

Replace Background with Photoshop's Select and Mask Tools

Doug Steakley Photography

1. Open Photoshop and open the foreground and background images. Be sure that they are the same size and format. To create a black or colored background, duplicate the foreground image and go to Edit>Fill and select a color. This will become the background image. If you are using another image as the background, be sure it is the same size or larger as the foreground image. If it is larger, you can move it around once it is in place.
2. Open the foreground image, go to the Select Menu and scroll down to Select and Mask.
3. Use the top tool—the Quick Selection Tool—to paint over the image you want to keep or use. Use the + and – selections at the top of the screen to refine the selection. Use Marching Ants or a black background to be sure you have made a good selection.
4. If there are edges that are not clearly defined, use the second tool from the top—the Refine Edge Brush Tool—to go over the edges that are irregular. The brushes can be made larger or smaller with the square bracket keys.
5. Refine the edges by dragging Shift Edge to a minus 10% and Contrast to plus 15%.
6. In the Output Menu select Layer Mask and click OK.
7. Open the Background Image and hit Cmnd A, Cmnd C to select all and copy it.
8. Go back to the foreground image and select Edit>Paste. The background image will cover the foreground image.
9. In the Layers Panel drag the background layer beneath the foreground image layer.
10. Flatten Layers and save the completed image. Once the layers have been flattened, additional work can be done on the image.