose Start Tethered Capture. In the dialog, where you enter pretty much the same info as you would in the Import window (you type in the name of your shoot at the top in the Session Name field, and you choose whether you want the images to have a custom name or not. You also choose where on your hard drive you want these images saved to, and if you want any metadata or keywords added—just like usual).

STEP THREE: When you click OK, the Tethered Capture window appears, and if Lightroom sees your camera, you'll see your camera model's name appear on the left (if you have more than one camera connected, you can choose which camera you want to use by clicking on the camera's name and choosing from the pop-up menu). If Lightroom doesn't see your camera, it'll read "No Camera Detected," in which case you need to make sure your USB cable is connected correctly, and that Lightroom supports your camera's make and model. To the right of the camera's model, you'll see the camera's current settings, including f-stop, shutter speed, and ISO. To the right of that, you have the option of applying a Develop module preset.

TIP: Press Command-T (PC: Ctrl-T) to show/hide the Tethered Capture window. Sometimes I call this the "heads up" display.

STEP FOUR: The round button on the right side of the Tethered Capture window is actually a shutter button, and if you click on it, it'll take a photo just as if you were pressing the shutter button on the camera itself (pretty slick).
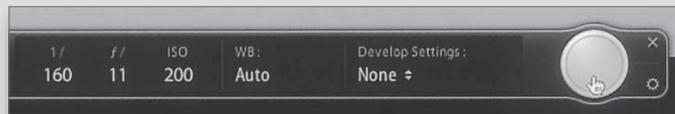
When you take a shot now, in just a few moments, the image will appear in Lightroom. The image doesn't appear quite as fast in Lightroom as it does on the back of the camera, because you're actually transferring the entire file from the camera to the computer over that USB cable (or a wireless transmitter, if you have one connected to your camera), so it takes a second or two. Also, if you shoot in JPEG mode, the file sizes are much smaller, so your images will appear in Lightroom much faster than RAW images.

NOTE: Canon and Nikon react to tethering differently. For example, if you shoot Canon, and you have a memory card in the camera while shooting tethered, it writes the images to your hard drive and the memory card, but Nikons write only to your hard drive.

STEP FIVE: Of course, the big advantage of shooting tethered is seeing your images really large (you can check the lighting, focus, and overall result much easier at these larger sizes, and clients love it when you shoot tethered when they're in the

studio, because they can see how it's going without looking over your shoulder and squinting to see a tiny screen). So, double-click on any of the images to jump up to Loupe view (as shown here), where you get a much bigger view as your images appear in Lightroom.

NOTE: If you do want to shoot in Grid view, and just make your thumbnails really big, then you'll probably want to go to the toolbar and, to the left of Sort Order, click on the A–Z button, so your most recent shot always appears at the top of the grid.

STEP SIX: When I'm shooting tethered (which I always do when I'm in the studio, and as often as I can on location), rather than looking at the Library module's Loupe view, I switch to the Develop module, so if I need to make a quick tweak to anything, I'm already in the right place. Also when shooting tethered, my goal is to make the image as big as possible onscreen, so I hide Lightroom's panels by pressing Shift-Tab, which enlarges the size of your image to take up nearly the whole screen. Then lastly, I press the letter L twice to enter Lights Out mode, so all I see is the full-screen-sized image centered on a black background, with no distractions. If I want to adjust something, I press L twice, then Shift-Tab to get the panels back.

TETHERED CAMERA SUPPORT:

See this link for an updated list—http://kb2.adobe.com/cps/842/cpsid_84221.html. If your camera does not support tethered shooting, Canon shooters can use the EOS viewer for shooting tethered on Windows, on Mac there is a program called Sofortbild a free tethering software. *NOTE: Leica S2 (Lightroom 3.2). Not supported on Windows XP.*

Canon:

• EOS 5D	• EOS 5D Mark II	• EOS 1D Mark II
• EOS 1Ds Mark II	• EOS 1D Mark III	• EOS 1Ds Mark III
• EOS 1D Mark IV	• EOS 7D	• EOS 20D
• EOS 30D	• EOS 40D	• EOS 50D

• EOS 500D (Rebel T1I(EOS /Kiss X3 Digital)

• EOS 450D (Rebel XSI/EOS Kiss X2)

• EOS 1000D (Rebel XS/EOS Kiss F)

• EOS 350D (Rebel XT/EOS Kiss Digital N)

• EOS 400D (Rebel XTi/EOS Kiss Digital X)

Nikon:

• D3	• D3s	• D3x	• D90	• D200
• D300	• D300s	• D700	• D5000	

notes

CAMERA SETTINGS:

- Canon 1Ds / 5D Mark III
- Aperture (f-stop) f/8
- Lens: 70–200 mm f/2.8
- Shutter: 1/125 sec
- ISO: 100
- Exposure: Manual
- Focal Length 200 *Note:*

The shutter speed and ISO will remain the same all day.

STEP TWO: Now have the model hold a gray card. In Lightroom, get the White Balance Selector (W) and click on the light gray in the gray card and it sets the white balance. People tend to look better a little warmer, so I tweak the Temperature setting in LR and then, from the heads up display, choose Same as Previous. Now, all photos will have the same settings applied. It's important to keep talking to your model. Give them feedback so they know they are doing well. When giving directions, use your hand and signal which way you want the model to move and avoid the whole "Your right. No, no, my right" debacle.

STEP THREE: Just using one light high like this will definitely put some shadows up under your subjects eyes, nose, and chin (down onto their neck), but luckily there's a very quick, easy, and inexpensive way to fix this—add a silver "reflector to reflect some of that top light back into those shadowed areas. I usually have the subject just hold the reflector flat in front of them, at chest level (so it's just out of the bottom of the frame) and that makes a big difference (and you see most of those dark shadows go away, and it gives a much more pleasing look all around.

STEP FOUR: If you have a second strobe, and a small soft box, then you can bring this look up a big notch. Place a second light in front of the model, a softbox facing up to the model, creating the classic clam shell lighting. One light from above, one light from below, and the camera in the middle. The bottom light needs to not over power the top light to avoid the "Frankenstein" look.

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STEP FIVE: Now we add one more light to get a completely white background. To do that, we are going to put a softbox and put it about one foot behind her. Make sure to aim it up at a 45-degree angle to avoid creating lens flare. With the light set up like this, we will have beautiful light wrapping around the sides of her hair and face.

STEP SIX: For this shot we are going to have the model pull her hair back in a ponytail, have a fresh, clean look to her face in her makeup application and wear an off-the-shoulder type top.

STEP SEVEN: In the studio, I set my camera to Manual mode, shooting in RAW, and at the cleanest ISO I can get. On Nikon that is ISO 200 and on Canon it is ISO 100. I set my shutter speed to 1/125 of a second and then start the aperture (f-stop) at f/9, even though I want to be at f/11. At f/11, I can get a shot with maximum detail which is what I am looking for. When taking this image, set the focus on the model's eye.

Shooting tethered I can see very clearly what I need to adjust. One thing to watch out for is the warning triangle in the histogram in Lightroom's Develop module. When that triangle is black, it means I am not clipping anywhere. The red on the photo alerts me so I know if there is any blown out skin. When shooting tethered with the light behind the model, you will have to turn off the clipping warning. *(See page 2 for the Shooting Tethered steps.)*
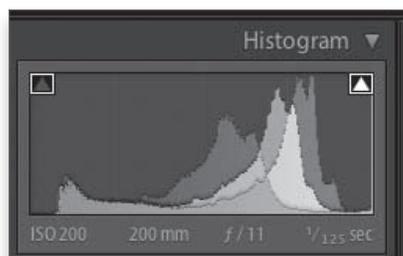
GEAR USED:
We use the same camera gear, tripod rig, and background support throughout the day (see page 1 for details).

SETUP
- (3) Elinchrom BXRi 500 Strobes
- Elinchrom 27" Softbox
- Elinchrom 39" Softbox
- (2) Avenger A635B Light Stands
- Avenger A625B Light Stand
- Elinchrom 17" Beauty Dish with Diffuser Sock
- Lastolite 5-in-1 30" Circular Reflector & Diffuser
- Savage 107" #1 Super White Seamless Paper Avenger
- D520L Extension Arm w/ Avenger D200 Grip Head & Avenger E650 6" Pin

notes

SETUP RECAP

IN THIS SETUP WE USED:

• A beauty dish with a diffusion sock above the model at a 45° angle

• A small (27") softbox below her to fill in the shadows

• A larger (39") softbox behind her, tilted up to avoid lens flare, which gives
  us a solid white background

notes

RETOUCH IT:

START IN LIGHTROOM: If you don't see much clipping, and the white balance is okay, then press Command-E (PC: Ctrl-E) and it will open in Photoshop.

FINISH IN PHOTOSHOP: First ask yourself, what do I wish was different in this photo? Usually, my goal is to make the image look how I saw it. Our eyes tend to filter out bad things—until we open it up in Photoshop. I do a lot of little things that individually may not make much difference, but when you add them up, really make a huge difference.

STEP ONE: REMOVE BLEMISHES

I usually start with blemishes. Create a new layer and use the Healing Brush (J) and make the brush size a little bit larger than the blemish you want to remove. Option-Click (PC: Alt-Click) in a nearby area, move the Healing Brush over the blemish and tap the pen once (or click the mouse). *TIP: Use your thumb on the spacebar to move around quickly.* Work on a few blemishes, then zoom out to make sure you don't overwork the skin. Also, make sure to work in the direction of the skin. The skin on the forehead is different than the skin on the cheeks.

STEP TWO: EYEBROWS

Next up, let's clean up some stray hairs around the eyebrow. Get the Lasso tool (L) and make a selection right above the eyebrow, tracing almost a "fake eyebrow". Then, go to Select>Modify>Feather, enter about 10 px, and click OK. Copy that selection onto a new layer, and then drag it down just a bit and watch how it cleans those right up.

Press Command-Option-Shift-E (PC: Ctrl-Alt-Shift-E) to create a new merged layer. Next, to darken the eyebrow a bit, duplicate the layer and change the blend mode to Multiply, which darkens the whole image. So now Option-click (PC: Alt-click) on the Add Layer Mask icon to create a layer mask on that layer. Take a small Brush tool (B) and paint over the eyebrows. Then, lower the opacity to 30% to adjust the effect. Sometimes that changes the color of the eyebrows, so instead, create a Levels adjustment layer. Slide the shadows and midtones sliders to darken up the eyebrows. Now, press Command-I (PC: Ctrl-I) to hide that behind a black mask and then paint over the eyebrows to bring back the darkness. Now change the blend mode to Luminosity and lower the Opacity to about 50%.

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STEP THREE: CLEAN UP THE EYES

Create a merged layer on top and clean up the whites of the eyes. Add a blank layer on top and zoom in close to the eye. Get the Brush tool, set the Opacity to 20%, and use a very small brush. Option-click next to a vein in the eye and then paint over the vein to remove it.

NOTE: Keep Option-clicking to select color from right next to each vein you are working on. Now, go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise and enter just 1%.

STEP FOUR: ADD CONTRAST TO THE EYES

Create a merged layer on top. Now let's add some contrast to the eyes. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels. In the histogram, drag the shadows to the right, and drag the highlights to the left, looking just at the eyes. Press Command-I to hide that dark layer behind a mask. Paint over the eyes at 100% Opacity and bring that contrast back in. If you go too far, just press X to swap the Foreground color. Now, if it changes the color of the eyes a bit, change the blend mode to Luminosity.

STEP FIVE: BRIGHTEN THE WHITES OF THE EYES

To brighten the whites of the eyes, start on a new merged layer and then duplicate the layer (press Command-J [PC: Ctrl-J]) and switch the blend mode to Screen. Hide it behind a black mask (Option-click on the Add Layer Mask icon) and use a nice soft brush to paint over the eyes. TIP: Overpaint the eyes, then press X to go in and correct it. Lower the Opacity of the layer between 40%–50%.

STEP SIX: DARKEN THE RING AROUND THE EYES

Here we will darken the black ring around the eyes. On a new merged layer, use the Elliptical Marquee tool and draw a circle around the eyes. Then go to Select>Modify>Feather and enter 10 px. Copy that eye onto its own layer and change the blend mode to Multiply. Command-click on the layer's thumbnail to reselect, then go to Select>Modify>Contract and enter 5 px. Now, delete that and you are left with just the darkened ring around the eyes.
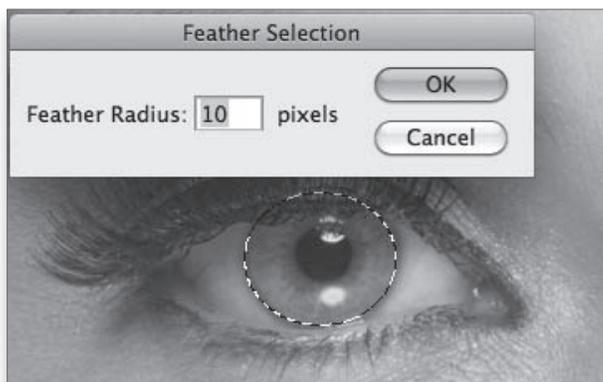
STEP SEVEN: ADD A 'KICKER' TO THE EYES

Here is a tip for adding a kicker to the eyes: Create a new merged layer and add a blank layer on top of it. Select the Brush tool and, with a small brush, paint a small half-moon shape in white on the eyes. Switch the blend mode to Soft Light and lower the Opacity to 50%. Now add a Gaussian Blur at 3 px to finish the look.

notes

STEP EIGHT: CORRECT AND RESHAPE THE FACE AND FACIAL FEATURES

Start on a new merged layer and go to Filter>Liquify. Use the Forward Warp tool and gently nudge to create more symmetry in the face. Push the chin up a bit, even out the eyebrows, pull in the hair, and even out a smirky smile.

To correct a smile, use the Lasso tool and make a selection around the lips. Feather the selection about 10 px. Copy it onto its own layer. Use Free Transform to rotate the lips a little bit. Add a layer mask and paint to hide any edges that are left over.

STEP TEN: ADD HIGHLIGHTS TO THE HAIR

Let's add some highlights to the hair. Start on a duplicate layer, change the blend mode to Screen, and hide it behind a black mask. Now, paint over the highlights in white, and then lower the Opacity of that layer to around 30%.

Dramatic Light and Retouching Techniques

Dramatic Light

You'll learn how easy it is to create a dramatic look to your lighting and how to retouch these types of images. You'll learn simple one-light and two-light setups and how just changing a few little details makes a big difference. Plus, you'll learn how to vary this setup for a totally different look in just 60 seconds.

LIGHT IT

In creating a dramatic lighting setup, there are two things you can do to add even more punch to the look. Use a black (or dark) background and a model with dark hair. We started with a black background, using a black seamless setup about 8-10' from the model.

Start with just one light, the large softbox, positioned very close to the model to create very soft light. Position it slightly in front of the model on your left, so that it will light the model's face and then gradually fade off. Place the softbox up high and aim it straight down. To get the dramatic light, have the power on this main light set low and keep it close to the model. Now, you have to make sure the subject plays to the light so she doesn't get lost in the shadows. One small step away from the light and it's all shadows. This setup, with just the one light, is great for a man's portrait or for bringing out lots of shadows.

Now, we'll make a quick change to this setup by adding a second light. Here, we are going to add a strip bank behind the model on your right. Position this light at a 45-degree angle, so it lights the model's hair and shoulders. Have the model at about 8' from this light and the background, which will help the light to not spill onto the background. With this second light we now have a great setup that works for everyone. It is great for products, families, kids, etc.

The egg crate grid on the strip bank focuses the light on the model's hair and prevents it from spilling everywhere, keeping the background black and maintaining the shadows.

SETUP RECAP
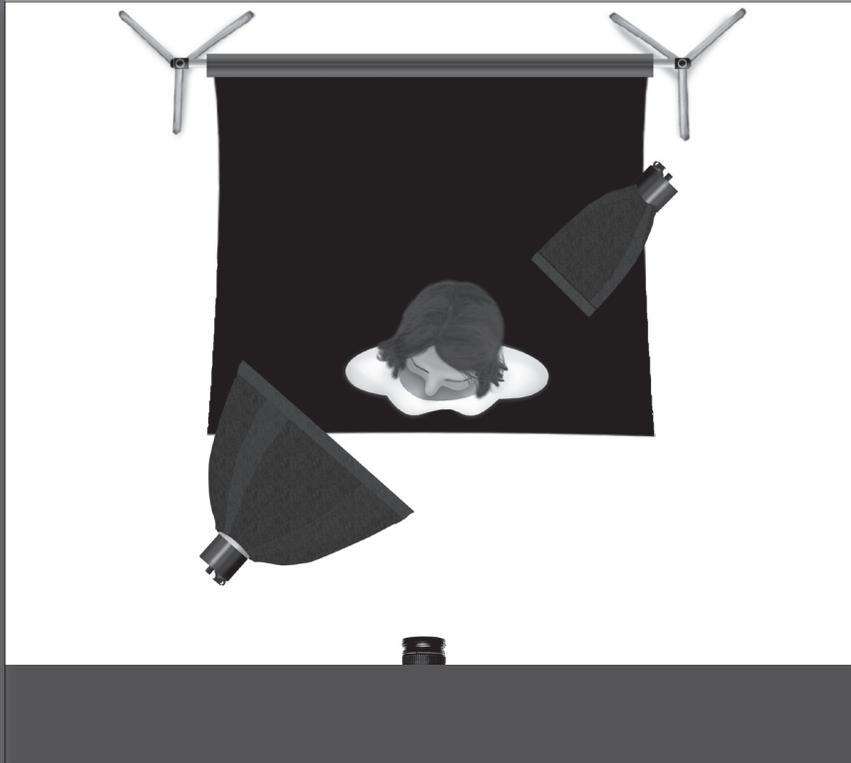
IN THIS SETUP WE USED:
- A black seamless paper.
- A Deep Octa Softbox in front and to the left of the model, up high and tilted down.
- A strip bank behind and to the right of the model directly opposite the deep octa,
  to add a hair light.

SHOOT IT

Now let's get ready to shoot. First, turn off the front light and take a test shot with just the back light so you know you have it just on her hair and shoulder. Add your front light and fan to get some movement in the model's hair and you are ready to go. Make your model feel more comfortable by having some music on the set. It helps set the mood and creates energy in your image.

NOTE: Check out your local music store for this fan that you can clamp to a light stand.

CAMERA SETTINGS:

• Canon 1Ds or 5D Mark III	• Shutter: 1/125 sec	• Exposure: Manual
• Aperture (f-Stop) f/8	• ISO: 100	• Focal Length: 200mm
• Lens: 70–200 mm f/2.8	*Note: The shutter speed and ISO will remain the same all day.*	

notes

GEAR USED:

We use the same camera gear, tripod rig, and background support throughout the day (see page 1 for details).

SETUP
- (2) Elinchrom BXRi 500 Strobes
- BlowIt Fan
- Savage 107" #20 Super Black Seamless Paper
- Westcott 12x36" Strip Bank w/Fabric Eggcrate Grid
- Elinchrom Deep Octa Softbox
- (2) Avenger A635B Light Stands

RETOUCH IT
START IN LIGHTROOM
STEP ONE: CORRECT CLIPPING

Work in Camera Raw or Lightroom to correct the clipping. In these shots as the model is moving around an arm might get too close to the light and get blown out. Using the Recovery slider will leave the exposure where it is and just brings back the clipped highlights. To make sure the skin is not clipping, select the Crop tool (R) and place it just over the face, and then the histogram displays information about just that area.
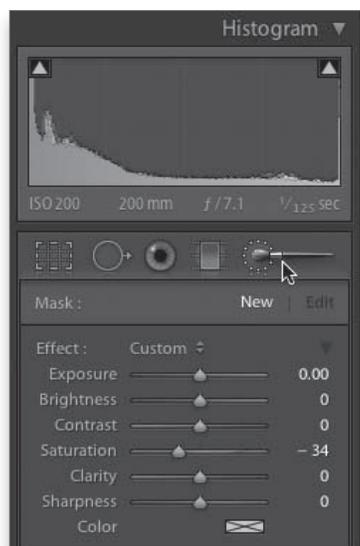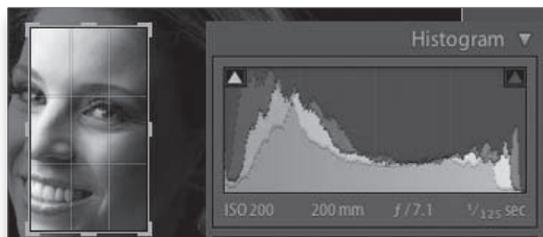
In Lightroom, select the images and press N for Survey mode. Then mouse over and click the X on any image you do not want and that image will leave the Survey mode and narrow down your selection.

STEP TWO: MAKE LOCALIZED CORRECTIONS

To brighten an area of the image, select the Adjustment Brush (K) and double-click on the word Effect to set everything to zero. Slide the Brightness slider up to around 33, and then paint over the darkened area.

notes

STEP THREE: CHANGE THE LIGHT ON THE MODEL'S HAIR

Now I want to change the light on the model's hair, which looks a bit yellow. In LR (and Camera Raw) use the HSL panel to decrease the Saturation of the colors you want to remove. However, it removes that color from the entire photo. Instead, use the Adjustment Brush and drag the Saturation slider to the left and paint over the hair. If it is too much, just drag the slider back up a bit.

FINISH IN PHOTOSHOP
STEP ONE: FIX THE CLOTHING

Let's start with a quick fix on the clothing. Sometimes the clothing gets all sorts of areas sticking out, pushing in, and pretty much making even the trimmest person not look their best. Go under the Filter menu and choose Liquify to bring up the Liquify dialog. Zoom in tight on the area to retouch. Select the first tool in the Toolbox, the Forward Warp tool.
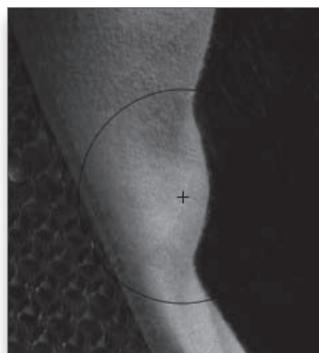
STEP TWO: USE THE WARP TOOL

Choose a brush size that's a little bit larger than the part you want to tuck in, and just push it in. If you need to pull a section out, do the same thing with a slightly larger brush.

STEP THREE: REMOVING BLEMISHES

My favorite tool for removing blemishes is the regular Healing Brush tool. So select the Healing Brush and in the Options Bar, click on the brush thumbnail to get the Brush Picker, and lower the Hardness to 75%. From the Sample pop-up menu, choose All Layers.

When removing blemishes, you always want to work on a new layer, so create a new blank layer and then zoom in to the area you want to work on first. Choose a brush size that's just a little larger than the blemish you want to remove. Press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key, and click in a clean area right near the blemish, and then click once right on top of the blemish.
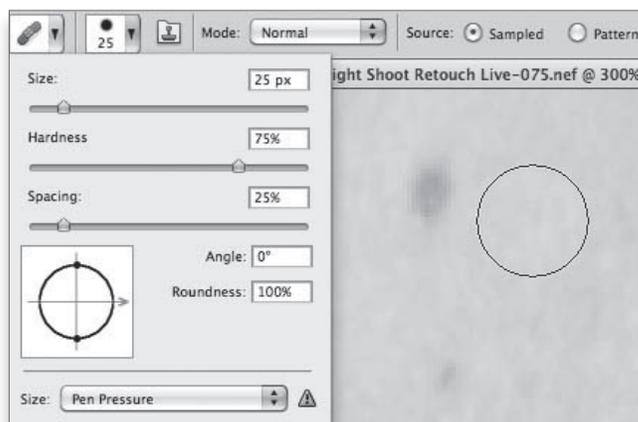
notes

NOTE: Keep sampling from each area of the face (body) you are working, as each area has a slightly different texture.

Keep working on the rest of the blemishes, veins, etc., on the face, arms, and hands, etc. And be sure to zoom back out often, so you don't overwork an area.

STEP FOUR: REDUCE OR REMOVE WRINKLES

When you just remove all the wrinkles, the person looks weird. So instead, what we are going to do is reduce or lighten the wrinkles. Ideally, you want to make the person look about 10 years younger. So keep that in mind as we are working.

The first thing to do is merge the layers together and then create a new blank layer to work on. Get the Healing Brush again and, in the Options Bar, choose a very small brush size. From the Sample pop-up menu, choose All Layers. Option-click (PC: Alt-click) in a clean area near the wrinkles, making sure to sample from skin that is the same texture as the area with the wrinkles. Now, paint over the wrinkles with the Healing Brush. You don't have to worry about being perfect. Just keep working until you have removed all the wrinkles from the model's skin (don't forget all of the skin, not just the face).

STEP FIVE: BRING BACK SOME OF THE ORIGINAL WRINKLES

The final step is simply to lower the Opacity of your healing layer in the Layers panel to bring back some of the original wrinkles. Now, lower the Opacity to soften and lighten the look of the wrinkles. It just depends on how old the model is, but you can see how it takes a few years off and looks very natural. The more you drop the Opacity, the more wrinkles come back in. With a younger model you can bring it down to 40%–50%, but with an older model, you don't want to bring it down that low.
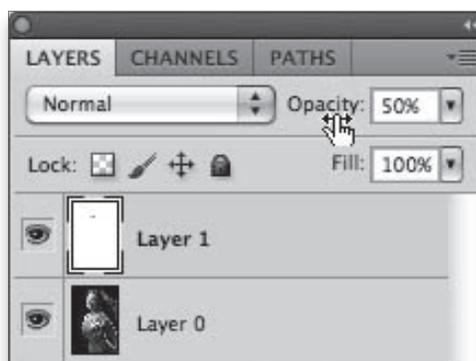
STEP SIX: QUICK SKIN RETOUCH

Let's retouch the skin with a quick skin retouching technique. Merge the layers together and then create a duplicate layer. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and set it to about 20 px. Now, lower the Opacity of this layer to 50%, press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key, and click on the Add Layer Mask icon to hide the blur behind a black mask.

STEP SEVEN: REVEAL THE BLUR

Press D to set your Foreground color to white and get the Brush tool (B), then in the Options Bar, choose a medium-sized, soft-edged brush around 45 px and set the Opacity of the brush to 100%. Now, start painting the skin and be sure to avoid the things that should stay sharp, like the edge

notes

of her face, eyebrows, teeth, eyes, etc., changing the size of your brush as you work. Remember to retouch the skin on the face, and neck, and hands.

Go to the Layers panel, press-and-hold the Option (PC: Alt) key and click directly on the layer mask thumbnail that is attached to your top layer. Now you can work on the layer mask which helps you see any areas you may have missed. Press Option and click on the mask to return to the image.
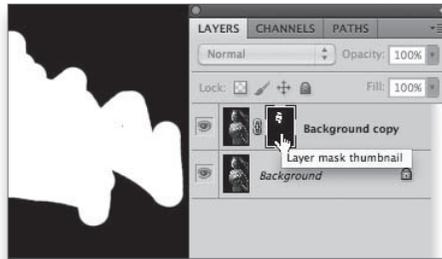
STEP EIGHT: REDUCE THE OPACITY
Now, bring the Opacity of the layer down to 35%. Based on the age, you can drop the Opacity more to bring in texture and still have smooth (and realistic) looking skin. Toggle the layer visibility Eye icon of the top layer on/off to see a before and after view. You can go as low as 20% on someone with good skin.

STEP NINE: FINISH IT
Take one more step to finalize this look. Press Command and click on the layer mask to select the areas of the skin you smoothed. Now go to Layer>New Layer, select Soft Light mode, and turn on Fill with Soft-Light-Neutral Color.
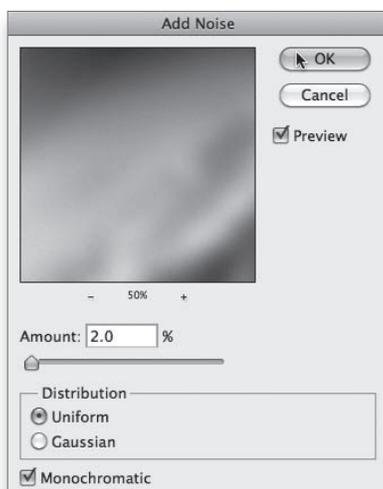
Then go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise, and add 2% noise, select Monochromatic, and click OK.

Now, press Option and click on the mask, then drag it up to this layer to apply the added texture just to the skin.

Lighting & Retouching for Fashion and Glamour

In this lesson you'll learn great, simple, can't miss lighting setups that really flatter your fashion and glamour subjects, and then you'll learn the latest Photoshop portrait retouching techniques that will take your look over the top.

LIGHT IT

The Midi Octa softbox gets the most use in our studio. It is pretty big at about 53". If you can only afford one softbox, this is the one to get. This look needs to have more consistent lighting throughout. We don't want the fall-off, like before. A Midi Octa will give you beautiful light with lots of spread. It is a deep light and that gives you a lot of coverage.

We are also using a large reflector in this shot. It's a 4' x 6' collapsible reflector from Lastolite that we just hang on top of a light stand, then put it beside the model. You could also use a V-flat, which is two 4' x 8' foam boards that are white on one side and black on the other side, then gaffer taped together. You can use them to reflect or absorb light, or as flags to eliminate lens flare. A local sign shop is usually your best place to get them.

The Midi Octa hits the model, then it hits the reflector beside the model, and the light reflects back onto the model. The Midi Octa throws a large ray of light, so it lights the background very well. And when your model has lots of detail in their clothing, you want to make sure that there is a lot of light reflecting off the background to pick up those details. You want to get a nice light gray background for a fashion look.

notes

Now, add a strobe to light the background, power down the light all the way to keep the background a nice light gray. Add more power on that strobe lighting the background for a more white background, and to bring out more detail in the clothing.

SETUP RECAP

IN THIS SETUP WE USED:
• A white seamless paper
• A 53" Midi Octa softbox to the left of the model
• A large white reflector on the right side of her to fill in shadows

notes

SHOOT IT

Shooting tethered, we see some vignetting in the corners. We can fix that in Lightroom and use Same as Previous. So first, go to the Lens Corrections panel, then under Manual, select Lens Vignetting. Now, move the slider up to about 46 to fix that, and adjust the Midpoint to about 72, as well, since the vignetting was way up in the corners.

To get this shot, you can change your lens to 85mm or get down on the floor. Let's try both. With the 85mm or the 200mm, take the shot on your knees, or down on the floor for a different perspective, which works really well for this type of look.

CAMERA SETTINGS:

- Canon 1Dx or 5D Mark III
- Exposure: Manual
- ISO: 100
- Lens: 70–200 mm f/2.8
- Shutter: 1/125 sec
- Aperture(F-Stop) 8/8
- Focal Length: 92mm

Note: The shutter speed and ISO will remain the same all day.

GEAR USED:

We use the same camera gear, tripod rig, and background support throughout the day (see page 1 for details).

SETUP
- Elinchrom BXR 500 Strobe
- (2) Avenger A635B Light Stands
- Lastolite 4' x 6' Collapsible Oval Silver/White Reflector
- Optional Background Light: Elinchrom BXR 500 Strobe with 7" Reflector)
- Elinchrom 53" Midi Octa Softbox
- Savage 107" #1 Super White Seamless Paper

notes

RETOUCH IT (1)
START IN LIGHTROOM

In Lightroom (or Camera Raw), let's bring in a little more detail and brightness. Fill Light can add too much brightness to the overall image so instead let's use the Adjustment Brush (K).

Drag the Brightness slider up to about 51, and paint in some brightness in the areas of the image you need it. Then, come back to the slider and drag it back down a bit.
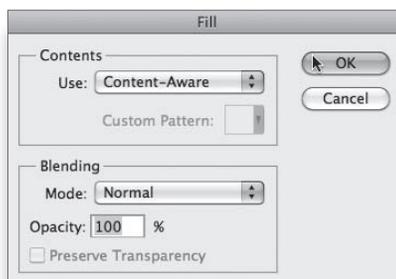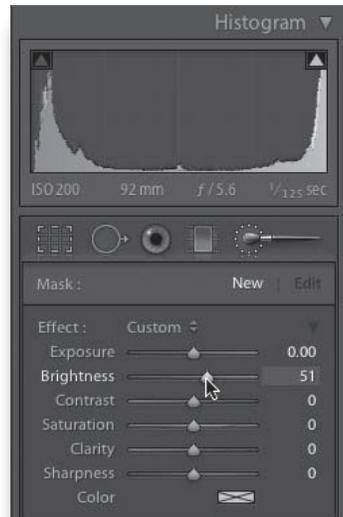
FINISH IN PHOTOSHOP
STEP ONE: REMOVE UNWANTED ELEMENTS

In this image, we were pretty far back and picked up the Midi Octa, and now need to get it out of the image. Using Content-Aware Fill to remove the light stand is just so easy. Use the Lasso tool to select the elements you need to remove. Select Edit>Fill, choose Content-Aware from the Use pop-up menu, and click OK.

STEP TWO: CROP

Now we need to crop this image, and we want to keep the same aspect ratio as the original photo. So, what we do is just go to Select>All and then Select>Transform Selection. Press-and-hold the Shift key while you resize the image. Once you have the selection, press Enter and then select Image>Crop.

STEP THREE: ADD A REFLECTION

Use the Rectangular Marquee tool (M) to select the image, from the model's feet and all the way up to the top. Press Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J) to put that selection on its own layer. So now, on that top layer, go into Free Transform (Command-T, PC: Ctrl-T), Right-click on the selection, and choose Flip Vertical. Then, drag straight down until the feet meet. Lower the opacity to 50%, and now you have a reflection.

NOTE: In a wide stance, use Free Transform, press-and-hold Command, and drag one corner up until the feet meet. Then, create a new merged layer.

STEP FOUR: ADD DETAIL TO CLOTHING
Now, to add some detail in the clothing, we are going to select Filter>Nik Software>Color Efex Pro. Add 50% of Tonal Contrast and click OK. *NOTE: If we just select it from the top of the menu, it will apply it to the flattened image, so by doing it this way, it adds the effect on its own layer.* Now, hide the layer behind a mask and paint it back in over her hair, clothes, shoes. Lower the Opacity of the layer to about 50% for a more natural effect.

QUICK TIP: Here's a trick to help you find (and remove) things in the background: Add a Curves. adjustment layer and, in the Adjustments panel, click to add two points. Drag them to create a curve, as shown. Everything you missed—dust on the floor, stray hairs, blemishes on the skin, etc.—will all stand out. You then click on the Background layer, select the Healing Brush and choose Current Layer from the Sample pop-up menu. Use the Healing Brush to remove any stray particles.
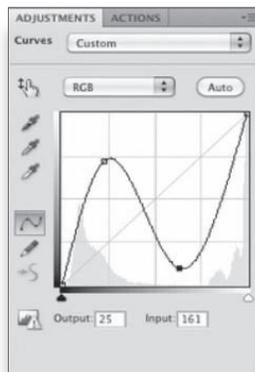
STEP FIVE: ADD SOME HIGHLIGHTS TO THE HAIR
Okay, now merge the layers together and then duplicate the layer and change its blend mode to Screen. Option-click (PC: Alt-click) on the Add Layer Mask icon to hide it behind a black mask. With the Brush tool (B), go in and paint over the existing highlights on her hair. It makes your lighting look better. Just lower the Opacity of the layer a bit to soften the look.

STEP SIX: REMOVE BLEMISHES, WRINKLES
Create a new blank layer and use the Healing Brush to remove blemishes. Then, on another layer, remove all the wrinkles and lower the Opacity of the layer to bring a few of them back in.

STEP SEVEN: TRIM THE MODEL
If you need to trim your model, perhaps due to the angle you shot at or maybe how the clothes fell, here is a great way to do that.

Merge the layers together and then go to Select>All and then select Edit>Free Transform. Right-click in the bounding box and select Perspective from the pop-up menu. Drag in the corner a bit to make the correction. Press Return (PC: Enter) to lock in the change. Now, that will stretch out her whole body, so go to Free Transform again and just push it back up a bit.

A great way to take about 10 pounds off of someone is by using the Free Transform tool. Go to the side, and don't hold down any keys and just push in that side about 5%. It looks great, and no one will notice.